



History of Art

FROM STUDY TO SKILLS

All academic programs offered at the UM help students develop valuable transferable skills. In our increasingly visual world, the breadth of History of Art offers a vivid perspective on the course of human history through the study of works of painting, sculpture, architecture, decorative arts, and graphic media. As a History of Art concentrator you will be developing your global competence and visual literacy: the ability to read material artifacts as expressions of cultural beliefs, values, and practices, both in their original and subsequent contexts. As you gain familiarity with works of art and architecture from all over the world, you will learn to analyze the rhetoric and politics of visual culture and engage in sophisticated cultural historical analysis.

History of Art concentrators develop a broad range of abilities ranging from specific knowledge of artistic periods and artworks to visual literacy and well-honed research, writing, and communication skills. The program has close connections with many museums in the region, including the UM Museum of Art.

Related fields include Architecture, Literature and Culture, Asian and African Studies, Music, Theater and Dance, Museum Studies, History, International Studies, Communication Studies, Screen Arts and Cultures, Archaeology, Sociology, Psychology, and Anthropology.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Visual Literacy and Analytical Skills

- “Reading” images from a wide range of cultures
- Understanding how objects communicate with the environment
- Defining quality / weighing values
- Thinking critically
- Recognizing the school / period/artist of a work of art
- Analyzing the artistic qualities of everyday objects
- Understanding the impact of technology on the dissemination and reception of visual objects

Communication Skills

- Writing and speaking effectively
- Conveying complex information
- Describing the impact of art
- Presenting theories /ideas
- Speaking to groups
- Clarifying others’ thought and ideas
- Helping others see the messages in our visual environment

Interpersonal / Cross-Cultural Skills

- Developing visual sensitivity to a range of cultures
- Understanding how the making of art has changed across time
- Interpreting a culture’s values and beliefs
- Explaining the present by understanding the past
- Working in teams

Research /Project Skills

- Working with primary sources
- Using online image and archival databases
- Gathering and analyzing information
- Examining evidence
- Organizing information / materials
- Determining origins of artworks
- Evaluating research results

BUILDING YOUR SKILLS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Employers seek out individuals who can demonstrate excellent verbal and written communication skills, teamwork and interpersonal skills, initiative, and a strong work ethic. Student organizations, campus employment, and study abroad offer valuable opportunities to add to the skills you are developing in your classes. Helicon, the History of Art student organization, sponsors a range of events and publishes the Helicon Review, a journal of

student work. Other options include working as a docent or volunteering at area museums. Finally, a summer internship may be the best way of all to test out a career field and develop marketable skills; art history students typically find internships in museums and galleries, as well as in business, fashion, and media.

FROM SKILLS TO CAREER

History of Art concentrators develop both general and technical skills that serve as building blocks for a wide range of careers. For example, the ability to articulate the aesthetic and political impact of images may be equally

useful whether working in journalism, marketing, or a museum. Many concentrators go on to graduate or professional school. The list below is a sample of careers undertaken by Art History graduates.

Visual Literacy and Analytical Skills

Graphic artist/layout editor	Art gallery director
Photographer	Appraiser
Documentary editor	Corporate arts adviser
Set designer	Web designer
Picture researcher (film or publishing)	Online archivist
Exhibit designer	Design consultant/interior designer
Curator, museum and freelance 	Arts consultant
Architect	Conservator/restorer
Advertising executive	Fine arts handler
Art dealer	

 = Further Study Required

For more career information, see O*Net at online.onetcenter.org

Communication Skills

Public relations specialist
Art critic
Museum educator
Arts writer/reporter
Book/journal/magazine editor
Arts Programmer (TV/radio)
Volunteer coordinator
Educational coordinator
K-12 teacher
College instructor 
Librarian

Interpersonal / Cross-Cultural Skills

Travel leader/tour consultant
City cultural event planner
Foreign service officer 
Arts therapist
Physician 
Attorney 

Research/Project Skills

Grants specialist
Museum director 
Museum registrar
Museum development officer
Arts council director
Archivist
Records manager
Corporate history preservation officer
Registrar of historic places
Director, municipal parks and historic sites
Operations supervisor
Development officer
Research associate
Data analyst
Legislative analyst
Archaeologist
Historic preservation officer

CONCENTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Within the field of Art History, there are many possible areas of specialization, by culture, time period, or medium. The concentration requires a minimum of 30 credit hours, with a minimum of four courses at the 300 level or higher, including at least one seminar. A 15-credit hour minor and an honors program are also available. The program encourages study abroad and participates in the Museum Studies minor, as well as the joint program in Classical

Art and Archaeology. For more information, consult the department website below.

Department of History of Art

110 Tappan Hall
734-764-5400
lsa.umich.edu/histart

Newnan Advising Center

1255 Angell Hall
734-764-0332
lsa.umich.edu/advising

NEXT STEPS / RESOURCES

To learn more about museum internships and careers in art history, visit: lsa.umich.edu/histart/resources

To begin connecting to professionals in fields that interest you, create your own LinkedIn account: careercenter.umich.edu/article/getting-started-linkedin

To identify internships or job opportunities, visit Career Center Connector: careercenter.umich.edu/article/c3

On campus jobs (work-study and non work-study jobs)

are listed at: studentemployment.umich.edu/JobX_Home.aspx

The Maize pages list hundreds of organizations for students to get involved in: maizepages.umich.edu

Connect to Community lists volunteer opportunities in local organizations: connect2community.umich.edu

The Career Center

3200 Student Activities Building
734-764-7460
careercenter.umich.edu
facebook.com/careercenter.umich
twitter.com/careercenter
linkedin.com/company/the-career-center-at-the-university-of-michigan

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