

Art History and Criticism (BA)

This program is offered by the Leigh Gerdinge College of Fine Arts/ Department of Art, Design and Art History and is only available at the St. Louis main campus.

Program Description

Art history is an empirical and humanistic discipline that investigates art as a document in the broad history of human experience. The study of art history entails the evaluation, analysis and interpretation of aesthetic objects by identifying materials and techniques, the time and place of their creation, the meaning or function of the work of art, the biography of the artist, the cultural or social origins of the work and other significations. The eclectic nature of the field encourages interdisciplinary approaches as well as extra-cultural awareness and experiences.

This program is offered through the Department of Art, Design, and Art History in the Leigh Gerdinge College of Fine Arts. Please see the Colleges, Schools, and Departments section of this catalog for further information.

Learning Outcomes

Having completed the B.A. in Art History and Criticism, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a foundational knowledge of facts and accepted art historical terminology through the successful application of art historical terminology and factual information to critical discussions of works of art.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the religious, intellectual, political, social, and cultural context in which works of art and architecture were made, and how those contexts affected the development and appearance of those works of art and architecture.
- Demonstrate familiarity with the periodicity of art history by engaging with similarities and differences between works of art from different periods and cultures.
- Recognize and employ, through oral and written work, a variety of art historical methodologies including, but not limited to, formal and stylistic analysis, iconography, and social history, in addition to more specialized methods of interpretation and criticism, in considering and discussing works of art and their history.
- Recognize and employ art historical research methods, from using various technologies to discriminating among and critically considering types of sources and evidence.
- Communicate effectively about art in writing and oral presentations, applying complex forms of analysis in essay-length papers using clear and concise prose and discipline-appropriate style and format, and presenting the same using multimedia tools.
- Complete a final thesis project which uses and demonstrates the above skills by conducting art-historical research and integrating appropriate sources to analyze works of art through an original interpretation or argument.

Degree Requirements

For information on the general requirements for a degree, see Baccalaureate Degree Requirements under the Academic Policies and Information section of this catalog.

A minimum of 120 credit hours consisting of the following:

- 42 required credit hours
- 30 Global Citizenship Program credit hours
- 48 elective credit hours

Required Courses

- ART 1010 Creative Strategies (3 hours)
- ART 1150 Observational Drawing (3 hours)
- ART 1310 Materials and Making (3 hours)
- ARHS 2200 Current Art (3 hours)
- ARHS 2210 Intercultural History of Art (3 hours)
- ARHS 4920 Senior Thesis (3 hours)

A minimum of 24 credit hours must be chosen from the following:

- ARHS 3010 Greek and Roman Art (3 hours)
- ARHS 3110 Early Renaissance Art (3 hours)
- ARHS 3120 High and Late Renaissance Art (3 hours)
- ARHS 3130 Northern Renaissance Art (3 hours)
- ARHS 3150 Baroque Art (3 hours)
- ARHS 3210 Nineteenth-Century Art (3 hours)
- ARHS 3250 Modern Art (3 hours)
- ARHS 3270 Contemporary Art I: Late-Twentieth-Century Art (3 hours)
- ARHS 3280 Contemporary Art II: Twenty-First-Century Art (3 hours)
- ARHS 4600 Topics in Art History (3 hours)
(may be repeated for credit if topic varies)
- ARHS 4700 Cultural Organizations: Structure and Theory (3 hours)
- ARHS 4730 Art Theory and Criticism (3 hours)
(may be repeated for credit if topic varies)
- PHIL 3120 Philosophy and Art (3 hours)

Other Program Requirements and Opportunities

- Intermediate proficiency in a foreign language is required.
- The Department of Art, Design and Art History is committed to the concept of combining theory with experience; consequently, art history students are required to take courses in studio art. Further electives in studio art are encouraged.
- Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the field, additional credit hours should be taken in related areas, included courses in history, literature, philosophy and religious studies.
- Students are encouraged to participate in a practicum experience. They can take advantage of several internships available in local museums and galleries.
- Students are encouraged to study at one of the Webster University international campuses. Each international campus and host city offers unique opportunities relevant to art historical studies, and students should consider choosing one with respect to their scholarly interests.
- Alternating biennial short-term study abroad trips to Florence and to Venice are offered, each with an art history and criticism focus, and majors are encouraged to take them. The trip to Venice focuses on the Biennale, the large-scale international contemporary art show that occurs there every other year. Students are exposed to the most current ideas occurring in today's art world and how to critically engage with them. The trip to Florence, with a focus on Italian Renaissance Art, considers a specific period of art within its architectural and cultural setting, providing a more immediate interaction with works in their original locations.