

# ART HISTORY, B.A.

**Begin Campus:** Any Penn State Campus

**End Campus:** University Park

## Program Description

The art history major is designed to provide students with a dynamic and comprehensive education in the history of art. The histories of diverse forms of visual culture - including painting, sculpture, architecture, design, the graphic arts, and the decorative arts - are examined in relation to their social and cultural contexts. Students who pursue the Bachelor of Arts in art history will acquire a thorough humanistic education that involves writing, speaking, and participating in group discussions, as well as developing a facility in at least one world language. Majors are also encouraged to pursue a study abroad experience.

The major provides students with an excellent liberal arts background and prepares them for a range of career paths as well as for graduate study in art history. With a B.A. in art history, graduates have found employment in museums, galleries, publishing, arts agencies, visual resources, archives/libraries, archaeology, historic preservation, and historic sites. Teaching at the college level or working in a museum (as a curator, educator, director, etc.) typically require graduate degrees.

## What is Art History?

Art history is the exploration of art and architecture from pre-historic to contemporary times, in Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. It's museum studies, historiography, iconography, art criticism, connoisseurship, and research. It's studying aesthetics, and the context, form, and social significance of art throughout time and place. Art history relates visual images back to questions of religion, politics, society, gender, economics, philosophy, and culture.

## You Might Like this Program If...

- Art, architecture, and/or other visual material makes your mind light up with questions such as "Who? Where? When? Why? How?"
- If you are excited by the possibility of making a career out working with significant cultural objects and applying your critical insight.

## Entrance to Major

In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:

1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
2. have at least third-semester classification (<https://www.registrar.psu.edu/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm>).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major/>)

## Degree Requirements

**For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Art History, a minimum of 120 credits is required:**

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	18

Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	36

**3 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes 3 credits of GA courses.**

**3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if world language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.**

## Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>).

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Prescribed Courses</b>		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
ARTH 350W	Undergraduate Seminar in the History of Art	3
<b>Additional Courses</b>		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
Select 9 credits from the following:		9
ARTH 100	Introduction to Art	
ARTH 105N	Pictures and Power	
ARTH/GEOSC 107N	Rocks, Minerals, and the History of Art	
ARTH 111	Ancient to Medieval Art	
ARTH 111U	Ancient to Medieval Art	
ARTH 112	Renaissance to Modern Art	
ARTH 112U	Renaissance to Modern Art	
ARTH 120	Asian Art and Architecture	
ARTH 130	Art of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas	
ARTH 140	Introduction to the Art and Architecture of the Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas	
ARTH 201	Ancient to Medieval Architecture	
ARTH 202N	Renaissance to Modern Architecture	
<b>Supporting Courses and Related Areas <sup>1</sup></b>		
<i>Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
Select 3 credits in studio art (0-499 level) <sup>2</sup>		3
Select 9 credits of ARTH geographical distribution with one course from three of the following four geographic categories, chosen in consultation with the department or faculty adviser. <sup>3</sup>		9
1) <i>Africa</i>		
ARTH 125	Islamic Architecture and Art	
ARTH 130	Art of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas	
ARTH 301	Egyptian and Mesopotamian Art	
ARTH 335	African Art	
ARTH 442	Late Antique and Early Christian Art	
ARTH/AFR 446	Topics in African Art	
ARTH/AFR 447	Topics in the Art of the African Diaspora	

*2) The Americas*

ARTH 130	Art of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas
ARTH 140	Introduction to the Art and Architecture of the Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas
ARTH 226	The Comic Book: A History of Sequential Art
ARTH/AMST 307N	American Art and Society
ARTH/AMST 308N	American Architecture
ARTH 326	Art Since 1940
ARTH 405	Pioneers of Modern Architecture
ARTH 415	The Skyscraper
ARTH 416	Studies in American Art
ARTH 460	Art and Empire: Aztec, Inca and Spanish
ARTH 462	Studies in Latin American Art
ARTH 470	Contemporary Art

*3) Asia*

ARTH 120	Asian Art and Architecture
ARTH 130	Art of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas
ARTH/ASIA 215	Architecture and Art of South and Southeast Asia
ARTH 220	Chinese Art
ARTH 440	Monuments of Asia
ARTH 445	Oceanic Art
ARTH 470	Contemporary Art

*4) Europe and the Mediterranean*

ARTH 111	Ancient to Medieval Art
ARTH 111U	Ancient to Medieval Art
ARTH 112	Renaissance to Modern Art
ARTH 112U	Renaissance to Modern Art
ARTH 201	Ancient to Medieval Architecture
ARTH 202N	Renaissance to Modern Architecture
ARTH 204	The Art of Marvel: Italy and Spain 1600 - 1750
ARTH/ENGL/WMNST 225N	Sexuality and Modern Visual Culture
ARTH 226	The Comic Book: A History of Sequential Art
ARTH 250/PHOTO 201	A Chronological Survey of Photography
ARTH 301	Egyptian and Mesopotamian Art
ARTH 302	Pagans and Christians: Encounters in Early Medieval Art
ARTH 303	Italian Renaissance Art
ARTH 305	Romanticism and Revolution
ARTH 311	Greek and Roman Art
ARTH 312	Romanesque and Gothic Art
ARTH 313	Northern Renaissance Art
ARTH 314	Art in the Age of Rembrandt
ARTH 325	Impressionism to Surrealism
ARTH 326	Art Since 1940
ARTH 401	Greek Art and Architecture
ARTH 402	The Illuminated Manuscript
ARTH 405	Pioneers of Modern Architecture
ARTH 410	Taste and Criticism in Art

ARTH 411	Roman Art
ARTH 412	The Gothic Cathedral
ARTH 420	Russian Architecture
ARTH 422	Studies in Medieval Sculpture
ARTH 423	Studies in Italian Renaissance Art
ARTH 426	Iconoclasm: Powerful Images and their Destruction
ARTH 429	Studies in Baroque Art
ARTH 435	Studies in Modern Art
ARTH 442	Late Antique and Early Christian Art
ARTH 450	The History of Photography
ARTH 456	Renaissance and Baroque Palaces
ARTH 458	The City 1600-1800
ARTH 470	Contemporary Art
ARTH 475	Contemporary Women Artists

Select 12 credits of electives in ARTH 12

<sup>1</sup> At least 12 credits of Supporting Courses must be take at the 400 level or higher.

<sup>2</sup> GA double count. Prerequisites for studio art classes may apply.

<sup>3</sup> Courses that address multiple geographies may count for any one requirement from the geographic categories.

## General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

### Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

### Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

### Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

## Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses**. This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

## University Degree Requirements

### First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

### Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

### Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

### Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

### Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

### Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

## B.A. Degree Requirements

**World Language** (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one world language in addition to English. This proficiency must be demonstrated by either examination or course work. See the Placement Policy for Penn State World Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

**B.A. Fields** (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, World Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; world language credits in this

category must be in a second world language in addition to English or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language). Credits must be selected from the list of approved courses.

**World Cultures** (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the University Cultural Diversity (US/IL) requirement.

## Learning Outcomes

Art History teaches deep looking and analysis. It therefore develops the sort of visual literacy essential in today's world. The major also sharpens writing and verbal communication skills, and improves critical thinking.

## Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

## University Park

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## Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2025-26 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

## Art History, B.A. at University Park Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

### First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ARTH 1S (Art History Support Elective/FYS) <sup>*3</sup>	3 Additional Course <sup>*1</sup>	3

Additional Course <sup>*1</sup>	3 Foreign Language	4
ENGL 15, 15A, or 30H <sup>‡</sup>	3 General Education Course	3
Foreign Language	4 General Education Course	3
GQ <sup>#</sup>	3 General Education Course	3
	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>

**Second Year**

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Additional Course <sup>*1</sup>	3 Support Course Geographic Area <sup>*2</sup>	3
Studio Art (GA) <sup>**4</sup>	3 Support Course Art History Elective <sup>*3</sup>	3
Foreign Language	4 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 CAS 100 <sup>#</sup>	3
	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

**Third Year**

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Support Course Geographic Area <sup>*2</sup>	3 ARTH 350W <sup>*</sup>	3
Support Course Art History Elective <sup>*3</sup>	3 B.A. Knowledge Domain (US)	3
General Education Course	3 B.A. Knowledge Domain	3
GQ <sup>#</sup>	3 World Cultures	3
B.A. Knowledge Domain (IL)	3 Elective	3
	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

**Fourth Year**

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Support Course Art History Elective <sup>*3</sup>	3 Support Course Geographic Area <sup>*2</sup>	3
ENGL 202 <sup>#</sup>	3 Elective	3
General Education Course	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
Elective	3	
	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>

**Total Credits 120**

\* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

# Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

<sup>1</sup> Additional Courses - Select nine credits from the following list; ARTH 100, ARTH 105N, ARTH 107N, ARTH 111, ARTH 111U, ARTH 111H, ARTH 112, ARTH 112U, ARTH 120, ARTH 120Z, ARTH 130, ARTH 140, ARTH 201, ARTH 202N. These nine credits must include one course in Western art and one course in non-Western art. ARTH 100 and ARTH 107N do not count for either the Western or non-Western requirement.

<sup>2</sup> Supporting Courses - Select 9 credits of ARTH geographical distribution with one course from three of the following four geographic categories: Chose in consultation with the department or faculty adviser. 1) Africa and the Middle East, 2) The Americas, 3) Asia and the Pacific, 4) Europe and the Mediterranean. Courses that address multiple geographies may count for any one requirement from the geographic categories.

<sup>3</sup> Supporting Courses – Select 12 credits in Art History Electives

<sup>4</sup> Select 3 credits in studio art (0-499 level), Prerequisites for studio art classes may apply

**University Requirements and General Education Notes:**

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and satisfy a portion of that General Education requirement. If the student's program prescribes GWS these courses will replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. Each course is 3 credits.

**Bachelor of Arts Requirements:**

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

**Advising Notes:**

- 3 credits of major Additional or Supporting Courses must include Architectural History. Architectural history courses may be taken in satisfaction of any of the Additional, Supporting, or Elective requirements.
- At least 12 credits of Supporting Courses must be taken at the 400 level or higher; ARTH 495 may not be used to satisfy this requirement.
- At least 3 credits of Supporting Courses must be in Prehistoric-1600.

**Career Paths**

Art history provides students with a solid background in the liberal arts, as well as a strong foundation in the history of painting, sculpture, architecture, design, and the graphic arts. It opens the door for numerous careers, and is an excellent first step toward pursuing advanced degrees in art history.

## Careers

Graduates of the art history program have found employment in museums, galleries, publishing, arts agencies, visual resources, archives and libraries, archaeology, historic preservation, and historic sites.

## Opportunities for Graduate Studies

The two most common careers for art historians are teaching at the college level, or working in a museum as a curator, registrar, or director (among other possibilities). These careers typically require a graduate degree, and the B.A. in art history is the perfect foundation for graduate study in the field.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES  
(<https://arts.psu.edu/degree-programs/graduate-degree-programs>)

## Contact

### University Park

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<https://arts.psu.edu/academics/department-of-art-history/>