Art History and Archaeology

The department offers the degrees of Master of Arts (AM) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Particular areas of strength include ancient art, European art of the Renaissance and early modern periods, Asian art, and modern and contemporary art of Europe and the Americas. The size of our graduate program ensures that our students receive an exceptional level of advising and mentoring. Every student has a faculty adviser; the research of PhD students is supervised by a Research Advisory Committee, a core group of three members of the faculty. PhD students gain teaching experience within the department or in other programs (as a mentored teaching experience or as instructors of record) as part of their professional preparation.

Our faculty prepares students to acquire skills in empirical and theoretical methods in art history; museum, archival, and site research; visual and textual analysis; and descriptive and analytic writing. Students also take advantage of curatorial or research internships at the university’s Kemper Art Museum, the Saint Louis Art Museum and other local institutions, as well as art museums outside the region. The department supports students’ professional development and research projects through funded field trips to major art centers and financial subvention of travel for research and presentation of conference papers. Such education and support prepares our students for a variety of professional opportunities at the highest level.

Students with a PhD from the department go on to teaching or administrative appointments in colleges and universities; positions as curators, registrars and educators in art museums; jobs with auction houses, arts publications, and art appraisers. Students with the AM degree from the department have pursued doctoral studies at Washington University or in other PhD programs, as well as taken a variety of positions in arts journalism, art libraries, art advising, secondary school teaching, and commercial art galleries.

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Faculty

Chair
Elizabeth C. Childs (http://arthistory.artsci.wustl.edu/people/elizabeth-c-childs)
Etta and Mark Steinberg Professor of Art History
PhD, Columbia University

Endowed Professor
William E. Wallace (http://arthistory.artsci.wustl.edu/people/william-wallace)
Barbara Murphy Bryant Distinguished Professor of Art History
PhD, Columbia University

Professors
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Professor of Archaeology, Department of Anthropology
PhD, Harvard University
Rebecca Messbarger (http://rll.wustl.edu/people/messbarger)
Professor of Italian; History; and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies
PhD, University of Chicago
Degree Requirements

Applicants for admission to the graduate program are normally expected to have completed 18 hours of undergraduate study in art history. However, the department welcomes applications from students with less background in art history who show strong preparation in such fields as classics, history, philosophy, literature, anthropology and Asian studies.

Master of Arts in Art History and Archaeology

Requirements for the AM degree

Normally 12 courses over four semesters, including the required graduate seminar, Methods in Art History; and a capstone course in the fourth semester in which the candidate revises two seminar papers for presentation to the faculty as Qualifying Papers. In addition, students must pass a reading proficiency exam in a modern foreign language (or exempt this requirement through graded courses in the language). Students in ancient art and Asian art may have additional language requirements. Students continuing for the PhD are strongly advised to demonstrate reading proficiency in a second modern foreign language before the start of their fifth semester in the graduate program.

PhD in Art History and Archaeology

Requirements for the PhD degree

If the student has completed their AM degree at Washington University and are continuing on to the PhD, they will take additional courses (normally six courses, of which three are seminars or independent study); demonstrate reading proficiency in a second modern foreign language; prepare for and pass a Comprehensive Exam (two courses); prepare and defend a
Dissertation Prospectus (one course); and begin dissertation research. Students in ancient art and Asian art may have additional language requirements.

Thus, by the end of the sixth semester of graduate study overall, students will normally have:

- completed all required courses;
- determined a three-person Research Advisory Committee for the dissertation;
- passed the Comprehensive Exam in the Major Area and one Minor Area;
- defended the Dissertation Prospectus;
- demonstrated reading proficiency in not fewer than two modern foreign languages.

Students admitted to the PhD program who have an approved master's degree from another university will normally complete these requirements by the end of their fourth semester at Washington University.