Art History and Archaeology

The Department of Art History and Archaeology 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; and 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, and they have also taken a variety of positions in arts journalism, art libraries, art advising, secondary school teaching and commercial art galleries.

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Professors Emeriti
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Jarvis Thurston & Mona Van Duyn Professor Emerita
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Sarantis Symeonoglou
PhD, Columbia University

Mark S. Weil
E. Desmond Lee Professor Emeritus
PhD, Columbia University

Affiliated Curators, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington University

Sabine Eckmann
Director and Chief Curator
PhD, University of Erlangen–Nürnberg

Meredith Malone
Associate Curator
PhD, University of Pennsylvania

Allison Unruh
Associate Curator
PhD, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Affiliated Curators and Directors, Saint Louis Art Museum

Brent Benjamin
Director
MA, Williams College

Nichole Bridges
PhD, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Lisa Çakmak
PhD, University of Michigan

David Conradsen
MA, University of Delaware

Philip Hu
MA, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Simon Kelly
PhD, Oxford University

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PhD, Washington University in St. Louis

Alexander Brier Marr
PhD, University of Rochester

Melissa Wolfe
PhD, Ohio State University

Elizabeth Wyckoff
PhD, Columbia University

Guest Scholars, Pulitzer Foundation

Tamara Schenkenberg
Curator
PhD, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Cara Starke
Director
MA, Williams College

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

Requirements for this program normally involve 12 courses over four semesters, including the required graduate seminar, Methods in Art History, as well as 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

Students completing their AM degree at Washington University and continuing as PhD students will have two more semesters of course work, normally in the form of three seminars plus Comprehensive Exam Preparation (two courses) and Dissertation Prospectus (one course). To be admitted to PhD candidacy, a student must also demonstrate reading proficiency in a second modern foreign language, pass the Comprehensive Exam, and successfully defend the Dissertation Prospectus. Students in ancient art and Asian art may have additional language requirements.

Thus, by the end of the sixth semester of graduate study at Washington University, students will normally have achieved the following:

- Completed all required courses;
- Demonstrated reading proficiency in no fewer than two modern foreign languages;
- Passed the Comprehensive Exam in the major area;
- Passed the Comprehensive Exam in the minor area (or have exempted this requirement through related course work);
- Determined a three-person Research Advisory Committee for the dissertation; and
- Successfully defended the Dissertation Prospectus.

Students admitted to the PhD program who have an approved master's degree from another university will normally take courses at Washington University for four more semesters, including the Comprehensive Exam Preparation courses and the Dissertation Prospectus course. Thus, these students will normally complete course work and the other requirements for PhD candidacy listed above by the end of the fourth semester of graduate study at Washington University.