

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD) DEGREE IN THE FIELD OF ART HISTORY

Program Learning Outcomes for the MA and PhD Degrees in the field of Art History

Upon completing the MA and PhD degrees in the field of Art History, students will be able to:

1. Apply disciplinary methods for the visual interpretation and critique of art to produce scholarship and communicate about art using appropriate disciplinary vocabularies and primary and secondary texts where appropriate.
2. Understand art not as an isolated incident but in relation to the contexts that not only shape art, but are shaped by art, including: history, society, culture, geography, and politics.
3. Understand art as a multicultural issue.
4. Develop and apply understanding of major artistic movements, artists, and art pieces by identifying and situating individual artists and works of art within major movements.

Requirements for the MA and PhD Degrees in the field of Art History

MA Degree Program

The MA degree is a non-thesis master's degree. For general university requirements, please see [Non-Thesis Master's Degrees \(https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-non-thesis-masters-degrees/\)](https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-non-thesis-masters-degrees/). For additional requirements, regulations, and procedures for all graduate programs, please see [All Graduate Students \(https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/\)](https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/).

Although all students are admitted into the doctoral program, and no MA program is available, an MA degree may be conferred upon the successful completion of the first two years of PhD coursework, the passing of at least one language exam, and the completion of the graduate research paper. The Art History department offers the MA degree to those PhD students who have achieved doctoral candidacy and are in the process of completing the doctorate, *or* to qualified PhD students who leave the program before completing the doctorate. To receive an MA degree students must:

- Achieve doctoral candidacy. Candidacy is achieved once all coursework, both language exams, teaching assistantships, the graduate research paper, and qualifying exams are successfully completed, *or*
- Successfully complete all coursework, one language exam, and the graduate research paper, but leave the PhD program before completing it.

The courses listed below satisfy the requirements for this degree program. In certain instances, courses not on this official list may be substituted upon approval of the program's academic advisor or, where applicable, the department or program's Director of Graduate Studies. Course substitutions must be formally applied and entered into Degree Works by the department or program's [Official Certifier \(https://registrar.rice.edu/facstaff/degreeworks/officialcertifier/\)](https://registrar.rice.edu/facstaff/degreeworks/officialcertifier/). Additionally,

these course substitutions must be approved by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Students and their academic advisors should identify and clearly document the courses to be taken.

Summary

Code	Title	Credit Hours
	Minimum Credit Hours Required for the MA Degree in Art History	30

Requirements for the PhD Degree in the field of Art History

PhD Degree Program

For general university requirements, please see [Doctoral Degrees \(https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-doctoral-degrees/\)](https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-doctoral-degrees/). For additional requirements, regulations, and procedures for all graduate programs, please see [All Graduate Students \(https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/\)](https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/). The PhD in Art History program at Rice University trains students for academic research and teaching, curatorial positions, and other careers in the visual arts. Program requirements include two years of coursework and the demonstration of two language proficiencies in addition to English, as well as the successful completion of a graduate research paper, oral and written qualifying exams, a thesis prospectus, and a doctoral thesis. All students entering the PhD program must complete the full curriculum, regardless of the degrees and coursework completed prior to the student's admission to Rice's doctoral program.

In addition to the traditional degree timeline, the department also offers a Museum Professionals area of specialization, which is designed for students who currently hold professional appointments at local museums. All requirements for the program remain the same; however, graduate students who continue to hold their position at museums have a longer timetable for completing requirements.

The program is overseen by the Graduate Committee in Art History. The committee is comprised of department faculty and supervised by a Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The DGS is responsible for advising students on coursework and degree requirements, and the department's Graduate Program Administrator oversees completion and documentation of program requirements, as well as financial matters concerning graduate students.

All incoming students will be assigned to the DGS for the first semester of enrollment. The DGS will assist in explaining departmental guidelines, choosing courses, and beginning to strategize about areas of study with a view towards dissertation topic and requirements of the job market. First-year students need to identify a potential faculty advisor in their area(s) of study, approach the faculty member for permission, and, with the advisor's agreement, declare a permanent advisor by the end of the first week of classes in the Spring semester of the first year.

The requirements listed in the General Announcements (GA) satisfy the minimum requirements for this degree program. In certain instances, courses (or requirements) not officially listed here may be substituted upon approval of the program's academic advisor or, where applicable, the department or program's Director of Graduate Studies. Course substitutions or any exceptions to the stated official curricular requirements must be approved by the [Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies \(https://graduate.rice.edu/\)](https://graduate.rice.edu/). Students and their

academic advisors should identify and clearly document the courses to be taken.

Summary

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Minimum Credit Hours Required for the PhD Degree in Art History		90

Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Required Coursework		
HUMA 500	THE HUMANITIES BEYOND THE DISCIPLINES ¹	2
HART 590	METHODS OF ART HISTORY	3
Additional Requirements as Defined by Department		85
Total Credit Hours		Minimum of 90

Footnotes and Additional Information

¹ HUMA 500 is required for all first-year PhD students within the School of Humanities.

Coursework

All first year PhD students are required to take the introduction to Humanities doctoral study course HUMA 500, *The Humanities Beyond the Disciplines*, (2 credit hours). The course does not replace or displace any of the required coursework in the department.

Satisfactory completion (grade C+ or above) of at least 36 credit hours (12 courses) of graduate coursework (500-level or 600-level) is required; at least half of these courses need to be seminars. All incoming students are required to take HART 590 (*Methods in Art History*), an introductory seminar, in the Fall term of their first year, as well as HART 503 (*Graduate Research Paper*), an independent study, in the second or third year, according to the degree timeline. Both of these courses count toward the 12-course requirement.

The 12 required courses should be chosen in consultation with the student's advisor and DGS. Up to 3 graduate courses may be taken outside the department, as approved by the student's advisor.

If a student chooses to enroll in an independent study course, the student and course supervisor should establish and document the format and expectations for the course by the second week of the term.

Additionally, research hours leading to candidacy and a thesis are also required, but do not count toward the 12-course requirement. HART 600 (*Preparation for Candidacy I*) and HART 601 (*Preparation for Candidacy II*) are taken in preparation for candidacy, and HART 800 (*PhD Research*) is taken in preparation for the thesis and for defense.

Foreign Languages

Reading knowledge of at least two languages other than English is required. These languages should be relevant to research in the student's field of study and must be approved by the student's advisor. A third language may also be strongly recommended by the student's advisor. The first language proficiency exam must be taken by December 15 of the first semester of the first year, and the second exam taken by May

1 of the second semester of the second year. If the student fails either exam, the student may retake them no more than two additional times. The first exam must be passed within a year of the original exam. The second exam must be passed for the student to enter into candidacy, and no later than September 15th of the fourth year. If necessary, students are strongly encouraged to begin study of their second language at the start of their first year.

Graduate Research Paper

In the Spring term of their second year, students are required to complete a substantial research paper, as part of HART 503 (*Graduate Research Paper*). In preparation for this paper, the student should submit a topic and preliminary bibliography for the graduate research paper to the student's advisor by the end of Fall term of the second year. The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate research skills in art history including the ability to develop a convincing argument, to use visual evidence, to undertake research in foreign languages where applicable, and to develop an original thesis. The paper topic should be the result of careful thought and planning between student and advisor. It should not be thought of as a preliminary version of a thesis, but rather an opportunity to explore in depth a topic of interest, perhaps related to course work. It need not, however, be outside of the student's primary field of study and may end up being related to an eventual thesis topic. The topic of the paper, and a preliminary bibliography, should be discussed with the advisor before the end of the Fall semester of the second year.

Teaching and Research Assistantships

All students in their third year will serve as Teaching Assistants (TAs). TAs will be assigned to courses based on course enrollments and numbers of TAs available. In some semesters, a TA may be assigned to a different course, based on interest/experience, combined with course size and professors' needs. In both cases, the focus will be on a collaborative process in which TAs are an integral part of the department's teaching, and will be supervised and trained in ways which will help in the development of their pedagogical skills. Students will gain experience by either leading discussion sections or taking over class sessions during the semester and the TA will be observed and given feedback.

Qualifying Exams

The doctoral qualifying exams (HART 600) consist of a written exam, followed by an oral exam. Preparation of the qualifying exams will begin during the summer term between the second and third years, and the written and oral exams must be completed in the Fall semester of the third year. The exams will cover topics as agreed upon with the student's advisor, and based on the student's interests and intended area of study for the doctoral thesis. Passing the qualifying exams is necessary for continuation in the program into the thesis phase.

Thesis Prospectus

In the Spring semester of the third year, students will enroll in HART 601 and prepare a prospectus of 10-12 pages plus bibliography on their thesis topic to be presented to their advisor and thesis committee. Students are encouraged to think of the thesis prospectus as a base document for their thesis research and writing phases. It should clearly present the thesis topic, significance and contribution to the field(s), historical context, methodology and archival sources, and preliminary structure. Format details should be agreed upon with the thesis advisor, and the thesis committee should be approved by the department's graduate committee. Once the student has passed the doctoral exams and had the prospectus approved by the thesis committee, the student

will file a petition for approval of candidacy for the PhD with the Office of Graduate Studies.

Thesis

A thesis represents independent and original research, equivalent to a publishable book, which makes a significant contribution to the current body of knowledge in the field. It must show a mastery of the literature in the subject, be written in acceptable literary style, and conform to the standards outlined on the Rice University [Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website \(https://graduate.rice.edu/\)](https://graduate.rice.edu/). Theses may be written on any subject that falls within the supervisory competence of a permanent member of the department.

Policies for the PhD Degree in the field of Art History

Department of Art History Graduate Program Handbook

The General Announcements (GA) is the official Rice curriculum. As an additional resource for students, including more detailed information regarding the PhD degree program policies and requirements, evaluation of student progress, and recommended timetable for degree completion for traditional students and those in the Museum Professionals Track, please see the Department of Art History Graduate Program Handbook, which can be found here: https://gradhandbooks.rice.edu/2024_25/Art_History_Graduate_Handbook.pdf.

Transfer Credit

For Rice University's policy regarding transfer credit, see [Transfer Credit \(https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/#transfer\)](https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/#transfer). Some departments and programs have additional restrictions on transfer credit. Requests for transfer credit must be approved for Rice equivalency by the appropriate academic department offering the Rice equivalent course (corresponding to the subject code of the course content) and by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS). Students are encouraged to meet with their academic program's advisor when considering transfer credit possibilities.

Additional Information

For additional information, please see the Art History website: <https://arthistory.rice.edu/> (<https://arthistory.rice.edu/>).

Opportunities for the PhD Degree in the field of Art History

Co-Teaching

A competitive co-teaching program will be available to in-residence students beginning in their fifth year, with applications due by January 15 of the preceding year. This is a chance to build on the teaching assistant experience of the third year, while giving students a means to build their teaching résumé during the thesis stage of the program and as they prepare to go into the job market.

Exhibitions, Lectures, and Arts Programs at Rice and in Houston

Houston is fortunate to have some of the best art collections in the United States. The department enjoys a strong and ongoing relationship with the local museums, in particular the Menil Collection and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The department offers opportunities for students to study with local museums, galleries, and alternative

art spaces by way of internship courses, summer internship working opportunities, fellowships, or collaborative events. The collections and special exhibitions of local museums are often the focus of class lectures and research papers in art history.

The department sponsors the Katherine Tsanoff Brown Lecture Series, which brings leading scholars to Rice to speak on a wide variety of topics. The department also hosts occasional symposia and lectures in collaboration with other departments, presenting the ideas of top scholars, critics, and artists.

The Department of Art History houses the Visual Resources Center, which currently offers a broad and extensive collection of digital images related to the arts for teaching and research, serving both the department and the university at large. Additionally, exhibitions and related activities organized by the Rice University Moody Center for the Arts enrich the university and the Houston community. The Department of Visual and Dramatic Arts mounts several art and photography exhibitions each year and sponsors Rice Cinema, a public alternative film program.

Prizes and Awards

Information regarding graduate prizes and awards, as well as fellowship and internship opportunities at local museums, can be found under the *Funding and Additional Opportunities* section on the [department website \(https://arthistory.rice.edu/graduate-awards/\)](https://arthistory.rice.edu/graduate-awards/).

Additional Information

For additional information, please see the Art History website: <https://arthistory.rice.edu/>.