

ART HISTORY PHD

Degree Requirements

The following requirements are in addition to, or further elaborate upon, those requirements outlined in The Graduate School Policy Guide (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/academic-policies-procedures/>).

MA

Our MA is not designed as a terminal degree but can be awarded to students who successfully complete twelve course credits in good standing, pass one language exam, and complete the requirements for the First Year Spring meeting. Since it is not a requirement for the PhD, students must petition for the MA degree by completing the corresponding TGS Form through GSTS; it will not be awarded automatically.

PhD

The art history PhD is based on a balance of breadth (distribution requirements) and depth (your Major or Teaching Field, and eventually the dissertation fields, or areas of specialization within the Teaching Field). The department encourages and promotes interdisciplinarity by way of coursework outside of the department in related fields and programs.

Students enroll in full-time coursework or the equivalent for the first three years of matriculation, during which time a minimum of eighteen graded courses at the 400-level are completed (determined on a case-by-case basis, certain 300-level courses may count towards this requirement with additional work). Full-time enrollment is at least three credits per quarter.

Major or Teaching Field

Students are required to take eight courses in the major field, six of which must be Northwestern 400-level seminars or those offered by the Big Ten Alliance/Committee for Institutional Cooperation (CIC). The student and advisor determine what counts towards the Major or Teaching Field regardless of the department in which the course was taken. At least five major field classes should be departmental offerings, although it is recognized that this is not possible in all fields or applicable to all individual scholarly needs. Up to two of the eight required courses may include Independent Studies or M.A. transfer credits.

The Major or Teaching Field corresponds roughly with the temporal and/or geographic categories used as hiring descriptors, i.e., Modern, Early Modern, Latin American, and so forth. In the first year, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) can help you determine a student's major field, but after they declare an advisor, they will work with that advisor to define the parameters of the field.

Breadth Requirement

Students are required to take four courses in three major teaching fields outside their Major or Teaching Field, to diversify their exposure to different temporal, geographical, and faculty teaching areas in Northwestern 400-level art history seminars, and to build community in the department. The advisor determines what satisfies the breadth requirement.

Total Required Graded Courses: 18

Course	Title
First Year	
ART_HIST 401-1	Methods and Historiography of Art History (Proseminar)
ART_HIST 405-0	Art Historical Research (Summer Seminar Abroad)

Other courses in major or teaching field and to fulfill breadth requirements (8 units)

Second Year

ART_HIST 403-0 Objects and Material Seminar

Other courses in major or teaching field and to fulfill breadth requirements; or independent studies as approved by advisor (at least 8 units)

Third Year

ART_HIST 406-0 Dissertation Prospectus (Prospectus)

ART_HIST 499-0 Independent Study (Third-year students should take multiple AH 499s with their advisor and committee members during the year, normally two for the major exam field, one each for the other two exams, and one for the dissertation prospectus.)

Other courses in major or teaching field and to fulfill breadth requirements (if necessary)

Fourth Year

3 units of either TGS 500 or TGS 512 each quarter

See PhD Degree Requirements below

Other PhD Degree Requirements

- **Language:** For most students, proficiency in two languages is required for the PhD, with demonstration of proficiency in the first language by the end of the first year. In some circumstances, such as in Medieval Studies, additional language competency may be required after the third year. If a second foreign language is not needed for a student's research, or if a student wishes to pursue a computer language, for example, the student may petition the DGS for an exception to this second language requirement by Fall in their second year. In this case, the student will pursue an alternative specialization as approved by their advisor and the DGS. Please see the Department of Art History Graduate Handbook (<https://arthistory.northwestern.edu/graduate/resources/>) for more information.

- **First Year Meeting:** In late Spring of the first year, students schedule a meeting with their advisor. They may include the DGS if they wish. In advance of this meeting, the student completes the department's End of Year Annual Progress Survey which is typically circulated in April and gathers other relevant materials. More information about this review can be found in the Department of Art History Graduate Handbook.

- **Qualifying Examinations:** The department offers two tracks for the PhD Qualifying Exam, both of which can include written and oral components. The exams shall be completed by the end of Winter quarter in the third year. The format of the exam is flexible to meet the needs of different students and fields. A successful exam demonstrates a student's familiarity and ability to think with, and sometimes against, key texts in their fields and to demonstrate a proficiency in speaking about art objects and methods. For both tracks preparation includes regular meetings with the examiner in independent studies and, typically, an extensive amount of writing in the form of précis of each text on the bibliographies. More information about the Qualifying Examination can be found in the Department of Art History Graduate Handbook.

- **Dissertation Prospectus & Colloquium:** The written Dissertation Prospectus and oral Colloquium are the penultimate requirements for the Ph.D. and are intended to represent grounds for a substantive contribution to the field based on the student's original research and analysis to come in the dissertation. The Prospectus is supervised by the student's advisor with input from the other members of their dissertation committee. It puts forth the student's dissertation project for committee approval, and must be approved before the student can advance to candidacy. More information about

the Dissertation Prospectus and Colloquium can be found in the Department of Art History Graduate Handbook.

- **Fifth Year Chapter:** Before the end of Spring in the fifth year, the student is expected to complete and circulate to their committee a draft chapter of their dissertation (some advisors ask to review the chapter in advance). The chapter should not be an introduction to the dissertation project as a whole. The provisional chapter draft is intended to facilitate a check-in with the committee so that its members can assess progress toward the degree. Although it should be tightly argued and include proper citations, it is not immutable: after further research and writing, the vetted version is likely to change within the context of the final dissertation. The chapter is not awarded a pass/not pass grade, nor does it need to be "defended" in a meeting with the committee. Instead, the chapter is vetted by committee members who give written feedback, usually within eight weeks following submission.
- **PhD Dissertation:** When the student and advisor agree that the dissertation is ready, it is presented and discussed with the student's committee at an open oral defense. Typically, this is before the end of the seventh year. Please see TGS limitations on time to degree.
- **Other:** Students are regularly assigned teaching and research roles in the department. Students must select an advisor by June 5th in their first year, their exam committee by the end of Spring quarter, and their dissertation committee by the end of the fifth week of Winter quarter in their third year.