MA HANDBOOK
Art History and Visual Culture

SJSU SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

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General Requirements

For completion of the M.A. degree in Art History and Visual Culture you will need:

1) 30 units taken in graduate standing
2) Of your 30 units, 15 units (or 5 courses) must be AHVC seminars
3) Comprehensive Exam I
4) Foreign Language Exam (Reading comprehension only)
5) Comp II Exam (preparation for Thesis Project)
6) Thesis or Project

Art History Faculty and Staff

We strongly recommend that you meet with an advisor before you register for classes and when you plan to move to the next stages of your exam and thesis work.

Advisors:

Dr. Anthony Raynsford / anthony.raynsford@sjsu.edu / Art History Graduate Advisor

Dr. Sarah Mills / sarah.mills@sjsu.edu / Art History Advisor

Staff:

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Dr. Josine Smits / Nineteenth-Century Art and Global Visual Culture / josine.smits@sjsu.edu

Coursework Roadmap

Roadmap for M.A. in Art History **Fast-Track (4-5 Semesters)**

Semesters	Coursework	Exam Prep Work	Exams	Other Tasks
First Semester	1) ARTH seminar 2) Upper Division Course 3) Upper Division Course	Prepare for Comp I Exam	Comp I	Meet with Art History Graduate Coordinator or Advisor Participate in May Review (if starting in Spring)
Second Semester	1) ARTH seminar 2) ARTH seminar 3) Upper Division Course	Prepare for Foreign Language Exam	Foreign Language Exam	Meet with Art History Graduate Coordinator or Advisor Participate in May Review Meet with potential thesis committee members to discuss Comp II
Third Semester	1) ARTH seminar 2) ARTH seminar 3) Upper Division Course	Prepare thesis proposal Set up thesis committee	Comp II	File Advancement to Candidacy
Fourth Semester	1) ART 299 (Thesis course)			File for Graduation
Fifth Semester	1) ART 299 (Thesis course)		Orals	Submit Thesis to Grad Studies Office Submit Culminating Experience form

Notes on Coursework:

- ARTH 291 may be substituted for one of your required 5 seminars
- If you are specializing in contemporary art, we recommend taking ART 282A/B or ART 200W (listed under ART, not ARTH, in the Schedule of Classes)

- We strongly recommend that all graduate students without a strong background in contemporary theory enroll in ARTH 175, “Theory of Art History and Criticism”

- Of your 30 units, 9 may be taken from outside Art and Art History in Departments or Programs, such as Women’s Studies, Comparative Religious Studies, Near Eastern Studies, etc…)

- Lower-division courses, those numbered 1 - 99 do not count for graduate credit

- Conditionally Classified: If you are admitted as Conditionally Classified, you must file a “Change of Classification” form. This form is available here.

Examination Roadmap

- Pass the Comprehensive Exam, Comp I
- Pass the Foreign Language Exam
- Create and obtain approval of Thesis Committee
- Submit Thesis Statement to Thesis Committee
- Hold Joint Meeting with Thesis Committee to discuss Thesis and Comp II
- Obtain Comp Exam, Part II questions and bibliography (3-4 weeks after Statement is approved)
- Pass Comp Exam, Part II
- File Advancement to Candidacy forms
- Register for Thesis Units (ART 299 or ART 297A/B)
- Submit Final Thesis to Thesis Committee
- Hold Final Thesis Discussion Meeting

Deadlines [Check GAPE website for updated deadlines.]

First week of the semester - Complete the Advancement to Candidacy form (if applicable)
Second week of the semester - Complete the Comp I exam (if applicable)
Check date - deadline for applying for Spring/Fall Graduation (if applicable)
April - deadline to submit Annual Progress Report for all students with Candidate Status
May (First Friday) - Required Graduate Student and Advisor Check-In Meeting
Semester of your Graduation - Application for Award for Master’s Degree form due

Exams

Foreign Language Exam:

- You must pass the Foreign Language Exam in order to Advance to Candidacy and register for thesis units. We recommend you pass the exam within the first year of your enrollment.
- The foreign language exam is an hour-long reading comprehension test: you are given a passage in the relevant language of your choice and have an hour to write out a translation of as much of the passage as possible. You are allowed to use a dictionary.
- In keeping with most graduate programs, SJSU AHVC requires proficiency in reading French or German due to the extensive scholarship conducted in these languages. One of these two languages should be selected if your research topic is almost exclusively in English.
- You may substitute French or German with another language when your research necessitates it.
- Schedule your foreign language exam through the Art History Graduate Coordinator at any time during any semester. You may also pass a Proficiency Exam administered by the Department of World Languages and Literature.
- Students have three opportunities to pass the foreign language exam.
- Here are helpful sources for study:
    - French: https://french.kwiziq.com/learn/reading
    - French: http://www.columbia.edu/~ab410/drills.html
    - German: https://www.goethe.de/en/spr/kup/prf/bar.html
- You may also consider auditing language courses in the Department of World Languages and Literature

The Comprehensive Exam (or “Comps”) Overview:

- The comprehensive exam is a two-part exam administered at the beginning of each semester.
- The first part of the exam is a slide exam which examines your broad knowledge of western art—from ancient through contemporary in short-answer questions. Areas covered include: Ancient, Medieval, Italian and Northern Renaissance, Baroque-Rococo-Neoclassical, Early American, Modern and Contemporary
- The second part of your exam will consist of essay questions based on your thesis proposal. The exam will be specific to your topic and developed in conjunction with a pre-thesis committee.
- Students are encouraged to take the comp exam at the beginning of your second semester of study.
- You must pass the Comprehensive Exam in order to Advance to Candidacy and register for thesis units

Comprehensive Exam, Part I:

- Part I of the comprehensive exam is a slide exam. The format consists of ten slides which will be shown for ten minutes each. You will identify each image by period, style, dates, function and patronage (if applicable). You will also write a brief paragraph-form short answer that indicates the significance of each image within art history.
- You will be evaluated on your ability to identify defining characteristics of specific styles and their relationship to a cultural, historical context. The exam also tests your deductive reasoning abilities; your ability to draw conclusions about work using estimated guesswork and (art) historical knowledge.
- You must pass the exam with a score of 70%
- The exam may be repeated once in the following semester. Upon a failed second attempt, students will not be permitted to continue in the program.
- Use general survey textbooks to help you study, and refer to specific area texts in fields which you have less knowledge. See bibliography for these resources.

Comprehensive Exam, Part II (Preliminary Thesis Exam and Statement Submission):

1. First, develop a thesis. A thesis asks a question or articulates a problem in art history. A thesis also provides a hypothesis (draws conclusions) using preliminary research and points to evidence that can be used to support one's hypothesis or conclusions.
2. Second, set up a thesis committee. Students form a thesis committee of three people, including at least two Art History faculty members. Ideally, committee members have an expertise in your area of interest and the student has taken one or more classes with each member. In some cases, it is recommended completing ARTH 291, a special independent study course with one faculty member. You may have one committee member from outside Art History. Faculty must agree to serve on the thesis committee
3. Discuss preliminary ideas with several members of the faculty and also familiarize yourself with the central writings around the topic. Ideally, you will have closely examined and analyzed ten significant sources (books and articles).
4. Thirdly, submit a preliminary thesis statement (see directly below) to the faculty group. Part II of the Comprehensive Exam will be based on your thesis statement
5. A strong thesis proposal might include:
    a. A working title
    b. A clear explanation of the topic and why it is important
    c. An explanation of how the topic adds to or addresses existing scholarship
    d. A tentative thesis statement (think of this as your hypothesis)
    e. An outline of thesis chapters and summaries of content for each chapter
    f. An annotated bibliography, including primary and secondary sources

- Lastly, plan an exam date. During this time, your committee will prepare six questions for you regarding your thesis proposal. In a two-hour exam, you'll be given two of these questions to answer in long-form essays. We recommend you prepare answers to all six questions (which will be given to you in advance of the exam).

  One set of questions will examine the breadth and depth of your understanding of the proposed area of study. The other set of questions will ask you to focus on issues related to the theoretical issues underlying your proposed approach to the project.

- You have two opportunities to pass the exam.
- Criteria for passing this exam include:
  - Quality and persuasiveness of the answer
  - Comprehensive understanding of the field and/or historical period in which research will be conducted
  - Working knowledge of relevant theoretical writings or a demonstrated understanding of how to apply critical methods proposed in research
  - Preliminary understanding of how the proposed thesis will contribute to the area

Thesis Preparation and Process

The thesis is a 35 - 75 page document, which we encourage you to think of as a long-form article for a peer-reviewed journal.

Beginning Thesis:

- Before you begin your thesis you need to file the Advanced to Candidacy form. Please file your form in the first weeks of the semester.
- Enroll in ART 299. To enroll, obtain the ADD code for ART 299 from the art history faculty who is Chair of your thesis committee after completing the Tutorial form.
- You may take ART 299 twice, which will count for six units towards your total of 30.
- You may decide to complete a "Thesis Project" instead of a research paper. The Thesis Project is an option generally reserved for students who are curating and then documenting an exhibition. With permission to complete a Project, you will enroll in ART 297 A/B instead of ART 299.

During Thesis Writing ("Candidate Status"):

- Few students complete the thesis in one semester. Two semesters is the typical time it takes to complete a thesis.
- An incomplete grade is automatically filed by the Art Graduate Advisor if there is no evidence of work for the given semester.

- While completing the thesis (if you are not enrolled in any other coursework) you must continually register for ARTH 1290R in order to maintain all University privileges (such as Library use, internal scholarships, etc…).

May Review (or First-Year Review): Faculty and students will dedicate the first Friday in May to public discussion of student progress through the degree program. During this time, faculty will also share news of their current professional work and areas of expertise. In advance of the Review, all currently-enrolled students will be asked to provide a short portfolio with examples of current papers and a CV. Students will give a brief presentation of their current work and discuss preliminary ideas for the thesis and/or about the intended area of specialization.

Last Stages of Thesis:

- Complete Culminating Experience/Oral Examination: arrange a meeting with your committee. The exam will take place as a discussion between you and the committee and last one hour. You will be asked to speak about your topic, historical and bibliographical sources for your work, and ways in which it could be developed further, should you plan to publish or continue with doctoral work.

- Upon successful completion of your Oral Exam, the Graduate Advisor will sign the Verification of Culminating Experience form and submit it to GAPE.

- During the semester you plan to finish your thesis, you need to file for graduation in the first weeks of the semester. Deadlines for filing are March 1 for December graduation and October 1 for May graduation.

- Submit your thesis to the Office of Graduate Studies, following instructions on their website. Your thesis should be fully formatted and include the title page with committee signatures.

- One copy of the thesis or project is kept in the Visual Resources LIbrary for future reference. An additional copy must be submitted to the SJSU Library. The Office of Graduate Studies and Research checks your thesis to ensure you have followed all SJSU Thesis Guidelines, then sends the final version to ProQuest for publication.

Scholarship and Professionalism

Professionalism in the Field:

We encourage students to participate in scholarly activities, which could include those of the Art History Association, attending symposium, and Thompson Gallery events. Outside the University, we also recommend following the College Art Association activities (and possibly becoming a member), traveling to Bay area exhibitions, becoming a member of an affiliated professional society, proposing papers to conferences, and completing an internship or serving as a reader or graduate assistant in the AHVC program.

Art History Scholarships (usually about $200 - $800) are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. For more information inquire with the Art History Graduate Coordinator.

You are eligible to apply for a Research Assistant to various professors (contingent on funding) or a Graduate Assistant (reading papers and exams). These positions are announced at the start of each semester.

Resources

SJSU Graduate Studies: http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/

SJSU Writing Center (see “Homegrown Handouts” for Style Guides):
https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/resources/index.php

Art Bulletin Style Guide (useful for caption formatting):
http://www.collegeart.org/artbulletin/guidelines.html

Link to Forms

SJSU Thesis Guide: http://sjsu.edu/gradstudies/thesis/

IRB (form to file if interviewing human subjects)

Change of Classification in Graduate Program

Advancement to Candidacy

Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines

Graduation Application

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General Bibliography

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This list supplements what we assume of students entering their Comprehensive exams, namely knowledge of key canonical works gained from undergraduate-level studies and of the more specialized areas presented by their graduate coursework and interests.

Comprehensive Exams, Part I: RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Arnason, H. Harvard. *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2010.

Gardner, Helen; Fred S. Kleiner and Christin J. Mamiya. *Gardner's Art through the Ages.* Australia; United States: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2005.

Roberston, Jean and Deborah Hutton. *The History of Art: A Global View.* Thames & Hudson, New York, 2021.

Stokstad, Marilyn in collaboration with David Cateforis. *Art History*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2011.

Trachtenberg, Marvin and Hyman, Isabelle, *Architecture from Prehistory to Postmodernism*. Harry N. Abrams, New York, 2002.

On-Line Resources: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Heilbrunn Timeline Essays

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY BY AREA:

Non-Western:

O'Riley, Michael Kampen. *Art Beyond the West: The Arts of Africa, India and Southeast Asia, China, Japan and Korea, the Pacific, and the Americas*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 2006.

Visona et al, *A History of Art in Africa*, Hoboken, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007.

Willett, Frank, *African Art,* New York, NY: Thames and Hudson, 2003.

Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt:

Bahrani, Zainab. *Art of Mesopotamia,* New York: Thames & Hudson, 2017.

Manley, Bill. *Egyptian Art*, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2017.

Classical Art:

Beard, Mary, *Classical art : from Greece to Rome,* ed. John Henderson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Donohue, A. A. (Alice A.) Mark D Fullerton. *Ancient art and its historiography* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Elsner, Jaś. *Art and Text in Roman Culture* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Henderson, John and Mary Beard, *Hellenistic and Early Roman Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Kleiner, Fred S. *A History of Roman Art*. Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth, 2007.

Neer, Richard T. *Greek Art and Archaeology*, Thames & Hudson, 2018.

Pedley, John Griffiths. *Greek Art and Archaeology*, 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1998.

Pollitt, J. J. (Jerome Jordan). *Art in the Hellenistic age,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

———. *The art of ancient Greece : sources and documents* . ed. Jerome Jordan Pollitt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Stansbury-O'Donnell, Mark D. *A History of Greek Art*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015.

Stewart, Andrew F. *Art, desire, and the body in ancient Greece* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

___. *Classical Greece and the birth of Western art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Tuck, Steven L. *A History of Roman Art*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015.

Medieval:

Luttikhuizen, Henry and Dorothy Verkerk, *Snyder's Medieval Art*, rev. 2nd ed. 2005.

Elsner, Jas. *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire AD 100-450*. Oxford History of Art. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Northern Renaissance:

Snyder, James, Larry Silver and Henry Luttikhuizen, *Northern Renaissance Art*, rev. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 2004.

Harbison, Craig. *The Mirror of the Artist: Northern Renaissance Art*. New York, N.Y.: H. N. Abrams: Prentice Hall, 1995, 2003.

Porras, Stephanie. Art of the Northern Renaissance: Courts, Commerce and Devotion. London: Laurence King, 2018.

Renaissance in Italy; Baroque

Campbell, Stephen J.and Michael W. Cole, *Italian Renaissance Art*, Volumes 1 (1300-1510); and 2 (1490-1600), New York: Thames & Hudson, 2nd edition, 2013 & 2017.

Harris, Ann Sutherland. *Seventeenth-Century Art and Architecture*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005.

Minor, Vernon Hyde. *Baroque and Rococo: Art and Culture*. Prentice Hall, 2003.

Nichols, Tom. Art of Renaissance Venice: From Tradition to Individualism. London: Laurence King, 2016.

Partridge, Loren. Art of Renaissance Florence 1400-1600. Berkeley: UC Press, 2009.
Marciari, John. Art of Renaissance Rome: Artists and Patrons of the City. London: Laurence King, 2017.

Welch, Evelyn. *Art and society in Italy, 1350-1500*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Rococo, Neoclassicism, Romanticism:

Bailey, Gauvin, *Baroque & Rococo: Art and Ideas,* London: Phaidon, 2012.

Chipps Smith, Jeffrey, *The Northern Renaissance*, London: Phaidon, 2004.

Craske, Matthew. *Art in Europe, 1700-1830: A History of the Visual Arts in an Era of Unprecedented Urban Economic Growth*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

The 19th century through Modern Art:

Brettell, Richard R, *Modern Art: 1851-1929*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Harrison, Charles and Paul Wood, eds. *Art in Theory, 1900-1990: An*

Anthology of Changing Ideas. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1993.

Joachimides, Christos M. and Norman Rosenthal, eds., *The Age of Modernism: Art in the 20th Century*, Berlin: Zeitgeist-Gesellschaft e.V.; Ostfildern-Ruit [Germany]: G. Hatje; New York, N.Y.: Distributed in the US by Distributed Art Publishers, 1997.

Lucie-Smith, Edward, *Movements in Art since 1945,* New York: Thames & Hudson, 2020.

Stephen F. Eisenman et al., *Nineteenth Century Art: A Critical History*, Fifth Edition, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2019.

American Art:

Bjelajac, David. *American Art: A Cultural history.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005.

Patton, Sharon F., *African-American Art,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Pohl, Francis K. *Framing America: A Social History of American Art*. New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson, 2002.

Roth, Leland. *American Architecture, A History*. Cambride, MA; Westview Press, 2002.

Contemporary:

Cotton, Charlotte, *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2014.

Foster, Hal. et al. *Art Since 1900, 1945 to the Present*, two volume set,Third edition, Thames & Hudson, 2016.

Hopkins, David, *After Modern Art: 1945-2000,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Jones, Amelia, ed. *A Companion to Contemporary Art since 1945.* Blackwell Press, 2006.

Kocur, Zoya and Simon Leung. *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005.

Paul, Christiane. *Digital Art*, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2015.

Shanken, Ed. *Art and Electronic Media*, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2009.

Stiles, Kristine and Peter Selz, eds. *Theories and Documents in Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

Theory and Methodology:

Hatt, Michael and Charlotte Klonk. *Art History: A Critical Introduction to Its Methods*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006.

Nelson, Robert S. and Richard Shiff, eds. *Critical Terms for Art History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Pächt, Otto, *The Practices of Art History, Reflections on Method*, London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1999.

Preziosi, Donald. *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.