

**Department of Art History and Archaeology  
Graduate Student Handbook**

**MA in Modern and Contemporary Art:  
Critical and Curatorial Studies**

**2023–2024**

---



**Columbia University in the City of New York  
826 Schermerhorn  
119th Street & Amsterdam Avenue  
New York, New York 10027**

**Last update: 23 August 2023**

## Table of Contents

Preface.....	3
MA in Modern and Contemporary Art: Critical and Curatorial Studies .....	4
Course Requirements .....	6
Thesis Requirements .....	8
Full-time and Part-time Options for Structure of the Program.....	13
Language Requirement.....	15
Registration Procedures & Course Information.....	16
Advising.....	16
Registration Procedures.....	16
Registration Classifications .....	19
Academic Records.....	20
Course Categories .....	20
Grading Options .....	22
Departmental Resources.....	23
Miscellaneous Student Resources .....	24
University Resources.....	25
Outside Resources .....	27

## Preface

The Graduate Student Handbook is intended to explain the structure and requirements of the *MA in Modern and Contemporary Art* program and inform students of resources available to them, but it is not a substitute for the information provided on the website for the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/gsas/index.html>. General University policy, official program descriptions and course listings are presented in detail on the website. Where appropriate and useful, references to specific portions of the website are provided.

For additional information about University resources and services, students should obtain a copy of *FACETS: Facts About Columbia Essential to Students*; a comprehensive guide to University resources, updated yearly. FACETS may be obtained at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/facets/>.

Essential policies for the Columbia Community are available at:  
<https://www.essential-policies.columbia.edu/>

International Student and Scholars Office:  
<https://isso.columbia.edu>

# ***MA in Modern and Contemporary Art (MODA) Program in the Department of Art History and Archaeology***

---

## ***MA in Modern and Contemporary Art: Critical and Curatorial Studies***

---

The MODA program is devoted to the study of all fields in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century art history. Students can focus upon the following major fields and subfields:

### Major Field

20th & 21st Century Art and Theory

20th & 21st Century Architecture and Theory

### Subfields:

American and European, pre-1945

American and European, post-1945

African American/African/ Caribbean/African Diaspora

Latin American

Modern and Contemporary East Asian

Modern and Contemporary South Asian

Modern and Contemporary Middle Eastern

Global Contemporary

History of Photo and New Media (1900-1945)

History of Photo and New Media (post-1945)

Established in 1997, the program is founded on the conviction that art historians and critics engaged with modern and contemporary art need to understand curatorial strategies that reflect the interrelationship between new mediums and modes of artistic practice as well as changing institutional and exhibition practices and forms. Similarly, curators need to embark upon the research, organization and mounting of exhibitions with an extensive knowledge of critical theory and art history. MODA consequently offers a rigorous, scholarly, and expansive program of study, combining an intellectual foundation in modern and contemporary art and theory with exposure to the broader professional art world.

Students take advantage of the full range of expertise of the distinguished faculty in Columbia's Department of Art History and Archaeology and in the University at large, while benefiting from specific programs crafted uniquely for MODA. The course of study enables each student to develop a unique, interdisciplinary curriculum based upon individual interests and goals. At the core of the program are the first year MA Critical and Curatorial Colloquia. The Critical Colloquium is taken in the first term of study. It involves a reading and analysis of texts by major theorists and critics, an introduction to art history's different and changing interpretive methods and models, and an examination of different models of critical writing. Each year, the focus of the Colloquium alters in relation to current developments in the field, with past terms focusing upon such topics as: postmodernism, the notion of critique, critical race theory, the development of alternative historiographies, and multiple modernities. The Curatorial Colloquium is taken in the second semester of study. It introduces students to the history, theory and practice of exhibitions, the histories of curating, and recent models of the "curatorial," as well as case studies on historical exhibitions. Each colloquium is also designed to engage students with a range of professionals in the critical, scholarly, and curatorial field through a guest speaker series. Past speakers have included writers for *Artforum*, *Grey Room*, *Texte zur Kunst*, *October*, *The Guardian*, and *The New York Times*, scholars from major colleges and research university across the country (UC Berkeley, Princeton, University of London, Harvard), as well as curators and

museum professionals (i.e. The Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Met Breuer, and The Philadelphia Museum of Art) among other international and experimental venues. The Curatorial colloquium also includes visits to relevant panels, institutions, and current exhibitions.

Taking advantage of both Columbia's location and the department's close ties with area museums, galleries, and other cultural institutions, the program complements scholarly study with an introduction to the broader art world of New York City. On-campus resources such as those provided by the School of the Arts and Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, further enrich the program's multi-faceted and interdisciplinary approach. Students learn from and are exposed to a wide range of contemporary cultural practitioners, including art historians, artists, architects, critics, curators, theorists, designers and publishers, just as they build community across institutions and disciplines.

The program culminates in the preparation of an independent thesis. Students produce a written thesis based on rigorous, original research under the supervision of a faculty advisor. Students may also choose to conceive a thesis exhibition project, which can assume a variety of formats. Other opportunities include MODA Curates, a competitive program that allows select students to mount an exhibition in Columbia's Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, and the MODA Student Run Event, another competitive program where winning proposals lead to a symposium, film series or other event on a timely topic.

---

## *Course Requirements*

---

### **Coursework**

All students in the program are required to accumulate 2 Residence Units (see *Registration Classifications*) and take a total of eight graduate courses plus the MODA Thesis Prep and two sections of the *MA Thesis* course.

- All students must take for a letter grade the mandatory Critical Colloquium and Curatorial Colloquium in the first year.
- All students must take the MODA Thesis Prep course (p/f) in the Spring term prior to commencing their thesis.
- Also required are six courses at either the 8000, 6000, or 4000 level. Of these courses, no more than two should be taken for R credit. Students who wish to take 2000 (i.e. undergraduate)-level courses must get instructor approval to take them for 5000-level credit, either for a letter grade (which commonly involves additional course assignments) or for R-credit. Students may take up to two 2000-level courses at the 5000-level towards their course requirements, whether for letter-grade or R-credit. Please follow instructions under Course Registration Procedures section for how to complete registration for 2000-level courses. 3000-level courses (undergraduate seminars) are generally closed to graduate students.
- All students must take two sections of the *MA Thesis* course during their final year in the program.
- With the consent of the Director, students are encouraged to take courses in other departments in the history, culture, literature and philosophy of their area of interest.
- To ensure permission to continue in the program, students are strongly warned against the accumulation of Incompletes in their MA coursework.

### Full-time Students:

Full-time students must take all eight required graduate courses in their first year, plus MODA Thesis Prep, and two sections of the *MA Thesis* course in their second year of study in the program.

### Part-time Students:

Part-time students must take at least four of the required graduate courses during their first year, and at least two required courses in any subsequent year in the program, plus MODA Thesis Prep. Two sections of the *MA Thesis* course must be taken during the final year in the program, but no later than the fourth year.

## **Language Requirement**

Knowledge of one foreign language relevant to their program of study must be demonstrated in order to complete the MA. For specific information on fulfilling the language requirement, see the section entitled *Language Requirement* later in this handbook.

## **Areas of Concentration**

The MODA program does not have formal distribution requirements, but all students are strongly encouraged to take during their coursework at least one course outside of their geographical and/or chronological field at the 4000-level or above.

## **Problems in Curatorial Practice and Problems in Art Criticism**

In order to pursue academic credit for an internship, students should speak with their advisor about the requirements for Problems in Curatorial Practice and Problems in Art Criticism. These independent study courses are conceived as the academic complements to curatorial and critical work and thus integrate intellectual reflection with a student's practical experience outside the classroom. These courses may be pursued *after* the first semester of study. Students may only register for one that will count toward the degree's completion.

## **Completion of MA Requirements**

Full-time students must have completed all required coursework for the MA degree by the end of their first year and be given a favorable first-year evaluation to continue to the MA thesis stage. The MA thesis (and two sections of the *MA Thesis* course) must be completed within the second and final year in the program.

Part-time students must have completed all required coursework for the MA degree by the end of their third year and be given a favorable first, second-, or third-year evaluation to continue to the MA thesis stage. The MA thesis (and two sections of the *MA Thesis* course) must be completed no later than the fourth year in the program.

## **Receiving Your Degree**

Students must complete the degree application form (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/registrar>) near the end of the semester prior to the one in which they expect to fulfill the requirements for the MA. Consult <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/registrar> for specific application deadlines and degree dates. Students should submit the completed application to the Graduate Programs Manager. The MA diploma can be picked up in 205 Kent Hall; it will be mailed to the address indicated on the degree application if it is not picked up.

---

## *Thesis Requirements*

---

### **Developing Your Thesis Topic**

The thesis is the culminating project of the MODA program where students take the lead in conceiving a potential topic, locating an appropriate advisor who can guide their research, and meeting all program and advisor deadlines.

### **MODA Thesis Prep Course:**

The MODA Thesis Prep, offered in the Spring term, is a required course for MODA students who plan to commence their thesis in the Fall of the following semester. The course introduces students to the fundamentals of an MA thesis; the process of identifying and developing an appropriate topic; the distinctions between a written/scholarly, or an exhibition-based thesis; formulating a proposal; and an introduction to the research and writing process that will be undertaken during the thesis year. By the end of the semester, all students must have decided upon a thesis topic and secured an adviser, and begun to identify literature on the topic and related issues. Students must successfully pass the course in order to register for the MA thesis. The course is taken on a Pass/Fail basis.

### **The Thesis Proposal Form**

Students must submit their approved proposal, along with the signed Thesis Proposal form (found online), to the Graduate Programs Manager on the designated deadline. The Thesis Proposal form is normally due during the first four weeks of classes in the semester in which you intend to begin thesis research. Your topic and advisor are approved only when a faculty member signs the form, thereby agreeing to be your advisor and having approved your proposal. Your advisor may require that you resubmit your proposal with suggested changes before agreeing to sign this form. Note: the deadline for an approved proposal and signed form is mandatory for all students and if not met, may result in the student having to delay the start of the thesis to the following semester.

### **Guidelines for the Thesis:**

Students have two options for their thesis: a written thesis, or a thesis exhibition, the guidelines for each are as follows. The thesis presentation events (see below) are required for all MODA thesis writers, with the exception of students selected for MODA Curates.

#### **1. Written Thesis Guidelines**

##### **Content:**

The MA thesis is a substantial piece of critical writing that develops an original argument about an important issue in art and art history. It should not just summarize existing literature on a topic, but make a new contribution to the literature through research and critical thinking. You may focus, for example, on an artwork, a group of artworks, an artist, an art movement, an art institution, an aesthetic idea/theory or historiography. It is better to write in depth on a relatively narrow topic than superficially on a broad topic. The thesis is distinct from a seminar paper; however, it may expand upon an existing seminar paper with the consent of the advisor. It should develop a topic in substantial depth, show a command of the existing literature, and be organized into chapters or sections that guide the reader through its argument. While exact length of the



thesis is dependent upon the topic and selected methodology, as well as the requirements of the thesis advisor, the benchmark is about 40-80 pages (10,000 – 20,000 words) of writing, including footnotes, but *excluding* illustrations and bibliography.

**Advisor:**

Throughout the thesis year, students should meet regularly with their advisor to discuss their progress. The frequency of these meetings should be decided with the advisor, and students are responsible for scheduling them. (*Note: If a student is working with a faculty member who has agreed to be their advisor but is on leave at some point during the process, students should arrange individually with him/her on how to keep in contact.*) When appropriate, students may ask a faculty member from within or outside the department (the latter with permission of the Director) to serve as a second reader. The second reader may offer initial suggestions at the proposal stage, but they generally do not assist in the research and writing process; their central role is to read and offer feedback on the final draft and confer with the faculty advisor on the final grade.

Please note: deadlines for the thesis proposal form, the thesis presentation events, and the final deposit date are set by the department; individual research and writing deadlines are at the discretion of the faculty advisor in consult with the advisee.

**Schedule:**

Generally speaking, students should aim to complete all research and begin writing during the first semester, and devote the second semester to complete writing and revisions based upon advisor feedback. Students should set a date with their advisor for the submission of a complete rough draft of the thesis with plenty of time left for revision before the final draft is due. Students who do not arrange for a submitted draft early enough to allow appropriate time for advisor feedback and subsequent revisions risk not being able to graduate on time. It is the student's responsibility to be mindful of deadlines and time frames.

**Final draft:**

The style of the thesis need not conform to the requirements of the Columbia University PhD Dissertation Office. A consistent and recognized format must be employed, however, especially with regard to citations and footnotes. Students are advised to employ such style as is standard for art history journals and seminar papers. Illustrations should be of excellent quality, and annotated with captions. Expectations vary between advisors; therefore, it is imperative that students discuss specific formal and organizational requirements with their advisor early in the writing process.

**Submitting the thesis:**

For graduation approval, all students must submit to the Graduate Programs Manager a final bound copy of the thesis, and the MA Thesis Approval Cover Sheet signed by the advisor by the due date as determined by the Department of Art History and Archaeology.

**2. Thesis Exhibition guidelines**

In lieu of a written thesis, students may opt to curate an exhibition as their final thesis project. General requirements for all thesis exhibitions are described below, but the three options for the exhibition, with stipulations specific to each, are as follows:

### **Virtual Exhibition:**

Students may submit a virtual exhibition, either conceived on paper or as a fully executed web design. The virtual exhibition may be representative of an ideal, imagined exhibition, detailing how it would appear in a physical space; or, it may be an exhibition that is intended to exist online or in a digital format. In the case of the latter, students should detail specifics regarding the type of interface or software that would be employed, the nature of viewer interactivity, and the temporal life of the exhibition. Given the technical complexities of an online exhibition, students selecting this option should either have a level of technical expertise that would allow them to produce a quality project, or work in consult with an advisor who can lend such knowledge.

### **MODA Curates Exhibition with expanded catalogue essay:**

During the second semester of the first year, students may choose to submit an exhibition proposal to MODA Curates, a competitive program that provides second year students the opportunity to organize an exhibition in the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery in coordination with the Gallery Chief Curator and Director and staff. Exact guidelines for MODA Curates are distributed when the competition is announced. Students whose proposals are accepted and who curate an exhibition have the option of submitting their exhibition, with all its attendant components, and an expanded catalogue essay as their MA thesis, following the guidelines below. Exact requirements for this option are determined in consult with the student's advisor.

### **On or Off-Campus Exhibition:**

Students may also submit exhibition proposals to various spaces on- and off-campus. When a proposal has been accepted, precise dates are decided in consultation with the curator(s) and the venue's staff. Students can work on exhibition projects in small groups; in that case the faculty advisor determines how to evaluate each student's contribution, but each student must prepare an original catalogue essay, an installation plan, object label texts, etc. (following guidelines below).

The Department has limited funds available to put toward these exhibitions. If you wish to request funds from the Department, you must submit a detailed show description and budget, which includes all revenue and costs, even those for which you are not seeking assistance. If you are working with a group, all members' names must be on the budget proposal, though each group only needs to submit one copy. The budget must list all anticipated expenses, including: framing, shipping, supplies, installation, insurance, security, advertising and promotion, reception, and anything else specific to the demands of the show. (Note: students should consult the staff in the Art History office while devising their budgets). All materials must be attached to the Thesis Proposal Form by the designated deadline.

### **Guidelines for all Thesis Exhibitions:**

#### **Catalogue essay:**

Each option for the MA thesis exhibition includes a substantial essay (usually c 30 pages, the final length to be determined in consult with the student's advisor). The essay should be similar in scope to a catalogue essay for a museum exhibition, describing the exhibition's main theme and/or concept, and contextualizing it historically, including its contemporary relevance. Students may use the exhibition as an opportunity to engage with recent curatorial strategies, or previous

exhibitions that broach similar issues. They may also reflect upon how an exhibition intervenes in a particular understanding of modern and contemporary art, and how it contributes to recent discourse. The writing should be of highest quality, and follow appropriate bibliographic and citation standards for the humanities.

### **Installation plan/ checklist:**

In addition to the catalogue essay, each exhibition should describe the exhibition's overall size and scope, and any information about design presentation or aspirations. An installation plan, and a complete object checklist containing basic information about each included work (artist, title, dimensions, medium, date) should also be included. (For virtual exhibitions, the "installation" should describe how it will appear online). When relevant, the proposal should note mechanical or electronic interactive elements, and audio-visual components. A potential list of programs, publications, lectures or other accompanying materials are also optional for inclusion.

### **Advisor:**

Students choosing the exhibition option register for the MA thesis and must have a faculty advisor who oversees the process and sets deadlines and other benchmarks. Throughout the thesis year, students should meet regularly with their advisor to discuss their progress. The frequency of these meetings should be decided with the advisor, but students are responsible for scheduling them and for meeting any deadlines. As expectations for the MA thesis exhibition vary between advisor, it is imperative to discuss specific formal and organizational requirements with advisors early in the conceptualization, curatorial and writing process.

### **Schedule:**

MODA Curates exhibitions occur in the Spring term, and deadlines are determined by the Wallach Gallery Director and Chief Curator. Other exhibitions must take place during the final academic year of study or within three months of graduation. All students pursuing an actual or virtual exhibition should set a date with their advisor for the submission of a complete rough draft of the catalogue essay and any other materials with plenty of time left for revision before the final draft is due. Students who do not arrange for a submitted draft early enough to allow appropriate time for advisor feedback and subsequent revisions risk not being able to graduate on time.

### **Final Draft:**

For catalogue essays, students must employ such style as is standard for art history journals and seminar papers, including proper format for footnotes, bibliography, and citations. Illustrations should be of excellent quality and contain appropriate captions.

### **Submitting the thesis:**

For graduation approval, all students must submit to the Graduate Programs Manager a final bound copy of the thesis exhibition, including all written and visual materials, and the MA Thesis Approval Cover Sheet signed by the advisor by the due date as determined by the Department of Art History and Archaeology.

### **Thesis Presentation Event:**

All the MA thesis writers are required to participate in the joint MA and MODA thesis event during their thesis year. The event includes 2 parts: part 1 (theses-in-progress) takes place towards the end of the fall semester; part 2 (final theses) takes place towards the end of the spring semester.

The event includes 2 parts:

- Part 1: theses-in-progress

Part 1 takes place towards the end of the Fall semester. Each student must give a 10-minute formal presentation (i.e., read a paper) of his/her thesis-in-progress. Each presentation is followed by 5 minutes of discussion/feedback. The presentation must include:

- an overview of the topic;
- a provisional thesis statement;
- a review of the conducted research;
- a description of the thesis structure (i.e., the different chapters/sections);
- and an outline of each chapter/section.

The presentation should be accompanied by images. A provisional title should be emailed to the MODA Director the week before the event.

- Part 2: final theses

Part 2 takes place towards the end of the Spring semester. As in part 1, each student must give a 10-minute formal presentation accompanied by images. However, it should not be a mere repetition of the first presentation. Instead, it should emphasize how the research and argument have developed since the Fall and present conclusions. Each presentation is followed by 5 minutes of discussion. The thesis final title should be emailed to the MODA Director the week before the event.

MODA students who are not yet at the thesis stage are required to attend both parts of the thesis presentation event, in anticipation of their own thesis year.

## ***Full-time and Part-time Options for Structure of the Program***

For all students (full-time and part-time) 10 courses, plus MODA Thesis Prep, and the MA thesis (2 semesters) are required for graduation. Two residence units are required for the Master of Arts Degree. Please see *Registration Classifications* later in this handbook.

Students may choose from the following approved options to progress through and complete the program.

### **For full-time students:**

<b>Semester 1</b> 1 Full-Time Residence Unit	<b>Semester 2</b> 1 Full-Time Residence Unit	<b>Semester 3</b> 1 Extended Residence Unit	<b>Semester 4</b> 1 Extended Residence Unit
Critical Colloquium  Lecture  Lecture or Seminar  Lecture or Seminar	Curatorial Colloquium  MODA Thesis Prep  Lecture  Lecture or Seminar  Lecture or Seminar	MA Thesis I: Research  Lecture or Seminar (optional)	MA Thesis II: Writing  Lecture or Seminar (optional)

### **For part-time students choosing the 2-year option:**

<b>Semester 1</b> 0.5 Residence Unit	<b>Semester 2</b> 0.5 Residence Unit	<b>Semester 3</b> 0.5 Residence Unit	<b>Semester 4</b> 0.5 Residence Unit
Critical Colloquium  Lecture  Lecture or Seminar	Curatorial Colloquium  MODA Thesis Prep  Lecture or Seminar	MA Thesis I: Research  Lecture or Seminar  Lecture or Seminar	MA Thesis II: Writing  Lecture or Seminar

**For part-time students choosing the 3-year option:**

<b>Semester 1</b> 0.5 Residence Unit <i>(or 0.25 Residence Unit)</i>	<b>Semester 2</b> 0.5 Residence Unit <i>(or 0.25 Residence Unit)</i>	<b>Semester 3</b> 0.25 Residence Unit <i>(or 0.5 Residence Unit)</i>	<b>Semester 4</b> 0.25 Residence Unit <i>(or 0.5 Residence Unit)</i>	<b>Semester 5</b> 0.25 Residence Unit	<b>Semester 6</b> 0.25 Residence Unit
Critical Colloquium	Curatorial Colloquium	Lecture or Seminar	Lecture or Seminar	MA Thesis I: Research	MA Thesis II: Writing
Lecture or Seminar	Lecture or Seminar	Lecture or Seminar	MODA Thesis Prep	Lecture or Seminar	

**For part-time students (4-year option):**

<b>Semester 1</b> 0.25 Residence Unit	<b>Semester 2</b> 0.25 Residence Unit	<b>Semester 3</b> 0.25 Residence Unit	<b>Semester 4</b> 0.25 Residence Unit	<b>Semester 5</b> 0.25 Residence Unit	<b>Semester 6</b> 0.25 Residence Unit	<b>Semester 7</b> 0.25 Residence Unit	<b>Semester 8</b> 0.25 Residence Unit
Critical Colloquium	Curatorial Colloquium	Lecture or Seminar	Lecture or Seminar	Lecture or Seminar	MODA Thesis Prep	MA Thesis I Research	MA Thesis II: Writing
Lecture or Seminar	Lecture or Seminar					Lecture or Seminar	

---

## *Language Requirement*

---

All programs in the Department of Art History and Archaeology require proficiency in languages relevant to their subject area. Students should consult with their advisors regarding languages required for their field at the beginning of their first year.

### **Language Examinations**

Language exams are taken in the respective language Departments at Columbia University. These Departments offer regularly scheduled language exams (schedules are available on their websites) and *students are responsible for signing up for a language exam directly with the relevant Department*. Students should ensure that the language exam they sign up for will satisfy the language requirement for graduate students. For questions, consult the Graduate Programs Manager.

### **Students may also complete one of the following two options:**

#### **1. Native Speaker Language Exemption**

International students who follow a program related to their native culture may request exemption from one of the language requirements. This process typically involves an interview with a language program director or faculty member who can attest to a student's fluency. Please consult the Graduate Programs Manager and the MODA Program Director.

#### **2. The Course Option**

In lieu of a proficiency exam, students can also take language courses to fulfill language requirements. Students must successfully earn a passing grade at the Intermediate II level to demonstrate proficiency.

A passing grade in summer intensive courses offered through Columbia's Paris and Venice programs and the School of Professional Studies Summer Sessions will also satisfy language requirements.

Some language departments offer Rapid Reading and Translation or Accelerated Reading courses. These courses focus more on translation, as opposed to speaking, listening, and writing. Practices vary by language department, but students must earn an A-grade (A-, A, or A+) in these courses to count towards the degree requirements. If a student earns a lower grade, the student must take the language department's proficiency exam. Please consult the Graduate Programs Manager for more details.

*\*\*Please note that language courses for the requirement do not count as coursework for the degree.*

#### **Non-native English speakers**

For information about the resources of the American Language Program (ALP) and Writing Center please refer to the University Resources section of the handbook.

# Registration Procedures & Course Information

---

## *Advising*

---

Upon entrance to the program, students should consult with the Director of MODA, who is responsible for approving and supervising students' individual programs and completion of requirements. Because of the importance of making appropriate and well-informed decisions, it is vital for students to keep in communication with the Director, as well as their thesis advisor during the second year of the program. Students must independently seek out a faculty member to act as their thesis advisor during the second term of the first year in order to ensure timely completion of their thesis and degree. Thesis advisors are typically selected from the full-time modern and contemporary faculty (including the MODA Director) and appropriate part-time faculty, but students should not be limited in their selection and rather seek out faculty whose expertise will best contribute to their research. Specific questions about administration details regarding Residence Units and Registration should be directed to the Graduate Programs Manager.

## *Registration Procedures*

---

There are currently three different periods during which students may register for courses and registration status. Registration for incoming GSAS students usually occurs in late August/early September.

- Advance registration for continuing students takes place in the middle of April for the Fall semester and at the end of November for the Spring semester.
- Normal Registration takes place during a three-day period at the beginning of each semester.
- Late Registration (Change of Program period) occurs during the first two weeks of class (the Registrar may assess a late fee during this period if registering for tuition category).

### **Online course registration procedures**

- Obtain necessary forms including: courses that require special permission, and the latest schedule of departmental course offerings on the Department's website.
- Consult with primary advisor to determine the state of the student's academic progress within the program. Reminder: obtain advisor's approval of your course selection.
- Consult the on-line Directory of Classes for five-digit registration call numbers and course numbers necessary for the on-line registration process, and/or the Registration Adjustment Form. Instructor approval for all undergraduate courses is required (see below).
- Determine registration appointments by logging on to SSOL at <https://ssol.columbia.edu/>.
- After completing the above, students may register on-line by logging on to their SSOL at <https://ssol.columbia.edu/> during their registration appointments.

**Please note that although registration is conducted on-line, students must receive full approval from their advisor for their program.**



**For complete instructions on how to register on SSOL and more details on MA student registration, please consult the GSAS website: <https://gsas.columbia.edu/student-guide/policy-handbook/ma-registration> and the Office of the Registrar website: <https://www.registrar.columbia.edu/content/registering-classes-and-appointment-times>.**

### **Non-online course registration procedures;**

For some courses, students cannot automatically register online. These courses include:

- **Core Graduate Courses; the Critical and Curatorial Colloquia.** Students cannot register themselves for the two required core graduate courses. They must add their name to the course waitlist through SSOL and Columbia will then register them.

- **Bridge and graduate seminars.** Admission to bridge (4000-level) and graduate seminars (8000-level) is through application only. Applications are usually due in August for the fall semester and December for the spring semester. Forms for each seminar can be found on the Department's website under "Courses." After review of the seminar applications, accepted students will receive an email from the Graduate Programs Manager, asking them to add their name to the seminar waitlist through SSOL if they still wish to enroll. At that point, Columbia will register students.

- **2000-level lectures taken at the 5000-level.** Students who wish to take a 2000-level lecture must get the instructor's approval to take it at the 5000-level, either for a letter grade (which commonly involves additional course assignments) or for R-credit. Once approval is given, students must have the instructor sign the form available on the Department's website at: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/arthistory/graduate/planning-sheets-and-forms.html>. The signed form should be submitted to the Graduate Programs Manager. Columbia will then process the 5000-level registration. **Students should not register for 2000-level courses online.**

- **Undergraduate seminars (3000-level) and independent research (9000-level).** Please consult with the Graduate Programs Manager.

- For **cross-registration** between Columbia schools, students should complete the Registration Adjustment Form and bring it 205 Kent Hall . The form is available at: <https://registrar.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/reg-adjustment.pdf>.

Additional information about registration procedures is available at:  
<http://registrar.columbia.edu/content/registration-and-enrollment#registering>

Questions about registration procedures should be directed to the Graduate Programs Manager.

### **Adding and Dropping Courses after Registration**

Once students are registered, there is the Change of Program period during which they may add and/or drop courses without academic or financial penalty. Add/Drop period dates and deadlines are included in the current academic calendar. Additional questions related to adding and dropping should be directed to the Office of the Registrar, 205 Kent Hall.

## Receiving Grades

Students may obtain their grades by logging on to their SSOL at <https://ssol.columbia.edu/>. Grades are accessible through SSOL within two days after the professor informs the registrar of the final grades. Grades are obtained by these means only.

## R-credit

Up to two courses may be taken for R-credit. Before electing to take a course for R-credit, students should first consult the instructor of the course to obtain permission to take it for R-credit, and discuss the requirements for earning the R grade at the beginning of the semester. Ideally, these requirements should be put in writing, as in an e-mail.

Requests for R are handled directly between students and instructors any time from the start of the semester until the eleventh week of classes (see the Academic Calendar for the precise deadlines each term).

Students should discuss the R credit option with the instructor, and obtain written confirmation of the agreement, typically via email. Instructors will be able to select the R at the end of the semester, when submitting grades.

Courses taken for R-credit are applied toward the calculation of Residence Units for billing purposes in the same way as courses taken for a letter grade. Additional information about R-credit is available at: <https://gsas.columbia.edu/student-guide/policy-handbook/grading-system#r>.

## Incompletes

Accumulation of Incompletes is strongly discouraged. However, occasionally students who have met all the requirements for a course but need additional time to finish a major research project for exceptional reasons satisfactory to the instructor may request an Incomplete. *In any event, students are strongly encouraged to resolve all Incompletes as soon as possible as they may affect their academic standing, as explained here:*

<https://gsas.columbia.edu/student-guide/policy-handbook/good-standing>.

For a course in the Arts and Sciences, if the student does not submit the outstanding work by the deadline specified below, the mark of IN will be changed to an F, which will not be subject to change at a later date.

For Incompletes earned in the fall semester, the deadline for students to submit their outstanding work is the June 30 that immediately follows. For Incompletes earned in the spring semester or summer term, the deadline for students to submit their outstanding work is the December 30 that immediately follows. Departments and instructors may set an earlier deadline for completion of the outstanding work; in such cases, that deadline will supersede the GSAS deadline. Leaves of absence approved by GSAS stop the clock on Incomplete deadlines.

Additional information about Incompletes is available at:  
<https://gsas.columbia.edu/student-guide/policy-handbook/grading-system>

---

## *Registration Classifications*

---

### **Residence Unit (RU)**

In order to graduate, all students must accumulate two Residence Units (RUs), per guidelines set by GSAS. A Residence Unit (RU) is the basic classification of registration for students who are currently enrolled in courses at the University. Regardless of their actual course load, students are required to register for a full RU, which classifies student as full-time for the duration of the semester

A student registered for **1 RU** in any given semester may take up to 20 course credits (unless specific courses require additional fees).

A student registered for  $\frac{1}{2}$  **RU** in any given semester may take up to three courses. A student registered for  $\frac{1}{4}$  **RU** may take up to two courses.

**NB: Resident units, credit and course allotments are set by GSAS and cannot be altered by the department.**

### **Extended Residence (ER)**

MA students who have completed the required **2 RUs** but still have to fulfill additional coursework must register for Extended Residence. Students in ER are allowed to take up to four classes. During the thesis year, full-time students must register for two terms of ER.

### **Continuous Registration Policy**

All students pursuing a degree in GSAS must be continuously registered, meaning that they must register every fall and spring with the University in order to continue their program. Students who fail to register but wish to continue with the program will be charged a re-admission fee. This policy also applies to students who have withdrawn from the program but have worked on any degree requirements, including dissertation research.

**This policy maintains even when students are not taking courses and/or are preparing their theses.**

### **Leaves of Absence & Withdrawal**

A leave of absence allows a student who must interrupt his or her studies for a compelling reason—for example, a sustained medical condition that prevents attendance or a personal matter requiring absence from campus—to be exempt from the Continuous Registration requirement. Information on leaves of absence is available at: <https://gsas.columbia.edu/student-guide/policy-handbook/leaves-absence-withdrawals-and-reinstatement/leaves-absence>

Students who **withdraw** from the program in the event of an emergency may be reinstated by submitting a form well before the beginning of the semester in which they intend to return. Students will need the full support of one faculty member who will inform the Director of Graduate Studies that they will take on advisement/sponsorship of the student.

Note that students who withdraw are not registered at the University for that time period and may not use University facilities (including the libraries and computer labs) and do not receive health insurance, housing or any other services from the University.

Students who withdraw when there is no emergency will need to reapply to the program.

---

## *Academic Records*

---

### **The Office of the University Registrar**

The Office of the University Registrar keeps official University records of students, including coursework, registration status, degrees conferred, and addresses. Students can access this information by logging on to their SSOL at <https://ssol.columbia.edu/>. Information listed on SSOL does not constitute official documentation.

Most University offices utilize addresses and telephone numbers listed on SSOL. Students should therefore inform both the Department **and** the Registrar's Office of any address and telephone changes. Addresses and phone numbers may be changed on SSOL, but the Department should be informed in person or in writing.

Students may obtain their grades and registration through SSOL. This requires a personal identification number (PIN), which is assigned by the Registrar during student's first semester of coursework.

Official transcripts may be obtained from the Transcript Office in 205 Kent Hall (phone # 854-3056). Transcripts may also be ordered by mail (see <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/registrar/>) or on-line through SSOL.

*Proof of Enrollment*, or *Academic Certification*, which is often required for loan purposes, may be obtained from the Registrar's office in 205 Kent, or ordered through SSOL.

---

## *Course Categories*

---

### **2000-Level and 3000-Level Courses: Undergraduate Lectures and Undergraduate Seminars**

2000-level courses are undergraduate lectures and 3000-level courses are undergraduate seminars. They tend to be rather general and introductory. Undergraduate lectures (2000-level) may be open to graduate students (see Course Requirements earlier in this handbook), while undergraduate seminars (3000-level) are generally closed to graduate students. MA students wishing to enroll in undergraduate seminars should contact the instructor. If permission is granted, the Graduate Programs Manager must be informed.

### **4000-Level Courses: Bridge Lectures and Bridge Seminars**

4000-level courses are either bridge lectures or bridge seminars. They are intended for mixed constituencies of graduate students and advanced undergraduate students. Contribution to a bridge lecture may not be as demanding as in a bridge seminar, although they do require significant term papers and/or examinations.

### **5000-Level Courses: MA Only Courses**

5000-level courses are for MA students only. Students in the MODA Program are required to take the following three 5000-level courses: the MODA Critical Colloquium, the MODA Curatorial Colloquium, and the MODA Thesis Prep (see Course Requirements earlier in this handbook)

### **6000-Level Courses: Graduate Lectures**

6000-level courses are primarily for graduate students. Contribution to a graduate lecture may not be as demanding as in a graduate seminar, although they do require significant term papers and/or examinations.

### **8000-Level Courses: Graduate Seminars**

Graduate seminars are more intensive and demand more of students. Enrollment in seminars is limited. All seminars include discussion and research papers by students. Requirements will vary, but students should expect to complete a substantial research project to receive credit.

### **Independent Research**

Independent research courses, while uncommon, may be taken by students seeking to work on specific research projects or art historical problems. Independent research courses must be supervised and graded by a faculty member.

Independent research courses are recorded at the 9000 level and count as seminars toward the degree program.

- The G8010 independent research course may function as a tutorial in a specific area not otherwise covered by courses in a given semester. Students may use such courses to explore a field and/or the state of research or a specific topic, under the supervision of a faculty member.
- The MODA program offers advanced research courses in specific subject areas (e.g., G8727 “Problems in Curating”), which are supervised by faculty in the relevant program. These courses will be entered into the system once the department staff is requested to do so by the student or faculty member.
- Students may coordinate other independent research courses directly with the faculty member with whom they wish to study.
- Students are required to obtain instructor approval in order to register for independent research courses.

---

## *Grading Options*

---

There are two basic types of course credit in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

### **Letter Grade**

Letter Grade is the default credit classification for taking a course. Students taking a class for a Letter Grade are required to do all work described in the course syllabus and meet attendance policies. Students are assigned a qualitative letter grade once all requirements for the course are completed.

### **R-Credit**

R-Credit (Registration Credit) allows a student to attend a lecture or seminar and participate in class without being assigned a qualitative grade. Students are expected to meet attendance requirements for the class and are given the registration grade of "R" to indicate satisfactory completion. Should there be written assignments required by an individual instructor, students should keep in mind that such work will not receive a letter grade and should not take time away from letter-credit courses to prepare such assignments. However, rules for Incompletes apply even to R-credit courses. Seminars generally may not be taken for R grade, with exceptions (consult the faculty and Director).

- Students need to inform their instructor at the start of the semester if they intend to take a course for R-credit. At this time, students should discuss any specific assignments the instructor may have in lieu for regular Letter Grade requirements.
- Students registering for a course for R-credit must get the instructor to sign a form indicating that he or she approved the student registering for the course for R-credit. Only two approved R-credit courses are counted toward a student's program, as dictated by their programs' requirements.
- Students must submit the required paperwork for R-credit within the same semester of the class being taken for R-credit. Courses previously taken cannot be retroactively switched to R-credit.

For more information on R-Credit, see Course Registration Procedures earlier in this handbook.

---

## *Departmental Resources*

---

### **Department Office**

The Department office, located in 826 Schermerhorn Hall, includes the offices of the Chair, the Departmental Administrator, the Graduate Programs Manager, the Undergraduate Program Coordinator, and the Administrative Manager. There is also an adjoining conference room where departmental meetings take place. 653C Schermerhorn Extension includes the offices of the Business Manager and Financial Coordinator.

Faculty mailboxes are located in the Departmental Office.

The Graduate Programs Manager (854-4507) coordinates activities such as graduate student record keeping; language examinations; degree certification; admissions; fellowship application, and graduate registration

### **The Media Center**

The Media Center, located in 825 Schermerhorn Hall, supports the visual imaging needs of the Department. Contact the Media Center (854-3044) for borrowing policy and procedures.

### **Wallach Art Gallery**

The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery is located at the Lenfest Center for the Arts, 615 West 129th Street, between Broadway and the Hudson River on 125<sup>th</sup> Street (854-7288). Inaugurated in 1986, and relocated to the new Lenfest Center in 2016, the Wallach serves as a platform for critically acclaimed exhibitions, a dynamic range of programming, and publications that contribute to scholarship. Exhibitions are planned and curated by faculty and graduate students, as well as outside guest curators; each year, it hosts exhibitions by MODA students selected in the competitive MODA Curates program. The Gallery also sponsors public lectures and symposia in conjunction with its exhibitions.

Day-to-day operations of the Gallery are the responsibility of the Gallery Director and Chief Curator, Betti-Sue Hertz, who is assisted by a small professional staff and graduate student interns. Some students in the Department of Art History and Archaeology intend to pursue museum or gallery careers, and for them to participate in the operation of the Gallery provides an opportunity to gain professional experience. Support staff include work-study students. MODA students who are interested in working or pursuing other involvement with the Wallach, including serving as student representative on the Steering Committee, should contact Betti-Sue Hertz.

For more information, please visit: <https://wallach.columbia.edu/>

### **Fora**

Three faculty Fora offer occasional lectures and receptions to bring outside scholars to campus and create a community of scholars in the metropolitan area. Consult the Departmental website for upcoming events of the *Robert Branner Forum* (Medieval Art and Architecture), the *Howard Hibbard Forum* (Renaissance and Baroque Art and Architecture), and the *Collins/Kaufmann Forum* (Modern Architecture.). In addition, the student-run Works In Progress (WiP) is a yearly symposium jointly organized by students in the MODA Program, the PhD Program in Art History and MA Program in Visual Arts.

---

## *Miscellaneous Student Resources*

---

### **AHAGA (Art History and Archaeology Graduate Association)**

The purpose of AHAGA is to unite and strengthen the Art History and Archaeology graduate community. The Council serves as a resource for AHAGA members by organizing networks for peer support, building and sustaining streamlined communication among students, faculty, and staff, and maintaining and disseminating institutional memory.

### **Graduate Student Lounge**

The Graduate Student Lounge in the Stronach Center is available for quiet study, meeting, and relaxation for members of the Department. This room is frequently used for departmental receptions and houses graduate student folders and bulletin boards. The lounge is located on the east end of the eighth floor of Schermerhorn Hall, is open to students during regular Department Office Hours.

### **E-Mail**

Graduate Students receive departmental and general information via their Columbia University emails. Please remember to notify the Graduate Programs Manager of any address change.

### **Bulletin Boards and Display Cases**

Bulletin boards in the hallway outside the Department office announce the upcoming University and Department sponsored lectures, events, etc., events held in New York, as well as internship and study abroad postings. A bulletin board in the office posts announcements received by the Department of current art historical, archaeological, and curatorial job searches.



---

## *University Resources*

---

### **Libraries**

Columbia University is among the nation's top 10 largest academic library systems, with holdings of over 7.5 million volumes, 67,400 currently received serial titles and archives, manuscripts, microfilms, videos, and a growing number of electronic resources. The collections are organized into 22 libraries, each generally supporting a specific academic or professional discipline.

Library services, including borrowing privileges, are available to all currently registered students, faculty and staff. Reading privileges are available to alumni. Privileges are also available to spouses and domestic partners of students. Contact the Library Information Office (LIO) in 201 Butler Hall (212-854-2271.)

Library items obtained since 1981 are catalogued on CLIO, an on-line service. CLIO can be accessed, browsed, and searched from on and off-campus through library terminals or Columbia's home page (click on Libraries.) Information on access and use of CLIO is available in all libraries.

For more information on library services and resources, contact the Library Information Office (LIO) in 201 Butler Hall (212-854-2271) (source: FACETS).

### **Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library**

Avery Library (854-3501) collects books and periodicals in architecture, historic preservation, art history, painting, sculpture, graphic arts, decorative arts, et al. Most of these materials are non-circulating and must be used within the library. The library contains over 250,000 volumes and receives 1500 periodicals. The drawing and manuscript collection holds over 400,000 drawing and original records. (source: FACETS).

### **Columbia University Information Technology (CUIT)**

CUIT is the University office for academic-related computer usage, located in 102 Philosophy Hall (854-1919, ext. 3). This office provides e-mail account creation, consulting for computer questions, and distributes "shareware" software for off-campus access to Columbia-net as well as virus protection programs for both PCs and Macintoshes. Basic e-mail accounts are free to registered students and provide full access to internet resources; email accounts can be set up on-line by visiting the *Computing and Email* link on the Columbia home page.

CUIT conducts workshops in various topics of computer and software use which are free and open to the university community. Information regarding on-campus student computer labs, account creation, and policies is described in the *GSAS Bulletin*. For additional information and scheduling, contact the CUIT Computer Support Center, which can be reached through the Columbia University web page.

### **Columbia Computing System and the Internet**

The University has a large central computing system which provides E-mail, online university information, and access to the Internet. The system may be accessed by on-campus terminals and via modem from off-campus. For more information, contact the CUIT Computer Support Center, 102 Philosophy Hall.

The Department has a homepage on the Columbia University website listing departmental events, news, and information (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/arthistory/>).

### **Discounts on Computer Purchases**

Columbia University has special arrangements with Dell and Apple for computer purchases. In order to take advantage of the discounts offered by these companies, students will need to meet with the Department's Financial Coordinator.

### **American Language Program**

The American Language Program (ALP) provides wide-ranging, high-quality academic courses in English as a Second Language. Founded in 1911, ALP is one of the oldest English-as-a-Second-Language programs in the United States, offering a carefully integrated sequence of courses to students who wish to improve their command of English. For more information, please see <https://sps.columbia.edu/academics/english-language-programs/american-language-program>

### **Writing Center**

The Writing Center is open to any person directly affiliated with Columbia University. The Center's approach is to attend to both the short-term goal of improved papers and the long-term goal of improved writing, critical thinking, and reading skills. For more information, please see <https://www.college.columbia.edu/core/uwp/writing-center>

### **Career Development: GSAS Compass**

GSAS Compass is a new initiative in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences that offers a variety of career development services tailored to master's and doctoral students, including career development workshops, employer events, networking opportunities, and one-on-one advising. For more information, please visit: <https://gsas.columbia.edu/graduate-life/career-development>

### **International Students and Scholars Office**

The International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) serves the international community at Columbia University and provides advisory and documentation services and information on visas, employment travel, and tax-filing obligations. The ISSO is the most reliable source of information about the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of State (DOS) regulations that govern students studying in the United States. Questions regarding visa policies and status, as well as other issues involving international study should be directed to the ISSO (not the Art History office or staff).

For the up-to-date information and guidance on visa, CPT, OPT, and other related issues, students are strongly encouraged to contact ISSO. For more information, please see <https://isso.columbia.edu/>

---

## *Outside Resources*

---

The many collections and libraries of New York City provide opportunities for further study and research. Students have free access to most of these. In several, such as the Watson Library of the Metropolitan Museum, the Frick Art Reference Library, the Museum of Modern Art, and the New York Historical Society, special facilities are available for students.

The Department often offers courses of instruction by adjunct professors who are also museum curators. These seminars frequently meet at museums to allow students the opportunity to study collections first-hand.

NYC's wealth of commercial and non-profit galleries offer an ever-changing series of exhibitions in which the works of the most recent artists, as well as the more established ones, can be seen. Various private collections in New York, through the courtesy of their owners, are often made accessible to students under the guidance of their instructors.

## Appendix A: Part-time Graduate Work Guidelines

**If you have been offered a position—even if it’s outside the Art History Department—please consult with the Administrative Manager or the Director of Academic Administration and Finance, before you accept the position and start working. We need to make sure that funds are available, you have the correct work authorization, and you are set up correctly in the payroll system to get paid on time.**

Visa Holders: The allowable hours may vary for Student Visa Holders, please confirm with the International Students and Scholars Office about the hours you are allowed to work.

- ❖ Full-time MA and PhD students are eligible to work an average of 20 hours/week during the academic year. If you are a PhD student on an instructional appointment (i.e. Teaching Fellowship) you may not spend more than 20 hours/ week on responsibilities associated with your fellowship *and* those associated with any other activity within or outside Columbia for which you are compensated. If you hold a Dissertation Fellowship or a first-year Dean’s Fellowship (which have no service responsibilities) you may spend up to ten hours per week on non-fellowship activities.

Graduate student part-time work can be administrative (getting books from library, copying and scanning, organizing payments etc.) or research-related (field-specific research, compiling bibliography, corresponding with museums, etc.) In the Department of Art History and Archaeology compensation starts at \$20/hour and is commensurate with skills and experience.

- ❖ Full-time MA students who are US citizens or permanent residents may be eligible for Federal Work Study. Interested MA students must contact GSAS Office of Financial Aid to determine eligibility, and must complete additional documents with the Federal Work Study Office. In the Department of Art History and Archaeology Work Study compensation starts at \$15/hour and is commensurate with skills and experience.
- ❖ During break periods –winter break, spring break, and summer break—students on appointment may work a maximum of 20 hours/week. Short term hires (i.e. Casuals and Work Study) may be eligible to work more hours. Please see the Administrative Manager or the Director of Academic Administration and Finance for more information.
- ❖ The Department encourages faculty supervisors and graduate student hires to prepare a memo of understanding with each other before starting work. This should include a brief description of the responsibilities, pay rate, and timeline, and periodic check-ins. The Administrative Manager or the Director of Academic Administration and Finance are happy to help with this.

### Helpful Links:

<https://gsas.columbia.edu/student-guide/teaching/teaching-and-research-appointments>

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa/handbook/studentofficers.html>

<https://isso.columbia.edu/content/campus-work-f-and-j-students>

<https://humanresources.columbia.edu/content/student-casual-employees>

<https://sfs.columbia.edu/content/work-study-overview>