

**DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY**  
**UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK, 2023–24**

A major or concentration in the Department of Art History and Archaeology lays the basis for pursuing a variety of careers beyond the scholarly pursuit of the history of art, museum work, or work in the commercial art world of galleries and auction houses. Art history majors have gone on to graduate education and careers in law, medicine, business, and academe, among others. Critical study teaches the student not only the particulars of the art, archaeology, and architecture under study, but also the broader analytical and synthetic skills needed for mature, reasoned, and inventive solutions to broad-based questions in any field, with particular emphasis on analysis of our visual culture. As one of the largest art history departments in the world, the Columbia–Barnard art history faculty includes specialists in the art and architecture of an impressive spectrum of cultures and geographies from the Ancient Near East to Contemporary Global Art History. The curriculum offers course work in the Pre-Columbian New World; in the art and architecture of the Africa, of the Indian Subcontinent, of China, of Japan; in addition to many aspects of the art and architecture of North America and Europe, including African-American and diasporic art, and the art of First Nations in the Americas. Methodological approaches offered by the curriculum are equally diverse, including courses which explicitly address issues of gender and race. Several members of the faculty have extensive curatorial experience and regularly offer courses which comprise instruction in the history of collecting, display, and museum practices.

The visual study of the world around us continues to increase in importance as global communication becomes most often based in visual media. Understanding the sources and significance of images that form a common language of communication is crucial for anyone who aspires to play an active part in society. The goal of the major and concentration programs offered by the Department of Art History and Archaeology is to explore the history of art, architecture, and archaeology across broad historical, cultural, geographic, and methodological spectrums. Department courses take advantage of the extraordinary cultural resources of New York City and often involve museum assignments and trips to local monuments.

The department offers three majors and two concentrations. This handbook is intended as a reference to help guide you through departmental policies and procedures. The Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Barry Bergdoll, and the Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Emily Benjamin, are also available to answer questions and support students as they make their way through the major and concentration.

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## **ADVISING**

Students are encouraged to contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the Undergraduate Program Coordinator for advice regarding the major. The department does not assign individual advisors to majors and concentrators.

Both the DUS and the Undergraduate Program Coordinator can provide general advice regarding the major or concentration, the field of art history, and internship and career opportunities in the arts. The DUS makes the final decisions on all matters concerning the major or concentration. Students must contact the DUS to approve the following (see **TRANSFER AND STUDY ABROAD CREDIT** for more details):

- Transfer credit for courses taken at other colleges or universities
- Study abroad credit from non-Columbia programs
- Credit for courses taken in other Columbia departments

For questions regarding degree progress, course planning, and major/concentration requirements, students should speak with the Undergraduate Program Coordinator. While the department does not require formal approval of major or concentration requirement forms, students are highly encouraged to meet with the Undergraduate Program Coordinator to discuss their progress within the department.

It is particularly important to speak with the Undergraduate Program Coordinator about your major or concentration progress at any of the following times:

- Just before or after officially declaring a major or concentration
- If you are declaring a double major or concentration
- Before going on a study abroad program
- At the beginning of your final year of coursework

### **Department Email Listserv**

The department regularly communicates with majors and concentrators via its undergraduate listserv. This is a critical source of information for majors and concentrators. Emails are sent regarding events, course announcements, policy changes, and job/internship opportunities. While the list is updated after each major declaration period, if you aren't getting emails and would like to, please email the Undergraduate Program Coordinator and request to be added.

## MAJOR AND CONCENTRATION REQUIREMENTS

The department offers three majors and two concentrations. The required coursework is listed below.

Students are encouraged to refer to the Field Distribution Chart, posted on the department website, to develop a plan for completing their requirements. Keep in mind that chronological divisions for some courses are approximate. In case of ambiguities about the eligibility of a course to fulfill a given requirement, please contact the Undergraduate Program Coordinator or the DUS.

Students should track their progress through the major or concentration by using the degree planning worksheets, also available on the department website.

### Major in Art History (AHIS)

- AHIS UN3000 *Majors Colloquium: Introduction to the Literature and Methods of Art History*  
OR AHIS UN3007 *Majors Colloquium: Introduction to the Literature and Methods of Architectural History*

- Seven lecture courses in art history

Students must take at least one course in three of four historical periods:

- Ancient (pre-400 CE/AD)
- 400-1400
- 1400-1700
- 1700-present

Students must take an additional two courses, covering two of five world regions:

- Africa
- Asia
- Europe/North America/Australia
- Latin America
- Middle East

The remaining two courses are the student's choice.

- Two seminars in art history
- One studio course in the visual arts or architecture (which may be taken Pass/Fail)

### Combined Major in Art History and Visual Arts (AHVA)

- AHIS UN3000 *Majors Colloquium: Introduction to the Literature and Methods of Art History*  
OR AHIS UN3007 *Majors Colloquium: Introduction to the Literature and Methods of Architectural History*

- Seven lecture courses in art history

Students must take at least one course in three of four historical periods:

- Ancient (pre-400 CE/AD)
- 400-1400
- 1400-1700
- 1700-present

Students must take an additional two courses, covering two of five world regions:

- Africa
- Asia
- Europe, North America, Australia
- Latin America
- Middle East

The remaining two courses are the student's choice.

- 21 points in Visual Arts covering: VIAR UN1000 *Basic Drawing* (3 points); VIAR UN2200 *Ceramics I* or VIAR UN2300 *Sculpture I* (3 points); and five additional VIAR 3-point studio courses (15 points)
- Either one seminar in the Department of Art History and Archaeology, or a senior project in Visual Arts (pending approval by the Visual Arts Department)

*The combined major requires the completion of sixteen or seventeen courses. It is recommended that students interested in this major begin work toward the requirements in their sophomore year.*

*Students electing the combined major should speak with the DUS or Undergraduate Program Coordinator in art history, as well as with the DUS of the Visual Arts Department.*

#### **Major in the History and Theory of Architecture (HTAC)**

- AHIS UN3000 *Majors Colloquium: Introduction to the Literature and Methods of Art History* OR AHIS UN3007 *Majors Colloquium: Introduction to the Literature and Methods of Architectural History*
- AHIS UN1007 *Introduction to the History of Architecture*
- Six additional lecture courses in art history, at least three of which must focus on architectural history

Students must take at least one course in three of four historical periods:

- Ancient (pre-400 CE/AD)
- 400-1400
- 1400-1700
- 1700-present

Students must take an additional course, covering one of four world regions:

- Africa
- Asia
- Latin America
- Middle East

The remaining two courses are the student's choice.

- Two seminars in art or architectural history
- ARCH UN1020 *Introduction to Architectural Design and Visual Culture* (which may be taken Pass/Fail)

*Courses in the Department of Architecture may substitute for up to two courses in art history, with prior approval of the DUS.*

### **Concentration in Art History**

- Seven lecture courses in art history

Students must take at least one course in three of four historical periods:

- Ancient (pre-400 CE/AD)
- 400-1400
- 1400-1700
- 1700-present

Students must take an additional two courses, covering two of five world regions:

- Africa
- Asia
- Europe, North America, Australia
- Latin America
- Middle East

The remaining two courses are the student's choice.

### **Concentration in the History and Theory of Architecture**

- AHIS UN1007 *Introduction to the History of Architecture*
- Six additional lecture courses in art history, at least three of which must focus on architectural history

Students must take at least one course in three of four historical periods:

- Ancient (pre-400 CE/AD)
- 400-1400
- 1400-1700
- 1700-present

Students must take an additional course, covering one of four world regions:

- Africa
- Asia
- Latin America
- Middle East

The remaining two courses are the student's choice.

## **DECLARING THE MAJOR OR CONCENTRATION**

While students are encouraged to discuss the major or concentration with the DUS or Undergraduate Program Coordinator before officially declaring, formal approval from the Department of Art History and Archaeology is not required in order to declare a major or concentration program.

Typically, Columbia College students declare in the second semester of their sophomore year during the designated declaration period. Please visit the Center for Student Advising website and speak with your advising dean for more information.

General Studies students typically declare in the months of March or October. Please visit the GS website and speak with your advising dean for more information.

**Double Major/Concentration:** All students intending to complete a double major, a double concentration, or a combination of a major and a concentration should keep in mind that they must complete separate sets of required and related courses for each field. Please refer to the College Bulletin for the policy on double-counting courses. Courses which are applied to more than program of study must be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies of each department.

## **TRANSFER AND STUDY ABROAD CREDIT**

### **Transfer Credit from Other Colleges and Universities**

Approval by CC or GS of transfer credit toward the degree does not mean that this credit will automatically count toward the major or concentration. All such courses being applied to the major or concentration must be approved in writing by the DUS. The department will allow no more than three transfer courses.

In order to obtain transfer credit approval, please take the following steps:

1. Complete a Transfer Credit Request form. Please be sure in to indicate if you are requesting the course to be applied to a specific major/concentration requirement. If you do not indicate a specific requirement, the course will count as an elective lecture.
2. Attach a syllabus and a copy of written work for the course, such a paper.
3. Attach an unofficial transcript, indicating that you have successfully completed the course.
4. Submit the completed application to the Undergraduate Program Coordinator.
5. The student will receive notification of the DUS's decision via email. The DUS can approve the transfer credit as requested or instead approve a course for elective credit. The DUS may also request more information from the student, or may deny the application. Students are strongly encouraged to retain the notification email and all related materials for their records.

Transfer credit will not show up on your degree audit. Records are kept internally.

*Before beginning this process, it is helpful to discuss your options and the approval process with the Undergraduate Program Coordinator.*

### **Credit for Courses Taken in Other Departments**

Most Barnard Art History courses may count towards the major or concentration. Students can confirm which courses have been approved for the major or concentration requirements by checking the Field Distribution Chart on the department website.

With prior approval of the DUS, students may take up to two courses outside the department for credit toward the major or concentration. This limit does not include the required studio course for majors.

If you are interested in taking a course outside the department for credit toward the major or concentration, please complete the Interdepartmental Credit Request form, attach the course syllabus, and submit these materials to the Undergraduate Program Coordinator. All materials will be reviewed by the DUS. Students receive notification of the DUS's decision via email. Students are strongly encouraged to retain the notification email and all related materials for their records.

## **Study Abroad**

Majors and concentrators in the Department of Art History and Archaeology are encouraged to study abroad. Please visit the Center for Undergraduate Global Engagement and your advising dean regarding your options and how those options fit into your Columbia degree. It is also recommended that students consult with the department when exploring study abroad options.

Courses taken through Columbia study abroad programs will transfer directly to your degree. Please discuss with the Undergraduate Program Coordinator which requirements these courses will fulfill. Students do not need to complete additional transfer credit forms for courses with the subject code AHIS taken through Columbia programs.

Courses taken through a non-Columbia study abroad program may be counted towards your major or concentration, but they require departmental approval. Please follow the steps for Transfer Credit from Other Colleges and Universities.

## **Summer Programs**

The Department of Art History and Archaeology, in conjunction with the Center for Undergraduate Global Engagement, offers several summer study abroad programs. More information can be found on the department website.



## CURRICULUM AND GRADING POLICIES

### Grades

In order to receive credit for a course counting toward the major or concentration, students must receive a grade of C- or higher.

Classes taken in the Architecture or Visual Arts departments to fulfill the studio requirement for AHIS and HTAC majors may be taken Pass/D/Fail.

If a student's first course in art history is taken Pass/D/Fail, before the major or concentration is declared, this course may be eligible to count toward the major or concentration requirements. Students must confirm this with the DUS.

Grades from transfer courses taken at other colleges or universities are not calculated in the major GPA. Grades from Columbia-administered study abroad programs, and from courses taken in other Columbia departments that have been approved towards the major, will count towards the major GPA.

### Core and Global Core Courses

Art Humanities (HUMA UN1121) does not count towards the department's major or concentration requirements.

The department offers several courses that have been approved for partial fulfillment of the Global Core requirement. Students may count these courses toward both their department requirements and toward their Global Core requirements.

Courses approved for the Global Core are listed on the College Bulletin.

### Undergraduate Lectures

Lecture courses are open to all students. Students are strongly encouraged to take several lecture courses before applying to seminars.

Most lectures are eligible to count toward one or more departmental requirements. However, please keep in mind that a single course can only fulfill a single requirement. *Nineteenth Century Art*, for example, is eligible for credit toward **either** the 1700-Present requirement **or** the Europe/North America/Australia requirement, **but it cannot be used to fulfill both of these requirements.**

Students are encouraged to refer to the Field Distribution Chart, posted on the department website, for information about how courses may count toward distribution requirements. Please contact the Undergraduate Program Coordinator if you have any questions about this chart.

### Undergraduate Seminars

The department offers undergraduate seminars in a variety of fields and topics each semester. Seminars are limited-enrollment classes which offer students the opportunity to explore a topic in-depth with the

instruction of a faculty member who is an expert in that field. Seminars typically require intensive reading and discussion, culminating in an extended research paper and oral presentation.

Seminars may be used to fulfill lecture requirements with approval of the DUS. (Note that lecture courses cannot be used to fulfill seminar requirements.)

Unless otherwise specified, all undergraduate seminars require an application. The application provides an opportunity to detail your background and interest in the course. Applications must be submitted online; a link to a specific application for each seminar will be posted below each course description on the department website and in each seminar course entry on the Directory of Classes. The deadline to submit applications will be posted on the department website and the Directory of Classes. Students on the listserv will also be notified via email.

Students will be notified of the instructor's decision by the Undergraduate Program Coordinator. Accepted students must join the wait-list in SSOL during the registration period in order to enroll in a seminar.

### **Undergraduate Travel Seminar**

The travel seminar is a highlight of the undergraduate major in art history. It features a week-long trip during spring break to study firsthand the subject of the seminar. The course combines the rigors of a traditional seminar with the excitement and intensity of round-the-clock learning and camaraderie on a trip led by a Columbia professor. The trip is a required part of the course, and major expenses (airfare and hotel) are covered by the department.

All students interested in the Undergraduate Travel Seminar must submit a seminar application.

### **Bridge Lectures (GU4000-4499)**

Bridge lectures are typically large lecture courses open to both graduate students and advanced undergraduates. While instructor approval is not required, undergraduates are expected to have some background in the subject of the course.

### **Bridge Seminars (GU4500-4999)**

Bridge seminars are open to both graduate students and advanced undergraduates. As with undergraduate seminars, these courses require an application. Advanced knowledge within a field is typically expected. If you have questions about the suitability of a course, please contact the instructor to discuss your qualifications.

### **Graduate Lectures and Graduate Seminars**

With permission of the instructor, undergraduates may take graduate lectures and graduate seminars. Please contact the instructor before submitting an application to find out whether the instructor is willing to consider admitting undergraduates.

## **The Majors Colloquium**

The Majors Colloquium a required course for all AHIS, HTAC, and AHVA majors. The course is an intensive, discussion-based introduction to the methods and key texts of art history.

Prior to the start of the early registration period, students will have the opportunity to sign up to be considered for enrollment in this required course. Sign-up dates and instructions will be announced via the listserv. Admission to the colloquium is not guaranteed. It is suggested that students start signing up for the colloquium in their junior year.

Early sign-up is strongly encouraged as the instructor may take into account the order in which students sign up when making admissions decisions. Instructors will also take the student's expected graduation date into account.

The department offers three sections of the Majors Colloquium per year; typically one in the fall and two in the spring. The colloquium is not offered during the summer session.

AHIS UN3000 *Majors Colloquium: Introduction to the Literature and Methods of Art History* and AHIS UN3007 *Majors Colloquium: Introduction to the Literature and Methods of Architectural History* are **not** eligible to be covered by a transfer course.

## **Independent Study**

Students interested in exploring a specific topic with a faculty member may choose to complete an independent study project. Students should contact the faculty member who they would like to work with directly. If the faculty member agrees to supervise the independent study, the faculty member will contact the Undergraduate Program Coordinator to have the student registered. Students may complete an independent study project for 3 points. Independent studies typically count toward lecture credit; exceptions may be made with the approval of the DUS.

## **Summer Courses**

Summer courses may be taken for credit towards the major or concentration.

The department offers undergraduate lectures and seminars during the summer sessions. Seminars offered during the summer session do not require an application.

## THE SENIOR THESIS

The senior thesis is an optional project open to Art History, History and Theory of Architecture, and Art History/Visual Arts majors.

The senior thesis qualifies students to compete for departmental honors, and (indirectly) strengthens dossiers for university honors. It is also a great opportunity for those interested in graduate school to build their academic resume and experience the intensity and rewards of graduate-style research.

Keep in mind that the thesis requires commitment. It is a year-long project encompassing the senior year, as well as the summer before, and will consume much of winter break and all of spring break. Substantial research and preparation, and travel as appropriate (see below), is completed in the summer before the senior year.

All thesis writers are required to enroll in the year-long (YC) course AHIS UN3002 *Senior Thesis Seminar*, which is offered as a 3-point seminar in the Fall and a 3-point seminar in the Spring. This 6-point year-long seminar may substitute for a single elective lecture course. Students receive a grade at the end of the Spring term which is applied to both semesters of the seminar.

If a student withdraws after the Fall term, they will receive a P/F grade for the Fall term which cannot be applied to the major.

***Securing faculty sponsorship is critical.*** Speaking with potential advisors during the spring semester of your junior year (or earlier) is highly recommended. With approval of the DUS, students may work with a faculty sponsor outside the department. Written confirmation from the advisor is due in May of junior year. Specific deadlines will be posted on the department website and circulated on the listserv.

***In August, students who have secured faculty sponsorship must submit the Senior Thesis Application.*** The application, based on research completed over the summer, includes a proposal of about 400 words, an annotated bibliography, and the signature of your faculty sponsor. Students should have a GPA of at least 3.7 in Art History courses and should have completed at least six courses counting toward the major requirements, preferably including at least one seminar. Specific deadlines will be posted on the department website.

The DUS reviews the applications with the goal of ensuring that the student has the academic qualifications to succeed and has identified a credible project. Typically, no more than ten students complete the senior thesis each year.

### **Summer Research Grants for Rising Seniors**

The department is able to offer summer research travel grants to facilitate the preparation of a senior thesis. These competitive grants can be used for domestic and international travel to art collections, archives, architectural sites, monuments, and other places of interest. In order to apply, students must submit the following to the Undergraduate Program Coordinator:

1. A proposal of 750 words
2. An itemized budget
3. A letter of recommendation from a Barnard or Columbia faculty member in art history

The proposal should include a statement on the overall significance of the project, outlining the particular research proposed for the summer and how it will contribute to the thesis. Applications are typically due in April of the student's junior year.

These grants are made possible by the generous support of the Riggio Fund for Undergraduate Education.

Grants for thesis research during the academic year are also available through [General Studies](#) and [Columbia College](#). Please visit their websites for more information.

## HONORS AND AWARDS

### Departmental Honors

To be considered for departmental honors, students must have a GPA of at least 3.7 in classes for the major and have submitted a senior thesis of distinction. The faculty of the Department of Art History and Archaeology submits recommendations to the Committee on Honors, Awards, and Prizes for confirmation. Normally, no more than ten percent of the graduating majors in the department receive departmental honors.

### Departmental Awards

The department awards the following prizes:

**Senior Thesis Prize** is awarded annually for a senior thesis of superior distinction. Support for this prize comes from the Riggio Fund for Undergraduate Education.

**The Judith Lee Stronach Memorial Prize** is awarded for outstanding contributions in art history or archaeology by a General Studies student.

**Benedetto Marraro Prize** is awarded to a General Studies student for distinction in Italian studies. The department may nominate one student for this award annually.

**Meyer Schapiro Book Prize for Excellence in Art History** is awarded to senior thesis writers of distinction.

## **INTERNSHIP AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES**

Students are encouraged to speak with the DUS and the Undergraduate Program Coordinator about internship and career advice. Other faculty members and graduate students may also advise students on ways to use your art history education outside the classroom.

The department regularly receives internship postings from museums, galleries, and artists in the greater New York City area and beyond. We distribute these via our email listserv.

Students are also encouraged to visit the Columbia University Center for Career Education for internship and career support. For resources outside the University, students may find the New York Foundation for the Arts web page helpful.

## **MAJOR AND CONCENTRATION WORKSHEETS**

Major and concentration requirements worksheets, posted on the department website, are intended to help students plan their coursework and completion of their program. These are not official documents and do not need to be signed by the DUS. However, students are strongly encouraged to make an appointment to go over degree progress with the Undergraduate Program Coordinator. **Please do not rely on the SSOL degree audit.** Students may make appointments at any time, but it is particularly important to meet with the DUS or Undergraduate Program Coordinator right before or after declaring the major or concentration and before the start of final year of coursework.