

# **DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY GRADUATE MANUAL 2023 - 2024**

**Department Chair:** Prof. Tobias Wofford  
**Graduate Program Director:** Prof. Eric Garberson

The Department of Art History Graduate Manual is an addendum to the VCU Graduate Bulletin, which outlines university policies, procedures and requirements. The official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published in the Graduate Bulletin and on the Graduate School website, are fully applicable to all graduate programs and graduate students and take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines. Students are bound by requirements published in the Graduate Bulletin corresponding to the year in which they entered the University.

As an addendum to the Bulletin, this Graduate Manual offers information, advice and requirements specific to students' success in the Department's graduate programs. Generally speaking, the shared objectives among all departmental graduate students are: to engage critically with objects and art historical theories and methods; to acquire in-depth knowledge of a chosen subject area; and to develop advanced professional skills in oral and written dissemination of research.

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

- Buford House: The building will be accessible to graduate students Monday–Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm, when the university is open. Students should use their VCU ID at the card readers at the front and back entrances of Buford House to gain entry to the building.
- Graduate Lab: Located in room 106 and open Monday-Friday, from 8:30-4:30, the Graduate Lab provides computers, flatbed scanners, and a printer exclusively for educational use.
- E-mail: All students are required by the University to maintain an official VCU email account. The University and the Department send announcements only to VCU email accounts.
- Address and name changes: Students are asked to notify the department, via email to [arthistory@vcu.edu](mailto:arthistory@vcu.edu) of address and name changes; use eServices to update official University records.
- Professional courtesy: Students requesting letters of recommendation or review of professional materials (e.g., conference submissions, fellowship applications) from faculty members are advised to make requests at least one month prior to a deadline for which students are submitting those materials.

## ADVISING

The Graduate Program Director is the advisor of record who signs all university forms requiring an advisor's signature. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all requirements are met in a timely manner. VCU requires that MA students complete their degrees within **six** years of matriculation and that PhD students (including MA/PhD students) complete their degrees within **eight** years.

**MA students** consult with the Graduate Program Director each semester to select courses and maintain good progress through the program. Through their coursework and other department activities they establish a relationship with a full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty member who will direct their qualifying paper. (Visiting, adjunct, or affiliate faculty may not direct qualifying papers.) Student progress is tracked in Degree Works. All students should check this each semester to ensure that they are completing requirements and that their record is correct.

**MA/PhD and PhD students** consult with the Director of Graduate Studies and their dissertation directors to define, in general terms, the major and minor fields of study, map out a program of study, and initiate a curriculum tracking form. Students invite a faculty member to be a minor field advisor during the first or second semester of PhD coursework.

## **Continuous Enrollment**

The University requires that graduate students enroll each fall and spring semester.

Students wishing to take a leave of absence or to withdraw from the graduate program must submit a written request to the Graduate Program Director. An approved leave of absence does not stop the clock for calculating time-limit for the degree (6 years for the MA).

Full-time enrollment, 9 credits per semester in fall/spring, is encouraged (though not necessarily required) for all students completing coursework, and it is required for students who have been awarded Graduate Assistantships.

When PhD candidates (students who have completed all required coursework, passed the language and field exams, and successfully defended a dissertation proposal) may enroll for just one dissertation credit to maintain continuous enrollment while continuing to work on the dissertation. PhD candidates must complete at least 6 hours of dissertation credit within their eight-year time limit before applying to graduate.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Department of Art History enthusiastically supports extra-curricular activities that contribute to students' professional success.

### **Graduate Student Association**

Graduate students are integral to the scholarly community within the Art History Department at Virginia Commonwealth University. As members of the Art History Graduate Student Association (AHGSA), they engage with visiting guest speakers, attend professional development workshops, and organize social events, like the annual trip to New York City. In the past, students have used this trip to seek out research opportunities for their qualifying papers, establish relationships with museum and gallery officials, and inquire about potential job opportunities in the field. These events support the growth of professional relationships among graduate students, faculty, alumni, museum staff, and colleagues across different institutions and disciplines.

At monthly meetings, members of the AHGSA discuss opportunities both within and outside the department. They also provide input regarding decisions made for the future of the Art History program. Officers of the AHGSA are elected annually.

### **Travel Funds for Conference Presentations**

Graduate students are encouraged to begin participating in the professional life of the discipline by submitting proposals for conference papers. There are a number of graduate symposia around the country, and graduate students may also submit proposals for the College Art Association conference, the Southeastern College Art Conference, and other regional, national, or international conferences.

Students whose proposals are accepted for conference presentation are encouraged to work with their faculty advisors in crafting a polished professional presentation that will appropriately serve the students' professional goals and demonstrate the high caliber of the

VCU Department of Art History. Students whose proposals are accepted for conference presentation may apply for travel assistance awarded by the School of the Arts and the Graduate School. Students who are awarded travel funds must initiate the necessary forms for reimbursement well in advance, as they must be completed at least 30 days before travel within the US and 45 days for international travel. Consult the Graduate Program Director for links and advice.

Travel grants from the School of the Arts:

<https://arts.vcu.edu/innovation/graduate-grants/>

Travel grants from the Graduate School:

<https://graduate.vcu.edu/current-students/awards-and-competitions/travel-grants/>

### **Departmental Research Travel Awards**

Each year, the Department of Art History posts at least one call for research/travel proposals. Applications require the following:

- Cover letter
- Description of the specific research to be supported
- Description of the larger project (i.e. the Qualifying Paper) to which the research contributes
- Itemized budget
- Current CV

Proposals are evaluated on the following criteria:

- Necessity of proposed travel to the larger research project and completion of the researcher's academic program
- Viability of proposed project and likelihood of completion
- Qualifications of researcher (for example, evidence of appropriate language skills and research experience)
- Clarity of written proposal
- Appropriateness of the requested funding amount

Proposals are evaluated by faculty members on the departmental graduate committee.

### **School of the Arts Research Grants**

Each year, VCUarts awards several Graduate Research Grants to support creative practice, research, and scholarly activities. Students who have achieved candidacy in a VCUarts graduate program are eligible to apply for awards up to \$3,000. Grant recipients must be enrolled during the spring semester in order to remain eligible for funds. To apply: <https://arts.vcu.edu/innovation/graduate-grants/>

# PROGRAMS OF STUDY

## MA CONCENTRATIONS

MA Students complete a program of study in two years consisting of 30 credits of coursework, variously distributed according to curriculum concentration, as illustrated below. Full-time enrollment allows students to complete the degree requirements as well as two elective courses, which can be in any department relevant to students' interests and professional goals. The time- to-degree limit set by the university is listed in the bulletin for the year in which the student first enrolls in the program.

### Historical Studies MA

#### Course Requirements

ARTH 683: Museum Collections	3 credits
ARTH 690: Historiography and Methodology	3 credits
ARTH 695: Writing Seminar I	3 credits
ARTH 771: Writing Seminar II	3 credits
ARTH 743: Seminar in Art and Representation	3 credits
5 Art History Seminars*	15 credits

\*At least one course from ARTH 721-729. May also include ARTH591 or ARTH694.

Students must earn a minimum grade of B in “ARTH 690 Historiography and Methodology of Art History” in order to enroll in subsequent graduate-level art history courses.

Students enrolled in “ARTH 771 Writing Seminar II” work independently with a faculty member whose expertise is in the relevant research area. They also meet periodically as a group during the semester, as outlined in the course syllabus.

Year	Fall	Spring	Summer
1	1) ARTH 690: Historiography 2) Seminar 3) Seminar  Language Exam, if needed	1) Seminar 2) Seminar 3) Seminar	Internship may be completed during the summer.
2	1) ARTH695: Writing Seminar I 2) Seminar 3) Seminar	1) ARTH 771: Writing Seminar II 2) Open elective (not required) 3) Open elective (not required)	

## Museum Studies MA

### Course Requirements

ARTH 683: Museum Collections	3 Credits
ARTH 690: Historiography and Methodology of Art History	3 Credits
ARTH 695: Writing Seminar I	3 Credits
ARTH 771: Writing Seminar II	3 Credits
ARTH 693: Graduate Museum Internship	3 Credits
ARTH 743: Seminar in Art and Representation	3 Credits
2 Museum Studies Seminars (Selected from ARTH 681-684, 691)	6 Credits
2 Art History Seminars (Selected from ARTH 720-729, 740-749, 591, 694, 791)	6 Credits

Students must earn a minimum grade of B in “ARTH 690 Historiography and Methodology of Art History” in order to enroll in subsequent graduate-level art history courses.

Students enrolled in “ARTH 771 Writing Seminar II” work independently with a faculty member whose expertise is in the relevant research area. They also meet periodically as a group during the semester, as outlined in the course syllabus.

Year	Fall	Spring	Summer
1	1) ARTH 690: Historiography 2) Seminar 3) Seminar  Language Exam if needed	1) Seminar 2) Seminar 3) Seminar	Internship may be completed during the summer.
2	1) Museum Internship 2) Writing Seminar I 3) Seminar	1) ARTH 771: Writing Seminar II 2) Open elective (not required) 3) Open elective (not required)	



## MA/PHD CONCENTRATIONS

Students accepted into a MA/PhD concentration complete 60 credits of coursework, variously distributed according to curriculum concentration, as illustrated below. The time-to-degree limit set by the university is listed in the bulletin for the year in which the student first enrolls in the program. For students in a combined MA/PhD program, the time-to-degree clock listed for the PhD applies.

### Historical Studies MA/PhD

#### Course Requirements

ARTH 683: Museum Collections	3 Credits
ARTH 690: Historiography and Methodology of Art History	3 Credits
ARTH 695: Writing Seminar I	3 Credits
ARTH 771: Writing Seminar II	3 Credits
ARTH 743: Seminar in Art and Representation	3 Credits
10 Art History Seminars*	30 Credits
ARTH 772: Major Field Exam	3 Credits
ARTH 773: Minor Field Exam	3 Credits
ARTH 774: Dissertation Prospectus	3 Credits
ARTH 899: Dissertation	6 Credits

*\* At least one course from among ARTH 721-729. The remaining 4 art history seminar courses may be among the aforementioned ARTH courses and/or ARTH 591, 694. In addition, students must complete at least 3 courses in the declared major field of study and 2 courses in the minor field.*

#### Suggested Timeline

Year	Fall	Spring	Summer
1	1) ARTH 690: Historiography <sup>1</sup> 2) Art History Seminar 3) ARTH 683: Museum Collections Language Exam <sup>2</sup>	1) Art History Seminar 2) Art History Seminar 3) ARTH 743: Seminar in Art and Representation	Option for Independent Study/Internship
2	1) Art History Seminar 2) Art History Seminar 3) ARTH 695: Writing Seminar I	1) ARTH 771: Writing Seminar II <sup>3</sup> 2) Art History Seminar 3) Art History Seminar	Option for Independent Study/Internship
3	1) Art History Seminar 2) ARTH 772: Major Field Exam 3) ARTH 773: Minor Field Exam Language Exam	1) Art History Seminar 2) Art History Seminar 3) ARTH: 899 Dissertation Prospectus	
4-6+	Dissertation <sup>4</sup>	Dissertation	

<sup>1</sup> Students must earn a minimum grade of B in “ARTH 690 Historiography and Methodology of Art History” in order to enroll in subsequent graduate-level art history courses.

<sup>2</sup> Students may elect to enroll in “ARTH 598 German for Art Historical Research”; see page 14 for information about the language exam.

<sup>3</sup> Students enrolled in “ARTH 771 Writing Seminar II” work independently with a faculty member whose expertise is in the relevant research area. They also meet periodically as a group during the semester, as outlined in the course syllabus.

<sup>4</sup> In the semesters following the dissertation proposal defense, students must enroll continuously in dissertation credit hours. They must complete 6 total hours before applying to graduate; students may enroll in a few as 1 credit hour of dissertation each semester to satisfy the continuous enrollment requirement.

## Curatorial MA/PhD Course Requirement

ARTH 683: Museum Collections	3 Credits
ARTH 690: Historiography and Methodology of Art History	3 Credits
ARTH 695: Writing Seminar I	3 Credits
ARTH 771: Writing Seminar II	3 Credits
ARTH 743: Seminar in Art and Representation	3 Credits
2 Graduate Museum Internship (ARTH 693)	6 Credits
3 Museum Studies Seminars* ( <i>Selected from ARTH 681-684, 691</i> )	9 Credits
4 Art History Seminars* ( <i>Selected from ARTH 720-729, 740-749, 591, 694, 791</i> )	12 Credits
1 Non-Profit Management or Research Methods Course ( <i>Selected from PADM 650, 659, 656, and 661 or ARTE 690, EDUS 660</i> )	3 Credits
ARTH 772: Major Field Exam	3 Credits
ARTH 773: Minor Field Exam	3 Credits
ARTH 774: Dissertation Prospectus	3 Credits
ARTH 899: Dissertation	6 Credits

*\*Students must complete at least 3 courses in the declared major field of study and 2 courses in the minor field. Museum Studies is either the major or minor field.*

### Suggested Timeline

shaded areas indicate PhD coursework

Year	Fall	Spring	Summer
1	1) ARTH 690: Historiography <sup>5</sup> 2) Art History Seminar 3) ARTH 683: Museum Collections Language Exam <sup>6</sup>	1) Museum Studies Seminar 2) Museum Studies Seminar 3) ARTH 743: Seminar in Art and Representation	Option for Independent Study/Internship
2	1) Art History Seminar 2) Art History Seminar 3) ARTH 695: Writing Seminar I	1) ARTH 771: Writing Seminar II <sup>7</sup> 2) Museum Studies Seminar 3) Art History Seminar	{Option for Independent Study/Internship}
3	1) Museum internship 2) ARTH 772: Major Field Exam 3) ARTH 773: Minor Field Exam Language Exam	1) Art History Seminar 2) Art History Seminar 3) ARTH: 899 Dissertation Prospectus	
4-6+	Dissertation <sup>8</sup>	Dissertation	

<sup>5</sup> Students must earn a minimum grade of B in “ARTH 690 Historiography and Methodology of Art History” in order to enroll in subsequent graduate-level art history courses.

<sup>6</sup> Students may elect to enroll in “ARTH 598 German for Art Historical Research”; see page 14 for information about the language exam.

<sup>7</sup> Students enrolled in “ARTH 771 Writing Seminar II” work independently with a faculty member whose expertise is in the relevant research area. They also meet periodically as a group during the semester, as outlined in the course syllabus.

<sup>8</sup> In the semesters following the dissertation proposal defense, students must enroll continuously in dissertation credit hours. They must complete 6 total hours before applying to graduate; students may enroll in a few as 1 credit hour of dissertation each semester to satisfy the continuous enrollment requirement.

## PHD CONCENTRATIONS

The program of study for students who matriculate directly into PhD concentrations is determined on a case-by-case basis, to include at least 30 credit hours in one of the two PhD curriculum concentrations, as listed below.

Students may also be required to complete “690 Art Historiography and Methodology of Art History” and/or selected art history seminars if they have not completed equivalent courses in their MA programs and/or if their MA degrees were awarded in fields other than art history. Students in the Curatorial concentration may also be required to take one or more Museum Studies courses (ARTH 681-684, 691) if their MA programs did not include equivalent courses. The time-to-degree limit for completion of the PhD set by the university is listed in the bulletin for the year in which the student first enrolls in the program.

### Historical Studies PhD

#### Course Requirements

5 Art History Seminars*	15 credits
ARTH 772: Major Field Exam	3 credits
ARTH 773: Minor Field Exam	3 credits
ARTH 774: Dissertation Prospectus	3 credits
ARTH 899: Dissertation	6 credits

\* Selected from among ARTH 721-729, 741-749, 591, 694 or 791. Students must complete at least 3 courses in the declared major field of study and 2 courses in the minor field.

#### Suggested Timeline

Year	Fall	Spring	Summer
1	1) Art History Seminar 2) Art History Seminar 3) Art History Seminar  Language Exam {Option to take German for Art History course}	1) Art History Seminar 2) Art History Seminar  {Students may enroll in non-non-required course of their choosing.}	{Option for Independent Study/Internship}
2	1) ARTH 772: Major Field Exam 2) ARTH 773: Minor Field Exam  {Students may enroll in non-non-required course of their choosing.}	1) ARTH: 899 Dissertation Prospectus  {Students may enroll in non-required courses of their choosing.}	
3-5	Dissertation	Dissertation	

## Curatorial PhD

### Course Requirements

3 Art History Seminars*	9 credits
ARTH 693 Museum Internship	3 credits
1 course in Nonprofit Management or Research Methods ( <i>selected from PADM 650, 659, 656, and 661 or ARTE 690, EDUS 660</i> )	3 credits
ARTH 772: Major Field Exam	3 credits
ARTH 773: Minor Field Exam	3 credits
ARTH 774: Dissertation Prospectus	6 credits
ARTH 899: Dissertation	

*\*Students complete a major and a minor field of study, one of which is Museum Studies. Museum Studies courses completed for the MA degree may be applied. The major area requires 3 seminars, while the minor requires 2 seminars.*

### Suggested Timeline

Year	Fall	Spring	(Summer)
1	1) Art History Seminar 2) Art History Seminar 3) Museum Internship  - Language exam {option to take German for Art History course}	1) Art History Seminar 2) Nonprofit Management or Research Methods  {Students may enroll in non-required course of their choosing.}	{Option for Independent Study/Internship}
2	1) ARTH 772: Major Field Exam 2) ARTH 773: Minor Field Exam  {Students may enroll in non-non-required course of their choosing.}	1) ARTH: 899 Dissertation Prospectus  {Students may enroll in non-required courses of their choosing.}	
3-5+	Dissertation	Dissertation	

## INTERNSHIPS

Students in the MA Museum Studies concentration are required to complete internships for course credit at museums, art galleries, historical sites or other scholarly institutions. All other students may include one 3-credit course on the program of study, with approval of their faculty advisors and the Graduate Program Director.

Internships can be completed for course credit during any semester, including the summer. Students seek out internships at local, regional, national, or international museums. Students completing internships are expected to have specific responsibilities relevant to a clearly defined project. In addition, interns ideally have opportunities to observe or contribute to ongoing professional activities (e.g., processing loans, attending project meetings, observing educational programs) associated with the professional specialization with which the internship is affiliated or the project to which the intern contributes.

Departmental approval of the internship scope and venue is required in advance of course registration. Students are encouraged to discuss potential internships with the Graduate Program Director, who will provide further information about the formal application process that students and internship supervisors must complete prior to registration.

Interns complete a minimum of 120 hours of work (7.5 hours per week during a 15 -week semester) at the host institution for a 3-credit internship; they complete 240 hours (15 hours per week during a 15-week semester) for a 6-credit internship. Work hours must be completed during the semester in which course credit is awarded. However, the project to which the student contributes need not necessarily be completed during the semester in which the student completes the internship (e.g., an intern may complete research for an exhibition or a collection catalog that will be produced at a later date).

Internship supervisors formally evaluate students' work performance, using the departmental evaluation form. Students also submit a brief report to the Graduate Program Director at the end of the internship semester.

# EXAMS

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE EXAMS

MA students are required to demonstrate a reading knowledge of one foreign language—typically German, French, Italian, or Spanish. They may do this by passing a departmental language exam during the first semester of enrollment or by documenting completion of four semesters of undergraduate language study (or the equivalent).

Language exams are administered on a pre-specified date (typically the third Friday of the fall semester), and may be taken only by students who have signed up, via email with the Graduate Program Director.

MA/PhD students complete their first language exams—typically German, French, Italian, or Spanish—during the first semester of enrollment. They complete a second language exam later in the program of study, ideally during the first semester of the third year. Satisfaction of the language requirement for an MA in the VCU Department of Art History carries over automatically to the MA/PhD requirement. Students may request an exam in a language not listed above if it is relevant to their dissertation research.

PhD students whose MA degrees were conferred elsewhere and included a language exam requirement may have the earlier language exam approved by the Director of Graduate Studies on the basis of appropriate documentation. They accordingly take a second language exam in the first semester of enrollment at VCU, demonstrating reading knowledge of a foreign language relevant to their dissertation research. Students for whom a second foreign language is not necessary for dissertation research may elect to complete the course “ARTH 598 German for Art Historical Research” and complete their second language exam in German.

### **Exam Format**

During the 90-minute exam period, students translate an excerpt from current art historical literature, selected by a faculty member who will evaluate the exam. With the aid of a dictionary, students provide an accurate translation. Some paraphrasing is acceptable, as long as students convey the full sense of the text. The translation should make sense in itself as a piece of English prose.

### **Preparation**

Successful students prepare for the exam by reviewing basic grammatical structure, memorizing art historical vocabulary, and using bilingual publications to practice translating sample passages then checking their translations against the English text.

## Evaluation

Language exams are evaluated by two full-time faculty members, using the evaluation rubric that appears below. Notification of pass/fail is sent to students, via email from the Director of Graduate Studies, within 2 weeks. Students who fail a language exam may retake it once without securing department permission. The opportunity to retake the exam ought not suggest that the first attempt is a trial run without consequences. Students who must retake the test typically fall behind in their programs of study. Students who fail the exam twice must submit a request, reviewed by the entire faculty, to take it a third time. Students who fail the exam a third time will be terminated from the program.

## Language Exam Evaluation Rubric

Whole or half points may be awarded in each category. Score of 8 needed to pass.

Components	Very good – 3	Acceptable – 2	Unacceptable - 1
Overall Comprehension	Few or no errors in conveying the overall meaning and specific aspects of the passage.	Shows comprehension of overall meaning; some errors in conveying specific aspects of the passage.	Lack of comprehension of the whole; many errors in conveying specific aspects of the passage.
Art Historical Terminology	Few or no errors in comprehending overall art historical argument and translating art historical terms.	Shows comprehension of overall art historical argument but includes many errors in translating specific terms.	Lack of comprehension of both the overall argument and specific terms.
Quality of English Text	Readable text with few errors in English grammar and syntax.	Unpolished text with many errors in grammar and syntax.	Very awkward, ungrammatical text with syntax errors that obscure comprehension.
Thoroughness of Translation	All or almost all of the assigned passage is translated.	At least 75% of the passage is translated.	Less than 75% of the passage is translated.

## PHD FIELD EXAMS

The purpose of the field exams is to evaluate a student's command of the major publications, historical developments in scholarship, and current lines of inquiry in a major field and minor field of study.

Students take field exams at the end of the semester in which they enroll in "ARTH 772 Major Field Exam" and "ARTH 773 Minor Field Exam," under the supervision of their major and minor field advisors. The major field advisor is the anticipated dissertation director, and the minor field advisor has expertise in the area being tested. Students cannot enroll in these courses until they have completed coursework in their major and minor fields.

Each exam includes one or two essay questions that adhere to the following parameters: The questions are rigorous enough that they cannot be answered without substantial preparation and specific enough that responses cannot be written out in advance; the objective of the exam is to test the student's knowledge of the field as well as careful and solid reasoning in his or her written exposition. Responses must include correct, succinct definitions of key terms and demonstrate a command of the major debates in a specific and established research area. The student should clearly articulate his or her own perspective on the chosen field and the essays should adopt a carefully- reasoned and well- supported position on the central issues at hand in the respective area of investigation. The responses must clearly demonstrate an effective use of secondary sources and specific examples to support or refute points.

Students must adhere to the University Honor Code. They will neither solicit nor accept any assistance in the preparation of their answers.

### **Format**

While writing the exam essays, the student has full access to notes and sources assembled during the preparation process. Each exam should be no less than 12 pages and no more than 15 pages, double-spaced, excluding bibliography. References are to be given in the text in parentheses using the author-page format, with an attached bibliography.

### **Preparation**

At the outset of the semester in which students enroll in ARTH 772/ARTH 773, students submit a bibliography for each area, which include major texts—historical, critical, and theoretical—with which all scholars in the selected field are familiar. The bibliography is then revised in consultation with the faculty advisor by the end of the first week of the semester.

While the length of the bibliographies varies by student, depending on the field, they should be of a length that can be completed in three months of thorough reading and dedicated study, and they should be broad enough for the student to demonstrate general competency in the field, but not so broad as to preclude critical engagement with specific issues of current importance.

Although successfully completing the field exams should demonstrate a student's readiness to undertake specific reading and research for the dissertation, preparation for the field exam should be distinguished from such reading and research, which will in most cases represent a further stage of specialization. Accordingly, the reading list for the field exam should not be construed as a working bibliography for a particular dissertation project.



During the course of the semester, students meet three or more times with the respective faculty advisors to discuss the readings completed thus far. These conversations are crucial to the ultimate articulation of field exam questions. Students find it helpful to prepare an annotated bibliography in advance of each meeting, and faculty advisors may require them for these appointments as well. Thus, students are encouraged to organize the sequence of readings, in consultation with the field advisors, such that it fosters substantive, productive, and supportive conversation.

### Administration

Both major and minor field exams are taken together during a period of 72 hours, or three days. The exams will be emailed to the student by the Director of Graduate Studies (who cc's the supervising faculty members) by noon on the first day and must be returned 72 hours later (e.g. sent at noon on Friday and returned by noon on Monday). The student's response to the email serves as a time-stamp. Exams must be sent and returned on a regular business day (Monday through Friday, excluding holidays). The student is advised to spend the first half-day formulating the answers, spend one day on each exam, and spend the final half-day for revisions and corrections.

### Evaluation

Each exam will be read by one faculty member (the major field exam will be read by the faculty advisor for that field; the minor field exam by the faculty advisor for that field), using the evaluation rubric that appears on the next page. Notification of pass/fail is sent to students within 2 weeks, via email from the Director of Graduate Studies. Should a student fail either portion of the field exams, he or she may submit a formal letter of request to retake the exam, written to the Director of Graduate Studies, who confers with the Graduate Committee, the members of which will determine the parameters for re-examination. A subsequent failure on either portion results in termination from the program.

### Major and Minor Field Exam Evaluation Rubric

Whole or half points may be awarded in each category. Score of 12 needed to pass; score of 15 is exemplary.

Components	Exemplary – 3	Acceptable – 2	Unacceptable – 1
Addresses specific exam question	Directly addresses the question posed, with a sound thesis.	Addresses the question posed but not clearly or directly.	Does not address the question posed.
Sources Cited	Sources are current, relevant and consistently support the thesis.	Sources are not consistently relevant or supportive of the thesis.	Sources do not support the thesis.
Examples (artworks, artifacts, concepts, and/or institutional practices) cited	Examples are relevant and consistently support the thesis and analysis.	Most examples are relevant and support the thesis and analysis.	Examples do not support the thesis and analysis.
Quality of Analysis	Analysis is sophisticated, compelling, and convincing; demonstrates superior control of the material.	Analysis is competent and convincing; demonstrates adequate control of the material.	Analysis is weak, confused, unclear, and/or inadequate. Does not demonstrate mastery of the material.
Quality of Conclusions	Conclusions are clearly stated, convincing, and insightful.	Conclusions are stated and convincing.	Conclusions are not stated or are stated incompetently.
Quality of Written Mechanics	Skillfully uses language that conveys meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually free of errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers, although writing includes some errors.	Uses language that impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

## MA QUALIFYING PAPERS

The qualifying paper is the culminating project leading to the MA degree. It is expected to be of publishable quality: it must contribute to an ongoing scholarly conversation and reflect the student's knowledge of current issues in a particular area of study. Although not required to submit their papers for publication, students must ensure that their final paper fully conforms to the submission guidelines of their target journal. Target journal may be in art history or a related field, or have an interdisciplinary focus suited to the student's topic. Journal selections are made in consultation with the faculty advisor and approved by the Graduate Committee

Paper topics usually emerge from work in one or more seminars. Students are strongly encouraged to begin thinking about the QP topic from the start of the program. Toward the end of the first year, students submit a topic statement and list of potential advisors to the Graduate Program Director by the announced deadline (usually early April). The faculty advisor, who is expected to have research expertise relevant to the topic of a student's qualifying paper, must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the Department of Art History.

In the fall of the second year, students are enrolled in ARTH 695 Writing Seminar I. This seminar introduces them to the process of preparing work for publication: selecting a target journal, formulating an argument, presenting research in a variety of pre-publication contexts, securing copyright for images, and formatting for submission to a journal. They are also expected to complete a full draft of the qualifying paper, in consultation with the faculty advisor, by the end of the semester.

In the spring semester, students enroll in ARTH 771 Writing Seminar II while they work independently with their faculty advisor on the final draft of the qualifying paper. This seminar is conducted as a writing workshop, with meetings to share writing strategies, check in on progress, and prepare the final presentation to be delivered to the whole department at the end of the semester. This is a public event to which family and friends may also be invited.

At the end of the spring semester, students submit their final papers to the Graduate Program Director. Each paper is evaluated by three tenured or tenure-track members of the Department of Art History faculty, including the student's advisor. This process is analogous to the peer-review process used by scholarly journals. Evaluators prepare a reader's report and fill out the Qualifying Paper Evaluation Rubric.

## Qualifying Paper Evaluation Rubric

Whole or half points may be awarded in each category. Score of 14 needed to pass. Score of 18 required for matriculation from MA to PhD programs.

Components	Exemplary - 4	Very Good - 3	Acceptable - 2	Unacceptable -1
<b>Introduction: Clarity of Thesis &amp; Justification</b>	Clearly articulates a sound thesis and explains contribution to specific scholarly discourse(s).	States a clear thesis and indicates awareness of relevant scholarly discourse(s).	Thesis and relevance to scholarly discourse(s) are implied.	Thesis and/or relevance to specific scholarly discourse are not stated.
<b>Clarity of Methodology/Theoretical Structure/Approach</b>	Clearly states a well-conceived and appropriate methodology and/or theoretical structure.	States an appropriate methodology and/or theoretical structure.	States an acceptable methodology and/or theoretical structure.	Does not clearly state or does not employ a methodology or theoretical structure.
<b>Selection of Sources</b>	Sources cited are directly relevant to the topic and include the most significant scholarly contributions to the topic. Rationale for choice of sources is cogent and clearly articulated.	Sources cited appear to be directly relevant to the topic and include the most significant scholarly contributions to the topic. However, the rationale for choice of sources is not entirely clear.	Sources cited are adequate to constructing an argument but exclude significant contributions to the topic.	Sources cited are not adequate for supporting a scholarly argument about the selected topic.
<b>Quality of Analysis</b>	Analysis is sophisticated, compelling, and convincing; demonstrates superior control of the material.	Analysis is competent and convincing; demonstrates very good control of the material.	Analysis is adequate but not compelling; demonstrates adequate but not remarkable control of the material.	Analysis is weak, confused, unclear, and/or inadequate. Does not demonstrate mastery of the material.
<b>Conclusions</b>	Conclusions are clearly stated, convincing, insightful, and original.	Conclusions are stated and convincing.	Conclusions are adequately stated but not especially convincing.	Conclusions are not stated or are stated incompetently.
<b>Quality of Written Mechanics</b>	Skillfully uses language that conveys meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually free of errors.	Uses language that conveys clear meaning to readers and has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers, although writing includes some distracting errors.	Uses language that impedes meaning because of errors in usage.
<b>Appropriateness for Publication</b>	Consistently follows specifications for submission to specific (approved for qualifying paper) journal; requires little or no revisions prior to submission.	Follows most specifications for submission to specific (approved for qualifying paper) journal; requires revisions prior to submission.	Follows some specifications for submission to specific (approved for qualifying paper) journal; is not suitable for submission.	Does not follow specifications for submission to specific (approved for qualifying paper) journal.

## PHD DISSERTATION PROPOSALS

The program of study for PhD students culminates in a written dissertation, which is to be a scholarly investigation of a particular problem or issue in the history of art and a significant contribution to the field. The student should begin to define the dissertation topic as soon as possible and in close consultation with the major field advisor and other faculty in relevant areas.

The proposal represents a foundation for a successful dissertation that constitutes original research, typically based on previously unknown or unexamined data or an original application of interpretive methods.

The dissertation proposal should be focused, critical, and succinct in its treatment of the topic and comprehensive in its assessment of the relevant scholarship, both previous and current. It should clearly demonstrate an original contribution by the author to the subject, rather than merely reviewing or reworking existing scholarship. Research and writing should be carried out with the intention of subsequent publication as either a book or a set of significant essays.

### **Dissertation Committee**

The University requires that a dissertation committee has at least four faculty members, including a director, who is also the candidate's faculty advisor, and a reader, who shall assume the role of director if for any reason the director cannot continue to serve on the approved committee.

Both the director and reader must be tenured or tenure-track faculty members in the VCU Department of Art History. The third member may be selected from among the aforementioned faculty members as well as from the affiliate faculty members listed on the departmental web site. The fourth committee member must be from another discipline. Some students choose to have a fifth committee member from another university. All committee members must hold graduate faculty or affiliate faculty status.

The four required committee members should be finalized and recorded on the curriculum tracking form before students enroll in "ARTH 774 Dissertation Prospectus." The fifth committee member need not be in place for preparation and defense of the dissertation proposal.

While working on both the dissertation proposal and the dissertation, a student works primarily with the dissertation director. The director determines when a draft is ready to be shared with the reader, whose approval is necessary for the proposal to be reviewed by the remaining committee members.

Doctoral students typically have applied to the program to work with a specific faculty member who serves as their faculty advisor and ultimately also as their dissertation director. There are instances in which a student's research interests change, in which case the faculty advisor may or may not change. There are also instances in which a faculty member's availability changes. Students considering a change in faculty advisor are expected to consult with the Director of Graduate Studies in advance of changing advisors.

The proposal must be approved by both the dissertation director and the reader before a proposal defense is scheduled. Students should allow at least two weeks between the date upon which the full committee receives the proposal and the date of the proposal defense.

## Proposal Guidelines and Format

The proposal is 15-20 pages in length (not including the bibliography), double spaced in 12 -point type, with one-inch margins, and follows either *The Chicago Manual of Style* or Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. It is formatted using the headings exactly as listed below:

### I. Thesis Statement

State your thesis as either a hypothesis that you will defend or a question you will answer. The thesis statement, which ideally appears on the first page, should be short, specific and to the point: one or two sentences, at most. It may be accompanied by one or two paragraphs of explanation and support, with reference to relevant works or further ideas.

### II. Justification

Justify the importance of the project. Summarize how it relates to the existing literature and to the field (art history or museum studies). This should also be short and concise, generally one paragraph and certainly no more than one page.

### III. Scholarly Literature

Provide a thorough, critical review of the relevant literature on your topic that presents the current state of the question. Consider specifically what has been said and by whom. Indicate briefly how your project extends or complements the existing literature.

### IV. Research Plan

1. State your art-historical methodology or methodologies (archival, connoisseurship, critical or theoretical, etc.) and their relevance to your specific topic.
2. Summarize where, when, and how you will access your primary and secondary sources. These may include: libraries, archives, collections, museums, interviews, etc.
3. Summarize research already conducted and future travel or off-campus research still pending. This includes professional contacts with non-VCU personnel.
4. Statement regarding approval by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. Consult the VCU IRB site: <http://www.research.vcu.edu/irb/index.htm> and your director. If your project is not subject to IRB review, state why. If subject to review, attach relevant documentation and give the status of your review.

### V. Outline

Provide a tentative, fully detailed outline of the dissertation. This may be presented with full- sentence points and sub-points, or it may be multi-sentence chapter summaries. It must give a clear sense of how the dissertation will investigate the issues set forth above.

### VI. Bibliography

Include a working bibliography in complete, proper, and consistent format. Proposals that do not conform to the Chicago Manual of Style or Turabian will not be accepted. Distinguish between sources already consulted and to be consulted.

### VII. Additional Materials

Include any other relevant materials after the bibliography. These may include appropriate illustrations or reproductions. Photocopies or scanned images may be used. Supplemental material should be kept to a minimum.

### **Dissertation Proposal Defense**

The student defends the proposal in a meeting of the dissertation committee, scheduled by the student after approval from the dissertation director, by the deadline posted each semester. The format for the defense is decided by the dissertation director, often requiring the student to speak for 10-15 minutes in advance of inviting questions and comments from committee members.

Per University requirements, it is expected that all members of the committee will be present at the dissertation proposal defense. In the event that a single member of the committee is unable to attend in person but can be available by video conference, the defense may proceed, pending approval from the Director of Graduate Studies. If more than one committee member is unable to attend, the defense will be rescheduled.

At the conclusion of the proposal defense, the committee members sign the dissertation proposal cover sheet indicating their approval. The student and dissertation director also sign the student's doctoral candidacy form.

One copy of the approved dissertation proposal, the signed cover sheet and the signed candidacy form are submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies.

## Dissertation Proposal Cover Sheet

To accompany the final draft of the proposal. All signatures required for submission.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Dissertation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

**Department of Art History**  
**ARTH 899 Work Plan & Evaluation Contract**  
*Complete all sections-including signatures*

Student:

Student V Number:

Dissertation Director:

Semester:

Year:

**Work Plan**

*Indicate work to be completed; include due dates of deliverables and dates of meetings to discuss work completed.*

*Please refer to departmental deadlines for the last day to defend a thesis or dissertation.  
It is customary to allow 4 weeks for the committee to review the final draft of the dissertation in advance of the defense.*

**Grading: Indicate the work to be completed for each grade**

S (Satisfactory) =

U (Unsatisfactory) =

F (Failure) =

Student Signature:

Date:

Director Signature:

Date:



## DEGREE CANDIDACY

Degree candidacy is required for all graduate students. To be admitted to candidacy, MA students must have satisfied the language requirement and completed 15 credit hours toward their program of study, including ARTH 690: Historiography and Methodology of Art History.

At the end of each spring semester, the Graduate Program Director will notify all first-year students of the process and deadlines for applying for degree candidacy.

PhD students are admitted to candidacy upon completion of coursework, foreign language exams, and field examinations as well as successful defense of the dissertation proposal. Candidacy allows the student to register for dissertation credits and is usually required when applying for external funding. After achieving candidacy, students must enroll in ARTH 899: Dissertation each fall and spring until graduation, except in cases in which they have been approved for a leave of absence.

### **Applying for External Research or Curatorial Fellowships**

Doctoral candidates are expected to apply for external fellowships that support their dissertation research and/or professional goals. While preparing their applications, students work closely with their faculty advisors and may seek input from the Director of Graduate Studies.

A list of funding agencies, foundations, and programs will be distributed to students at the start of the grant/fellowship season. For applications that require departmental nomination, doctoral candidates must submit application materials to the Director of Graduate Studies at least one month before the due date. These include CASVA (Center for the Advanced Study of the Visual Arts at the National Gallery, Washington, DC), Dedalus Foundation, and Kress Foundation.

## DISSERTATION PROGRESS

After admission to candidacy, doctoral students work under the supervision of the dissertation director to complete and defend a dissertation. The dissertation must represent independent research that is devoted to an original question or hypothesis with appropriate development, analysis and interpretation. Successful defense of the dissertation completes the requirements for the degree.

### Enrollment

The University requires that degree candidates maintain continuous enrollment. A graduate student who has completed course requirements for a degree must register for at least 1 credit at VCU each fall and spring semester until the degree is awarded. Students must be enrolled during the semester in which they apply to graduate.

The timeframe for completing the dissertation varies among students insofar as the nature and extent of research varies among individual dissertation topics. Students are required to maintain continuous enrollment of at least 1 credit hour per semester (excluding summer) until they have attained 6 hours of dissertation credit. After completing the 6 required dissertation credits, students may apply to graduate. If additional work is required to complete the dissertation, students must continue to enroll in 1 credit of dissertation until the dissertation is complete.

### Work Plans and Grades

At the start of each semester PhD candidates file a formal work plan, using the form provided on the department's website. Working with the dissertation director to complete the work plan, the candidate articulates the goals for the semester, notes due dates, and establishes meeting dates to discuss work that has been submitted during the semester.

The work plan also defines what constitutes satisfactory and unsatisfactory progress for the semester, which corresponds to the grade that will be assigned (S/U/F). This document, signed by both the student and the dissertation director, is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies before the student can enroll in dissertation credits.

Dissertation credits are graded S (satisfactory), U (unsatisfactory), and F (failing). The criteria for assigning grades is outlined in the student's aforementioned work plan submitted each semester.

S and U grades are not calculated in the GPA. However, credits graded U do not count toward graduation requirements and may need to be repeated. Receipt of a U may result in review of the student for termination from the program. A grade of (I) incomplete may not be assigned for a course approved for satisfactory, unsatisfactory or fail (S/U/F) grading.

A grade of U is a permanent grade. A student who received a U must earn an S in the subsequent semester in order to continue in the graduate program. A grade of F will result in immediate termination.

### Committee Members' Roles

Each doctoral candidate works closely with his or her dissertation director and consults with the director before sharing work-in-progress with the reader or with other committee members. It is only when the dissertation is complete and polished that the director advises the candidate to submit the manuscript to the reader.

The dissertation invariably takes shape in response to comments and suggestions from both the director and reader, both of whom must approve a final draft before a defense may be scheduled. Other committee members must receive an approved draft of the full dissertation at least four weeks in advance of the defense.

### **Dissertation Defense**

The dissertation director *and* reader must approve the dissertation before it is distributed to the full committee and defense scheduled. At least four weeks in advance of the defense, all committee members should be provided with a full draft (electronic or hard copy, depending on each committee member's preference) including illustrations, though illustrations will not be included in the final submission to the library.

The defense will be oral and last approximately two hours. The candidate will respond to questions from members of the committee about the dissertation. The committee will assess the student's performance and determine whether he or she has demonstrated a sufficient level of scholarship in the dissertation and defense. Although the draft presented at the defense is to be final and complete, the committee may require additional revisions. These are to be completed in time for the final copy to be deposited in the library by the date specified each semester by the Graduate School.

### **Evaluation**

The dissertation is evaluated by all dissertation committee members, using the Dissertation Evaluation Rubric.

## Dissertation Evaluation Rubric

Whole or half points may be awarded in each category. A score of 18 is needed to pass; a score of 23 is exemplary.

Components	Exemplary - 3	Acceptable - 2	Unacceptable -1
<b>Introduction/ Clarity of Thesis</b>	Sets up, defines, and clearly articulates a sound thesis and explains the significance of the dissertation.	States a thesis and notes the significance of the dissertation.	Does not provide a clear thesis statement; does not demonstrate the significance of the dissertation.
<b>Grounding in the Secondary Literature</b>	Demonstrates mastery of secondary literature; engages critically and analytically with it; makes a significant and original contribution to the secondary literature.	Demonstrates knowledge of relevant secondary literature; engages with and is contextualized within the secondary literature.	Does not demonstrate knowledge of relevant secondary literature; misinterprets or misunderstands the literature; and/or does not situate the project within the literature
<b>Quality of Primary Research (includes textual sources, artworks and/or artifacts)</b>	Offers compelling engagement with primary sources, which may include use of previously unpublished archival sources or passages.	Incorporates relevant primary sources and uses them to support the argument.	Uses too few or no primary sources; misinterprets or provides no context for these sources.
<b>Clarity of Methodology/ Theoretical Structure/Approach</b>	Clearly states a well-conceived and appropriate methodology and/or theoretical structure.	States an appropriate methodology and/or theoretical structure.	Does not clearly state or does not employ a methodology or theoretical structure.
<b>Quality of Analysis</b>	Analysis is sophisticated, compelling, and convincing; demonstrates superior control of the material.	Analysis is competent and convincing; demonstrates adequate control of the material.	Analysis is weak, confused, unclear, and/or inadequate. Does not demonstrate mastery of the material.
<b>Conclusions</b>	Conclusions are clearly stated, convincing, insightful, and original.	Conclusions are adequately stated and convincing.	Conclusions are not stated or are stated incompetently.
<b>Originality and Significance of Dissertation</b>	Dissertation is innovative and makes an original, significant contribution to the field.	Dissertation is well organized and makes a contribution to the field.	Dissertation does not offer an original contribution to the field.
<b>Quality of Written Mechanics</b>	Skillfully uses language that conveys meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually free of errors.	Uses language that conveys meaning to readers and has few errors.	Uses language that impedes meaning because of errors in usage.
<b>Overall</b>	Dissertation is of extraordinary quality and, with some revision, worthy of publication	Dissertation is of good quality and, with extensive/substantive revision, worthy of publication.	Dissertation is not of acceptable quality.

Department of Art History  
Virginia Commonwealth University

**Dissertation/Thesis Teleconference Approval Sheet**

*To accompany the completed ETD Signature Page. This form verifies that committee members authorize the student to attend his or her defense via teleconference.*

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Defense Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Dissertation/Thesis:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

## **Format and Style**

The format for final submitted versions of dissertations must conform to the Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Manual, which can be downloaded from the Graduate School web site. Note that illustrations are not included unless a student has documented permission to reproduce images from the relevant copyright holder(s).

Stylistically, dissertations follow *The Chicago Manual of Style* or Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, using only footnotes; endnotes and in-line citations are not used.

## **Submission of the Approved Dissertation**

The final draft of the dissertation must be submitted to Cabell Library by the deadline specified by the Graduate School and in accordance with the procedures posted on the VCU Libraries website: <http://guides.library.vcu.edu/etd>.

Documents that do not follow the format prescribed by the Graduate School risk being rejected for submission, thereby resulting in delayed graduation.

## **GRADUATION APPLICATION**

At the beginning of each semester, all matriculated students eligible to graduate receive an email prompt to initiate the application process. Completing a graduation application is required but does not guarantee graduation. If a student does not fulfill all program requirements in time for graduation, the graduation application is automatically canceled. They must apply again when requirements have been completed.

## **GROUNDS FOR TERMINATION**

In accordance with University and Departmental policy, reasons for termination may include but are not limited to:

- Academic performance (i.e., two grades of C or a single D or F grade in coursework)
- Discontinuous enrollment
- Exceeding time limit
- Honor policy violation
- Academic misconduct
- Professional misconduct

## **Termination Process**

The termination process is initiated at the department level. Students are notified of termination by the Director of Graduate Studies via email, at the same time that official paperwork is sent to the School of the Arts (SOTA) dean's office. The SOTA dean forwards the paperwork to the Graduate School dean's office, where the decision is reviewed and notification is sent to the Office of Records and Registration, which sends a termination letter via university email to the student. Upon receipt of the letter, the student interested in appealing the termination must initiate the process outlined below within 10 business days.

## **Appeal Process**

Upon receipt of the termination letter through email, the student interested in appealing notifies, via email, the Department Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies. Upon receipt of the student's request for an appeal, the following process is initiated:

1. A panel of three faculty members is appointed by the Department Chair to review the appeal. The panel will include the Director of Graduate Studies, a faculty member with whom the student has had little or no prior interaction, and one other member of the department.
2. The Director of Graduate Studies provides a written statement explaining the grounds for termination. This statement is sent to the student and members of the appeal panel.
3. Within 7 business days of receiving this statement, the student submits to the panel a written response that addresses three questions: Are any of the facts included in the statement inaccurate? Are there any extenuating circumstances that should be considered? Why is the student deserving of a second chance to complete the degree?
4. A hearing of the faculty panel is scheduled upon receiving the student's response. At the hearing, the student states his/her case to the appeal panel.
5. Immediately after the hearing, the appeal panel adjudicates until a unanimous decision is reached.
6. The Director of Graduate Studies writes a synopsis of statement, response, hearing, and decision. This synopsis is submitted to the other two faculty members for review. It is then submitted to the Department Chair for review. If the student is granted a second chance to complete the degree, the synopsis will delineate performance goals that the student must meet on or before specified dates in order to remain in the program.
7. After reviewing the panel's decision, the Department Chair communicates the outcome of the appeals process to the student. If the appeal is denied, the student may appeal for further review by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the School of the Arts. If this appeal is denied, a final appeal may be made through the office of the Graduate Dean according to the procedures outlined in the Graduate Bulletin.

Further information concerning the appeals process is located in the current Graduate Bulletin, available from <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/>. As with all matters of university policy, it is the student's responsibility to familiarize him/herself with the procedures of the School of the Arts and Graduate School.