

VCUARTS DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING + PRINTMAKING  
MFA Guidelines and Handbook 2019

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## **NEW STUDENTS: GETTING STARTED**

### V-NUMBER

This is your VCU identification number and it is used for all things from Human Resources to reimbursements. Kat in the PAPER Office can tell you what your V# is. Note: It is not the number that appears on your VCU ID card.

### eID

The next thing you'll need is an "eID". This is a login name with a corresponding password that is used for many digital resources throughout the VCU system. When you set this up you will be able to choose your own password. This is something you can do yourself online, once you have your VCU card number. To set up your eID, go [here](#).

You'll need to have your VCU card number or V-number handy to get your eID.

### VCU ID CARD

To get your ID Card go to the VCUCard office, located at:

701 W. Broad St.  
8 AM - 5 PM, Monday - Friday  
804-827-2273

Once you have your card, we can have it coded to give you 24 hour access to the Fine Arts Building via the card swipes on the front and back doors. Please email the number on the back of your ID card along with your V# (more on that below) to David Wood, PAPER Program Coordinator, [dhwood@vcu.edu](mailto:dhwood@vcu.edu).

### VCU email

Students are required to obtain an official VCU student email account within one week of the beginning of their first semester of enrollment. Students are responsible for reading communications sent to their official VCU student email account. The Office of Financial Aid uses email to provide financial aid information, to request documentation to support financial aid application data and to provide financial aid application status and award information. Information on how to set up an account is available [here](#).

Your email address will be your eID@vcu .edu and the password will be the same as the one set for the eID . VCU email is accessible through the portal mentioned above, and then selecting "Faculty/Staff Email (appsforVCU) " in the "Resources" box on the right hand side of the portal

page. You can also access your email by going to VCU's home page: <http://www.vcu.edu/>. Go to the "Faculty and staff drop down list and select "Email (Google)" and login with your eID and password.

## eSERVICES

Now that you are set up, you can take advantage of eServices, where you can view and edit your personal information, access student information, view and print course rosters, and view employee information such as pay stubs, tax forms, etc. To access eServices, go to VCU's home page (<http://www.vcu.edu/>) and click on the "myVCU" button located in the "Faculty and staff drop-down menu at the top of the page. There you can login to the VCU Portal with your eID and password. This will take you to a page full of information, but fear not: Click on the "eServicesNCU Self Service" link which is located in the top right corner in the "Resources" box.

This will take you to a page with a series of gray tabs: "Personal Information", "Faculty Services", and "Employee". Personal information such as your address and phone number is listed under the "Personal Information" tab. If you need to change this information, do it here. Please also let the office know so we can have your current information in our records. Under the "Faculty Services" tab, you can look up student information and schedules, and here you can obtain your roster. To obtain your roster, click on "Detail Class List" or "Summary Class List", then select the current term from the drop-down menu, then select the course you are teaching from the drop down menu next to "CRN". (The CRN (course reference number) is a five-digit number associated with your class. If you do not know your CRN number, let me know, or look it up under "Class Schedule" by searching for Sculpture classes.) Click the "Submit" button and your roster will appear. You should check this both before and after the drop/add week as it may well change during that time as students adjust their schedules.

Under the "Faculty Services" tab you can also submit grades at the end of the semester by clicking on "Final Grades" and selecting student grades from the drop down menu listed by each student's name. If you are formally submitting midterm grades, you may do the same by clicking on "Midterm Grades".

## Mail

Mailboxes for MFA students and faculty are located in the PAPR office. Internal department notices as well as general VCU and VCU arts mail will go there. If you have anything delivered use the following mailing address:

Virginia Commonwealth University  
Fine Arts Building  
1000 West Broad Street  
Box 842016

Richmond, VA 23284-2016

All mail from USPS will be delivered to the PAPR office for pick up. All FedEx and UPS packages will be delivered the FAB front desk. When packages come in your name will be written on the board at the FAB front desk.

### Blackboard

If you are interested in setting up a Blackboard account, go to <http://blackboard.vcu.edu>. On this page, click on the little login icon at the top and login with your eID and password . For support, call the VCU Technology Services Help Desk at 804-828-2227 for assistance .

### Reserving rooms and equipment

The PAPR department has three critique rooms. You can reserve these spaces by signing up on the calendars outside of each room.

A computer, printer, and copier, are available for your use in Room 313. The door code is 1339\*.

Additional AV equipment may be reserved and used, including access to the digital lab, screenprint room, and lithography room by contacting VCU Print Technician and Professor Brooke Inman.

### Registration & Advising

Graduate students register for classes one to two weeks before classes begin. Advising is scheduled each semester with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) in collaboration with the Administrative Coordinator. Please visit the academic calendar on the VCU website: <http://academiccalendars.vcu.edu/>

### **Studios**

Graduate students are provided studio space for four semesters. Your studio is the headquarters for your research and practice. Students have access to their studios 24/7, except for times when the Fine Arts Building is closed in accordance with VCU holidays and in the event of maintenance. Studios are also open and available to students during the summer.

The Fine Arts Building is located at 1000 W. Broad St. The building is open 7am - 6pm, Monday-Friday. Students have access during all other times with their VCU ID.

You are required to [follow health and safety guidelines as required by VCU](#). Keep all flammable materials in the flammable cabinet provided. Students are not permitted to live in their studio. Alcohol or drugs are not permitted on VCU property in accordance with VCU policy.

Each student must read, sign, and return a [studio contract](#) [see appendix A] to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The student will receive a studio key to be returned at the end of their studies. At this time their studio space must be clean, with all belongings cleared from the studio, walls must be patched and painted by the student and floors must be in good condition. A final walkthrough must be done with the Administrative Coordinator.

Graduate students may move into their studios August 1 of their first year. First year students are assigned studios. At the end of the first year students may request the studio spaces of outgoing second year students. These requests go to the DGS who then assigns studios, taking these requests into account. Graduating second year students must move out by July 1. Between July 1 and August 1, studios left by second year students will be cleaned and first year students may move into them, allowing their outgoing studios to be cleaned. Cleaning will be coordinated by the Dept. chair.

Please note that there is also a storage area dedicated for MFA student work. Graduating students must clear out all work from this area by July 1 of their graduating year. All graduating students must do a walk through of their studio after it is cleared out and cleaned with a member of the PAPER office staff at which point they will hand in their key.

## Curriculum

Sixty credits of courses at 500 level or above are required for the award of the M.F.A. degree. Transfer credits are not accepted; all graduate study must be completed at VCU. Enrollment in four semesters of full-time study at VCU is required for the award of the M.F.A. degree. Part-time study is not allowed.

The [curriculum](#) is currently structured as follows:

### First Semester

Issues in Contemporary Visual Arts (PAPR 525)	3
Art and Critical Theory (PAPR 527)	3
Graduate Studio (PAPR 605)	3 (visiting graduate prof.)
Graduate Group Critique (PAPR 680)	3
Graduate Seminar (PAPR 690)	3 (visiting graduate prof.)

### Second Semester

Graduate Studio (PAPR 605)	3 (visiting graduate prof.)
Candidacy Exhibition (PAPR 650)	3 (committee chair)
Graduate Group Critique (PAPR 680)	3
Graduate Seminar (PAPR 690)	3 (visiting graduate prof.)
Approved Elective (500 level or higher)	3

#### Third Semester

Graduate Studio (PAPR 605)	3 (visiting graduate prof.)
Professional Practice (PAPR 660)	3
Graduate Group Critique (PAPR 680)	3
Graduate Seminar (PAPR 690)	3 (visiting graduate prof.)
Approved Elective (500 level or higher)	3

#### Fourth Semester

Graduate Studio (PAPR 605)	3 (visiting graduate prof.)
Thesis (PAPR 670)	3 (committee chair)
Graduate Group Critique (PAPR 680)	3
Graduate Seminar (PAPR 690)	3 (visiting graduate prof.)
Approved Elective (500 level or higher)	3

TOTAL	60
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#### **PAPR 525. Issues in Contemporary Visual Arts. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits. Prerequisite: Painting and printmaking majors only. The investigation of content and meaning of major directions in contemporary art as they relate to the studio. Students will relate their own work to major movements in contemporary visual art.

#### **PAPR 527. Art and Critical Theory. 3 Hours.**

Semester courses; 3 lecture hours. 3, 3 credits. Prerequisite: General art history or equivalent. Major themes in art criticism and theory from 1940 to the present. This course provides an introduction to the literature of art criticism as well as artists' writings in relation to studio production.

#### **PAPR 605. Graduate Studio. 3,6 Hours.**

Semester course; 4.5 or 9 studio hours. 3 or 6 credits. May be repeated for a total of 24 credits. Enrollment is restricted to students in the painting and printmaking concentration of the M.F.A. in Fine Arts. A studio course in which primary emphasis is placed on individual creative projects with regular exposure to the critical attention of the teaching faculty in the department. Special

attention is given to the development of personal expression through individual research and criticism.

**PAPR 650. Candidacy Exhibition. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 4.5 studio hours. 3 credits. Enrollment is restricted to students in the painting and printmaking concentration of the M.F.A. in Fine Arts; students in other M.F.A. concentrations may enroll with permission of the instructor. This course comprises the process of producing work for and planning a group exhibition by first-year M.F.A. students, a crucial qualifying step for students in the program.

**PAPR 660. Professional Practices. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Seminar for the purpose of examining the range of professional practices in the field of contemporary art. Students will learn skills that apply to various parts of the field. The course will also address major debates within the field.

**PAPR 670. Thesis. 1-3 Hours.**

Semester course; 1.5-4.5 studio hours. 1-3 credits. Enrollment is restricted to students in the painting and printmaking concentration of the M.F.A. in Fine Arts. This course comprises the process of producing work for and exhibiting it in the thesis exhibition, a written thesis, and an oral presentation by second-year M.F.A. students, a crucial qualifying step for students in the program.

**PAPR 680. Graduate Group Critique. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 4.5 studio hours. 3 credits. May be repeated for a total of 12 credits. Enrollment is restricted to students in the painting and printmaking concentration of the M.F.A. in Fine Arts; those in other M.F.A. concentrations may enroll with permission of the instructor. A seminar class in which primary emphasis is placed on the discussion of individual creative projects with regular exposure to the critical attention of the other graduate students in the department, under the direction of the teaching faculty. Special emphasis is given to the development of personal expression through individual research and criticism.

**PAPR 690. Graduate Seminar. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 12 credits. Enrollment is restricted to students in the painting and printmaking concentration of the M.F.A. in Fine Arts; students in other M.F.A. concentrations may enroll with permission of the instructor. Weekly seminar for the purpose of examining the contemporary issues within the field of fine art. Students will also have a chance to discuss the ideas that manifest in their work and in the work of others.

**MFA Committees**

Committees are made up of three full time VCU faculty members. Of the three, the student may select one faculty member from outside PAPR. A fourth non-voting member can be added, but only in consultation with the DGS, the committee chair, and the department chair.

If a faculty member goes on leave for one or more semesters, the student, in consultation with the DGS will decide on a faculty member to replace them for the duration of their absence. Students and the replacement faculty member must fill out the graduate committee form to document this process. The replacement committee member must have the same faculty designation as the original faculty member – PAPR faculty will replace PAPR faculty and outside faculty will replace outside faculty.

One full time faculty member serves as chair of the graduate student's committee. The chair has the following responsibilities:

- Ensures that all reviews for the committee are scheduled.
- Moderates, reviews, and conveys faculty remarks to the student.
- Communicates academic status of the student at mid-term and at the end of each semester.
- Mentor MFA student with regard to teaching in both GTA and adjunct capacities, including syllabus development.

#### Individual studio visits with committee members

On average, students will meet with each committee member twice a semester, once before and once after the mid-term review. Students are required to meet with the chair of the committee twice a semester outside of the mid-term review.

#### Building your Committee:

First Semester: Incoming graduate students do not have a committee. Students choose their committee during their first semester. It is strongly recommended that students invite all full-time faculty to conduct studio visits with them to determine a graduate committee best suited to their MFA research.

Second semester: First year graduate students in their second semester must submit a list of their top four committee members by January 24th. They should ask faculty if they can be added to this list. From this list the DGS and chair will approve three committee members by Feb 1st. Once the committee is approved students must submit a Graduate Committee Form [see Appendix B], not only to document the student's choices but also to indicate that the professor chosen for the committee has agreed to participate, by Feb 7th.



Third semester: Students may switch out one member of the committee in extraordinary circumstances, approved by the DGS. They must fill out the graduate committee form once again. Committees must be confirmed by the add/drop deadline.

Fourth semester: Students must maintain the committees from the third semester so that they have one committee for the entire second year.

## REVIEWS

### Committee reviews:

The Committee's function is two fold: to both provide feedback and evaluation of the student's practice in an intimate context. The graduate committee works closely with the student until graduation and advises the student in organizing the final exhibition and writing the Research Statement (a.k.a. MFA Thesis). The committee informs the student any time the work is below graduate standards. A student's graduate committee is the ultimate arbiter of their academic progress. It is recommended that all committee reviews for a semester are scheduled at the start of that semester.

### Full faculty reviews:

The goal of the full faculty reviews is for students to hear a wider range of perspectives from all full time PAPER faculty, all outside members of the committees, and the visiting graduate professor. Outside critics may be invited as well, to further diversify the range of perspectives, at the discretion of the graduate director and the department chair.

### Mid term reviews:

The goal of the mid term review is for faculty to provide feedback and assess the student's progress midway through the semester.

Note: All reviews are for MFA students and faculty only.

### Review outline:

#### *first semester*

- mid term review (faculty)
  - Three faculty members meet with the student who presents their progress. The faculty gives oral feedback at the end. The schedule is created by the chair and DGS.

- end of semester review (full faculty)
  - Faculty members meet with student for the student to present their progress. The faculty gives oral feedback at the end. All faculty participate equally for first year grads.

*second semester*

- mid term review (committee)
  - committee meets with student for the student to present their progress. The faculty gives oral feedback. At the end, the student leaves the room for 5 minutes Then the student comes back and meets with the committee chair to discuss the assessment of the committee.
- candidacy review (committee)
  - This review is attended by the student's committee, and either the DGS or PAPR Chair. Students may also invite additional members to this review, limited to the DGS, the dept. Chair or the Visiting Graduate Professor. These reviews will be scheduled on the same day by the DGS.
  - At this review, the graduate committee recommends the student for candidacy, for postponement of candidacy, or to leave the program. After the review the committee chair gives oral feedback and an candidacy form must be digitally submitted by the student and signed by the committee.
  - Students and the DGS must be informed in writing by their committee chair within 2 business days after the candidacy review if the committee decides that the result of the candidacy review is postponement of candidacy or to leave the program.

*third semester*

- mid term review (committee)
  - committee meets with student for the student to present their progress. The faculty gives oral feedback at the end, the student leaves the room for 5 minutes Then the student comes back and meets with the committee chair to discuss the assessment of the committee.
- end of semester review (full faculty)
  - The committee leads the critique, and then opens it up to all faculty for the last fifteen minutes. After the review the committee chair sends written feedback to the student, copying full committee and director of graduate studies.

*fourth semester*

- mid term review (committee)
  - committee meets with student for the student to present their progress. The faculty gives oral feedback at the end, the student leaves the room for 5 minutes. Then the student comes back and meets the committee chair to discuss the assessment of the committee.
  
- oral defense of thesis exhibition review (committee)
  - The student must meet with their committee after the opening for final evaluation of the work for a one hour meeting. The student must send the most recent draft of their thesis to the entire committee three days in advance of the meeting. The student presents their work and faculty respond with questions and evaluation. At the end of this meeting the student leaves the room for 5 minutes, while the committee decides if they pass or fail this portion of the thesis requirement. They then inform the student orally.

### **1st Year MFA Candidacy**

Students must qualify for continuing status at the end of the second semester. Candidacy for the M.F.A. degree is based on a review of the student's work before completion of 30 credits. At this review, the graduate committee recommends the student for candidacy, for postponement of candidacy, or to leave the program. Students and the DGS must be informed of this status in writing by their committee chair within 2 business days after the candidacy review.

A 500 word artist statement is to be written by the candidate and distributed to the committee (and additional members) at least one week prior to the candidacy meeting. This statement should articulate the major concerns or areas of research that the student is engaged in and the contemporary discourse that surrounds their work.

Students will mount a candidacy exhibition as part of the candidacy requirements. A second semester 1st year GTA, selected by the graduate director and the department chair, is the primary organizer of the candidacy exhibition. This includes finding an exhibition space, organizing installation and deinstallation, a marketing plan, budget, and working with the PAPR office to secure insurance and a lease. The graduate director and the department chair will serve in an advisory capacity to this exhibition. Even though a GTA has the primary role of leadership and administrative responsibility for this exhibition all students are expected to participate and support the exhibition. The exhibition should include at least one work per student, checklist, marketing plan including a press release, and opening reception.

Students are encouraged to engage their committees in planning for their candidacy exhibition.

Achievement of candidacy is based on the student's artistic development, articulation of ideas and influences, and knowledge of media. Grades do not determine candidacy. Graduate students who are eligible for candidacy must complete and sign the Degree Candidacy Form, then submit it to the DGS for approval and processing.

In the event that the student has had their candidacy postponed they will be given one opportunity to show their work by the first week of school in the fall semester. In this case, the committee must evaluate the exhibition and inform the student and DGS in writing that the student has passed or failed candidacy. In this case, the student will receive an incomplete for the spring semester and a final grade in the following fall semester. The decision must be made, and the final grade must be submitted by the add/drop deadline.

In the event that a student does not pass candidacy, they must withdraw from the program using the [VCU ENROLLMENT CANCELLATION REQUEST FORM](#).

## **Graduation Requirements**

Students submit a Graduation Application Form in eServices at the beginning of their final semester. They may find guidelines and forms [here](#). No degrees will be conferred unless students formally apply to graduate.

In order to graduate, MFA students must complete three parts of their “thesis.” These include: the thesis exhibition, the written thesis, and the artist talk. Each student will have registered for PAPER 650 with the chair of their committee. This course will be graded to reflect an evaluation of the student in each of these three areas. These three areas will be graded in the following manner:

50% thesis exhibition  
25% written thesis  
25% artist talk

In the event that the student does not successfully pass the thesis exhibition there is no further option and they will not receive their degree. If the student fails to successfully complete the written thesis or the artist talk, they will be given one opportunity to take a 1 credit course over the summer during which they can submit another draft of their written thesis or do another version of the lecture. In this case, the committee and the department chair must evaluate the lecture. Committee members may view either live or prerecorded versions of the lecture but at least one person needs to be at the lecture in person.

Candidates for degrees are eligible for graduation upon the successful completion of all academic requirements. Students are responsible for keeping track of their credit hours and

their completion of academic requirements. The DGS will conduct advising sessions once a semester to check on a student's progress.

### **Thesis Exhibition**

Students must exhibit their MFA thesis research at the Anderson Gallery as a part of the annual VCUarts MFA thesis exhibitions. The Gallery Manager conducts studio visits with second-year grads in advance of the exhibition and assigns exhibition spaces. The Anderson Gallery typically organizes two rounds of thesis exhibitions, both in April.

If a student wants to hold an off site installation, exhibition, performance to supplement their work at the Anderson Gallery, they must obtain the approval of their committee.

Each student must document their work in the exhibition. The student must submit one image of each work included in the exhibition, caption information for each image, and an artist statement to the PAPER DGS by the first week of May.

Students will be working closely with the gallery manager at the Anderson and are also encouraged to engage their committee in preparation.

For expectations and requirements on the *oral defense of thesis exhibition review* go to *thesis exhibition* under *Review Outline* on page 8.

### **Written Thesis (a.k.a Research Statement)**

Each student is required to submit a written thesis to their committee. The thesis should be a summary of the student's practice. This should include an overall summary of the practice, with particular attention to the two years of graduate study, but most importantly specific examples from the work exhibited in the Anderson Gallery MFA thesis exhibition. It should address the ways in which the student's practice engages with particular contemporary art discourses, such as other artists' practices, exhibitions, criticism, or literature. It should also address various art histories, modern and/or premodern, and any other relevant area of inquiry. The thesis should articulate a position, including formal, material, or conceptual modes of inquiry. The thesis is not a biographical statement.

The thesis should be between 5,000 - 10,000 words, including a bibliography, following the Chicago Manual of Style as a method of citation. Each thesis must also include a one page list of keywords relevant to the student's practice. Images may be included in the thesis but are not required.

Each graduate student is assigned a thesis advisor at the beginning of the second year (third semester). The thesis advisor may or may not be the committee chair; thesis advisor

assignments are made by the Department Chair based on faculty workload and availability in consultation with the DGS and committee chair. The thesis advisor is the primary point of contact for all issues related to the thesis. After each draft is submitted to the thesis advisor, they must produce comments within one week so that the student can meet the next deadline. If students miss deadlines the final grade for the thesis will be negatively affected, potentially risking the failure of the written component of the thesis requirement.

The electronic versions of the thesis must be submitted to the VCU Library system by the date specified by the Library (usually the second week in May). VCU's Graduate School provides [guidelines](#) regarding the formatting and submission of the thesis via an [online manual](#). All theses are submitted and archived digitally; because of this, theses can also include less conventional components, such as video, sound, etc. Instructions regarding the digital submission of theses is provided to second-year graduate students during the spring semester; a meeting with Library personnel will be scheduled by the DGS.

Students should make use of the [VCU Writing Center](#).

### **Thesis timetable**

1st week of December: Initial meeting with DGS and all second year students.

February 1: Obtain approval of outline and hold meeting with thesis advisor to discuss the plan.

March 1: By this date each student must submit a first draft to their advisor. This draft may be partially developed but should be around 2500 words.

April 1: By this date each student must submit a second draft to their advisor and committee. The advisor and committee must send edits to the student by April 15th.

May 1: Completed theses due to advisor and committee for final review and approval. Committees have one week to approve or deny approval.

May 7: Electronic theses must be approved by thesis advisor and committee, and uploaded by student by 9:00 pm.

May 8: ETD forms due to DGS for final departmental signature at 9:00 a.m. EST

### **ARTIST TALK**

The Artist Talk is a 30 minute lecture by the graduating student that summarizes their practice, with a primary emphasis on the body of work presented at the Anderson Gallery exhibition. This lecture, similar to the written thesis, should also place the student's practice within the context of

a wider set of discourses. Students are also expected to present a position in relation to this context. This lecture is typically scheduled for the first week in April.

While the thesis should present an outline for this lecture, students should not read a written paper. The format of this lecture should be akin to an artist talk.

The audience for this lecture must include the student's graduate committee but these lectures should be open to the general public, including, but not limited to, PAPR, VCUarts and VCU faculty and students. VCU faculty are expected to attend.

There will be a 10 minute Q&A session, during which the committee will ask the student questions about their presentation. Following the lecture, the committee should meet to discuss the merits of the presentation and decide whether or not to pass the student. Within 24 hours, the committee chair must notify the student, in writing or orally, if they passed the oral defense.

### **Visiting Artists and Critics**

PAPR invites 6-8 visiting artists and critics per year. In most cases they conduct a public lecture and conduct studio visits with MFA students. In some cases these visits are co-sponsored with other departments or the ICA and in that event, the opportunities for student contact with the visitor will be spread between the various entities. In some cases a visitor may only deliver a public presentation and in some cases they might only conduct studio visits, meet with a class, or conduct a workshop.

In all cases, MFA students are expected to participate in any events that they are invited to, most importantly, attending the lectures and signing up for studio visits. In addition, the PAPR department makes an effort to provide informal situations, such as group meals or receptions, for students and faculty to interact with the visitor. If invited, students are expected to attend these events as well.

### **MFA admissions**

First and second year MFA students are required to assist in the admissions process for the next incoming graduate class. This includes participation in the open house held in the fall semester, reviewing candidate applications, interviewing candidates, and assistance with tours, dinners, and meetings with visiting candidates. All activities will be scheduled by the chair and DGS.

### **GTA AND MFA ADJUNCT GUIDELINES**

**GTA and MFA Adjunct Mentoring:**

Each graduate student instructor will consult the chair of their committee who can answer questions throughout the semester regarding general course management, grading, and pedagogical issues.

**Assignments and expected outcomes**

Each instructor may devise their own assignments for their course, provided that the course content conforms to both the course description and the course's expected learning outcomes. All PAPR course descriptions are available at

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/arts/painting-printmaking/painting-printmaking-bfa/#coursestext>.

It is strongly recommended that you use the syllabus of a faculty member who has previously taught your course as a guide for developing your own syllabus. You should feel free to contact your faculty mentor and any other faculty in your area for guidance with course organization and planning.

**Reminders:**

- Email your course syllabus to both the DGS and Kat by August 27.
- Ensure all students are on your roster by the end of add/drop. In compliance with University policies, students may not attend courses in which they are not formally enrolled.
- Course Evaluations: VCU conducts electronic final evaluations for classes in which 5 or more students are enrolled. Faculty may access these evaluations approximately two weeks after the end of the semester (through eservices).

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**PAPR guidelines:****Classroom safety**

You may ask your committee chair or GTA supervisor to review with you the safety guidelines relevant to your classroom. These may include proper use of supplies, disposal of solvents, use of gloves, goggles, and/or other safety gear, etc. All Printmaking GTAs or MFA adjuncts must check with Brooke Inman about printmaking safety procedures.

**Communicating with students**

The instructor's VCU email address should be included on the course syllabus. All instructors should check their VCU email regularly in order to receive and to respond to messages from students.



## Attendance

Attendance is Mandatory: A maximum of 2 absences are allowed. This includes emergencies, illness, or court dates. Further absences cannot be excused with doctor's notes or any other form of documentation. Tardiness and leaving early will be counted as a partial absence. Students are responsible for informing the professor if they plan on being absent or late or after the fact of the absence or lateness was out of the student's control.

PAPR departmental policy allows for 2 absences without penalty. A third absence will result in the student's final grade to drop one letter and one more for every subsequent absence. If a student has a final grade of an A but is absent 3 times they will receive a B. If they are absent 4 times they will receive a C, and so on. Late arrivals and early departures accumulate toward absences. 3 latenesses equal 1 absence. Lateness is defined as 10 minutes or more. This also applies to breaks.

## GRADING POLICY

A – Excellent: You should adhere to the department attendance policy with no pattern of tardiness and you should possess exceptional attitude, which is reflected in your critique participation, response to criticism, and professional conduct. Your work must manifest remarkable achievement both in quantity and quality. Your ability to communicate ideas should exhibit noteworthy achievement.

B – Good: You should adhere to the department attendance policy with no pattern of tardiness and have a positive attitude, which is reflected in your critique participation; response to criticism and professional conduct is expected. Your work must manifest high quality achievement. You should possess sound, above-average ability to communicate your ideas.

C – Satisfactory: You should adhere to the department attendance policy with no pattern of tardiness and a positive attitude, which is reflected in your critique participation, response to criticism, and professional conduct is expected. Your work must manifest acceptable achievement both in quality and quantity. You should possess satisfactory ability to communicate your ideas.

D – Poor: Less than satisfactory adherence to the department attendance policy and/or a pattern of tardiness could result in this grade. Exhibiting a below standard or indifferent attitude, which is reflected in your critique participation, response to criticism and unprofessional conduct could also result in this grade. A grade of D indicates your work is less than acceptable in quality and/or quantity. This grade could indicate your inability to satisfactorily communicate ideas.

F – Failure: A pattern of non-adherence to the department attendance policy and/or excessive tardiness could result in a failing grade. If you possess an unacceptable attitude, which is reflected, in your lack of critique participation, response to criticism and unprofessional conduct, and/or your work shows a pattern of low productivity and/or unacceptable quality you could receive a failing grade.

## Midterm and Final Grades

Instructors in PAPR are not required to enter official midterm grades in eServices. But students should receive a midterm grade to reflect their progress. Brief one-on-one midterm meetings are recommended for students that are falling behind.

Final grades should be entered after the submission of all course work and/or the completion of final critiques and before the grading deadline.

### **Incomplete Grades**

When circumstances beyond a student's control prevent the student from meeting course requirements by the end of the semester, the student may request the instructor to assign the mark of I for that semester. If in agreement with this request, the instructor fills out an incomplete grade assignment form bearing the student's signature. A grade cannot be changed to I after the deadline for grade submissions. For more information, go to:

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/university/grading/>

### **FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 [FERPA] protects the privacy rights of students.

Generally, the act provides that no personally identifiable information will be disclosed without the student's consent, except for directory information and information to other school officials with a legitimate educational interest. No student information of any kind (e.g., grades, course progress, other documents) can be shared with anyone who does not have a business need-to-know unless the student provides written consent (a waiver).

### **Title IX**

All GTA students and MFA adjuncts should familiarize themselves with [the title IX policies](#) of VCU which are designed to provide an environment free from sexual misconduct, assault, harassment or any sex/gender discrimination

### **VCUarts and PAPER Model policies**

All VCUarts faculty must review and follow the [VCUarts model guidelines](#).

All requests for models must be made to the PAPER chair by the add/drop deadline.

### **Statements for Syllabi and Blackboard Pages**

Students should review **all** syllabus statement information. Visit <http://go.vcu.edu/syllabus> to view online. VCUarts has a suggested template available [here](#).

Syllabus Statement topics include:

1. [Campus emergency information](#)
2. [Class registration required for attendance](#)

3. Honor System: upholding academic integrity
4. Important dates
5. Managing stress
6. Mandatory responsibility of faculty members to report incidents of sexual misconduct
7. Military short-term training or deployment
8. Student email standard
9. Student financial responsibility
10. Students representing the university - excused absences
11. Students with disabilities
12. Withdrawal from classes
13. Faculty communication about students

### **1. Campus emergency information**

Sign up to receive at [alert.vcu.edu/signup/](http://alert.vcu.edu/signup/). It is essential to keep your information up-to-date within VCU Alert and to keep your permanent address and emergency contact information current in eServices.

VCU uses a variety of communication methods to alert the campus community about emergency situations and safety threats. Learn more about types of alerts at [alert.vcu.edu/know/typesofalerts.php](http://alert.vcu.edu/know/typesofalerts.php)

Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234), and report suspicious activities and objects.

### **2. Class registration required for attendance**

Students may attend only those classes for which they have registered. Faculty may not add students to class rosters or Blackboard. If students are attending a class for which they have not registered, they must stop attending.

### **3. Honor System: upholding academic integrity**

The VCU Honor System policy describes the responsibilities of students, faculty and administration in upholding academic integrity. According to this policy, "Members of the academic community are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty, ethics and integrity at all times." Students are expected to read the policy in full and learn about requirements here: <https://conduct.students.vcu.edu/vcu-honor-system/>

### **4. Important dates**

Important dates for the semester are listed in the VCU Academic Calendar:  
<https://academiccalendars.vcu.edu/>

### **5. Managing stress**

Students may experience situations or challenges that can interfere with learning and interpersonal functioning including stress, anxiety, depression, alcohol and/or other drug use, concern for a friend or family member, loss, sleep difficulties, feeling hopeless or relationship problems. There are numerous campus resources available to students including University Counseling Services (804-828-6200 MPC Campus, 804-828-3964 MCV Campus), University Student Health Services (MPC 804 828-8828, MCV Campus 804 828-9220) and the Wellness Resource Center (804-828-9355). 24 hour emergency mental health support is available by calling 828-1234 and asking to speak to the on-call therapist or utilizing the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-784-2433).

### **6. Mandatory responsibility of faculty members to report incidents of sexual misconduct**

All employees, including faculty, department chairs and deans, are required to report any incidents of sexual assault, sexual exploitation and partner or relationship violence to the university's Title IX Coordinator.

Confidential offices which can provide support at VCU are: University Counseling Services (804) 828-6200

For more information about Title IX, please visit please visit <https://equity.vcu.edu/>.

### **7. Military short-term training or deployment**

If military students receive orders for short-term training or for deployment/mobilization, they should inform and present their orders to Military Student Services and to their professor(s). For further information on policies and procedures contact Military Student Services at 828-5993 or access the corresponding policies.

### **8. Student email standard**

Email is considered an official method for communication at VCU. Students are expected to check their official VCU email on a frequent and consistent basis (the university recommends daily) in order to remain informed of university-related communications. Students are responsible for the consequences of not reading, in a timely fashion, university-related communications sent to their official VCU student email account. Mail sent to the VCU email address may include notification of university-related actions, including disciplinary action.

Students must read this standard in its entirety at

<https://ts.vcu.edu/media/technology-services/content-assets/university-resources/ts-groups/information-security/StudentEmailStandard.pdf>

### **9. Student financial responsibility**

Students assume the responsibility of full payment of tuition and fees generated from their registration, all charges for housing and dining services and other applicable miscellaneous charges. Students are ultimately responsible for any unpaid balance on their account as a result of the University Financial Aid Office or their third party sponsor canceling or reducing their award(s).

#### **10. Students representing the university – excused absences**

Students who represent the university (athletes and others) do not choose their schedules. All student athletes should provide their schedules to their instructors at the beginning of the semester. The Intercollegiate Athletic Council strongly encourages faculty to treat missed classes or exams (because of a scheduling conflict) as excused absences and urges faculty to work with the students to make up the work or exam.

#### **11. Students with disabilities**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, require that VCU provide "academic adjustments" or "reasonable accommodations" to any student who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. To receive accommodations, students must register with the Office of Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity on the Monroe Park Campus (828-2253) or the Division for Academic Success on the MCV campus (828-9782). Please also visit the Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity website via <https://saeo.vcu.edu/> and/or the Division for Academic Success website via <https://das.vcu.edu/> for additional information.

Once students have completed the registration process, they should schedule a meeting with their instructor (s) and provide their instructor (s) with an official accommodation letter. Students should follow this procedure for all courses in the academic semester.

#### **12. Withdrawal from classes**

Before withdrawing from classes, students should consult their instructor as well as other appropriate university offices. Withdrawing from classes may negatively impact a student's financial aid award and his or her semester charges. To discuss financial aid and the student bill, visit the Student Services Center at 1015 Floyd Avenue (Harris Hall) and/or contact your financial aid counselor regarding the impact on your financial aid.

#### **13. Faculty communication about students**

VCU instructional faculty, administrators and staff maintain confidentiality of student records and disclose information in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This means that VCU officials may disclose student record information without the consent of the student in certain situations. To support university operations, for example, VCU officials share information about students with other educational officials as necessary to perform their job duties. FERPA permits this disclosure to school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the student information. In addition, VCU officials have obligations to report information shared by a student depending on the content of that information, for example, in compliance with VCU's policy on the duty to report. Unless FERPA permits a certain

disclosure, VCU generally requires consent from a student to disclose information from their education record to another individual. You may find additional information on the VCU FERPA website: <http://rar.vcu.edu/records/family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act/>.

## **PAPR GTA AND ADJUNCT POLICIES**

GTA's are meant to both assist faculty with teaching responsibilities but also to train MFA students to teach at a college level. These assignments are not research assistant positions for faculty.

In the 1st year MFA students typically have GTA assignment for 2 courses, 6 hours each = 12 hours/week plus 3 hours of preparation time. This may occur within or without scheduled class times but will remain a 15 hour commitment.

In the 2nd year, in the event that MFA students are hired to teach as adjuncts, their maximum time commitment will be 6 hours/week of scheduled class time plus course preparation, totalling 15 hours/week.

In addition to assisting professors with teaching, a few GTA assignments will include supporting visiting artists, social media, and in the second semester one 1st year MFA student will be assigned as a part of their GTA duties to organize candidacy and the senior show.

## **Teaching Guidance**

All MFA students are provided regular opportunities to learn basic skills and problem solving techniques for the classroom. These sessions will be offered approximately once a month and will be led by the DGS and the Dept. chair.

These sessions will address issues such as:

- first day: names, gender identification, methods of introduction, communicating expectations
- critiques - best practices
- navigating the personal
- understanding the students
- crisis management - [VCU Classroom safety](#)
- [Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence](#)
- Methods of evaluation
- Classroom dynamics
- Methods for engagement

## **UNDERGRADUATE MENTORING PROGRAM**

<https://graduate.vcu.edu/development/mentorship.html>

The Graduate School's Mentorship Program matches undergraduate students with mentors who are graduate students as they make decisions about post-baccalaureate study and transition from undergraduate to graduate student status.

The program provides graduate students with the opportunity to develop mentoring skills as they share personal experiences with undergraduate participants in the program.

Mentors must be in at least their second year of graduate study. Students selected as mentors will be expected to participate in a combination of formal and informal activities, including:

- A mentorship training session at the beginning of the program
- Weekly interactions of one to three hours with undergraduate participants
- One-on-one meetings with program staff to discuss progress
- Participation in a program evaluation at the end of the semester
- Providing shadowing opportunities for their undergraduate partners

## **Pecha Kucha**

VCUarts hosts a "Slide Slam" at the start of each fall semester. This is an opportunity for all MFA students to see each others work in a convivial atmosphere. All MFA students are expected to participate.

PAPR, like many other VCUarts departments also hosts its own pecha kucha, offering more time for each student to present their work.

## **VCU, VCUarts, and PAPR Resources**

### *critique rooms*

There are three critique rooms available to students to sign out. Students may reserve them on the calendars outside of each room.

### *AV equipment*

PAPR has a range of AV equipment available for checkout including projectors, monitors, media players, cameras, audio recorders, and speakers. Contact Brooke Inman for availability and checkout procedures.

### *print shops*

PAPR has shops for etching, lithography, digital media, and screenprinting available for students. Contact Brooke Inman for details about training and access.

### *woodshop*

PAPR has no woodshop but students may access the woodshop for sculpture after receiving training for access. Please contact Kat Wilson to verify the procedures for access.

### *Cabell Library & School of the Arts Visual Resource Center*

VCU's Cabell Library houses an extensive collection of books, publications and magazines on the visual and performing arts. This library offers a wealth of resources to facilitate research and study at VCU, including the Special Collection and Archives collection focusing on traditionally under-documented groups including the African-American, gay and lesbian and women's activist communities; the visual, literary and performing arts; architecture and urban planning; and civic engagement and social activism. [Link to Visual Arts Databases](#)

### *ARTstor*

VCU subscribes to ARTstor--a nonprofit digital library of more than one million images in the arts, architecture, humanities, and social sciences with a suite of software tools to view, present, and manage images for research and pedagogical purposes.

### *The Workshop*

The Cabell Library houses The Workshop, an innovative media department, located on the lower level in Cabell Library. It offers a comprehensive suite of resources and spaces designed as an ecosystem for creating and learning. The Workshop includes Makerspace, an audio studio, a video studio, a gaming studio

Our equipment and spaces are free and open to all members of the VCU community. Make use of materials, tools, and emerging technologies for hands-on exploration and participatory learning. Attend an orientation on the 3D printers or laser cutter to become an authorized user, then reserve makerspace equipment in advance. Most makerspace resources are available when the Workshop is open.

### *The GOlab*

[The GOlab](#) is a staff and student-operated lab that provides print production services and educational opportunities to all faculty, staff, and students of VCU. Located in the Pollak Building on VCU's campus, we provide exemplary, accessible services with specializations in large-format printing and book finishing. In the effort to encourage participation and learning, we also provide instruction on production techniques through demos, self-service machines, and workshops.

### *Lynda Tutorials*

Virginia Commonwealth University has given it's students and faculty access to lynda.com. If you go to your [my.vcu.edu](http://my.vcu.edu) homepage, click "Lynda.com" under "Technology Resources" to sign up.



### *Kanopy*

[Kanopy](#), new in 2015-16, is a large, educational streaming video service. It provides easy access to more than 26,000 documentaries, feature films, shorts and more. Kanopy adds new videos regularly, so check back to browse new content.

### *JSTOR*

Searchable backfiles of core journals in the humanities, social sciences and sciences. (Backfiles end 3 - 5 years prior to current date). [JSTOR collections available at VCU](#)

### *Library Stack*

[Library Stack](#) is an online archive of digital arts publications from the fields of contemporary art, graphic design, architecture, film and philosophy. Library Stack draws from diverse global platforms, and has a particular focus on hybrid works.

## **Scholarships, Fellowships, and Grants**

- Dean's research and travel grants
  - Rolling
  - In 2017-18, PAPR MFA students received \$11,000 in research aid.
- [Daedulus Foundation](#)
  - 2 nominees - 1 PAPR, 1 SCPT submitted in November
- [SOMA Summer](#)
  - nominations are made in April for a residency in the summer.
- [Skowhegan](#)
  - VCUarts will provide fellowship support for up to two graduate students (if selected). Current 2nd year grad students that apply while in school and attend directly after graduating are eligible for the matching fellowship support from the School. Matching support is defined by half scholarship (\$3000) paid by VCUarts to match Skowhegan's contribution should they be accepted. Unfortunately we cannot offer support for alumni.
- [Mildred's Lane](#)
  - VCUarts sponsors 2 MFA students. PAPR nominates 1. VCUarts has funding to cover four weeks of tuition at Mildred's Lane to be divided amongst two fellows.
- Italy "Wurtzell" residency
  - nominations are made in April for a residency in the summer.
  - The residency consists of a private live work space in Tuscany. Residents stay 1-2 months with a total budget of \$5000 to cover airfare, living, and studio expenses.

## **VCU GUIDELINES**

The [VCU Graduate School](#) site and the [VCU Graduate Bulletin](#) outline resources and policies for VCU graduate students. The official policies and procedures of VCU take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

### **VCUarts Syllabus Statements:**

The School of the Arts is deeply committed to the university's mission of advancing knowledge and student success. We do this in a number of ways, including fostering an inclusive environment and ensuring students' well-being.

Any member of the community that would like to report an incident of bias, a violation of academic integrity, a Title IX incident, concerning behavior or a general conduct violation may do so by clicking the 'VCU classroom safety' link found on the desktop of all university computers, or by going to <https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?VirginiaCommonwealthUniv>

The aim of University Counseling Services is to provide comprehensive evaluation and consultation for students on best options for their mental health care. This can include any of the following: [case management](#), [referral services to a community provider](#), [brief individual and couples therapy](#), [group therapy](#), [consultation](#), and resiliency workshops.

Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity ([SAEO](#)) is the designated office that provides reasonable accommodations and services to students with disabilities enrolled on VCU's Monroe Park Campus.

University Student Health Services offer a wide range of primary care services in the following areas: [allergy shots](#), [blood and/or body fluid exposures](#), [immunizations](#), [mental health & ADHD](#), [nutrition consults](#), [sexual health & wellness](#) and more.

The Wellness Resource Center offers a wide range of services and resources for students, including information on [mindfulness](#), [stress reduction](#), [nutrition](#), [sleep](#), [substance use](#), and [recovery support](#).

Gender inclusive restrooms within the university can be located with this online map: [students.vcu.edu/gib-map](https://students.vcu.edu/gib-map).

Holly Alford, VCUarts director of diversity, is available to provide assistance and support. She can be reached at [artsinclusive@vcu.edu](mailto:artsinclusive@vcu.edu) or (804) 827-3476.

The Student Code of Conduct can be found at [conduct.students.vcu.edu](https://conduct.students.vcu.edu). Students should note that VCUarts values artistic freedom and expression. Because safety is a top priority, students should consult their instructor for guidance as they assess potential physical safety concerns related to a proposed project or performance. Any project or performance that is determined by the school to present an unreasonable safety risk, including to the physical safety of the

artist or any other person or to property, will not be graded and may result in additional university administrative and disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct and/or other university policies.