

## **M.A. Graduate Program in Art History Assessment Plan**

### **Mission**

The mission of the Art History Department is to educate students generally on the role of the visual arts within their historical, intellectual, philosophical, political, social, and economic contexts. To achieve this the Department offers a high quality, well-rounded Art History education through an instructional program that is culturally diverse in its subject matter and representative of a broad temporal spectrum of ancient and modern achievements in the visual arts. The same pedagogical tenets guide the graduate program. However, M.A. students are expected to engage their academic work more critically and with greater sophistication than undergraduates and also conduct advanced independent research that contributes knowledge in the field. M.A. students are expected to attain a general knowledge of Art History and its methodologies, while at the same time developing a sub-specialty which will advance a career track. The Department seeks to prepare graduate students for a variety of jobs in the art world or to continue their scholarly work at the PhD level at other institutions. Preparation for a career in museum work is an important facet of the graduate program's mission and is facilitated through the Art Museum Studies Certificate Program as well as a thesis exhibition option for non-Certificate students. The Art History Gallery attached to the Department serves as a laboratory for graduate student training in museum studies, while the University collection housed within provides working material for exhibitions. Additionally, the Department seeks to serve the cultural life of the city of Milwaukee and does so in part through the activities of its graduate students. Many assist in projects at area museums and often find employment in these same institutions after graduation.

### **Goals**

1. Familiarity with a broad range of subjects within art history
2. Proficiency in reading French, German, Italian, Spanish, or other language necessary for art historical research. This is especially important for those planning to continue their academic careers at the Ph.D. level.
3. Knowledge of historical developments within Art History and familiarity with major figures in the field.
4. Knowledge of methodological approaches to Art History, such as formal analysis, iconographic analysis, and social history, as well as the varied approaches of modern/contemporary social and cognitive theory.
5. Ability to address an art historical subject, issue, or problem through a systematic survey of the literature; the ability to analyze literature critically; and to craft a well-documented and well-argued paper.
6. Improvement of writing and oral communications skills.

7. For students pursuing an Art Museum Studies Certificate, the ability to conceptualize, plan, organize, and mount an exhibition.
8. For students pursuing an Art Museum Studies Certificate, knowledge of the history of museums and the ethical issues they face.
9. Preparation of students for careers in arts-related fields.

**Assessing student progress toward goals:**

For all goals, one means of assessment is the Graduate Student Self-assessment Form completed annually by graduate students and submitted to the Graduate Advisor. On this comprehensive questionnaire students list requirements already satisfied, plans to redress omissions, details concerning their degree tracks, and progress toward the completion of the thesis or equivalent. They also write a self-analysis of their progress, identify means of improvement, and have an opportunity to criticize the program. Information on these forms is introduced to the entire faculty by the Graduate Advisor at the annual spring assessment meeting at which time students' self-perceptions can be compared with those of the faculty.

In addition to this,

1. Goal 1 is assessed by the satisfaction of the distribution requirement, which requires courses in four areas, chosen from among the following: Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance-Baroque, Modern, and Non-Western. For students pursuing the non-thesis option, successful completion of the slide examination in three areas of Art History on the comprehensive exam.
2. Goal 2 is assessed by the satisfaction of the language requirement, that is, reading proficiency in one foreign language
3. Goals 3 and 4 are assessed by the successful completion of the Art History methods course (to be initiated in fall, 2005)
4. Goal 5 is assessed by outcomes in three required seminars. At an annual meeting, faculty discuss student performance in these courses and what action, if any, should be taken when problems are identified.
5. Goal 6 is assessed by the successful completion of three required seminars, which have extensive writing assignments and require oral reports and class participation. In addition, writing outcomes are assessed by student papers written in Art History lecture courses.
6. Goal 7 is assessed by the successful completion of Art Hist 704, the Introduction to Art Museum Studies II, in which students jointly curate and mount an exhibition

under the supervision of an instructor, as well as the later, successful production of a solo thesis exhibition.

7. Goal 8 is assessed by the successful completion of Art Hist 703 and 704

### **Assessment of the Graduate Program in Art History**

1. The annually completed Graduate Student Self-assessment Form solicits information from students during the course of their degree work that is useful in evaluating the curriculum and structure of the Art History M.A. program.
2. Faculty supervisors of students completing an MA thesis fill out an assessment form which rates achievement in the program's stipulated goals.
3. An exit questionnaire is administered to graduate students upon graduation. This questionnaire solicits information on students' perceptions of the efficacy of the program and how it will contribute to their future career plans. The program's strengths and weaknesses are also identified.
4. A focus group is conducted by the Assessment Coordinator with the aim of collecting data on students' perceptions of their experience in the MA program and how the program could better serve their needs.
5. The above data and evaluations are reviewed at the annual spring assessment meeting. Exit questionnaires are circulated among the faculty prior to the meeting while information from Graduate Student Self-assessment Forms is introduced by the Graduate Advisor. These evaluations are used to help identify potential curricular and programmatic improvements and obstacles to student success. Conversely, strengths can be identified and targeted for greater support. Chronic problems with the completion of particular requirements can easily be identified by patterns observed in the Graduate Student Self-assessment Forms, and ways of addressing these problems can be considered.
6. A database is maintained by the Department's Program Assistant regarding post-graduation activities, including special accomplishments and employment record. Employment outcomes are diagnostic of the program's success in preparing students for careers as stated in Goal 9.

**Departmental plan:**  
**M.A. Students, Art History Department**

| <b>MEASURES:</b><br>I. Direct<br>II. Indirect                             | <b>GOALS:</b>  |   |  |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|
|   | <b>1. Knowledge of broad range of art-historical subjects, methodologies, and historiographical developments</b> | <b>2. Proficiency in reading French, German, Italian, or other language needed for research</b> | <b>3. Ability to analyze art-historical literature critically and systematically</b> | <b>4. Honing of oral and written communication skills</b> | <b>5. (For Art Museum Studies Certificate): ability to plan and mount an exhibition; knowledge of museum history and ethics</b> | <b>6. Preparation for careers in arts-related fields</b> |
| <b>I a. Faculty questionnaire on M.A. students completing thesis work</b> | X  |   | X  | X   | X   | X  |
| <b>I b. Foreign language requirement</b>                                  |  | X   |  |   |   |  |
| <b>II a. Student self-assessment form</b>                                 |  |   |  | X   |   | X  |
| <b>II b. Student exit questionnaire</b>                                   | X  |   |  |   |   | X  |
| <b>II c. Post-graduation employment database</b>                          |  |   |  |   |   | X  |
| <b>II d. M.A. students focus groups</b>                                   | X  |   | X  | X   | X   | X  |