

Illinois State University

School of Art

MA in Visual Culture
Graduate Student Handbook

2016-2017

This Handbook has been written to accompany and expand upon information found on the website of the Graduate School and the Graduate Catalog. Please familiarize yourself with all of these resources on: www.grad.illinoisstate.edu.

The current ISU Graduate Catalog (2016-17) contains complete and up-to-date information regarding the graduate program; it is available on the ISU website to download as a pdf. See especially pages 23-30 (sections: Academic Policies and Procedures; Degree and Certificate Completion Requirements) and pages 187-193 (College of Fine Arts – School of Art).

Course Requirements

The sequence in Visual Culture requires a minimum of 32 semester hours of graduate credit, a master's thesis, and a comprehensive examination. Only the M.A. is offered in the Visual Culture Sequence.

Students who have not satisfied the language requirement for an M.A. before entering the program must do so by the commencement of the third semester (or, for part-time students, with the acquisition of the equivalent number of semester hours) while pursuing the program. Details regarding the language requirement are available in the [Graduate Catalog](#) (page 27).

It is expected that students in the Visual Culture Sequence will choose courses in consultation with the graduate coordinator in Visual Culture, and should make an appointment with her before they register. Additional coursework may be required of students with limited experience in art history.

A full time academic load is 9 or more hours during the fall and spring semesters and 6 or more hours in the summer session. A student may register for no more than 15 hours in the fall and spring semester. In the 12-week summer session the maximum load is 12 semester hours. Graduate students in the Visual Culture Sequence typically register for 9 hours/semester; anyone wishing to register for more must get approval from the graduate coordinator.

All students pursuing an M.A. in Art with a Sequence in Visual Culture must complete a core requirement of three courses:

- Art 475 Graduate Seminar in Visual Culture (3 credits)
- Art 478 Introduction to Critical Theory (3 credits)
- Art 497 Introduction to Research Methodology (3 credits)

The following requirements are in addition to the three core courses for the M.A. in Visual Culture. Of these 18 hours of coursework, at least 9 must be at the 400-level:

- At least 9 hours coursework in Art History and/or Visual Culture
- At least 9 hours in related field(s) outside the School of Art (history, literature, anthropology, etc.)
- 4-6 hours of Thesis work (ART 499) [These hours are typically taken during the fourth (or last) semester.]

Independent Study

1. Students may choose to pursue an independent study with a faculty member on a specific topic relevant to the thesis research. The course number for independent study is 451 (special projects inside or outside the area of study).
2. The independent study form, complete with faculty signatures and a typed description of the course of study, must be turned into the graduate coordinator before the student may register.
3. Before the student submits the independent study form to the graduate coordinator, the student and the faculty member will discuss and agree upon the student's project and establish a schedule of meetings for reviewing the student's progress. A typical meeting schedule is once every two or three weeks. The student is responsible for scheduling the meetings with the faculty.

Good Standing & Probation (Graduate Catalog, p. 23)

A student must remain in good standing during the entire enrollment in graduate studies at the University. Good standing includes maintaining a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA, satisfying any program-specific requirements for good standing, and making satisfactory progress to degree. Students who fail to meet this requirement will either be dismissed from graduate studies or placed on academic probation by the Graduate School.

A student will be placed on probation by the Graduate School if his/her GPA is lower than 3.0 and may not receive a graduate assistantship. The School of Art may also place a student on probation if his/her work is deemed unsatisfactory with regard to any of the above requirements.

[Text from catalog: "A student may be placed on probation for a time period not to exceed 9 credit hours. A student who fails to return to good standing by the end of this recommended time will be dismissed from graduate studies. A student must be in academic good standing to be admitted to candidacy for a degree to graduate."]

Incompletes

All required work for incompletes must be submitted prior to graduation. The Graduate catalog states: "For graduating students, incompletes in courses listed on their Degree Audit must be removed in Academic Records at least three weeks prior to the end of the final examination period."

Thesis & Comprehensive Exams

All students in the Visual Culture Sequence write a thesis and take a comprehensive exam.

Thesis [Please consult: <http://grad.illinoisstate.edu/academics/thesis-dissertation/>]

The thesis is an original work of research in the field of Visual Culture. It should be at least 50 pages and no more than 100 pages in length (double-spaced), not including the bibliography, footnotes, and images.

You should follow the “Traditional Format” described here: <http://grad.illinoisstate.edu/academics/thesis-dissertation/writing.shtml>. The basic format of the thesis includes a title page (with signatures of the committee members and the Graduate Coordinator), an abstract, a table of contents and a bibliography. The thesis must be format-checked by the Graduate School prior to final submission.

Style

Visual Culture graduate students should follow the guidelines of the Chicago Manual of Style. This is available in book form as well as on the Milner Library website.

Thesis committee

1. The thesis committee is responsible for directing the student's thesis project. The committee members approve the thesis proposal, conduct the comprehensive examination, and provide final approval for the MA thesis.
2. The thesis committee is comprised of a committee chair and two additional faculty members (a fourth committee member may also be included). The committee chair must be a faculty member in the Art History area and must have Graduate Faculty status. Other members may come from outside the School of Art.
3. The thesis committee must be formed by the end of the 2nd semester. A completed committee form, signed by the committee chair and all other thesis committee members, must be turned in to the art office before the last day of the student's 2nd semester.

Thesis proposal

The thesis proposal should provide an overview of the research topic and the intended methodological approach(es) along with a chapter outline and bibliography. The thesis proposal must be submitted at the beginning of the third semester. The Proposal Approval Form is submitted at the beginning of the fourth semester; this form requires you to provide the following information:

- Whether this is a first-time submission or revision to form.
- Student information
- Tentative Title of Thesis
- Protocol/Compliance
- Copyright Checklist and Approval
- Graduate Committee Information
- Required Signatures

Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination is a take-home exam consisting of three questions. The student will have one week to complete a five-page response to each question (fifteen-pages total, double spaced). Responses should include proper citations.

Candidates should prepare for the comprehensive examination by identifying four main issues or lines of inquiry in their research project that extend out to the broader field of Visual Culture. The candidate will work with the committee chair to determine these issues or lines of inquiry. The committee members will use these lines of inquiry as a basis from which to develop three questions for the candidate. No additional research should be required to write the comprehensive exam.

After the committee has read the exam they will schedule a meeting with the student to discuss the exam and the next steps in the student's research. The comprehensive exam must take place during the first month of the fourth semester.

Thesis Defense

Upon approval of the thesis by the committee, the committee and student will meet for a conversation about the thesis. This is not a formal examination or "defense" but rather an opportunity to discuss issues raised in the thesis. You must complete the "Right to Defend" form and return it to Hovey Hall 309. Students must wait at least 7 calendar days after the approval (not submission) of the Right to Defend to hold their defense.

Graduation

Plans of study and an application for Completion of Degree should be submitted to the Graduate School early in the semester of anticipated graduation. Students anticipating graduation in May should submit their plans of study and applications in January. Those anticipating graduation in December should submit their plans of study and applications in September.

Timeline to degree:

(For copies of these forms, consult: <http://grad.illinoisstate.edu/academics/forms/>]

The dates listed below are approximate and assume a May graduation date. For exact dates please consult the Dates & Deadlines page of the Graduate School website:

<http://grad.illinoisstate.edu/academics/thesis-dissertation/deadlines.shtml>

- End of 2nd semester: form thesis committee
- Beginning of 3rd semester:
 - Submit thesis proposal
 - This will generally be the first draft of a thesis proposal. You must submit a proposal approval form by the third week of January (consult Dates & Deadlines for exact date); on this form you will list your thesis committee. If at any point after you submit this form you change the membership of your thesis committee you need to submit a Committee Change Form.
- Fourth semester:
 - Beginning of 4th semester: complete comprehensive examination.
 - End of March: Submit "Right to Defend" form.
 - Last date for Oral Defense: end of first week of April
 - Final Deposit Filing of Thesis: beginning of second week of April

Financial Assistance & Opportunities

Grad assistantship (hours, paycheck, etc)

Graduate assistantships are provided as financial support for selected graduate students. A graduate assistant must maintain a 3.0 cumulative average in order to keep his/her assistantship. For more detailed information, consult the Graduate Assistant Handbook available on the Graduate School website: <http://grad.illinoisstate.edu/funding/>

Scholarships & grants

- In addition to University financial aid, School of Art grants and scholarships are available on a limited basis. The School of Art awards the Robert Small Award for the best paper in Art History/Visual Culture each spring.
- The Graduate School offers various means of financial assistance including Minority Tuition Waiver Fellowships and University Research Office Research Symposium Travel support.

Facilities & Programs

Art History/Visual Culture Study Room

CVA 134 is designated as a study space/lounge for Art History and Visual Culture students. Hours will be posted on the door at the beginning of each semester. Visual Culture students with a GA are eligible to receive keys to this room and may use it at their convenience; other students are welcome to use it during the posted hours of operation.

Milner Library

Milner Library has substantial holdings in the areas of Visual Culture and Art History. In addition to materials available through Milner, students have access to loan materials from university libraries throughout the state of Illinois through I-Share and through Inter-Library Loan (ILL).

Kathleen Lonbom is the Art Librarian. Contact information: klonbom@ilstu.edu or 309-438-3950.

Other Information

ISU graduate forms online

The following forms are available online at <http://www.grad.ilstu.edu/>

Masters Plan of Study

Graduate Tuition Waiver Application

Application for Graduate Degree or Certificate

Request to participate "Early" in Commencement Ceremony

Request for Transfer of Credit

Request to Extend Time to Complete Degree

Link to Graduate Assistant Application

Research using human subjects

Research involving human subjects in any capacity must be approved by the University Research Committee. For more information, please consult Ethics & Compliance section of the Research and Sponsored Programs website