

Art Department

The Art Department is made up of two closely linked cooperating divisions: Art History and Studio Art. Even though the six art historians and six artist-teachers hold various points of view and teach in varied ways, they all agree that Oberlin's Art Department classes should enable students (1) to acquire visual literacy, defined as an ability to understand and critically respond to our current visual culture as well as the ways in which it has been informed by traditions of visual representation inherited from the past; (2) to learn the skills required to reflect upon and convey in writing a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of visual experience; (3) to learn technical and visualization skills to convey ideas through formal and other media.

The programs in both Art History and Studio Art are enriched by the outstanding Art Library and through the possibility of intimate contact with the collections and staff of our own Allen Memorial Art Museum. Our program is further enhanced by the proximity to the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Toledo Museum of Art, two fine institutions that are accessible by Oberlin students and faculty. The department has an extensive visiting artists and scholars program, funded by three generous bequests – the Baldwin Lecture Fund, the Ellen H. Johnson Fund for Visiting Artists, and the Clarence Ward Fund – which makes possible both short and long-term visits of scholars and visual artists of international acclaim.

Art History

Art History courses investigate the main tendencies, major artists, and important works in both Western and Asian art. The fundamental aim of all these studies is to develop students' historical knowledge, visual sensitivity, and connoisseurship, as well as their ability to write analytical and critical essays.

Generally, courses are presented through slide lectures, often with class discussion, supplemented by reading in texts and source books and visits to the Allen Memorial Art Museum. Most are offered for three hours of credit.

The department offers Art History courses in four separate groups. Courses with 100 and 200 numbers provide a broad

introduction to the field and are open without prerequisite. Courses with 300 and 400 numbers comprise the core of the major in Art History, and are available only to students who have completed the prerequisites or have received the instructor's consent to enroll.

Courses in the 100-numbered group have been designed to provide broad, synthetic overviews of Art History as an intellectual enterprise. In this group are both large lecture courses and First-Year Seminars. Note: These courses satisfy none of the requirements for completing the major in Art History and may not be applied towards major credit.

Courses in 200-numbered group provide entry into the Art History curriculum by introducing students to the methods and concepts peculiar to the discipline. They place particular emphasis on acquiring the visual skills necessary for the close, analytical scrutiny of works of art. To that end, these courses make intensive use of the collections of the Allen Memorial Art Museum. The 200-numbered courses give access to courses numbered 300 and 400, and are among the major requirements.

Courses in 300-numbered group provide lectures on the major periods and styles in the art-historical fields taught in the department. Courses in the 400-numbered group focus on selected problems in art history in a discussion-oriented format. They treat themes, techniques, traditions of representation, or particular critical issues.

At the 300- and 400-levels, students pursue advanced topics that provide training in art-historical research and writing. Some majors complete their work in the department in the year-long honors (500-numbered) program.

A major in Art History requires no fewer than 30 hours in the department – at least 24 hours in Art History and 3 hours in Studio Art. In addition, two history courses in two different periods or cultures, and reading knowledge of French, German, or Italian are required. Those who complete their major will be well prepared to enroll for graduate work in Art History and in some cases can enter museum work, teaching, and related occupations at the beginning level.

Studio Art

The aim of all Studio Art courses is to enhance students' awareness of and sensitivity to the visual arts through engaging in the actual intellectual and technical processes by which works of art come into being. Students learn to perceive the world in visual terms and to conceptualize their perceptions through their own work. They are introduced to selected techniques of art-making through the study of various art techniques, issues, and attitudes developed by significant artists, both past and present.

Students planning to complete their studies with the Bachelor's degree in art should recognize that the fine arts curriculum at Oberlin is designed primarily as an integral part of a liberal arts program of the College, and not as specialized technical training. Education in Studio Art at Oberlin provides a solid foundation for students who wish to proceed into formal professional training at the graduate level or to continue their development as artists on their own.

The Art Department believes in the greatest possible freedom of creative choice of courses or activities, but requires all students to begin their studies in studio art with four courses on the "Visual Concepts and Processes" level. These courses are designed to offer students an introduction to art by encountering a diverse range of concepts, attitudes, and approaches through the direct "hands-on" procedure of exploring a wide variety of art media and processes. After this, students will select intermediate-level "Problems in (Discipline): (Title)" courses in specific media and processes: Drawing, Painting, Performance, Photography, Sculpture, Silkscreen, Time-Based Media. Classes at this level may be repeated. Students may apply, via portfolio review, for admission to the Senior Studio Thesis. This is a year long course that also operates over Winter Term. It is open to 12 students only and they are required to prepare for a senior exhibition with a qualifying paper. Students not admitted to Senior Studio Thesis are automatically accepted into Problems courses of their choosing. During their study, all studio art majors will present their work-in-progress to their colleagues and the studio faculty for discussion and criticism.

The major in Studio Art requires a minimum of 30 hours, including six hours of Art History; four "Visual Concepts and Processes" courses; two "Problems in (Discipline): (Title)" courses. The major is not intended to prepare all students to become professional artists. It does prepare them to apply for studies leading to the Master of Arts (M.A.) and Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) at institutions offering graduate work. Those intending to continue their studies towards advanced degrees in art are urged to enroll in the maximum number of courses allowed. Some majors graduating with the B.A. have found teaching positions and others have been successful in pursuing their own work.

Visual Arts Major

In addition to the two major options described above, the studio division of the department also offers a Visual Arts Major, which allows individuals more flexibility to pursue an interdisciplinary approach to the study of visual arts. Thirty-six hours are required in this major, from which a minimum of 24 hours must be taken within the Art Department and the other 12 hours are to be chosen according to the student's special interests. Concentrations in this major can permit students to study art or architectural history within a particular social or historical context, urban or environmental studies, critical theory, museum studies, or art conservation. In addition, students wishing to pursue projects in the creative arts may combine creative writing, theater, dance, music, performance art, or architectural design. The Visual Arts major may also accommodate students who wish to study more wide-ranging topics such as environmental aspects of art and/or architecture, art in the context of another discipline such as psychology, sociology, or philosophy, urban studies or architectural theory, critical or cultural studies, art and the law, arts management, or multi-media work in computer science or music. Students interested in this major are invited to consult with members of the Art Department for further information.

Facilities

The Oberlin Art Department is fortunate to be equipped with excellent facilities for the teaching of both Art History and Studio Art. A major asset is the internationally renowned Allen Memorial Art Museum, which is closely linked with the

Art Building. A new wing was added in 1977 that houses a large museum gallery, expanded studio areas, the Clarence Ward Memorial Art Library, the Art Department office, and a seminar room. It also allowed for the remodeling and expansion of space and facilities in the 1937 wing. In 1993 the art auditorium was renovated; it is now Fisher Hall, an exhibition/lecture space. A building that houses the photography studio facilities and a time-based media performance space was added in 1983. This year the Art Department acquired the ICA spaces which have been refurbished to house expanded New Media and Photography.

Off-Campus Study Opportunities

Because the size and facilities of Oberlin's Art Department are limited, it is impossible to offer work in every field of student interest; however, credit can be arranged for off-campus study in subjects not available at Oberlin. A program of off-campus study must have the prior approval of the department, and the results of such study are evaluated by the faculty before credit is granted towards a studio major. Specially qualified students are encouraged to participate in the GLCA (Great Lakes College Association) Arts Program, a semester of residence in New York City, consisting of seminars, directed personal creative work, and individual apprenticeships with leading professional artists in a variety of fields. A full semester of Oberlin credit is granted to those who satisfactorily complete the program.

The complete department resources include the following:

Art History

- Two lecture halls, a seminar room, and the Fisher Hall auditorium, all with fully automatic projection.
- The Clarence Ward Art Library, housing over 80,000 volumes.
- A slide library of 360,000 slides.
- Opportunities for individual study of original works of art (over 10,000) from the collection of the Allen Memorial Art Museum, one of the three leading college and university art museums in the country.

Studio Art

- One large Drawing Studio (1350 square feet)
- Three Painting Studios (2010 square feet)
- Silkscreen and Photo Silkscreen Studios (2000 square feet subdivided into three major rooms plus darkroom)
- One large Sculpture Studio (2480 square feet) and a Welding Room (125 square feet)
- Studio Shop (900 square feet) in the 1977 wing (welding equipment, spray booth and full facilities for woodworking –hand and power tools – plaster, clay, and plastics)
- Photography Classroom (1130 square feet that includes two darkrooms and a developing room in the 1977 building)
- Fisher Hall, an exhibition/lecture space
- One Time-Based Media Studio (850 square feet)

Faculty

JOHN COLEMAN, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, 1993
B.F.A., Otis Art Institute of the Parson's School of Design, 1989
M.F.A., University of California, San Diego, 1992

WILLIAM E. HOOD, JR., PROFESSOR, 1974
B.F.A., University of Georgia, 1965
M.A., University of Georgia, 1967
Ph.D., Institute of Fine Arts, NYU, 1977

ERIK INGLIS, CO-CHAIR, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, 1997
B.A., Oberlin College, 1989
M.A., New York University, 1991
Ph.D., New York University, 1998

SUSAN KANE, PROFESSOR, 1977
B.A., Barnard College, 1970
M.A., Bryn Mawr College, 1973
Ph.D., Bryn Mawr College, 1977

RIAN BROWN-ORSO, PROFESSOR, 2000
B.F.A. Massachusetts College of Art, 1994
M.F.A. University of California, San Diego, 2000

PATRICIA MATHEWS, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, 1985

B.A., University of Houston, 1974

Ph.D., University of North Carolina, 1984

PIPO NGUYEN-DUY, Associate Professor, 1998

B.A., Carleton College, 1983

M.A., University of New Mexico, 1993

M.F.A., University of New Mexico, 1996

JOHN PEARSON, PROFESSOR, 1972

N.D.D., HARROGATE COLLEGE OF ART, ENGLAND 1960

Certificate, Royal Academy Schools, London, 1963

M.F.A., Northern Illinois University, 1966

SARAH SCHUSTER, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, 1988

B.F.A., Boston University, 1979

M.F.A., Yale University, 1982

NANETTE YANNUZZI MACIAS, CO-CHAIR

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, 1993

B.F.A., Cooper Union School of Art & Science, 1984

M.F.A., University of California, San Diego, 1991

BONNIE CHENG, Assistant Professor, 2003

B.A., Bryn Mawr College, 1991

M.A., University of Chicago, 1996

Ph.D., University of Chicago, 2003

ANN GILKERSON, Visiting Assistant Professor

The studio division also retains the services of local artists as adjunct faculty to teach numerous courses in drawing.

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