

UC SAN DIEGO DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL ARTS

ART HISTORY/THEORY/CRITICISM MAJOR

For Students Declared Fall 2025 and Later

Major Code: VA26

The major in art history, theory, and criticism is designed both for students who desire a broadly-based education in the humanities and for those who plan to pursue a career in an art-related profession. In both cases, the foundation for study is proficiency in the languages of artistic expression. Through the study of art history, students learn to treat works of art as manifestations of human belief, thought, and experience in Western and non-Western societies from prehistory to the present day. Courses in criticism review the theoretical approaches which are used to understand artistic achievement. By combining art historical and critical study, the program promotes in the student an awareness of the cultural traditions which have shaped his or her intellectual outlook and provides a framework for informed judgment on the crucial issues of meaning and expression in contemporary society.

Majors are encouraged to take relevant courses in allied disciplines such as History, Communication, Anthropology, and Literature, and in such area programs as Classics and Italian Studies. In addition, students who plan to apply to graduate schools are strongly advised to develop proficiency in one or more foreign languages, as is dictated by their area of specialization.

LOWER DIVISION	7 courses / 28 units
UPPER DIVISION	12 courses / 48 units
TOTAL COURSES REQUIRED	19 courses / 76 units

ALL COURSES TAKEN FOR MAJOR REQUIREMENTS MUST BE TAKEN FOR A **LETTER GRADE**, AND ONLY GRADES OF **C- OR BETTER** WILL BE ACCEPTED. REFER TO COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR ENFORCED PREREQUISITES.

* Indicates Seminar

LOWER DIVISION

FOUNDATION LEVEL (7 courses/28 units)

VIS 22/22R	Formations of Modern Art
VIS 23	Seminar in Art History Methods

Choose five History courses:

VIS 11	Introduction to Visual Culture
VIS 12R	Race and Class in Visual Culture
VIS 20	Introduction to Art in Europe and America
VIS 21A	Introduction to the Art of the Americas of Africa and Oceania
VIS 21B	Introduction to Asian Art
VIS 21C	Introduction to African Art
VIS 83/83R or VIS 84	Photographic History or Film History

NOTE: Majors should complete VIS 23 by the end of their sophomore year or immediately upon joining the department

UPPER DIVISION

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL (7 courses/28 units)

VIS 112	Theories and Methods
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NOTE: Majors should complete VIS 112 by the end of their junior year

Choose two Distribution courses from each area:

A. Ancient - 1800

VIS 120A	Greek Art
VIS 120B	Roman Art
VIS 120C	Late Antique Art
VIS 121AN	Art and Experience in the Middle Ages

VIS 121B	Church and Mosque: Medieval Art and Architecture Between Christianity and Islam
VIS 121C	Art & Bible in Middle Ages
VIS 122AN	Renaissance Art
VIS 122B	Baroque
VIS 124BN	Art and the Enlightenment
VIS 126AN	Pre-Columbian Art of Ancient Mexico and Central America
VIS 126BN	The Art and Civilization of the Ancient Maya
VIS 127B	Arts of China
VIS 127P	Arts of Japan
VIS 128A	Topics in Pre-Modern Art History
VIS 128B	Topics in Early Modern Art History

B. 1800 - 1945

VIS 122GS	The City in Italy
VIS 123C	Art and Visual Culture of US
VIS 124CN	Nineteenth Century Art
VIS 124D	Paris, Capital 19 th Century
VIS 124E	The Production of Nature
VIS 124F	Art in the Age of Revolutions
VIS 124G	Art and Modernity
VIS 125A	Twentieth Century Art
VIS 125E	Faces and Powers
VIS 125G/125GR	Socially Engaged Art
VIS 126E	Indigenisms I
VIS 126F	Indigenisms II
VIS 126HN	Pacific Coast American Indian Art
VIS 126I	Southwest American Indian Art
VIS 126J	African and Afro-American Art
VIS 126P	Latin American Art: Modern to Postmodern (1890-1950)
VIS 127C	Arts of Modern China
VIS 127N	20 th Century Art in China and Japan
VIS 128D	Topics in Art History of the Americas
VIS 159	History of Art and Technology

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C. 1945 - Present

ADVANCED LEVEL (5 courses/20 units)

VIS 123B	Contemporary Art of Africa Diaspora
VIS 125BN	Contemporary Art
VIS 126Q	Latin American Art: Modern to Postmodern (1950-Present)
VIS 128C	Topics in Modern Art History
VIS 128E	Topics in Art History of Asia
VIS 128F	Topics in African Art History
VIS 150	Landmarks of World Cinema
VIS 150A	Seminar in Film History and Theory
VIS 151	Experimental Cinema
VIS 151A	Seminar in Media History and Theory
VIS 152	Media in Social Context
VIS 152D	Identity through Transnational Cinemas
VIS 155	Media Artists at Work
VIS 156	Latino American Cinema
VIS 157	Environmentalism in Art and Media
VIS 157D	US Civil Rights in Art and Media
VIS 158A	Topics in Contemporary Photography
VIS 158B	Photography After 1960
VIS 158C	History of Social Documentary
VIS 158D	Black Subjects/Material in Photography
VIS 194S	Fantasy in Film

Choose one Theory course:

VIS 113AN*	History of Criticism I
VIS 113BN*	History of Criticism II
VIS 113CN*	History of Criticism III
VIS 114A*	Landscape and Memory
VIS 114B*	The Fragment: Uses and Theories
VIS 117E*	Problems in Ethnoaesthetics
VIS 117F*	Theorizing the Americas
VIS 117G*	Critical Theory and Visual Practice
VIS 129F*	Seminar in Art Theory and Criticism

Choose three Seminar courses:

VIS 127G*	20 th Century Chinese Art
VIS 127Q*	Japanese Painting and Prints
VIS 129A*	Seminar in Pre-Modern Art History
VIS 129B*	Seminar in Early Modern Art History
VIS 129C*	Seminar in Modern Art History
VIS 129D*	Seminar in Art History of the Americas
VIS 129E*	Seminar in Art History of Asia
VIS 129I*	Seminar in Art History of Africa

Note: Students may also select any course from the Theory course list to count towards the Seminar requirement. Course will count as ONE Theory or Seminar course but not both.

Choose one Elective course:

- Any Intermediate Art History course
- Any Advanced Art History course
- Art History Honors (VIS 196A and B)
- VIS 199 or AIP 197

The completion of both quarters of VIS 196A/B count as one course towards fulfillment of the Advanced Level Elective