

John Cabot University

Master of Art (MA) in Art History

2018/19

Taught by John Cabot University's international faculty, the degree program can be completed in three semesters of full-time study (Fall-Spring-Fall) and an intervening summer. It unfolds in three phases: a structured Foundation Year (Fall-Spring); a Master's Exam (Summer); and a Thesis Semester (Fall).

Seminars and courses take place at John Cabot University's campuses in the centrally-located Trastevere district of Rome and in nearby Roman museums, churches, palaces, monuments, archaeological parks, archives, rare book libraries, restoration labs, study collections, artists' workshops, public installations, and contemporary art galleries. These venues of visual culture and documentation constitute the laboratory of the degree. Some courses involve travel to other parts of Italy—for example, to Naples, Florence, or Assisi.

Foundation Year

During the Foundation Year (Fall-Spring) students complete twenty-four credit hours of coursework:

- Six graduate-level courses in the history of art and architecture (eighteen credit hours total), including at least three graduate research seminars and one seminar or topics course focused on each of four periods: Antiquity; the Middle Ages; Early Modernity (i.e. Renaissance-Baroque); and the Modern and Contemporary era. Students choose from an array of dedicated, graduate-level courses and seminars in consultation with the MA Director.
- Two methodological foundations courses (six credit hours total): Case Studies in Art-Historical Practice (Fall); and Practicum in Art-Historical Research and Problem Solving (Spring). Required of all MA students, these courses cultivate methodological dexterity, problem solving, and technical skills as a basis for innovative research.

The Foundation Year also includes a cultural events attendance component: each student attends and reviews at least ten scholarly lectures, conferences, exhibitions, or other approved events over the course of the academic year. Rome is especially rich in opportunities for extraordinary intellectual expansion and enrichment thanks to its unique wealth of foreign scholarly academies, learned societies, universities, embassies, museums, and libraries, each with its own public programming.

By the end of the Foundation Year, students must demonstrate reading knowledge of one of the principal languages of European art history: Italian, French, or German.

Summer Term

During the summer (mid-May through late August), students sit for a **Master's exam** (administered in June). The Master's exam tests mastery of the basic image-repertoire, chronology, and methodologies of art history, with emphasis on Rome and related cultures. The remainder of the summer can be devoted to **thesis research**, research-related travel, **internships** in or outside of Rome, supplementary language training, or other professional or educational activities, including the Alberese Archaeological Field School. MA Students have access to JCU's Frohring Library and other university facilities through the summer.

Master's Thesis

The degree culminates in the completion of a **Master's thesis** (six credit hours) during the Thesis Semester (Fall). The thesis is typically based on a research project initiated during the Foundation Year in the context of a graduate research seminar or topics course. It concentrates on primary source material

(objects, buildings, excavations, documents) and is written under the guidance of a professor from the John Cabot University art history faculty.

A **Thesis Colloquium** (three credit hours) accompanies and structures the thesis-writing experience. Colloquium participants present and discuss their research in progress; invite prominent guest professors to speak and critique their work; and prepare and deliver public presentations of their theses. Students may register for the Master's thesis and colloquium upon fulfilling all requirements of the Foundation Year and passing the Master's exam with a grade of C or higher.

During this final semester (or the preceding summer), MA candidates complete an **Art-Historical Apprenticeship** (three credit hours). The apprenticeship may take the form of a teaching or research assistantship at John Cabot University or of an internship at a museum, research institute, historic library, school, gallery, or foundation. The University currently has internship agreements with a range of cultural entities, including the Polo Museale della Città di Roma, the British School at Rome, the Norwegian Institute, Tevereterno, and the Biblioteca Angelica.

Courses and Degree Components

Graduate Research Seminars

Graduate Research Seminars are research-intensive colloquia focused on specialized themes devised to stimulate original student research. They begin with the reading of a discrete body of scholarly sources and the examination of primary source material and proceed to the development of a focused research project, presentation, and paper by each seminar participant. Weekly seminar meetings are devoted to analyzing readings; examining art and other primary materials in museums, libraries, or laboratories; and presenting and discussing the results of individual research.

The final roster of seminars for academic year 2017-2018 will be published in mid-fall 2017. Prospective topics include: The Erotic Renaissance: Images of Love and Sex in the Cinquecento; The Life and Afterlife of the Roman Colosseum; Collecting the World: the Rise of the Museum in Early Modern Europe; Modernity and Loss: Art and the Idea of Rome in the 19th Century; and Picturing the City: Photographing Rome Then and Now. Two research seminars pertinent to different chronological periods will be offered each semester.

Topics Courses

Topics courses structure the acquisition of visual and historical information and research skills pertinent to specific artistic styles, media, genres, artists, or critical phenomena. Their formats vary. Most involve some combination of lectures, guided readings, site visits, and the researching and writing of a substantial paper. Sample course themes include Roman Painting; Late-Ancient Funerary Art; Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts; the Early Modern Print; Roman Baroque Sculpture; Archaeological Excavation and Methodology; and Modern and Contemporary Architecture.

Methodological Foundations Courses required of all MA students:

- **Case Studies in Art-Historical Practice** is a team-taught course focused on exemplary works of art-historical scholarship. Readings are selected to illustrate the diverse methods developed for studying the arts of different eras (Ancient, Medieval, Early Modern, and Modern/Contemporary), with their distinct problems and bodies of evidence, and to bring out possibilities for useful methodological borrowings across traditional chronological boundaries.
- **The Practicum in Art-Historical Research and Problem Solving** provides a hands-on introduction to research from the primary record, with units on media and materials, object handling, documentation and record-keeping, archive and library navigation, palaeography and transcription, and bibliographic, digital, and technical resources for the professional art historian.

Reading Knowledge of a Foreign Language

Given the polyglot nature of art-historical literature, before registering for the Master's thesis MA students must demonstrate the ability to read Italian, French, or German at the B2 (upper intermediate) level or higher in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This component can be satisfied by passing a language exam administered by the John Cabot University Foreign Language Resource Center or by presenting a B2-level certificate from an approved language school or testing service (CILS, DELF/DALF, etc.)

Applicants whose first language is Italian, French, or German or who hold a BA or the equivalent from a university where the language of instruction is Italian, French, or German are exempt from this requirement. Although language courses do not count toward the MA, students needing further language preparation may register for JCU courses in Italian, French, or German.

Sample Timetable

Fall semester 2017	
Course or requirement	Credit hours
Case Studies in Art-Historical Practice	3
Research Seminar	3
Topics Course	3
Topics Course	3
Cultural events attendance	
Italian, French, or German reading comprehension test (Fall or Spring)	

Spring semester 2018	
Course or requirement	Credit hours
Practicum in Art-Historical Research and Problem Solving	3
Research Seminar	3
Research Seminar	3
Topics Course	3
Cultural events attendance	

Summer 2018: Master's exam (June), followed by opportunities for thesis research, research-related travel, internships, supplementary language training, and other professional or educational activities, including the Alberese Archaeological Field School.

Fall semester 2018	
Course	Credit hours
Master's Thesis Registration	6
Thesis Colloquium	3
Art-Historical Apprenticeship*	3

*Apprenticeships may also be completed in summer between the Foundation Year and the Research Term.