Major Examinations

Following the completion of their coursework, Ph.D. students are examined on a major field consisting of two contiguous areas and on a third minor area which can be in a related field or provide skills necessary for their dissertation. Students should consult their advisor in selecting the two additional examiners and the fields for examination. It is the responsibility of the advisor to invite examiners and to inform any outside examiners about IFA procedures. Students should work closely with each of their examiners to determine appropriate bibliographies.

The purposes of the major examination are to ensure that students develop a comprehensive understanding of their chosen field of study in both breadth and depth, that they can draw independent conclusions based on the study of objects and on written scholarship, and that they are able to effectively communicate these conclusions to an academic audience. The major examination is separate and distinct from the presentation of the dissertation prospectus.

Students should allow at least one semester (15 weeks) of preparation for the oral examination. The committee will submit three essay questions to the Academic Office immediately following the oral examination. Within 30 days of the oral examination, the student must pick up the written component, the "Two Week Paper." For the "Two Week Paper," the student chooses one topic out of the three given by the examiners. The paper must be submitted two weeks after picking up the prompts from the Academic Office. Both the oral and written components of the examination must be passed by the advisor and the two other examiners in order for the candidate to continue to the dissertation. If the candidate does not pass either parts of the exam, the candidate is allowed one more attempt. Failure to pass both parts of the second major examination will result in termination from the program.

When a student is ready to begin studying for their exam, he or she should visit the Academic Office to report their examination areas and their preferred date for the exam.

Examples of Areas for the Major and Minor Field Examinations:

(1) Prehistoric and Protohistoric art of the Old World
(2) Art of New Spain and colonial Latin America
(3) Early Chinese art through the Han Dynasty
(4) Chinese art from the Northern and Southern Dynasties to the Yuan Dynasty
(5) Later Chinese art, Ming Dynasty to 1900
(6) Chinese art, 1900 to the Present
(7) Indian art (non-Islamic)
(8) Ancient Egyptian art
(9) Ancient Near Eastern art
(10) Ancient Greek art and architecture
(11) Ancient Roman art and architecture
(12) Early Christian through Carolingian art
(14) Byzantine art
(15) Islamic art to the Mongol Conquest, 690-1250
(16) Islamic art after the Mongol Conquest, 1250-1800
(17) Romanesque art
(18) Gothic art
(19) Italian art from 1300 to 1500
(20) Italian art of the 16th Century
(21) European art outside Italy from 1400 to 1600
(22) Art in Italy, France and Spain from about 1580 to the end of the 17th Century
(23) Art of the Netherlands, Germany and England from about 1580 to the end of the 17th Century
(24) European and American art from 1660 to 1780
(25) European and American art from 1780 to 1900
(26) Architecture in Italy, 1300-1600
(27) Architecture & Urban Culture in Italy, 1860-1980
(28) European and American art from 1880-1940
(29) European and American art from 1940-Present
(30) Latin American art, 1900-Present

Additional Examples of Minor Areas

(1) Conservation and Technology, in relation to a field or fields designated above
(2) History of Museums and/or Curatorial Practice
(3) Studio, Gallery, Museum Spaces & (Non-Spaces of Art, 1960-1980)
(4) American History
(5) European History, 1100-1500
(6) History of Photography, 1830s-Present
(7) Ancient Greek History
(8) History of the Roman Empire
(9) History of Collecting
(10) One research language, such as Arabic, Chinese, Ancient Greek, etc.