Curatorial Studies

Please note that we anticipate that our Curatorial Studies program will be substantially revised in the near future. Please consult our website www.ifa.nyu.edu, for the most current information. This doctoral-level program is offered jointly by the Institute of Fine Arts and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, under the supervision of the Joint Committee on Curatorial Studies, which is composed of faculty, curators, and the Directors of both institutions. The purpose of the program is to prepare students for curatorial careers in specialized fields. Problems of museum education and general administration are raised but not emphasized. The course of study normally requires three and one-half to four years, including the master’s degree in art history. The Certificate in Curatorial Studies is awarded at the completion of all requirements.

a. Curatorial Studies I (G43.2037)
This colloquium, focusing on the role and responsibilities of curators in art museums and emphasizing connoisseurship and research methods, is required for admission to the program; it is also open to students who do not intend to pursue the full Curatorial Studies Program. The course meets in the spring term in the galleries, storerooms, and conservation laboratories of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and may be taken at any time before applying for the curatorial studies interview (see section e. below).

b. Conservation Course. At least one course in the field of conservation and technology of works of art is required. Students may choose from the courses designed for art historians. See course descriptions on page 51 and 69.

c. MA Degree in Art History. All requirements for the Institute’s master’s degree must be completed as the foundation of the program. See the Admission and Master of Arts sections for a description of the admission and degree criteria.

d. PhD Candidacy Interview. Whether or not the student intends to pursue the doctorate as well as the Curatorial Studies Certificate, he or she must be accepted by the faculty as being capable of doing PhD work through acceptance into the PhD program. See the Doctor of Philosophy section for a description of the necessary qualifications and the candidacy review process.
e. Curatorial Studies Interview. Students interested in pursuing the Curatorial Studies Certificate must be accepted into the program by the Joint Committee on Curatorial Studies. Interviews are scheduled at the beginning of each academic year. Students are asked to discuss their long-term career goals, areas of special interest, and their preparation to date, including academic work and a demonstrated interest in curatorial issues. Normally the interview is held after the requirements listed above have been met and before Curatorial Studies II is taken.

f. Curatorial Studies II (G43.2537) This colloquium, conducted by a full-time curator from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, with additional lectures by conservators and visiting outside specialists, as appropriate, introduces students to curatorial responsibilities through hands-on involvement with original works of art in the context of an actual exhibition or cataloging project at the museum. The topic and the supervising curator vary from year to year. The course meets in the fall, and admission is determined by interview.

g. Six Courses beyond the nine required for the master’s degree are chosen in relation to the student’s specialty and may include Curatorial Studies I and II.

h. Curatorial Studies III (G43.3037)
This course is normally a nine-month internship, designed to provide maximum practical experience in each student’s area of specialization. Completion of Curatorial Studies I and II is a prerequisite, and usually the internship is elected after completion of all course work. Students should apply to the Director of the program to make internship arrangements at least six months in advance of the desired starting date. The internship may be in a department at The Metropolitan Museum of Art or at another museum as appropriate to the student’s interests. A substantive written project is required.

Recommendations: Students should seek out courses in art history that consider objects in the original and should take full advantage of the opportunity to study and work with Institute faculty who are active in museum projects. Relevant work experience is encouraged. Students are urged to take appropriate courses in conservation beyond the required minimum.

Financial assistance: For the internship, fellowships are available on a competitive basis up to the level of top dissertation grants. Other aid may be awarded on the same basis as for students in other programs at a similar point in their studies. Questions about offerings in Curatorial Studies should be directed to the Academic Office.