Guidelines for ARTH 4309: Senior Thesis in Art History
and Public Presentation of Research

This course is a required component of the B.A. in Art History. It provides the student with a “pre-professional” practicum in an essential art historical practice: the research, writing, and delivery of information on a topic of interest.

The guidelines herein govern all Senior Thesis projects. In addition, each advisor, in consultation with the student, will prepare a Senior Thesis agreement specifying the topic, expectations, meeting schedule, and due dates for all aspects of the research project.

Objectives:
In this course, students are expected to be largely self-motivated and self-directed. The student bears the responsibility for locating the necessary bibliographic sources, analyzing them, and assimilating them into the thesis. The student is responsible for setting up a regular schedule for writing the thesis in accordance with the agreement established between the student and the advisor. Students will meet with instructors at assigned intervals to discuss issues, any problems, and progress. Assigned readings will address art historical methodology in general and are intended to allow students to begin to engage with specific discourses in Art History.

The instructor intends that the student read and analyze a selection of art historical approaches. Instructors use discussions and précis to evaluate the student’s success. Instructors look for the ability to think beyond what is presented in readings and to incorporate concepts and data from the readings into discussions and the thesis.

Expected student learning outcomes:
Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills.
   *Methods for assessing this expected learning outcome:* readings, précis, and research for the Senior Thesis as required by the advisor.

2. Demonstrate research, writing, and self-editing skills and gain confidence in art-historical writing.
   *Methods for assessing this expected learning outcome:* bibliography and a series of drafts and revisions of the Senior Thesis based on advisor feedback.

3. Acquire technology skills in Photoshop and Power Point.
   *Methods for assessing this expected learning outcome:* public presentations of the Senior Thesis at the Undergraduate Art History Symposium.

Assessment of learning outcomes:
- Senior Thesis (final paper, including bibliography, précis, or other assignments) 70%
- Public Presentation of the Senior Thesis 30%
Preparing for ARTH 4309:
During the junior year, the student begins to think about a thesis topic. The thesis might expand on a research paper completed for an upper level art history class or it could address a new topic within a field with which the student has some familiarity. Students should approach one or two professors to discuss ideas for a topic.

By the beginning of the semester prior to enrolling for the Senior Thesis, the student will have petitioned a professor to supervise the project and, by the end of that semester, will have completed the Senior Thesis Enrollment Form. By the end of the semester prior to enrolling for Senior Thesis, the scope of the topic should be solidified with guidance from the instructor. The Senior Thesis Enrollment Form is a one-page proposal that should 1) describe the thesis topic or problem, 2) discuss the analytical strategy or theoretical positions that will form the basis for original contributions to the question, and 3) give a rough timeline for completion of the thesis. It is to be signed by both advisor and advisee, and will be submitted to the Art History Undergraduate Advisor.

Requirements for the Senior Thesis:
- The length of the thesis should be negotiated with the supervising professor. Normally it should between 15 - 25 pages plus bibliography, illustrations, notes, appendices, etc.
- The thesis must formulate and argue a thesis or proposition.
- It must include original critical synthesis of existing sources.
- It may contribute to knowledge through an original analysis of a body of material.
- It may advance a theoretical perspective related to art.
- Students must complete one or more preliminary drafts of the thesis by the deadline(s) required by the professor.
- Students must use correctly the citation and bibliographic formats determined by the professor.
- Students must present two hard copies and one digital copy on disc of the final version of the thesis. One spiral-bound hardcopy and the digital copy will be filed in the VRC. The other spiral-bound hardcopy will be presented to the supervising professor.
- Students will make a 20-30 minute public presentation of the thesis. If there are a minimum of three students completing senior theses, there will be an Art History Undergraduate Symposium with external judges and prizes may be awarded.

Student and Professor responsibilities during enrollment in Senior Thesis:
By the first week of the semester in which the student enrolls for the Senior Thesis, the student will have made an appointment with the professor to establish a schedule of meetings, and reaffirmed the timeline for completion of the thesis. The Senior Thesis Agreement (which you will find at the end of this form) will be signed. By this initial meeting, the student and professor will have clarified the focus of the project. Deadlines for bibliographies, précis/abstracts and other assignments, and outlines and drafts of the thesis will be established between the advisor and student as part of the signed Senior Thesis agreement. The advisor will provide feedback throughout the semester and with each draft of the thesis.
Criteria for evaluation:
The Senior Thesis grade will have two components: (1) the written paper, including all assignments leading up to it, will compose 70% of the final grade. (2) The public presentation will compose 30%. The advisor will provide the student with the formula used to calculate the grade at the beginning of the semester in the Senior Thesis Agreement.

(1) The written thesis

Any plagiarism will automatically earn the grade of “F”. Plagiarism exists if writer uses three or more consecutive words from another author without proper citation, or if a writer follows the structure of ideas and arguments of another writer without citation. Obviously, a student who turns in the work of another as his or her own commits plagiarism and fails the course.

The “A” senior thesis will be rich in content, including both that gleaned from source materials and that extrapolated through analysis and application of theoretical lenses. The reader of the thesis will gain knowledge of and appreciation for the subject. The writer will use examples that clearly illustrate points, will use appropriate terminology, will consult essential sources, and will present the material in a clear, well-organized, compelling manner, free from errors of grammar or spelling. The paper adheres to all specific instructions provided with the assignment. The paper will be submitted on time and will meet any preliminary deadlines.

The “B” senior thesis delivers substantial information about the subject. The factual information will be correct and terms will be used properly. The “B” thesis may not be as compelling in its arguments, examples, or language as the “A” thesis, but it demonstrates a firm awareness of appropriate sources, good organization, and nearly perfect presentation in terms of grammar, spelling, bibliography, notes, illustrations, and other apparatus. The paper may lack a minor component of the specifically required elements of the assignment. The paper will be submitted on time and will meet any preliminary deadlines.

The “C” senior thesis competently presents the subject. Its organization is clear enough to be readily understood. Generally, essays evaluated as “C” do not demonstrate as much thought about the material as the “A” or “B” thesis and may leave the reader with questions about the material or arguments. Errors of fact, grammar, spelling, punctuation, lack of appropriate research sources and other such factors will result in the determination of the “C” grade. The paper may lack a component of the specifically required elements of the assignment. The paper will be submitted on time and will meet any preliminary deadlines.

The “D” grade is applied when the student successfully presents information about part of the subject, but includes numerous errors of fact, grammar, terminology, spelling, punctuation, chooses poor examples, fails to complete part of the assignment, does not locate and analyze appropriate sources and/or has not adequately followed specific instructions provided with the assignment. Tardiness in submission will likely earn the grade of “D”. When a student has not given significant thought and effort to the assignment, the grade of “D” will usually be administered.
The grade of “F” will be assigned if the student fails to submit the thesis drafts at scheduled intervals, or does not address the topic or assignment, or if the paper demonstrates misunderstandings of basic concepts. Shortcomings that earn the grade of “F” include lack of thesis statement, organization, and essential parts of the paper.

(2) The public presentation

Art History majors are required to do a public presentation of their research, which will make up 30% of the overall grade for the thesis. The presentation should occur at the Art History Student Symposium in April or November. (When there are at least three students participating, the symposium will be juried, and prizes may be awarded.) The student will normally make the presentation in the same semester in which he or she is writing the thesis.

During the presentation, the student will be judged on: (1) Clarity of argument and logical development of ideas (2) Research sources (3) Originality/creativity of the paper (4) Grammar/expression (5) Quality of presentation (eg. use of Powerpoint) (6) Ability to answer questions during the question-and-answer period.

The student’s thesis advisor will provide feedback on his/her performance after the presentation.
Senior Thesis Agreement

Name of student: _________________________

I am writing my thesis under the supervision of: ________________________________

(name of professor)

Semester & year: _____________

I agree to abide by the **Guidelines for ARTH 4309** (rev. 2015):

Name of student: _________________________  Signature: ____________________________

Date: ________________________________