The Art History Honors Program

Overview: The Art History Department’s honors program offers our majors the opportunity to undertake focused independent research. It can be a highly rewarding experience and a great chance to undertake original scholarship. Our students work closely with the faculty in their chosen field to craft a thesis that contributes to the larger understanding of the history of art. There are also some undergraduate research funding opportunities available including the Marc Ernstoff Prize in Art History, and the Undergraduate Humanities Fellowship program at the Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry.

Students selected for the Art History honors program will take a graduate-level seminar (or equivalent), complete an honors thesis, and defend that thesis in an oral examination. There are also mandatory College requirements in the Fall and Spring semesters, including meetings, deadlines for degree applications, and the electronic submission of the thesis. For an explanation of the College Honors Program please view http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/honors-program/index.html, and responses to frequently asked questions: http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/honors-program/honors-faq.html. A dedicated Honors information session will be held on Wed. January 24 at 5:30 pm.

Detailed description: The Honors program is a senior-year (two semester) program. Art History students are officially admitted to the honors program in the spring of their junior year (with the exception of second-semester juniors who expect to graduate the following fall, and these students must notify their advisor and the Honors Coordinator in a timely fashion). The College sets the calendar for the date by which the student must defend the thesis before their committee and the date for final submission; this year, for example, students must defend their thesis by April 3 in order to have time to make any required revisions before the final submission of the thesis on April 10.

Students wishing to write a thesis in Art History should be committed to pursuing independent research and to writing about that research in a vivid, well documented, and persuasive way. The drafting and refinement of the thesis constitute one of the most important aspects of a longer research paper. An honors thesis is generally 30-50 pages in length and includes scholarly documentation through footnotes, bibliography, and images.

Students admitted into the Art History program register for 3 required courses during their senior year: Arthist 495A in the fall; Arthist 495BW in the spring; and a 700-level seminar course during one of the semesters, determined in consultation with their advisor. These courses are over and above the courses taken to fulfill the major, although Arthist 495BW can fulfill the College writing requirement. At the end of fall classes, Honors students participate in the department’s Honors symposium, and give a preliminary presentation of their research to the faculty.

Acceptance into the Art History Honors program: Students who have obtained a 3.7 grade point average are eligible to apply to undertake an Honors thesis in Art History and will receive a letter of invitation. This is the first step in a larger process that also involves:
1) finding a topic in consultation with an advisor
   the advisor who supervises the project is almost always a faculty member with whom the
   student has taken one or more classes; the advisor must be a full-time faculty member in
   art history

2) crafting an abstract
   the abstract should be approximately 700 words (about 2 pages, double spaced) and
   include a preliminary bibliography of 3-4 key references

3) submitting an abstract by on the Monday the week following Spring Break, no later than
   5pm.

   the abstract must be approved by the student’s thesis advisor before submission. It is
   then evaluated by the art history faculty as the basis for a focused, feasible, and
   compelling Honors thesis. Although students are naturally still learning about their thesis
   topics, the faculty read the submitted abstracts with an eye to their focus and specificity,
   method of approach, and the larger interest of the topic to determine feasibility. You may
   be eligible to write an Honors thesis, but you must still determine a suitable topic in
   conjunction with an advisor, and that topic must be approved by the Art History faculty.

Please submit the polished and completed abstract by email attachment to the Honors
Coordination, megan.eileen.oneil@emory.edu. This year, abstracts are due on Monday,
March 25.