

BA (Hons) History of Art

Programme Specification

Awarding Institution:

University of London (Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' College)

Teaching Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London**Name of Final Award and Programme Title:** BA (Hons) History of Art**Name of Interim Exit Award(s):** Not applicable**Duration of Programme:** 3 years full-time**UCAS Code(s):** V350**HECoS Code(s):** (100306) History of Art**QAA Benchmark Group:** History of Art, Architecture and Design**FHEQ Level of Award:** Level 6**Programme accredited by:** Not applicable**Date Programme Specification last updated/approved:** September 2017**Home Department:** Visual Cultures**Department(s) which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:**

Not applicable

Programme overview

This degree is unique within the University of London as it focuses on the arts of the modern period internationally (primarily since 1945), on issues both affecting and reflected upon by contemporary art practices, and on the framing of the idea of contemporaneity itself as an important contingent and contested means of evaluating artworks. The programme explores a diverse range of theoretical, methodological and archival perspectives that have influenced the formation of the discipline of the History of Art, and places considerable emphasis both on the ways that such increased sophistication and diversity has led to the emergence of Visual Culture as a field of study and the most recent developments in this discipline.

Within this framework, students are expected and encouraged to develop a critically independent approach to the interpretation of works of art, to examine shifting conceptions of the artist and to explore Visual Culture in its widest political, historical, aesthetic and technological contexts. The programme pays attention to an inclusive variety of art practices and media, including performance and installation art, the moving image and the built environment.

The programme also introduces students to an array of philosophical and theoretical debates, which bear on the understanding of the status of the art object in broader social ways. These include approaches to post-colonial culture, space, exhibition and display, sexuality and gender. In addition, Goldsmiths is well placed for the first hand study of contemporary art and culture in London. Structurally, the programme makes considerable use of these resources. Students are expected (with guidance and discussion) to take an active role in making themselves familiar with the city's various cultural institutions and to make use of these as primary resources in set coursework and in their own pieces of carefully supervised original research.

Programme entry requirements

Successful completion of three A-levels with BBB

BTEC: DDM

33 Points, HL655 in the International Baccalaureate

Equivalent to A-level BBB in other EU and overseas qualifications

Access: 60 credits overall with 30 distinctions and distinctions/merits in related subject.

Mature students without formal qualifications who have relevant experience are welcome to apply. International students apply in the same way as UK and EU students.

Application is online through UCAS. Suitably qualified applicants are selected according to aptitude and suitability, based on personal statements, references and, where necessary, interview.

Aims of the programme

The aims of the History of Art programme are:

- 1) to produce students with a pronounced awareness and critical grasp of developments in modern and contemporary art practices, aesthetics, history and criticism, and the socio-political and cultural forces that have informed and are informed by them;
- 2) to produce students with a broad range of independent critical tools with which to broach and assess such matters and the necessary skills to successfully articulate their findings and understandings of these matters.

What you will be expected to achieve

Learning Outcomes state what the learning and teaching of the programme enables students to do upon completion of every level. The modules provide them with the teaching

and resources they will need to attain these outcomes. Learning Outcomes form the basis of their assessment on the individual modules. Learning Outcomes must be attained to a pass standard for completion of the degree.

By the end of the programme successful students will have:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	an understanding of the various prevailing theories of contemporary artistic cultural production	All modules
A2	an understanding of the historical emergence and development of contemporary artistic practices	All modules
A3	an understanding of local, national and international dimensions of these art practices	All modules
A4	an understanding of the institutions of exhibition and criticism that shape art practices and their relation to other public and private institutions	All modules
A5	a theoretical understanding of the ways that art practices produce, and reflect upon the formation of cultural identities	All modules
A6	an understanding of the nature and the conditions of the emergence of the study of visual culture as a field in its own right	All modules

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	a theoretical apprehension of a range of pertinent conceptual approaches to the role of art practices in shaping subjectivity, signification, cultural difference and participation	All modules
B2	highly developed skills in research, analysis and the ordering, evaluation and communication of ideas relating to the interpretation of artistic practices	All modules

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	a strong conception of the conventions of art historical and visual cultural discourse and the possible ways of constructively and critically developing an independent practice	All modules

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	communication and discussion skills, in written and oral contexts	All modules
D2	presentation skills in written form in a well-informed and reasoned way	All modules
D3	group discussion skills: awareness of group dynamics; ability to interact, work, debate and communicate with others in a productive and positive way	All modules
D4	time management and risk taking skills: students will know how to manage their time effectively, meet agreed deadlines but also will acquire the skill to accept change and risk taking as a positive dimension in the search for knowledge and personal development	All modules

How you will learn

Students reach the above History of Art learning outcomes through lectures, seminar discussion and presentations, tutorials and through the structure of required collaborative research projects and other coursework.

The year by year progression in the structure of the programme, and the patterns of diverse modes of formative and summative assessment facilitate these outcomes in the following manner:

Level 4

The level 4 programme consists of a core Module and three additional modules that are all compulsory for the BA History of Art Single Honours students (120 CATS overall). The core

Module, Modernities, is a lecture and seminar series which introduces students to key ideas, arguments, events and works of art associated with the concepts of modernity and modernism. The other three modules approach the study of art and visual culture through thematic frameworks: Seeing and Showing, Space and Time, and Beyond Boundaries. These modules, which also consist of lectures and seminars, introduce the central theoretical, methodological and archival disciplinary concerns for Art History and Visual Culture, including questions of display and collecting, technology, representations of the body, cultural, sexual and other forms of difference, as well as a number of concerns relating to generic modes and techniques of cultural production. This lecture/seminar provision also creates structured occasions a) for the exercise of theoretical resources, research methods and considerations of the constitution of archives of materials and b) introductions and visits to a representative array of cultural institutions in London.

Level 5

The level 5 programme comprises a Compulsory (Non-compensatable) Module (30 CATS) and series of Option Modules. The Compulsory (Non-compensatable) Module, Contemporaneities, is a lecture and seminar series which provides a survey of key concepts, theories and artworks of the late 20th century. The additional Option Modules are constituted so as to introduce students, at this crucial stage of their degree, to advanced formulations of materials which they have already had preliminary encounters with during their level 4 studies. Students choose options that have an overall value of 90 CATS.

The modules individually (and, at important points, in concert) address the pertinent questions of 1) the curatorial 2) art and ideas 3) space and place 4) sound and image and 5) embodiment and provide an overview of latter-day critical theories bearing on ideas of post-modern and contemporary global culture. Whilst focusing thematically on prevailing and marginal conditions in the current and post-1945 period, each of these modules also attends to the emergence of these conditions, and reflects in detail upon earlier important moments.

Level 6

a) The level 6 programme consists of a series of Special Subject modules with an overall value of 90 CATS and the Art History Dissertation (30 CATS). The dissertation is something that students are encouraged to prepare for during and after (in the summer) their level 5 studies. The dissertation is so placed and structured as to allow students to fully and creatively exercise the interpretative and research methodologies encountered on the programme. Students are encouraged to consult closely with proposed supervisors before submitting dissertation titles, in order to explore the possibilities of the nature of their study during the year.

As with level 5, the range of level 6 modules is conceived in terms of 1) a fuller engagement with historical and other archival materials only indicatively encountered earlier in the programme, 2) making available a number of more advanced theoretical formulations of key disciplinary questions. As can be seen, these repeat areas of the level 5 array, but with greater intellectual nuance, as well as breadth and depth in archival materials. These matters are developed through the pursuit of a number of available pathways: Space and Place, the Curatorial, Sound and Image, Embodiment, Art and Ideas.

However, the level 6 Special Subjects are also structured to maintain ease of entry to those students who do not wish to follow particular pathways, and entry to level 6 Special Subjects is not conditional on attendance of specific level 5 Option Modules. Whilst offering and maintaining this structural intellectual coherence, students are at all points encouraged to venture outside the frameworks offered by the programme. This is with the advice, support and guidance of tutors in each instance.

b) Teaching on the programme is predominantly by lecture and seminar. Students are required to produce individual and group project work, and to lead seminars with their own research or by presentation of a given text. Here the term 'text' is conceived broadly, and may include particular artworks, documentaries, examples of cinema etc., as well as scholarly articles. However, a number of tutors also adopt innovatively interactive and discursive teaching methods. In addition, the use of the field trip and site visit serve as important pedagogical tools.

How you will be assessed

Modes of assessment all maintain a balance between summative and formative aspects. This ensures that students have opportunities for preparation, with constructive feedback, before they are summatively assessed. It enables them to learn about research methods and explore first-hand the processes by which knowledge is produced. It stimulates questioning of received modes of thought and presentation, whilst also encouraging detailed research into the current shape of a given area of study. However, original research findings also form parts of both formative and summative work.

The aim is to provide a comprehensive range of assessment methods across the programme to ensure that the diverse abilities of students can be demonstrated. These methods include conventional essays and dissertations, as well as research files and archive projects, creative journals, creative projects and collaborative group work. Where appropriate, students are encouraged to explore the possibilities offered by different media, including audio, construction, digital-visual and other formats. Through these different types of assessment, students develop a wide range of skills – in relation to research, the identification and structuring of specific problems, editing, citation, presentation and collaboration – which are transferable and enhance their employability.

Assessment Modes

As outlined above, modules at all levels are assessed by a combination of the following:

Essays

Essays give the students the opportunity to explore a series of theoretical and historical aspects of a question within the framework of the discussion of the objects of Art History and Visual Culture. They allow students to exercise an intellectual discipline, to mount an argument effectively, to demonstrate a broader knowledge of pertinent issues through referencing, footnoting etc., and to reflect upon the findings of their research.

Creative Journals

The journal consists of weekly entries of 200 words each (overall length 3000 words). It serves to link materials encountered outside the lecture room with those being studied on the module and will allow for the combination of visual and textual materials in one piece of work. The diary like structure aids students to conceptualise the process of learning and allows them to reflect upon their development through an entire module. The Creative Journal will be accompanied on submission by a two-page statement which will allow students to reread their work and reflect coherently on it.

Research Files / Archive Projects

The Research File / Archive Project is aimed at demonstrating the breadth of research and grasp of a considerable range and diversity of materials. In modules that are interdisciplinary in nature, the Research File / Archive Project will help students locate the disciplinary source and context of arguments and methods. Each Research File / Archive Project will set up a problematic and plot its way towards a research plan. In its final stage, the Research File / Archive Project will have an overall length of 3000 words consisting of a 1000 word report on the problem researched and a commentary that links the collated materials and argues and illustrates the set problematic.

Creative Projects

This is a cumulative project, which involves an element of writing. Depending on the module, it may consist of a series of exhibition reviews and exhibition proposals, work placement reports or audio-visual materials, which will ultimately be presented as one project with an overall rationale. It enables students to conceptualise the process of research and learning and allows them to reflect upon their development through an entire module.

Dissertations (Level 6 only)

The dissertation is an extended piece of writing (between 8,000 and 10,000 words) which is the outcome of individual research on a topic of the students' own choice. Work on the dissertation is largely independent, but is developed and monitored in consultation with a History of Art tutor through a series of individual tutorials in the summer before and during level 6 studies. It enhances students' ability to carry out independent research making use of a wide range of visual and written material. It demonstrates their understanding of the themes and theoretical frameworks informing the chosen topic as well as their ability to identify and formulate a convincing argument and sustain it throughout the dissertation. It also evinces the students' ability to present research material in a style and structure that is appropriate to the chosen subject.

Seminar Presentations

Though not used as a summative mode of assessment, most modules use the seminar presentation. Students have to make presentations of work (for which they will be given feedback and an indicative mark) as part of their formative assessment and before they will be allowed to submit other work for formal assessment. So, whilst it is itself not constitutive of the overall mark for the module, it is necessary to do the presentation in order to be able to submit the work that will constitute the overall module mark. Individual and/or group presentations are used as a way of generating discussion of central and related themes, and the presenters often have a great deal of responsibility towards the class to ensure that the material offered is clear, properly organised, relevant and well considered. Presentations may be based on salient points of some module reading, or on longer or shorter-term research work, which may be submitted later in the year. Whether individual or collaborative, the seminar presentation provides an invaluable opportunity to discuss work with peers and tutors.

Marking criteria

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	1st: First (Exceptional)	Represents the overall achievement of the specified assessment criteria/module learning outcomes to an exceptionally accomplished level. Potentially publishable work, showing extensive research, originality and independence of thought. Such work will be highly articulate and demonstrate an equally highly sophisticated critical apprehension of subject matter, theoretical, archival and historiographical questions and issues regarding cultural processes. It will make potentially original gestures towards the advancement and integration of these areas. The work

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
		will also demonstrate an acute understanding of developments in the field of Art History, and an understanding of the significance of the emergence and direction of the discipline of Visual Culture.
70-79%	1st: First (Excellent)	Represents the overall achievement of the specified assessment criteria/module learning outcomes to an excellent level. Excellent work, taking in all aspects of the question under consideration and showing independence in approach and ideas; shows a high level of critical and analytical skill; has a good grasp of the historiography of the subject; has a good understanding of the main issues and is able to relate them comparatively to other topics and/or periods; well written and presented. Awareness of shifts, conflicts and the development of concerns in the fields of Art History and Visual Culture will be in evidence, as will an advanced apprehension of questions surrounding the interpretation of cultural processes.
60-69%	2.1: Upper Second (Very good)	Represents the overall achievement of the specified assessment criteria/module learning outcomes to a very good level. Good work, showing wide knowledge of appropriate art historical, art theoretical and visual cultures themes and an ability to use this in relevant analysis and argument; shows a grasp of the main issues and the historiography of the subject; on the whole has a good understanding of English grammar, spelling and punctuation. Such work will signal a well-developed awareness of historiographical matters, research methodology, cultural processes and developments in the fields of Art History and Visual Culture. There may be evidence of independence of research and thought.
50-59%	2.2: Lower Second (Good)	Represents the overall achievement of the specified assessment criteria/module learning outcomes to a good level. Has a satisfactory knowledge of appropriate art historical, art theoretical and visual cultures themes, but tends to produce narrative and has not got highly developed powers of analysis and argument. Such work will signal a quite limited awareness of the main issues as well as of historiographical matters, research methodology, cultural processes and developments in the fields of Art History and Visual Culture.
40-49%	3rd: Third (Pass)	Represents the overall achievement of the majority of the specified assessment criteria/module learning outcomes to a pass level. Shows a limited knowledge of appropriate art

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
		historical, art theoretical and visual cultures themes, and weakness in approach; fails to see more than one side of a question; faults in style, spelling and punctuation; unable to write to the point. Any grasp or awareness of historiographical matters, research methodology, cultural processes and developments in the fields of Art History and Visual Culture will be weak.
25-39%	Fail	Represents an overall failure to achieve the specified assessment criteria/module learning outcomes. Has inadequate knowledge to tackle the question; serious weaknesses in approach; tendency to jot down a few unanalysed facts. Poor knowledge of the object of study and no apprehension of further critical and theoretical issues.
10-24%	Bad fail	Represents a significant overall failure to achieve the specified assessment criteria/ module learning outcomes. Has inadequate knowledge to tackle the question; serious weaknesses in approach; tendency to jot down a few unanalysed facts. Very poor knowledge of the object of study and no apprehension of further critical and theoretical issues.
1-9%	Very bad fail	A submission that does not even attempt to address the specified assessment criteria/module learning outcomes (shall be deemed a non valid attempt and module must be re-taken). Scribbled notes indicating little or no research, understanding of the question or attempt to consider theoretical issues.
0%	Non submission or plagiarised	A categorical mark representing either the failure to submit an assessment or a mark assigned for a plagiarized assessment.

How the programme is structured

Academic year of study 1

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Modernities	VC51001A	30	4	Compulsory	1-2
Seeing and Showing	VC51002A	30	4	Compulsory	1-2
Space and Time	VC51003A	30	4	Compulsory	1-2
Beyond Boundaries	VC51004A	30	4	Compulsory	1-2

Academic year of study 2

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Contemporaneities	VC52112A	30	5	Compulsory (Non-compensatable)	1-2
Option Modules to the value of 90 CATS from an approved list available annually from the Department of Visual Cultures	-	90	5	Optional	1-2

Academic year of study 3

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Art History Dissertation	HT53024A	30	6	Compulsory (Non-compensatable)	1-3
Special Subjects to the value of 90 credits from an approved list available annually from the Visual Cultures Department	-	90	6	Optional	1-2

Academic support

Support for learning and wellbeing is provided in a number of ways by departments and College support services who work collaboratively to ensure students get the right help to reach their best potential both academically and personally.

All students are allocated a Personal Tutor (one in each department for joint programmes) who has overall responsibility for their individual progress and welfare. Personal Tutors meet with their student at least twice a year either face-to-face, as part of a group and/or electronically. The first meeting normally takes place within the first few weeks of the autumn term. Personal Tutors are also available to students throughout the year of study. These meetings aim to discuss progress on modules, discussion of the academic discipline and reports from previous years if available (for continuing students). This provides an opportunity for progress, attendance and assessment marks to be reviewed and an informed discussion to take place about how to strengthen individual learning and success.

All students are also allocated a Senior Tutor to enable them to speak to an experienced academic member of staff about any issues which are negatively impacting their academic

study and which are beyond the normal scope of issues handled by Programme Convenors and Personal Tutors.

Students are provided with information about learning resources, the [Library](#) and information available on [Learn.gold \(VLE\)](#) so that they have access to department/ programme handbooks, programme information and support related information and guidance.

Taught sessions and lectures provide overviews of themes, which students are encouraged to complement with intensive reading for presentation and discussion with peers at seminars. Assessments build on lectures and seminars so students are expected to attend all taught sessions to build knowledge and their own understanding of their chosen discipline.

All assessed work is accompanied by some form of feedback to ensure that students' work is on the right track. It may come in a variety of forms ranging from written comments on a marked essay to oral and written feedback on developing projects and practice as they attend workshops.

Students may be referred to specialist student services by department staff or they may access support services independently. Information about support services is provided on the [Goldsmiths website](#) and for new students through new starter information and induction/Welcome Week. Any support recommendations that are made are agreed with the student and communicated to the department so that adjustments to learning and teaching are able to be implemented at a department level and students can be reassured that arrangements are in place. Opportunities are provided for students to review their support arrangements should their circumstances change. The [Disability](#) and [Wellbeing](#) Services maintain caseloads of students and provide on-going support.

The [Careers Service](#) provides central support for skills enhancement, running [The Gold Award](#) scheme and other co-curricular activities that are accredited via the Higher Education Achievement Report ([HEAR](#)).

The [Academic Skills Centre](#) works with academic departments offering bespoke academic literacy sessions. It also provides a programme of academic skills workshops and one-to-one provision for students throughout the year.

Links with employers, placement opportunities and career prospects

The BA History of Art programme prepare students for life after the college together with the ability and confidence to earn their living by being flexible, self-motivated and multi-skilled.

The experience of the programme helps students to develop as autonomous individuals, committed to life-long learning with valuable skills in communication (including public speaking, developing and presenting an argument, note taking, report writing) and analytical thinking. They also develop awareness of social, political and cultural processes as well as of social and cultural differences. These skills provide a good foundation for a number of career paths.

Most students of this degree find employment in arts related areas (arts education, curating, arts administration, writing etc.), or move further into postgraduate education. While at Goldsmiths, many take up jobs, internships and volunteer positions at museums and other gallery and exhibition spaces internationally. This regular connection with the Department has led to work for many in the UK, the rest of Europe, the USA, Asia and Australia. Such areas as advertising and product styling are important destinations too. Arts and other forms of journalism also recruit frequently from the students of the Goldsmiths Art History programme.

A great number of graduates choose to continue their studies. The degree is very well regarded by those institutions internationally offering MA programmes in arts administration, curatorial practice, the history of art, architecture, film, design and fashion. Very many students from Goldsmiths have accepted grant-supported places on the most prestigious of these programmes. Many too have gone on to grant-supported doctoral and post-doctoral study, both here and abroad. It is also a degree that provides a suitable starting point to enter law or the teaching profession, for example, through suitable conversion programmes.

The requirements of a Goldsmiths degree

Undergraduate degrees have a minimum total value of 360 credits. Some programmes may include a year abroad or placement year and this may be reflected in a higher total credit value. Programmes are composed of individual modules, each of which has its own credit value. Full-time students take modules to the value of 120 credits each year and part-time students not less than 45 credits and not more than 90 credits each year. If a programme has a part-time pathway, the structure will be set out in the section “How the programme is structured” above. Each full-time year corresponds to a level of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), as follows:

Year 1 = Level 4

Year 2 = Level 5

Year 3 = Level 6

More detailed information about the structure and requirements of a Goldsmiths degree is provided in the [Goldsmiths Qualifications and Credit Framework](#).

Modules

Modules are defined as:

- “Optional” – which can be chosen from a group of modules
- “Compulsory” – which must be taken as part of the degree
- “Compulsory (Non-compensatable)” – Some compulsory modules are central to the achievement of a programme’s learning outcomes. These are designated as “Non-compensatable” for that programme and must therefore be passed with a mark of at least 40% in order to pass the module.

Progression

Full-time students are required to have passed modules to a minimum of 90 credits before proceeding to the next year. Part-time students must normally pass new modules to a minimum value of 45 credits before proceeding to the next year.

In addition, some programmes may specify particular modules which must be passed, irrespective of the minimum requirements, before proceeding to the next year.

Award of the degree

In order to graduate with a classified degree, students must successfully complete modules to the minimum value of 360 credits, as set out within the section “The requirements of a Goldsmiths degree” above. A failed module with a mark of 35-39% may be compensated (treated as if it has been passed) so long as the average mean mark for all 120 credits at that level is 45% or above and the module has not been defined as “Non-compensatable”. No more than 60 credits may be compensated this way across a programme and no more than 30 credits at any one level.

Classification

Final degree classification will usually be calculated on the basis of a student's best marks for modules equivalent to 90 credits at Level 4, 105 credits at level 5 and 105 credits at level 6, applying a relative weighting of 1:3:5 to modules at level 4, 5 and 6 respectively.

Degrees are awarded with the following classifications:

- 1st: First Class – 70%+
- 2.1: Upper Second – 60-69%
- 2.2: Lower Second – 50-59%
- 3rd: Third – 40-49%

Students who, following the application of compensation and having used all their permitted resit attempts, have passed modules to the value of 300-345 credits, at least 60 of which are at level 6 may be awarded a pass degree.

More detail on the [calculation of the final classification](#) is on our website.

Interim exit awards

Some programmes incorporate interim exit points of Certificate of Higher Education and/or Diploma of Higher Education, which may be awarded on the successful completion of modules to the value of 120 credits at level 4 or 240 credits (120 of which at level 5) respectively. The awards are made without classification.

When these awards are incorporated within the programme, the relevant learning outcomes and module requirements will be set out within the “What you will be expected to achieve” section above.

The above information is intended as a guide, with more detailed information available in the [Goldsmiths Academic Manual](#).

Programme-specific rules and facts

General programme costs

In addition to your tuition fees, you will be responsible for meeting standard costs associated with your study. Find out more information at gold.ac.uk/programme-costs.

Specific programme costs

Not applicable.

How teaching quality will be monitored

Goldsmiths employs a number of methods to ensure and enhance the quality of learning and teaching on its programmes.

Programmes and modules are formally approved against national standards and are monitored throughout the year, such as in departmental committees, a variety of student feedback mechanisms and through the completion of module evaluation questionnaires. Every programme has at least one External Examiner who reviews comments annually on the standards of awards and student achievement. External Examiner(s) attend Boards of Examiners meetings and submit an annual written report.

Modules, programmes and/or departments are also subject to annual and periodic review internally, as well as periodic external scrutiny.

Quality assurance processes aim to ensure Goldsmiths' academic provision remains current, that the procedures to maintain the standards of the awards are working effectively and the quality of the learning opportunities and information provided to students and applicants is appropriate.

Detailed information on all these procedures are published on the [Quality Office web pages](#).