

Montana State University
School of Art

Studio Arts MFA
Graduate Handbook

Definitions of Terms and Notations on Calendar:

FYG – First Year Graduate Student

SYG – Second Year Graduate Student

TYG – Third Year Graduate Student

GTA – Graduate Teaching Assistant

SOA – School of Art

GTA – Graduate Teaching Assistant

Studio Faculty – Tenure Track Faculty who teach in the Studio Concentrations

Studio Concentrations – Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Ceramics, Printmaking, Metals

Seminar – 2 contact hours each week, Fridays from 10:00am until 12pm

MANDATORY COURSE

Although specific content varies from semester-to-semester depending on whom leads the Seminar course, Seminar is intended to cover issues regarding professional practices, financial and other strategies for career protection, studio visits with local artists or visiting artists, community service work (outreach to area high schools, alternative shows, workshop offerings), reviews, critiques and or discussions surrounding TYG thesis exhibitions,

Caucus – 2 contact hours each week, Wednesdays from 5:30 pm until 7:30pm

MANDATORY COURSE

Faculty and Third Years alternate Wednesday nights as Caucus Leaders
Caucus meetings involve discussing specific sections of the reader in a conference style meeting, addressing business related to the program when necessary/scheduled, providing feedback and content as it pertains to pre-thesis and thesis drafts, orientations, and

Caucus is not intended to replace or become a redundant activity to the once a week Seminar meeting. Caucus is an intellectual course with reading content and does not include critiques, studio visits, or other activities housed in Seminar.

All students are required to purchase the Caucus Reader and read the material to participate in Caucus. (see **Caucus Reader**)

Caucus attendance is required and failure to do so and or come prepared will adversely effect the graduate student's grade.

Caucus Reader – A full Studio Faculty meeting is scheduled prior to end of Spring semester each year to discuss the collection of reading, to be compiled hereby known as the **Caucus Reader**, for the coming year. The discussion includes possible topics or threads, reading thoughts and or themes. A deadline is discussed and agreed upon for all Faculty to collect/compile their contribution to the reader and the articles are compiled in a Lulu (or other such site) book form.

Current graduate students are also required to submit an article for each year's reader as a means to share articles relevant to their personal studio practice as well as to inform incoming graduates as to some of their thought process or interests. A date regarding the deadline for Grads to submit readings for this effort is on the calendar.

Fresh Meat – An exhibition designed to show the new work of incoming FYGs and further acquaint them to the community they have joined.

Orientation – First meeting of each semester in which graduate program agenda and business is addressed.

FYG Fall Orientation– Incoming FYGs receive key requisition forms (keys are issued by MSU Facilities Service), graduate student handbook, schedule/calendar, studio assignment, link to Caucus Reader, etc. Takes place one week prior to the first day of the Fall semester

Salty Meat – Exhibition of current work generated by SYGs.

Crit Crawl – MSU Community Event in which the MSU community (MSU Faculty, Students, Staff) are invited to frequent the Graduate Studios of all Graduate Students and look at their work in progress in an open house, studio crawl fashion. Informal. Organized and run by SYGs

Third Year Teaser Exhibition/Presentation – The following event occurs in the Waller-Yoblonsky Gallery. Work is displayed that reflects (teases out) the direction the TYG is headed towards in terms of their Thesis Exhibition-a preview work or works if you will. The week culminates in presentations and critiques on that Friday from 1:10pm - 4pm during the Undergraduate Seminars regular meeting time.

Critique structure is formal introduction by a faculty member of their choice; graduate student is then allowed to introduce the work/the show. Faculty respond and graduate student is expected to participate and defend publically, only full faculty speak for first ten, 15 minutes open critique by community. Dinner out with TYG's and Studio Faculty Follows-School of Art pays the bill.

Work in Progress Shows (W.I.P. Shows) – Show for FYGs and SYGs in which they display work in progress. The shows go up one day. Shows are closed to the public (Faculty and Grads only). Critique structure is formal welcome/introduction to community by a faculty member of their choice, only full faculty speak for first ten, 15 minutes open critique by community. Student takes notes but does not respond or need to defend their work publically. Install gallery requirement at the Yoblonsky is 1-day install, critique that evening, followed by de-install that night.

Pre-Thesis – The Pre-Thesis is the summary articulation of both the state of the studio practice of the student, as well as their proposed research topic. This articulation forms the material, conceptual and methodological proposal by which the student will proceed into their thesis year, and must include both substantial evidence in the form of artwork as well as written support materials, such as an artist statement and a proposed research topic (format and rubric need to be developed). Each student must submit their Pre-Thesis work and documentation to their committee for approval before they can enroll in Thesis credits. Additionally, SYG's must present their Pre-Thesis materials in an official, semi-public forum.

Thesis – The Thesis project is quite simply the summative project of the MFA studio program and occurs within the Helen E. Copeland Gallery. As soon as a Pre-Thesis proposal has been approved by a student's graduate committee, the student may enroll in Thesis tutorial credits at the beginning of their third year. TYG's in the pursuit of a Thesis project must complete a substantial artwork, body of work, installation etc. that represents a major investigation and articulation of their interests and motivations as artists. Additionally, the Thesis project must be accompanied by a written component: and artist statement (of variable length) as well as a research paper on a topic or topics germane to the student's artistic practice (additional development needed: what kind of topics? Length? On the student's work, or is it better to require a research topic that is related in some way but is not necessarily specifically about the work?).

Grad Group Show (G.G.S.) – Group Show of completed works for FYGs and SYGs (Open to the public)

Self-Assessment – The Self-Assessment is the student's attempt to honestly and critically assess their own performance in the program with regard to their studio practice and research. The assessment should include information such as:

- Articulation and evaluation of goals and interests, and a plan to move forward in addressing these.
- Successes and failures in the fabrication of artwork as well as plans and suggestions on how address problem areas.

- An appraisal of skills in research and time-management in order to locate problems and address them.

The Self-Assessment must be submitted to the review committee of each student for review and feedback. Feedback will include suggestions and assistance in the redress of problem areas, as well as the committee's honest appraisal of the Self-Assessment, which could include an inventory of additional problem areas and suggestions for redress, should the faculty detect any, or may alternately contain encouragement and feedback in the event that problem areas are overstated or misdirected.

Meeting Log – All Graduate Students are required to maintain a record of all of their meetings with faculty during each semester. This document assists faculty and students alike, it is a measure of accountability for failure to schedule or attend agreed upon meetings. If meetings are rescheduled, absences occur, etc. please account for these interactions as well.

Kick-off Show – The Kick-off show is intended for all FYGs and SYGs. It is a public exhibition of completed works. (One work-two works each- Waller-Yoblonsky)

Dinner – A mandatory dinner occurs during the first week of graduate courses. The dinner itself is a social event however following the dinner first year students and faculty alike are expected to stay around for about 30 minutes so that new program graduates can schedule one on one meetings with each studio faculty member of the School of Art (one hour studio visits).

First year, first semester graduates may not sign up with individuals for independent study, as they have no idea who WE are it is an impractical idea and is much more valuable in terms of their education that they experience all of us and get a sense of whom they may want to work with in upcoming semesters and for what. Students are allocated first year first semester independent credits by their studio faculty advisor after verification of the completion of the School of Art meetings. Dinner is paid for by MSU

FYG, SYG, & TYG hosted BBQs – There are numerous scheduled social events that FYGs, SYGs, and TYGs are responsible for organizing, paying for, and hosting these events. They are MANDATORY yet are intended to serve as a bonding and social event to get to know peers and faculty in a more personal and invested way. No business is officially scheduled for these meetings with the exception of the Studio Draw (see **Studio Draw**)

Studio Policy and Protocols – Please see the more comprehensive document regarding graduate studio use, safety, cleaning, ventilation, material considerations, and more. Graduate Studio common spaces are public spaces and must be kept clear of debris and other items at all times. Shared resource spaces such as “the shop”, yard, and kiln areas also must be cleaned after use and kept clear of personal items at all times they are not in active use. Vehicles (working or broken) and non-

practice related items are not to be stored on the grounds at any time for any reason. Faculty should be consulted if you have an item you are unsure about prior to dropping it off in the grounds. Students are expected to follow and abide by all studio safety protocol at all times and disregard for these rules will result in punitive measures-when ignoring protocol you are jeopardizing not only your own safety but the safety of others and the longevity of our program. Studios are allocated to graduates for use during the year but at no time become the property of the student. Spaces are to be returned to their original condition at the end of each year. Failure to return spaces to their proper state when requested (studio cleanout dates) will result in financial holds and/or loss of studio privileges.

Studio Draw – At the end of the spring semester of each year a Studio Draw occurs. All studios are options and no arrangements or deals otherwise are valid. The studio draw (administered by a faculty member) determines the order in which students may select their studio space for the upcoming semester. All studios are available at the time of each studio draw as all studios are cleared for maintenance and carryover of any space is not guaranteed. Future TYGs get first picks (numbers are drawn to determine which student of the TYGs picks first in their group), future SYGs get the second choices (numbers are drawn to determine which student of the SYGs picks first in their group), and FYGs are assigned what will become their studio space from the remaining spaces by the studio faculty at a later date once they have been selected and have accepted to attend the program (see **FYG Orientation**). Empty spaces during the summer are not to be used as storage or otherwise by graduate students.

Faculty Grad Review – A Faculty meeting that occurs at the end of each semester to evaluate FYGs, SYGs, and TYGs as to their progress in matriculating through the MSU Studio Art Graduate Program. Evaluation is based on numerous factors, including but not limited to: Self-Assessment, Meeting Log, Course Work, G.P.A, Studio Production, Work Ethic, Caucus and Seminar participation, and timeliness in adhering to programmatic deadlines and credit requirements. (Please see the Evaluation section in Graduate Handbook)

TYG Artist Lectures – Third Year Artist Lectures. These presentations are standard issue public artist presentations complete with slide presentation and question and answer session. They are public events and take place in Cheever 215 or another location TBD. They are MANDATORY.

Faculty Advisor – All first years are assigned a studio faculty advisor. This advisor is a studio faculty member randomly assigned to each new grad (FYG). The Faculty Advisor serves a similar purpose to an undergraduate academic advisor to the incoming graduate student as well as their “committee chair” for their first year review as an official committee chair will not have been determined.

Graduate Committee – Students are not permitted to select their committee, rather students choose a single member of their committee (chair) and the remaining two

are assigned randomly in the beginning of their second year. This ensures students make an effort to meet with all faculty throughout their time here and ensures a livelier discussion surrounding the work. Furthermore this distributes graduate studio committee faculty assignments more evenly. Graduate Committees will therefore be comprised of two randomly appointed Tenure Track Studio Faculty, One Tenure Track Studio Faculty (or GTA Coordinator) to serve as Committee Chair (selected by the Graduate Student), and there is an option to include another Faculty member from the S.O.A. (Art History, Graphic Design, or Studio) of the students choosing per Committee Chair approval. *Graduate Students may select outside of the S.O.A. for their 4th if Committee Chair approves of the request. Additionally the fourth member may be an Adjunct Faculty member although they will be unable to officially sign Committee paperwork.

Committee Chair – The Committee Chair is the Graduate Students chairperson for their Thesis Defense. Additionally the Committee Chair assumes the role Faculty Advisor (see **Faculty Advisor**) for the graduate student once defined as Committee Chair.

Midterm Review – These reviews are conducted either the Faculty Advisor (FYGs), Committee Chair (SYGs) or Full Committee (TYGs) to establish a reference point for each student as to how they are doing that semester in the estimation of the faculty and as a means to provide measured goals prior to the close of each semester's review.

Thesis Defense – The Thesis Defense is a formal, public critique and discussion of the Thesis Exhibition work within the Helen E. Copeland Gallery. The Defense is conducted by the graduate student's full Committee and can include questions, concerns, or comments regarding the work presented, thesis writing, and any other appropriate/related aspect of the graduate students progression through the program. The Thesis Defense is meant to be a mechanism to aid the student as they leave the program and provide them with questions, direction and challenges they should consider as they leave the university and move into their professional practice without the benefit of the conversations they received while enrolled. The defense begins with a formal introduction and a few comments regarding the graduate student from their Committee Chair. At the end of the Defense the Committee confers briefly and an announcement as to whether the graduate passes or fails the program is made. (At the time of the Thesis Defense-no paperwork, writing or otherwise should be missing and failure to have these materials entirely complete will result in a fail.)

Program Structure:

First year, first semester graduate students must take the most contemporary offering of Art History the School of Art has listed during the semester they enter the program. (This is not optional-mandatory requirement)

The MFA degree requires a minimum of 60 credit hours of coursework, including a minimum of 15 credits of thesis. This degree is designed for the professional artist.

Supporting courses (not counted in the sixty hour total) may be required as preparatory work by the School's admissions committee or the School of Art's Tenure Track Studio Faculty if it is felt that the student is lacking in some area of study critical to his/her graduate level development. The Graduate School may also require supporting courses to satisfy either certain undergraduate course deficiencies or other provisions for admission.

A grouping of 14 or more credits in a single discipline other than Studio Art constitutes a minor and requires a committee member from that area.

A grouping of 9 credits, outside of the Art History requirements, other than Studio Art is considered a supporting area and also requires a committee member from that area.

All students are required to take the Graduate Seminar and Caucus Course each semester that they are enrolled including their thesis year. Both Graduate Seminar and Thesis are graded as Pass/Fail. Caucus is assigned a letter grade. 9 credits are considered full time at the graduate level for financial aid and health insurance purposes.

Until the graduate student's committee is formed, an assigned Tenure Track Studio Arts Faculty Member (see **Faculty Advisor**) serves as the student's official advisor. A graduate committee is submitted to the Graduate School at the end of the second semester of attendance.

All graduate coursework should be completed within three consecutive years. (Additionally there may be limits regarding studio allocation, GTA options, and course releases – See Financial Aid and Studio Policies)

In extreme circumstances, should faculty support of extension be determined, a master's degree must be completed within five consecutive years. The five years begin with the first course included on the student's program of study.

The Thesis project is quite simply the summative project of the MFA studio program and occurs within the Helen E. Copeland Gallery. As soon as a Pre-Thesis proposal has been approved by a student's graduate committee, the student may enroll in Thesis tutorial credits at the beginning of their third year. TYG's in the pursuit of a Thesis project must complete a substantial artwork, body of work, installation etc. that represents a major investigation and articulation of their interests and motivations as artists. Additionally, the Thesis project must be accompanied by a written component: and artist statement.

An oral defense of the thesis is required.

The School of Art's academic requirements for graduate students exist within the

framework of requirements established by the Graduate School. Final approval by Graduate School is required, for example, for all applications for admission, for the acceptance of transfer credits, for formation and changes of all graduate committees and graduate programs, for the written and visual documentation of the MFA thesis exhibition, etc. The Director of the School of Art and the Tenure Track Studio Faculty serves as liaison between the School of Art and the Graduate School.

Grades

Students must maintain a "B" average. No grade lower than "C" will be accepted. All thesis credits are taken on a pass/fail basis. Up to six credits of course work other than thesis may be taken pass/fail (which is covered by the mandatory seminar course taken each semester).

Instructors may assign the grade of "I" (Incomplete) under two sets of circumstances. The first is unusual academic situations such as equipment failure and other situations clearly beyond the control of the student. The second case in which an "I" grade can be assigned is that of personal hardship, as defined by the most recent Graduate Catalog available online at:

http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/grades_academicstanding.html

In either case, the "I" grade may be initiated by the graduate student's full committee or faculty advisor (if a committee is yet to be determined-i.e. FYGs).

Continued enrollment in Montana State University's graduate program requires a student to maintain a 3.00 GPA (all course work) and evidence of academic progress toward the student's degree objectives. Evidence of academic progress is considered to be the timely pursuit of program courses as well as a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher on program courses. Failure by the student to achieve either of these conditions will result in academic probation and may result in ineligibility for financial aid.

Suspension Policy

A student whose cumulative grade-point average is less than 3.0 ("B") in their program courses at the end of the semester of probation may be suspended from the Graduate School. A student who is suspended from graduate school may continue to enroll in graduate courses as a non-degree graduate. Non-degree credits during this time will be ineligible for use on a graduate program.

A student may request a reconsideration of admission after one or more semesters of full-time graduate work have been successfully completed (a minimum of 9 credits with a 3.0 GPA.) A request for reconsideration for admission must be made in writing to the Graduate School.

Fees

All graduate students all pay a fee of \$175 each semester to pay for graduate studio maintenance; there is no waiver for this fee. Students wishing to order additional materials through the School of Art must make arrangements with the office and be able to pay for materials in advance. When a student fills out paperwork for the use of a studio space, a \$100 deposit is collected and held by the School of Art office. Additional fees may incur should a student vandalize or otherwise ruin graduate studio spaces or equipment.

Studio Arts MFA Program Curriculum Structure:

First Year Graduate Student (FYG)

Fall:

Seminar (ARTZ-594 - 1 Credit)

Caucus (ARTZ-___ - 3 Credits)

Contemporary Art History Offering (ARTH-451 - 3 Credits)

Ind. Studio with Faculty Advisor (ARTZ-___ - 2 Credit) *1

Spring:

Seminar (ARTZ-594 - 1 Credit)

Caucus (ARTZ-___ - 3 Credits)

Any Art History Offering (ARTH-451 - 3 Credits) –consult Faculty Advisor

Ind. Studio with Faculty Advisor (ARTZ-___ - 2 Credit)

Total First Year Credit: 18 credits

Second Year Graduate Student (SYG)

Fall:

Seminar (ARTZ-594 - 1 Credit)

Caucus (ARTZ-___ - 3 Credits)

Ind. Studio with Committee Chair (ARTZ-___ - 2 Credit)

Contemporary Art Offering (ARTH-451 - 3 Credits)

Or

Additional Independent Studio Credits (ARTZ-___ - 1 Credit) x3

(3, 1 credit Independent Studies with S.O.A. Faculty other than Committee Chair)

Spring:

Seminar (ARTZ-594 - 1 Credit)

Caucus (ARTZ-___ - 3 Credits)

Ind. Studio with Committee Chair (ARTZ-___ - 2 Credit)

Contemporary Art Offering (ARTH-451 - 3 Credits)

Or (Opposite of Fall second year choice)

Additional Independent Studio Credits (ARTZ-___ - 1 Credit) x3

(3, 1 credit Independent Studies with S.O.A. Faculty other than Committee Chair)

Total Second Year Credit: 18 credits

Third Year Graduate Student (TYG)

Fall:

Seminar (ARTZ-594 - 1 Credit)

Caucus (ARTZ-__ - 3 Credits)

Thesis Work (ARTZ-590 - 7 Credits)

Ind. Studio with Committee Chair (ARTZ-__ - 1 Credit)

Spring:

Seminar (ARTZ-594 - 1 Credit)

Caucus (ARTZ-__ - 3 Credits)

Thesis Work (ARTZ-590 - 8 Credits)

Total Second Year Credit: 24 credits

Total Credits towards Degree requirements: 60 credits

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Establishing Residency

An individual must have proof of Montana residency for one year before being eligible for in-state tuition (A person must be physically present in Montana for 12 continuous months. A total of 30 days absence from the state is allowed during the 12-month period). A student wishing to establish residency while attending school must take no more than 6 credits per semester for a 12-month period. If a student wishes to establish Montana residency it is imperative that the student begin taking the following steps **as soon as possible**:

1. Obtain a Montana residency policy information booklet from the Registrar's Office; begin filling out Residency Questionnaire.
2. Acquire a Montana driver's license.
3. Acquire Montana automobile license plates.
4. Prove presence in Montana during periods when not enrolled as a student.
5. Rely on Montana sources for a majority of one's financial support.
6. Be employed in the state of Montana.
7. File resident Montana state income tax returns.
8. Register to vote.
9. At the end of the twelve-month residency establishing period, file the Residency Questionnaire with the Registrar's Office.
10. While establishing residency, you can take no more than six credits per semester during the first year.

Financial Aid

Financial aid (other than teaching assistantships) is available to graduate students who show evidence of financial need. While such assistance may take various forms, most graduate students receive aid through loans or the work-study program. For further information, consult the Financial Aid on-line at <http://www.montana.edu/wwwfa/> or at MSU (located on the lower floor of the Strand Union Building, (406)994-2845).

Although fellowships are not awarded by the School of Art, certain students newly accepted to the MFA program may be nominated by the faculty for a Presidential Graduate Scholarship on the basis of an unusually outstanding academic undergraduate record and a record of special achievements, awards, exhibitions, etc. This is a 1-year non-renewable scholarship.

Nine credits and above are considered a full course load and full time status for a graduate student. A teaching assistant must enroll in a minimum of six credits a semester in order to keep his or her fee waiver. During the semesters he/she is teaching, a TA can enroll in no more than 15 credits.

AV Equipment Checkout

Digital projectors and cameras may be checked out in the Art office. Equipment may not be checked out overnight or weekends unless arrangements have been made with the Art office. If a projector is to be kept overnight it must be returned by 8:00 a.m. the following morning. Several of the classrooms in Cheever Hall are equipped with digital projectors and screens. These rooms may be used by appointment, made through the Registrar's Office, when no regularly scheduled classes are meeting in them (each room's schedule of daily classes is posted outside the door). There is also a digital camera and a laptop available for checkout.

Computer Access

The School of Art will make a computer and a printer available for use by graduate students. Graduate teaching assistants have priority for use of these machines in preparing class materials. Graduate teaching assistants will also have a computer and printer available for use in the adjunct instructor/TA office, room 216 Haynes. Graduate students are also able to use the Mac computer lab during open hours.

Career Placement Office

Graduate students in art, especially those planning to look for jobs in the teaching field, should consider setting up a placement dossier (which includes letters of recommendation and resume) with the Career, Internship and Student Employment

Services at least six months prior to graduation. The cost to set up a file and have ten credential packets sent out is \$30.00 a year. The student must directly request a faculty member to write a letter of recommendation for him/her. Once the student graduates, they are responsible for contacting faculty members to request letters. The School of Art Office regularly receives advertisements of job openings in art from colleges across the country; these will be posted on the main bulletin board in the hall.

Studio Policies

Haynes Hall is open during the posted regular and holiday hours. The Melvin Graduate Studios are open 24 hours with the exception of noted maintenance closures. Graduate students will be issued a building key upon enrollment in the program at orientation. This key is obtained with a requisition form from the School of Art Office and must be signed by the Director of the School of Art. Once a student has requested keys, they will receive an email notification that their key(s) are ready for pick up at Facilities Services located at the Plew Building (6th Ave and Grant Street).

Graduate studio assignments are made on a yearly basis during the Studio Draw (see **Studio Draw**)

A continuing graduate student (i.e., one who was enrolled the preceding spring semester) may use his/her studio space over the summer provided he/she has preregistered for fall semester and has followed appropriate protocol regarding studio clean-out, use, and studio draw. If a continuing student intends to use lab equipment, shop facilities or shop space outside of the graduate facility during the summer session, he/she must register for a minimum of one credit in the area in which he/she intends to work (regardless of the declared area of study). The reason for this is to ensure that the appropriate lab fee is paid to cover materials and/or costs of running equipment; furthermore should an accident with equipment in a University space occur in the summer, the registered student will be covered by the University insurance they paid for at the beginning of the preceding spring semester. Please note, if the student waived the University insurance coverage in the spring any accidents will be his/her own financial responsibility.

The following guidelines apply to graduate studio and office spaces:

- Graduate students are required to pay a \$100 studio deposit their first semester of attendance. This deposit will be refunded either fully or partially during their final semester.
- Each student is responsible for maintaining a clean and safe workplace at all times and must keep common areas clear for programmatic and public use.
- University regulations apply to all studio spaces including those prohibiting **alcohol consumption and smoking**.
- All adjoining hallways and common areas must be kept free of trash and materials at all times.
- No permanent alterations should be made to studio spaces.
- Be considerate of other students when playing radios, making noise, using noxious materials, etc. (Safe and conscientious studio practice is required)
- A mandatory studio cleanup occurs at the end of each semester and a mandatory clean out occurs in week 17 (the week after finals week) each spring semester.
- Any work left in studios and offices after a student graduates, abandons after mandatory clean out dates, withdraws from the program, will be removed and is not the responsibility of the School of Art.
- Vandalism, disregard for other students, and failure to obey University regulations will not be tolerated.