

Art and Visual Communications Design

BFA Thesis Handbook

Western Oregon University

2016-2017

Introduction

Congratulations on your acceptance into the BFA degree program.

The Art Department BFA Thesis Handbook has been designed as a practical means of conveying important information to all of our candidates in the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) program. This program provides serious, aspiring artists with an intensive, one-year experience informed by studio, academic and service learning/study abroad activities that will prepare them for graduate coursework and/or entry into the competitive and demanding fields of art and design.

This handbook is intended to supplement the Western Oregon University Academic Guidelines and Catalog. It contains information that is specific to students in the Bachelor of Fine Arts program and is not meant to be comprehensive. Students should consult the general catalog for information on policies, procedures and resources not outlined in this book.

Faculty

Phone

Jennifer Bracy, Visual Communications Design	88534
Michael Freeman, Art History	88326
Jodie Garrison, Painting	88027
Mary Harden, Ceramics	88460
Kim Hoffman, Sculpture	88248
Becca McCannell, Printmaking	88442
Daniel Tankersley, Visual Communications Design	89658
Diane Tarter, Visual Communications Design	88387
Garima Thakur, Visual Communications Design	89247

BFA Art Curriculum

(133 credits)

A 204 Art History: Prehistoric through Late Antiquity (4)

A 205 Art History: Middle Ages through Renaissance (4)

A 206 Art History: Baroque through Contemporary (4)

A 115 Beginning Design: 2-D (4)

A 116 Beginning Design: 3-D (4)

A 119 Digital Presentation for Artists (4)

A 130 Beginning Drawing (4)

Minimum of three 200 level studio courses (12) *See advisor*

A 230 Introduction to Life Drawing (4)

A 315 Intermediate Design: 2D *or* A 316 Intermediate Design: 3D (4)

A 304, A 305, A 306 History of Modern Art sequence (12)

Upper division studio sequences (36)

300 and 400 level in Ceramics, Drawing, Painting, Printmaking, Sculpture, or Visual Communication Design disciplines.

Twelve additional credits of upper division studio coursework* (12)

A 412 Service Learning ** *and/or* A 413 International Studio Art Study*** (3)

A 445, A 455, A 475, A485 *or* A 495 B.F.A. Thesis Project in primary concentration area* (18).

Capstone course(s) for specific major (4 credits total)

ART MAJOR A318 Production: Gallery Exhibition, A 418 Gallery Exhibition, A 419 Professional Concerns

VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN MAJOR A429 Portfolio & Professional Preparation

* Concentration areas: ceramics, printmaking, painting, sculpture, or visual communication design.

** Practicum (Service Learning) and International Studies may be combined to meet the 3 credit requirement.

*** A 413 this requirement may be met with studio art courses from another accredited university only if offered outside of the U.S.

Completion of the Liberal Arts Core curriculum, and the BA/BS requirements for language or math/computer science is part of the BFA in Art. A minor is not required for a BFA in Art. **Total Required Credit for BFA** **133**

LACC (in accordance with current WOU catalog)	55
BS or BA requirements plus electives (in accordance with current WOU catalog), minimum	15
<i>WOU requirement for Minor (in accordance with current WOU catalog).</i>	15

Total Credits for Graduation **≥ 218**

Preparation:

Check List

The following is a check list of activities to help guide you through the first steps of your BFA experience. Use the Thesis calendar to keep a record of your appointments.

- Make an appointment in advance to meet with your primary advisor on the first or second day of the Fall term.
- Be prepared to discuss your thesis ideas/concepts at this appointment.
- Have a plan for your thesis paper that includes images or ideas about your inspiration.
- Outline your work schedule with times and days of the week you will be in your studio. This is to be posted in your studio.
- After speaking with your primary advisor, make an appointment with your committee to present your preliminary information.

Thesis Calendar

Fall

1 st or 2 nd Day of Term	Meeting with primary advisor Determine weekly meeting day/time
Day, Date	Proposal completed and approved by primary advisor
2 nd Tuesday of Fall Term	Meeting with thesis committee for proposal presentation
4 th Tuesday of Fall Term	Approved proposal submitted to Art Department Head
Day, Date	Quarterly thesis project review with thesis committee

Thesis Calendar

Winter

Day, Date	Meeting with primary advisor Determine weekly meeting time/place
Day, Date	Meeting with thesis committee (Informal meetings schedule)
Day, Date	Quarterly thesis project review with thesis committee

Thesis Calendar

Spring

Day, Date	Meeting with primary advisor Determine meeting day/time
Second Week of Term:	All BFA candidate meeting with Gallery Director
Day, Date	Thesis paper review with primary thesis advisor
Day, Date	Presentation of thesis paper to thesis committee
Day, Date	Thesis exhibition installation
Day, Date	Final meeting with thesis committee
Day, Date	Removal of project, studio clean up

Faculty Advisors and Thesis Committee

Each BFA candidate will be assigned a thesis committee comprised of three (3) faculty advisors.

- The advisors must be Art Department faculty.
- The primary advisor will be, when possible, the faculty responsible for the concentration area chosen by the student.
- The primary advisor will act as the committee chair and will work with the student closely throughout the thesis project.
- The secondary advisor, when possible, will be the faculty responsible for the minor concentration area.
- The third faculty member will be assigned to the committee by the Art Department Head to provide committee balance and an equitable distribution of workload.
- Faculty members from outside of the project discipline contribute an important objective view. They enrich the composition of the committee, increase breadth and impart added insight to the project review.

The primary advisor will meet with the student at least once per week.

The remaining committee advisors will meet informally with the student at least 2 times per term.

The thesis committee will meet as a group with the candidate at least twice per term in the Fall and Spring and once in the Winter term.

The student is encouraged to initiate discussion with any/all committee members as often as the student has questions or concerns regarding the progress of the project.

Studio Safety

- Whenever possible, the BFA candidate will be provided with separate studio spaces. All electrical, fire and safety regulations must be followed in the studio space. Any deviation will result in a warning. Three (3) warnings regarding the same offense can result in expulsion from the program.
- Students are required to request instruction for all power equipment with which they do not have trained experience.

- Students who require the use of equipment outside of their project area must contact the professor responsible for that studio/equipment to request access and assistance. There is no guarantee that equipment from outside the two discipline areas will be available for use. The student does not have unlimited access to the facility and MUST ask permission to use equipment outside the two areas of concentration.
- Students will receive Fob Keys, a contract that outlines fob key rules/regulations and potentially an access code from your focus areas in the first week of classes. The student's WOU account will be charged a one-time \$25.00 fee that will cover all fob keys issued. Students are required to return the fob keys at the end of the academic year. Negligence to return the fob keys will result in a \$25.00 charge for each unreturned fob key. Lost, stolen or damaged fob keys must be reported immediately to the Art Department Administrative Assistant.

The Thesis

The thesis is a project in an area of special interest to the student. The objective of the thesis is an extensive exploration of material and content in which the student attains a level of personal sophistication/refinement that would not be possible in regulated class study.

As a thesis student, you are responsible for:

- Developing clear, purposeful personal goals and communicating these goals.
- Honoring deadlines and, in general, maintaining professional work habits without supervision.
- Initiating and maintaining contact with your advisor regarding your work.
- Integrating a body of work in such a way that all parts address the project goals and contribute to the whole.
- Preparing and installing the thesis exhibition at a professional level.
- Providing supporting documentation of the exhibition in written and visual formats.

- The scope of the thesis is limited only by the nature of the project and by the element of time. It is expected that you will attend all classes in your schedule and allocate 18 hours per week (6 credit hours minimum) in your primary area and 9 hours per week (3 credit hours minimum) in the secondary area for out-of-class work time. You should be ready to undertake the project as soon as your proposal is accepted by your committee and the project should be completed by the 8th week of the Spring term.
- During this period, you should have consultations with your advisor about your progress. Your advising committee will review your work and confirm or reject progress during quarterly reviews. Your primary advisor will confirm when you are ready to present your thesis for final review by the committee. At this time the thesis work and the formal written summation of the project must be presented.
- A space will be assigned to you for your thesis exhibition. You will be responsible for the removal and reparation of the exhibition and the exhibition space.
- When you satisfactorily complete the thesis, document the thesis with digital images and submit the documentation to the thesis committee and meet all other requirements of the degree program, you will be eligible to graduate. Works must remain in the thesis exhibition for the duration of the exhibition.

Thesis Proposal

The thesis proposal serves to guide you in the selection of area, material and subject matter with which you will be working. It is expected that the work will develop and change as the thesis progresses. If there is concern that the work is moving too far from the proposal, you should contact your primary advisor to discuss the issue. The work may need to be redirected or it may be necessary, with the approval of your committee, to modify your proposal.

You must consult with your primary thesis advisor after completing a first draft. The proposal should be in correct form (see thesis proposal outline), approved by your primary advisor and ready for presentation by the second Tuesday in the Fall term.

A meeting with your thesis committee to discuss your proposal will be arranged. In this meeting you will formally present the proposal to the committee for approval. A selection of your own previous work or other artist's work in pictorial or physically present images may be useful to clarify your position and facilitate discussion. The committee will evaluate the merit of the project and your capabilities and approve, suggest changes or reject the proposal. Substantive changes or rejection of the proposal will require a second meeting. The second meeting will be conducted within one week of the original proposal meeting. An approved proposal must be presented to the Art Department Head no later than the fourth Tuesday in the Fall term.

The proposal must be a one (1) to four (4) page typed document. This document must address philosophical and technical concerns as well as predict an outcome:

Philosophical issues:

1. As artists, we are accustomed to articulating our ideas through imagery, form and space. However, you must attempt to communicate, in written form, the thesis project, its intent and focus, and the problem or issue that will be explored. You will also provide the significance of the project for you or the reasons for choosing it.

Technical Issues:

2. Although your research will take you in directions you cannot currently project, include a plan for visual and intellectual resources for directing the development of your project. Additional resource information will be included in your log and in the thesis paper.
3. Explain the challenge or obstacles that you will be undertaking , , , both physically and intellectually. . . to complete this project (e.g. using new methods of working, new ways of researching or new materials).
4. State the number and scale of pieces and the medium that will be used.
5. A personal timeline of work expectations for each term is required. This is to be posted in the studio and maintained throughout the term. It will be periodically reviewed by the primary advisor.

Prediction:

6. Imagine how this undertaking will affect you as an artist and what you suspect you will learn from the experience. Articulate your supposition.

Quarterly Thesis Review

The purpose of the quarterly thesis review is to evaluate the progress of the thesis project, review and critique work, clarify and approve changes from the proposal and assess goals necessary for conclusion of the project. The thesis committee will lead and direct the discussion. Thesis committees' finding inadequate progress or work of insufficient quality will inform the student that the thesis is in jeopardy and clearly state what is expected.

All reviews will take place in the student's studio unless otherwise arranged. The student is responsible for contacting the committee individually to reconfirm the date and time of the review. Any schedule changes must first be submitted to the primary thesis advisor for approval, then submitted to the remaining thesis committee members.

Thesis Paper

The thesis paper is a required component of the thesis project. It is an opportunity to reflect on the original proposal, assess the direction the project has taken and the growth that has been experienced. Thesis writing is meant to clarify, confirm and record the process of the learning experience. Through this document, you will explain your ideas and how they relate to their physical manifestation, prove that you understand the methods and relationships you have developed and can repeat the process in future art-making endeavors.

You are required to meet with Dr. Katherine Schmidt in the Writing Center to work on the thesis paper. Please call to set up an appointment with Dr. Schmidt to accommodate this requirement (503-838-8234).

A journal is required throughout the year to assist in the successful construction of the thesis paper.

Thesis Paper Instructions

- The thesis paper must be a minimum of five (5) pages long with a maximum of twenty (20) pages.
- The paper must be written in MLA style.
- For more information on the MLA style, please contact the writing center. An example of this style will also be provided by your primary thesis advisor.
- This style requires double-spacing throughout the document and a centered title.
- The paper must include the seven sections listed below.
- With the exception of the title and introduction, each segment must include the heading and subject matter listed below.
- Use clear topic sentences at the beginning of each section to prepare the reader for the section information.
- At the end of each segment, transitional sentences help readers move from one topic to the next.
- When summarizing a citation, the author's name and page number can be placed in parentheses.
- When using a quotation with the author named in the sentence, the page number of the quote will be in parentheses.
- If using work that has no author, such as a general estimate, the Title and page will be listed in parentheses.
- No parenthetical citation necessary for unpaginated internet source when the author is named in the indicating phrase.
- Quotations longer than four lines are indented 1 inch (or 10 spaces) and quotation marks are omitted. No period is used after citation.
- Internet sources do not require page numbers.
- No citation is necessary for 'common knowledge' that is available in many sources.
- The final page(s) should include all works cited in alphabetical order of authors' last names.
- The first line of each entry is at left of the margin and subsequent lines are indented ½" or five spaces.

1. Title.

The title specifically relates to the project's scope and should not be a generic, broad description. For example; if you were creating landscapes of your bedroom, titling your work 'Landscapes' would be generic. The title, in itself, should be treated like a work of art – there should be a conceptual and formal relationship to the artwork.

2. The Introduction: A clear articulation of the project's intent at the opening of the paper.

Describe what you set out to do conceptually. For example: you wanted to work with the notion that the essential portion of a person is not physical or activity-related. You choose to work with light and space contained by a material to examine the essential being. Describe the risk-taking factor of using the materials and the idea of something that has no form or image.

3. Exhibition Description

(A description of the visual pieces for the benefit of those who will not view the exhibition to grasp the meaning of the project.)

This is another way of analyzing your work by looking intently at the physical qualities and describing them.

4. A description and reflection of the process

Chronologically describe this year of events in your studio and artistic life that are pertinent to the culmination of this body of work. Relate the changes in your ideas and working habits that occurred from investigation and experimentation.

5. Technical issues

Provide details regarding the challenge of material, tools, and presentation in the process of creating your work. Describe the technical refinement that came about from these challenges.

6. Visual and intellectual research findings

Describe the imagery and information that directed and supported your process.

7. Conclusion

(This analyzes and critiques the finished work and summarizes the learned outcome.)

This should be the strongest statement of the thesis. Express the way your artwork reflects your original ideas and provides evidence of your personal concerns.

Don't be afraid to be critical of yourself. This is an important part of the learning process and more fruitful for you to be able to accept blind spots that can only be discovered after the work is complete and in analysis, than to ignore or deny them.

Thesis Exhibition

The BFA thesis candidate is responsible for striking an exhibition of the project at the end of the Spring term. The exhibition space will be determined by the Art Department.

- A professional exhibition including lighting, signage, presentation and spatial consideration is vital and will be a part of the evaluation process.
- The project will be exhibited for at least one (1) week and potentially longer.
- The Gallery Director will work with BFA candidates to organize the exhibition space allocation.

Thesis Project Evaluation

There are two elements considered in the thesis project:

1. The exhibition
2. The thesis paper

The thesis exhibition will be assessed by the Advising Committee on the components of

- Craftsmanship
- Material usage
- Conceptual merit

The written portion of the project will be evaluated on the student's ability to interpret the nature, meaning and impetus of the work.

Assessment

The thesis committee will assess the exhibition and thesis paper individually and submit a grade to the primary thesis advisor.

The primary advisor is responsible for assigning the final grade for both the thesis paper and the exhibition.

Student success is the primary goal in the BFA program. **BFA candidates are required to obtain a 'C' average in the thesis project.**

Students who receive any grade below a 'C' in the thesis project will be immediately disqualified from the program.

Grading is divided into these categories:

Fall Term: The grade for the thesis project is determined by the primary advisor based on the work progress and quality thereof. The primary advisor will consult with the other committee members regarding this grade.

Winter Term: The grade for the thesis project is determined by the primary advisor based on the work progress and quality thereof. The primary advisor will consult with the other committee members regarding this grade.

Spring Term: thesis paper: 40%
work and exhibition: 60%

The final (Spring Term) grade will be determined by 50% primary advisor's grade and 25% per each Thesis Committee advisor's grade based on the thesis paper and the final body of the thesis work.

Format Requirements

Thesis Paper

Thesis must be typed on 8 ½” x11” quality paper. Margins of 1 ½ “ on the left side of each page and at least one inch on all other sides is required. Text should be double spaced. Grammatical and spelling errors are unacceptable.

Page 1 – Cover Page

Page 2 – Approval Signature Page

Page 3 – Thesis Proposal

Page 4 – Beginning of thesis body

When the body is complete, the next page will be reserved for bibliography. All research must be cited. List resources/references i.e. museums videos, books etc.

Final page – blank

- All thesis papers must be bound in a three-ring binder with the title, name and date on the cover.
- Copies of the thesis paper must be distributed to all thesis committee members and the Hammersly library after final approval.
- If using digital image documentation, provide copies of images to all committee members and the library.

Visual Documentation

Visual documentation of the thesis exhibition is required.

20 digital images (300 ppi resolution) documenting the thesis work is required.

Photographs are not permitted.

Images will be retained by the art department for future use by students and faculty.

CD's should contain an image list which includes name, title of work, dimensions and media of each piece corresponding to a numbered digital image. A copy of the student's Thesis Proposal and Thesis Paper should also be included in the CD. The CD and a hard copy of the thesis paper must go to the Art Department Head. The Thesis Committee should each receive a CD that contains images, image list, Thesis Proposal and Thesis Paper .

Responsibilities of the Graduating Student

The graduating student is responsible for:

- The thesis exhibition
- The thesis paper
- The completion of all other academic requirements
- The completion of service learning/study abroad element
- The removal of all art work from the university
- The reparation of exhibition and studio spaces to original conditions
- The return of Fob keys to the Art Department office

Eligibility to Graduate

To be eligible to graduate, the candidate must:

- Obtain a B average grade in the thesis project
- Maintain a C+ average in academics
- Receive a positive review from the service learning mentor
- Successfully install and uninstall the thesis exhibition
- Complete all repairs to studio and exhibition space
- Provide a set of 20 images (digital) for visual documentation of thesis project

Special Circumstances

In the event that a student must temporarily terminate participation in the program due to circumstances other than academic inadequacy, the student must present a written explanation for the interruption to the primary advisor.

If the explanation is acceptable, the student will be allowed to return to the program within one (1) year to complete the degree. The faculty will determine whether it is appropriate for the student to start over or continue from the stage at which they left the program.

Students who do not return to the program within the allotted time-frame will be required to reapply for acceptance into the program.

Thesis Handbook

Acknowledgment of Receipt

You are responsible for fulfilling the requirements for thesis as outlined in the Thesis Handbook. By your signature here, you acknowledge receiving the Handbook.

This document must be signed and returned to the Art Department Head by May 1st, 2014

In addition, please print your current address and telephone number.

Name _____

Current address _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Project concentration area _____

Signature