Art History & Communication Studies

The Department of Art History & Communication Studies (AHCS) embraces the interdisciplinary study of art, culture and communications, and the technologies of information, image and sound from all periods of time and through a broad range of historical and theoretical approaches. Maintaining its premier international standing among the top art history, media and communication studies programs, the department provides rigorous, high-quality graduate training in a globally-engaged and research-intensive environment.

Supported by interdisciplinary research initiatives within the Department and across McGill, AHCS offers distinct MA and PhD degrees in Art History and in Communication Studies. In each of these degree programs, students also have the opportunity to enroll in the Graduate Option for Gender and Women’s Studies.

Art History Programs
The MA and PhD in Art History consider the history of art, architecture and visual culture from the Medieval to the Contemporary periods, examining the development of art historical (and other) methodologies and critical theories. The historical expertise offered includes: Byzantine and Medieval; Renaissance; Early Modern; Modern; and Contemporary. Our geographic areas of concentration include East Asia, Europe, North America, Turtle Island, the Caribbean, the Middle East and South America. Concentrated areas of expertise include: new media; print culture; visual and material culture; globalization; postcolonial, decolonial and gender studies; Indigenous studies; histories of science and medicine.

Communication Studies Programs
The MA and PhD in Communication Studies examine the social, cultural, and political dimensions of communication media, processes and technologies. Areas of expertise include the history of communication technologies and knowledge; new media, including hacking, open source software, social media, artificial intelligence and the politics of computers and computation; cultural and media governance (broadcasting, telecommunications, Internet) and technology policy; technology and democracy; the role of media in diasporic cultures; feminist media studies; queer theory and critical race theory; theories of the city; infrastructure; postcolonial and transnational studies; sound studies and visual culture; disability studies; critical studies of journalism.

General Admission Requirements
Entrance into the MA or PhD programs is limited to the best qualified applicants. A minimum CGPA of 3.3 or the equivalent (i.e., 75%) is required, although successful applicants typically have CGPAs that exceed this minimum. The Department places a high priority on demonstrated scholarly ability, a track record of academic achievement, and fit between an applicant’s research interests and those of our faculty. Evidence of these qualities will be taken from an applicant’s academic transcripts, academic letters of reference, writing samples, and research proposal.
Admission to Art History
To apply to the MA program in Art History, candidates are expected to have a BA degree in art history or a closely related area of study; candidates may come from other fields such as literary studies, comparative literature, ethnic studies, Canadian studies, architecture, urban planning, film studies, history, performance studies, or philosophy/aesthetics, but must have taken at least 10 courses relating to the history and theory of art and/or visual culture, preferably covering a range of historical periods and geographical regions. In exceptional cases, applicants without a strong background may be admitted but with additional degree requirements. For the PhD program in Art History, candidates must hold a MA degree in Art History or a closely related field together with an appropriate number of art history or related courses.

Application materials include a research proposal of at least 250 words outlining the candidate’s research interests in Art History as well as a sample of their written work such as a seminar paper or, in the case of PhD applicants, all or part of an MA paper or thesis.

Admission to Communication Studies
An Honours Bachelor’s degree or equivalent is required of applicants for the MA program in Communication Studies. An undergraduate degree in Communication Studies is not required for admission to the MA program though demonstrated ability in a related area of study is an asset. To apply to the PhD program in Communication Studies, candidates must hold a MA or equivalent degree in a closely related field, as well as evidence of talent and previous research in the area. Admission to the PhD program is conditional on a strong fit between a candidate’s research interests and those of our faculty.

Application materials include a research proposal of at least 500 words outlining the candidate’s particular research interests as well as two examples of academic written work.

Further information
Further information on the Department of Art History and Communication Studies is available on our website, which includes links to faculty members and their research areas and contact information as well as more detailed information about admissions requirements.

McGill’s online application form for graduate program candidates is available at mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/apply.

See mcgill.ca/study/university_regulations_and_resources > Graduate > Graduate Admissions and Application Procedures > Application Procedures for detailed application procedures.

To obtain financial aid information, please consult the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website at mcgill.ca/gps/funding or email graduate.fellowships@mcgill.ca.

For any admissions issues, please contact the Graduate Administrative Student Affairs Coordinator at graduate.ahcs@mcgill.ca.

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