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## History of Art (BA) (three-year course) Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026

### Entry requirements

Visit [Admission requirements for 2026 entry](#) to view a summary table of each undergraduate course's entry requirements.

If English is not your first language you may also need to meet our [English language requirements](#).

### About the course

Anything designed by human beings exhibits visual and material qualities that are specific to the place and period in which it originates.

History of Art aims to arrive at an historical understanding of the origins, meanings and purposes of art and artefacts from a wide range of world cultures. It asks about the circumstances of objects' making, their makers, the media used, their functions, their critical reception and their subsequent histories.

A degree in History of Art educates students in the historical interpretation of art in its cultural contexts. It also provides skills in the critical analysis of objects through the cultivation of visual literacy, as well as encourages students to analyse critically related texts and documents. The acquired skills have broad applicability in a wide range of professional settings, as well as providing personal enlightenment and enjoyment.

The University's collections, including the famous [Ashmolean](#) and [Pitt Rivers](#) museums, provide objects for first-hand study under the supervision of those entrusted with their care. The historic architecture of the University, the city of Oxford and its environs supplies a rich source of study in its own right.

The Oxford degree is designed to provide innovative insights into a wide range of world art, drawing its expertise from various University faculties and the staff of University collections, as well as from the department itself.

There is a strong emphasis on how primary visual and written sources from various periods and places can be analysed in relation to works of art and architecture. Students are also encouraged to explore what it means to call something a work of 'Art' and to consider images and objects that may not necessarily conform to traditional definitions of 'Art'.

### A typical week

Each week you will have around two lectures, and a weekly tutorial.

Teaching usually takes place in the department or in a college, as well as in one of the Oxford museums and galleries where tutors often lecture in front of actual works of art. Visits to exhibitions and historical buildings will also be part of the course.

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Outside the classroom most of your time will be spent preparing essays for your tutorials and working in libraries, archives or museums on longer research papers.

Tutorials usually comprise between one and three students and a tutor. Class sizes may vary depending on the options you choose, but there would usually be no more than around 16 students, and often significantly fewer.

Most tutorials, classes, and lectures are delivered by tutors or curators. Many are world-leading experts with years of experience in teaching and research. Some teaching may also be delivered by postgraduate students who are studying at doctoral level and have normally received formal training in teaching undergraduates.

To find out more about how our teaching year is structured, visit our [Academic Year](#) page.

Significant self-study is expected of all students – for further details see [workload and independent study](#) information. Undergraduate courses at Oxford are full-time during term time. Students typically spend approximately 40 hours per week on academic work.

### Course structure

YEAR 1	
<b>COURSES</b>  Four elements are taken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Core course: Introduction to the History of Art</li><li>• Core course: Art, Design, Architecture: Meaning and Interpretation</li><li>• Core course: Challenging Antiquities</li><li>• Supervised extended essay on a building, object or image in Oxford.</li></ul> Students also undertake a French, German or Italian for Art Historians course through the University's Language Centre.  No previous experience or qualifications are required for the language courses and they are not formally assessed.	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>  First University examinations: three written papers and one extended essay
YEARS 2 AND 3	
<b>COURSES</b>  Seven elements are taken:  Core Course in Years 2 and 3: Approaches to the History of Art	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>  Final University examinations: four or five written papers, one or two extended essay(s) and one thesis

## YEARS 2 AND 3

Further Subject in Art History in Year 2 - options may include:

- Anglo-Saxon Archaeology
- The Carolingian Renaissance
- Culture and Society in Early Renaissance Italy
- Flanders and Italy in the Quattrocento
- Court Culture and Art in Early Modern Europe
- Intellect and Culture in Victorian Britain
- The Iberian global century, 1550-1650

Two courses in Year 2 in Modern art and Medieval/Ancient or non-Western art - options may include:

- Egyptian Art and Architecture
- Greek Art and Archaeology, c. 500-300 BC
- Art under the Roman Empire
- Hellenistic art and archaeology, 330-30 BC
- Encountering South Asian Sculpture
- Gothic Art through Medieval Eyes
- Understanding Museums and Collections
- Literature and the Visual Arts in France
- Topics in Islamic Art
- European Cinema
- Latin American cinema
- History and Theory of Visual Culture since 1900
- The Experience of Modernity: Visual Culture, 1880–1925
- American Art
- Inventing Photography
- Visual Culture in Contemporary East Asia

Special Subject and Extended Essay in Art History in Year 3 - options may include:

- Art and Culture in Renaissance Florence and Venice
- English Architecture, 1660-1720
- Art and its Public in France, 1815–67
- Pop and the Art of the Sixties
- Art and Politics: class and power in Chinese Art
- Art and the invention of race
- Art and the Anthropocene: imagining, taming and transforming the environment, ca. 1000-1450

## YEARS 2 AND 3

Undergraduate thesis completed in Year 3.

Students also have the opportunity to undertake a placement in one of the University museums, libraries or college collections in their second year. This is not formally assessed, but provides valuable experience in the museum and heritage sectors.

Visit the [History of Art](#) website for the latest information on all course details and a full list of current options.

Not all options may be available every year - this is subject to change, as explained in the [Terms & Conditions](#) and for reasons of staff availability and student demand. The department may add extra options.

Most Oxford courses are assessed by examinations. These are typically at the end of the first and last years but you may have assessments at other times and some courses have exams in the second year also. First year examinations are often called Prelims or Moderations, and you need to pass these exams to progress to the second year. You must pass your final year exams, or 'finals', to pass your degree. For more information on assessment for your course, please see the Course Structure.

Finals also determine the classification of your degree. For some courses you may also be assessed on your practical work, or you may be required to submit a dissertation. Please check the assessment details for your course.

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out above. However, there may be situations in which it is desirable or necessary for the University to make changes in course provision, either before or after registration. For further information, please see the University's [Terms and Conditions](#) and information about [potential course changes](#).

You are also referred to the [Student Handbook](#) (which is updated every September).

## Fees

These annual fees in 2026/27 are for full-time students who begin this undergraduate course here in 2026. Information about how much fees and other costs usually increase each year is set out in the [University's Terms and Conditions](#).

For details of annual increases, please see our [guidance on likely increases to fees and charges](#).

Fee status	Annual Course fees in 2026/27
Home	£9,790
Overseas	£43,600

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In the 2027-28 academic year course fees for Home fee status students will rise to £10,050 (in line with the government fee cap.)

[Further details about fee status eligibility](#) can be found on the fee status webpage.

### Living costs

Living costs for the academic year starting in 2026 are estimated to be between £1,405 and £2,105 for each month you are in Oxford. Students at Oxford can benefit from our [world class resources](#) and [college provision](#), which may help to keep costs down. Entitlement to certain types of support may depend on your personal financial circumstances.

Our academic year is made up of three eight-week terms, so you would not usually need to be in Oxford for much more than six months of the year but may wish to budget over a nine-month period to ensure you also have sufficient funds during the holidays to meet essential costs. For further details please visit our [living costs webpage](#).

### Living costs breakdown

	Per month		Total for 9 months	
	Lower range	Upper range	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£315	£545	£2,835	£4,905
Accommodation (including utilities)	£825	£990	£7,425	£8,910
Personal items	£160	£310	£1,440	£2,790
Social activities	£50	£130	£450	£1,170
Study costs	£35	£90	£315	£810
Other	£20	£40	£180	£360
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,405</b>	<b>£2,105</b>	<b>£12,645</b>	<b>£18,945</b>

In order to provide these estimated likely living costs (which are rounded to the nearest £5), the University in collaboration with the Oxford SU conducted a living costs survey in May 2025 to complement existing student expenditure data from a variety of sources, including the UK government's Student Income and Expenditure Survey and the National Union of Students (NUS).

The current economic climate and periods of high national inflation in recent years make it harder to estimate potential changes to the cost of living over the next few years. When planning your finances for any future years of study in Oxford beyond 2026-27, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of around 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

### Additional Fees and Charges Information for History of Art

There are no compulsory costs for this course beyond the fees shown above and your living costs.

Regulation - The University of Oxford is regulated by the [Office for Students](#) and subscribes to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) student complaints scheme.