Graduation with Distinction: Art, Art History & Visual Studies (ARTHIST, ARTSVIS, VISUALST)

Procedure for selection of students
To be eligible for graduation with distinction, students must have an overall GPA of 3.3 and a 3.5 in the major. In the spring of their junior year, students must:

- Identify an original project or topic of research;
- Select an advisor with whom to work; and
- In consultation with the advisor, constitute a distinction committee of two additional faculty members.

For acceptance into the distinction program, art history, visual arts, art history/visual arts, and visual studies majors must submit an application form (attached below) to the director of undergraduate studies. Students will be selected on the basis of the intellectual and creative merit of their projects.

Expected product

Art History: Majors will write an original research paper of 10,000 to 15,000 words (30-50 pages) with footnotes and bibliography. Students are expected to do research using primary sources, including those in foreign languages when necessary, and following conventional style guidelines.

Visual Arts: Majors will do a unique project in any medium from drawing, painting, sculpture, and computer graphics to installation, performance, video, film, and photography. These projects will develop a coherent central theme through a number of examples related in technique, format, and subject matter. A written component will accompany the project to analyze and elucidate its conceptual, thematic, and technical aspects.

Visual Studies: Majors will either write an original research paper of 10,000-15,000 words (30-50 pages) with footnotes and bibliography, or produce a unique project in an appropriate medium. A written component will accompany the project to analyze and elucidate its conceptual, thematic, intellectual, and technical aspects.

Evaluative body

Art History: Honors projects will be evaluated by an advisory committee comprised of the student’s advisor and two other faculty members.

Visual Arts: Honors projects will be evaluated by the entire Visual Arts faculty.
**Visual Studies:** Honors projects will be evaluated by an advisory committee comprised of the student's advisor and two other faculty members.

**Evaluative procedure**
The research papers of art history majors will undergo several stages of editorial revision with the students' advisory committees. Interim evaluations will enable students to revise and hone their projects. The final paper will be evaluated according to how well students have accomplished their stated objectives, how originally and cogently the subject has been argued, and the quality of research and writing. The projects of visual arts majors will undergo six oral critique sessions, during which the Visual Arts faculty will discuss students' progress. Visual arts projects will be evaluated for the originality of the work and excellence in communicating ideas in visual form. A combination of these two approaches will be used by the students’ advisory committees to evaluate the papers and/or projects of visual studies majors.

**Levels of distinction**
**Three levels:** Distinction, High Distinction, and Highest Distinction. Students will be evaluated for the originality and quality of their work, and for the execution of all the stated requirements of their project. Distinction and High Distinction will be awarded by the student's advisory committee. Highest Distinction for both Art History and Visual Arts will be awarded only by the entire Art, Art History & Visual Studies faculty.

**Special courses, other activities required, comments**
**Art History:** 1) Fall of Senior Year: Enrollment in an Independent Study with your advisor OR enrollment in a 400-699-level seminar related to the distinction topic and approved by your advisor, and 2) Spring of Senior Year: Enrollment in an Independent Study with your advisor AND enrollment in ARTHIST 495S Honors Thesis Workshop if offered (each meeting every-other week). This coursework will result in a paper written in your final two semesters on a subject you will choose in consultation with your advisor. You are expected to do research using primary sources, including those in foreign languages when necessary. The research paper should be 10,000-15,000 words (30-50 pages) with footnotes and bibliography. Three members of the faculty will read the paper: your principal advisor and two readers. It must receive a minimum grade of A- for the student to qualify for graduation with distinction.

**Visual Arts:** In order to qualify for the distinction project in Visual Art you must have taken at least half of the courses towards the art major at Duke by the end of the junior year and have taken at least one upper-level course in the area of focus with your advisor for your project. You must have a well-defined project focused in any medium from drawing, painting, sculpture, and computer graphics to installation, performance, video, film, and photography. Your project will develop a coherent central theme through a number of examples related in technique, format, and subject matter. A written component will accompany the
project to analyze and elucidate its conceptual, thematic, and technical aspects. Students will complete 1) Fall of Senior Year: Enrollment in ARTSVIS 497S Advanced Visual Practice, and 2) Spring of Senior Year: Enrollment in ARTSVIS 499S Senior Capstone in the Visual Arts. Your project is critiqued and evaluated monthly by all Visual Arts faculty. The results of the project are exhibited on campus prior to your graduation.

**Art History/Visual Arts:** Double major distinction candidates may elect to pursue distinction in either Art History or Visual Arts.

**Visual Studies:** 1) One Course in Fall of Senior Year: Enrollment in an Independent Study with your advisor OR enrollment in a 400-699-level seminar related to the distinction topic and approved by your advisor OR enrollment in VMS 497S Advanced Visual Practice (for VMS students completing a project with a strong visual component), and 2) One Course in Spring of Senior Year: Enrollment in VMS 495S Honors Thesis Workshop is strongly advised if offered OR enrollment in VMS 499S Senior Capstone in VMS. This coursework will result in a research paper and/or visual project completed in your final two semesters on a subject you will choose in consultation with your advisor. The research paper should be 10,000-15,000 words (30-50 pages) with footnotes and bibliography. Three members of the faculty will read the paper: your principal advisor and two readers. The visual project should have a written component to it as well (length to be decided in consultation with GWD advisor), read by three members of the faculty. The research paper and/or visual project must receive a minimum grade of A- to qualify for graduation with distinction.

See Also:  
[Department of Art, Art History & Visual Studies](#)

Form is on the next page.
Application for Graduation with Distinction
In Art, Art History & Visual Studies

Name of Student: ________________________________________________

Graduation Date: ________________________________________________

Cumulative Duke GPA: ___________________________________________
(all duke courses – 3.3 minimum required)

Major GPA: ____________________________________________________
(all courses taken in the major – 3.5 minimum required)

Major:
_____ Art History
_____ Visual Arts
_____ Visual Studies
_____ Art History + Visual Arts

Title of Distinction Project:
________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

Thesis Committee:
Principle Advisor: __________________________ Department: ________________
Second Reader: ____________________________ Department: ________________
Third Reader: ____________________________ Department: __________________

Signatures of Committee Members:

Principle Advisor: __________________________ Date: ______________________
Second Reader: __________________________ Date: ______________________
Third Reader: __________________________ Date: ______________________