MA in Art History, Curatorship and Renaissance Culture

warburg.sas.ac.uk
This 12-month full-time or 24-month part-time programme provides mastery in:

- The intellectual discipline of Art History for academic research and museum work, focusing primarily on the period 1300–1700, its objects of study, and modes of interpretation
- The intellectual and practical aspects of curatorship, with the opportunity to curate an online exhibition as part of degree coursework
- Renaissance culture, to enable critical evaluation of artworks and the conditions in which they were commissioned, produced, and enjoyed
- Primary source materials in original languages and translation for original research

The programme will equip you with the skills required to become either an academic art historian with a serious insight into the behind-the-scenes working of a pre-eminent museum, or a curator with the research skills necessary for high-level museum work.

Why study with us?

As a student at the Warburg Institute, you will have access to the best resources for the study of Renaissance art and culture in London. Unparalleled staff contact hours are combined with access to the Warburg Library, with its unique cataloguing system specifically designed to aid research, and the National Gallery’s collection and archives.

Through the Institute’s research projects, fellowship programmes and events, and its informal collegiate atmosphere, students have extensive opportunities for networking with an international community of scholars, which significantly enriches the learning experience and can provide ideal connections for your future career.

Studying in Bloomsbury at the centre of an academic and cultural hub, students also benefit from visits and training sessions at neighbouring institutions including the British Museum, the Wellcome Trust, and the British Library, and further afield the V&A, the Dulwich Picture Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery, and the Courtauld Gallery. London is regularly named the best university city in the world for its welcoming attitude, diversity, and vibrant student-friendly culture.

Investing in your future

Many Warburg alumni have gone on to pursue PhD study at the Institute and elsewhere across the globe, including the Universities of Cambridge, Copenhagen, Notre Dame (US), Padua, and La Sapienza (Rome), and to pursue careers at cultural institutions such as Sotheby’s, the Ashmolean Museum (Oxford), the Government Art Collection, the National Gallery, Art Council England, and the National Library, Argentina. Read more about Warburg alumni: warburg.blogs.sas.ac.uk

"I have kept in contact with many of the Warburg Institute staff and Fellows and I continue to collaborate with some of them on research projects, lectures or seminars."

Dr Laura Popoviciu
Curator: Research & Information (Historical), UK Government Art Collection

"The course was always inspiring and assiduously well taught, whether we were learning about picture framing and restoration, studying Michelangelo’s letters in his own handwriting, or handling rare books from the world-class library."

David Daly, 2016
Teaching, learning, and assessment

Modules are taught by academics at the Warburg and museum professionals at the National Gallery, giving you the opportunity to combine your academic study with behind-the-scenes training on a range of curatorial practices.

All students take three core modules and two option modules. The core module on Language and Palaeographical Studies includes training at all levels in European languages that can include French, Italian, and Latin, as well as palaeographical training in one chosen language. You will have the opportunity to conduct an independent research project through the dissertation, which is completed in the summer term under the guidance of a supervisor from either the Warburg or the National Gallery.

The programme is supported by an unassessed Methods and Techniques of Scholarship module, which will introduce you to the nuts and bolts of scholarly work in late medieval and early modern cultural history (broadly conceived), and prepare you to undertake original research in this field. The second term will focus on guiding you through the process of choosing and researching a dissertation topic.

The course is examined as follows:
1. Art History and Renaissance Culture: Image to Action: 4,000-word essay
2. Curating at the National Gallery: 4,000-word catalogue entry on a painting held in the Gallery’s collection
3. Language and Palaeographical Studies: examinations in palaeography and languages
4. Two option modules: 4,000-word essays (with the exception of *)
5. Dissertation: 15,000 words

Structure

Core modules: terms 1 and 2
- Art History and Renaissance Culture: Image to Action
- Curating at the National Gallery
- Language and Palaeographical Studies
- Methods and Techniques of Scholarship (unassessed)

Option modules: term 2 (two to be chosen)
- Cosmological Images: Representing the Universe
- Mapping Worlds: Medieval to Modern
- Renaissance Painting and the Workshop Tradition
- * Curating Renaissance Art and Exhibitions (examined by a 15 minute presentation on an online exhibition and a 3,000-word position paper)
- Italian Mural Painting and Visual Culture
- Renaissance Political Thought from Erasmus to Campanella

Additional modules may be offered, depending on both student numbers (a minimum of four students required per option) and teaching staff availability; see warburg.sas.ac.uk/studying for full details.

Dissertation: term 3
- The opportunity to conduct an independent research project utilising the world-renowned resources at both the Institute and the National Gallery, under the guidance of an academic from the Warburg or a museum professional from the National Gallery.
The University of London experience

As part of the School of Advanced Study (SAS), University of London, Warburg students benefit from a collaborative, interdisciplinary research environment. SAS is a national research hub and the Institute enjoys close links with its other members, including the Institute of Classical Studies, the Institute of Historical Research, and the Institute of Modern Languages Research.

Cross-institute collaboration is actively encouraged, making us an ideal location for interdisciplinary research.

Warburg students join a community of some 250 students in SAS. They are encouraged to participate in the wider activities of the University and are able to use the libraries of other colleges.

Funding opportunities

The School of Advanced Study and the Warburg Institute offer a number of funding options, including full scholarships and fee bursaries for both home/EU and international students. The Institute also has an excellent record in securing external funding, and is happy to work with prospective students on funding applications. For details, please visit warburg.sas.ac.uk/studying.

Entry requirements

The normal minimum entrance requirement is a First or Upper Second Class Honours degree from a university in the UK or an overseas qualification of an equivalent standard in any discipline in the humanities that is related to the course. In addition to a reading knowledge of one European language, applicants should have the desire to begin studying another. We will consider applications from candidates who do not meet the formal academic requirements but who offer alternative qualifications and/or relevant experience.

English is the language of instruction and applicants are required to demonstrate an appropriate level of proficiency.

For more information on entry requirements, please visit sas.ac.uk/graduate-study/entry-requirements.

How to apply

Applications should be made online via the SAS website. For full details of the application process, please visit warburg.sas.ac.uk/studying.

Accommodation

Full-time students, and part-time students with disabilities, may apply for accommodation in one of the University of London’s award-winning intercollegiate Halls of Residence. Our Registry office will send you housing information after you have been offered a place. To learn more about accommodation options, please visit halls.london.ac.uk/our-accommodation.

Course summary

Degree structure

Full time (one year): Three core modules and two option modules chosen from a range of topics, plus a dissertation of 15,000 words.

Part time (two years): Year 1: one core module, one option module, one chosen language, and palaeography;

Year 2: one core module, one option module, and the second chosen language.

Students will work on the dissertation over both summers, with one-to-one supervision during each summer.

Fees 2019–20 (subject to annual uplift)

Home and EU students: full time, £7,600 | part time, £4,560

Overseas students: full time, £16,340

Learn more

The Warburg Institute:
warburg.sas.ac.uk/studying

School of Advanced Study:
sas.ac.uk/study

Other programmes in Art History and Renaissance Culture

Postgraduate Certificate

The PGCert gives students the opportunity to pursue a personal or professional interest in their chosen subject while gaining a postgraduate qualification. It is ideal for students who want to study at a postgraduate level but who do not want to commit to a full MA.

MRes Art History and Renaissance Culture

This programme is ideal for students who wish to research and write on a complex, specialised area of history within the Institute’s field of study that interests them, while still having the support of taught modules to help develop the theoretical and methodological skills necessary for such a project.
The Warburg Institute is one of the world’s leading centres for studying the interaction of ideas, images, and society. It is dedicated to the survival and transmission of culture across time and space, with special emphasis on the afterlife of antiquity. Its open-stack Library, Photographic Collection, and Archive serve as an engine for interdisciplinary research, postgraduate teaching, and a prestigious events and publication programme.

The National Gallery houses the UK’s national collection of over 2,300 Western European paintings from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Its collection contains famous works, such as The Wilton Diptych, Leonardo’s Madonna of the Rocks, van Eyck’s Arnolfini Portrait, Velázquez’s Rokeby Venus, and Turner’s Fighting Temeraire. The Gallery’s aim is to care for the collection, to enhance, and to study it, while encouraging access to the pictures for the education and enjoyment of the widest possible public now and in the future.

The School of Advanced Study is the UK’s national centre for the support and promotion of research in the humanities. Located at the heart of the University of London in Bloomsbury, the School provides an unrivalled scholarly community in which to pursue postgraduate study and research. Students learn from leading specialists in their fields, hone their research skills in highly regarded training programmes, expand their knowledge through an extensive calendar of events, and become part of a worldwide network of humanities scholars. Funding opportunities include AHRC-sponsored London Arts and Humanities Partnership studentships, SAS studentships, and a number of subject-specific bursaries and awards.