

SUNY Cortland Art and Art History Department

BFA Handbook (1.2)

10/2022

Contents

BFA Overview

- **Student Learning Outcomes**
 - **Program Standard GPA Requirements**
 - **Definitions**
-

Admission to BFA Major

- **Applications for Incoming Freshmen and Transfer Students**
 - **Applications for Currently Enrolled Students**
-

BFA Reviews

- **Overview**
 - **Requirements**
 - **Evaluation**
-

Thesis

- **Overview**
 - **Course Catalog Descriptions**
 - **Timeline**
 - **Requirements**
 - **Evaluation**
-

Health and Safety

Cortland Code of Conduct

Art Studio: Bachelor of Fine Arts [BFA_BFAS]

Overview

The Bachelor of Fine Arts (**BFA**) major is an intensive degree program in studio art, intended for students who plan to pursue a professional career in art or to prepare for specialized graduate study, in particular the Master of Fine Arts (MFA). The degree requires 73 credit hours in the major, including foundation, skills core, studio specialization and five art history courses. Specializations include ceramics, fibers, graphic design and digital media, painting, print media and sculpture.

The culminating experience is the two-semester senior thesis project. A cohesive body of work is developed from concept to exhibition, accompanied by written abstract and oral presentation. One semester of foreign language or equivalent is required. Admission to the B.F.A. program is by portfolio review.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this program, students will be able to:

1. Utilize the elements of art and principles of design.
2. Execute visual and written/verbal skills applicable to the presentation of their work.
3. Understand the ways in which art, media, and culture affect each other and society-at-large.
4. Analyze critically works of art from traditional to nontraditional mediums, diverse genres, and a wide range of historical periods and geographical locations, demonstrating comprehension of global perspectives in visual culture.
5. Evaluate works of art/design using a personalized visual vocabulary that expresses knowledge, awareness and dialog with historical and contemporary influences within arts, humanities, sciences and technology.
6. Demonstrate competence in related discipline with considerable depth of knowledge, integrating and synthesizing information associated with practice in the area of

specialization, by creating a significant, culminating body of work.

Program Standard Grade Point Average Requirement

The major GPA is calculated by all courses identified in the college catalog as required for the major. In addition, this program has an established program standard GPA which may be used to determine progress in the program.

- Program Standard GPA
 - Minimum GPA of 2.0 in ATH, ATS, or ATT courses
- Art Studio (BFA) Major Requirements
 - 73 credits in ATH, ATS, or ATT courses

Definitions

BFA: Bachelor of Fine Arts

Full Faculty: Shall refer to the collective full-time and part-time faculty of the Art and Art History Department regarding review, admission to major, etc. In instances such as BFA review evaluation, it shall refer to the participating faculty present at time of decision.

Portfolio: A selection of art works professionally presented for the purpose of review.

Admission to the BFA

You may apply to the BFA program as a freshman, transfer student or as a currently enrolled SUNY Cortland student.

Applications for Incoming Freshmen or Transfer Students

Incoming freshman and transfer candidates to the Bachelor of Fine Arts Art Studio major will need to complete a two-part process. Transfer students may enter the program no later than the beginning of their junior year, or with two full years before graduation. The first part of the process consists of sending an admissions application to the College, and the second part consists of submitting a URL to your online portfolio. **Please do not submit your portfolio until you have received a letter from admissions instructing you to continue to part two of your application, an email address will be provided at that time.**

The online portfolio should consist of images and an introductory essay. Please include 10 images of your best work to demonstrate quality and diversity of skills and creative concept development. The essay of no more than 1,000 words should include a description of individual works in the portfolio and acquaint us with your art interests, art historical and contemporary influences, as well as your educational and career goals for the future. Submissions may consist of a website, blog, a photo

gallery or a portfolio service for publishing your work online. All applications will be reviewed by the Art and Art History Department Faculty. The Full Faculty will take into consideration the presentation, organization, clarity and creativity of all portfolios submitted in making admission decisions. Decisions are based on the majority vote of participating faculty.

The department will review portfolios until the end of April for the fall term and December for the spring term, however, to provide adequate review time it is encouraged that portfolios be submitted by Feb. 15 for the fall and Oct. 15 for the spring.

Application for Currently Enrolled SUNY Cortland Students

SUNY Cortland students interested in a change of major will also need to submit an admission essay and portfolio of work to gain admission to the B.F.A. program. Students may enter the program no later than the beginning of their junior year, or with two full years before graduation. Portfolio admission essays delivered to the BFA Coordinator by Oct. 1 or March 1 will constitute the beginning of the application process. The essay of no more than 1,000 words should include a description of individual works that will be presented to the faculty, and should acquaint us with your media interests, art historical and contemporary influences, as well as your future career goals. The portfolio should consist of approximately 10 original works displayed to their best advantage, that demonstrate quality and diversity of skills and creative concept development. Applicants will present their portfolios to the faculty during the month of October for spring admission and during the month of March for fall admission at the BFA mid-semester review. Your presentation should reflect the same ideas covered in your essay. All applications will be reviewed by the Art and Art History Department Faculty. The Full Faculty will take into consideration the presentation, organization, clarity and creativity of all portfolios submitted in making admission decisions. Decisions are based on the majority vote of participating faculty.

BFA Reviews

Overview

The purpose of the BFA review is to provide ongoing support and critical feedback from faculty and peers to benefit a student's technical and conceptual developments. These reviews build professional practice skills in the areas of artist presentations, both oral and visual. Additionally, BFA reviews offer the opportunity for continual faculty assessment of a student's progress within the major.

BFA reviews occur twice a semester, taking place at mid-semester and end-of-semester respectively. Specific dates for BFA reviews will be communicated by the

BFA Coordinator prior to the review. Every BFA student is required to present their work, displaying both consideration and intentionality with regards to arrangement, organization and display, as well as active participation in each scheduled BFA review while in the program. Exceptions exist for newly admitted BFA students in which the upcoming review would constitute their first review since being admitted to the major. In such cases, newly admitted students are expected to attend and participate in the review discussions but will not be required to present work.

It is the expectation that BFA students participating in BFA reviews present their work and themselves in a professional manner and should listen and engage with feedback provided from their faculty and peers. Presented works should exhibit a high level of quality in technical approach and display significant evidence of conceptual consideration and development.

Evaluation

There are several forms of evaluation and assessment in addition to standard letter grades associated with specific courses that are integrated into the BFA program. Regular discussion and dialogue about your work in progress is part of every class in studio art courses. Another important evaluation and assessment tool is the BFA Review.

Following each review, the Full Faculty will privately discuss and assess each student's work and, if appropriate, the BFA Coordinator, Department Chair or Media Specialization professor will communicate any concerns or information discussed to the student.

Should the Full Faculty evaluation find a student's work to fall below the level of meeting stated BFA expectations, the student will be informed, and it is the responsibility of the student to show significant progress prior to the following BFA review. If after the following review, the Full Faculty still does not feel that significant progress has been made, and the student runs the risk of being unable to meet the graduation requirements for Thesis, the student will be given the option of changing majors, and completing a BA degree, or delaying graduation to complete additional upper-level courses to prepare for thesis application.

It is preferred that in cases where a student fails to meet the stated expectations of the BFA major, the Full Faculty decision for a student to change majors occurs before a student's senior year to provide adequate time to take required courses (such as the additional language requirement) for the BA. Should this decision occur during a student's junior or senior year, it is the understanding a change of major may extend a student's time until graduation.

Thesis

Overview

After completing the 400-level course in a media specialization, senior BFA students are required to register for ATS 498 – Bachelor of Fine Arts -Thesis I in their second to last semester followed by ATS 499 – Bachelor of Fine Arts -Thesis II in final semester prior to graduating.

The purpose of the dual Thesis courses is to provide focused feedback and guidance, as well as dedicated time for research and production of individualized, self-directed work for senior BFA students. Thesis students will directly work with a thesis committee composed of three faculty members, chaired by their media specialization professor. In cases where there is more than one media specialization professor, the student will request that a specific faculty member in the media specialization serve as thesis committee chair. The culmination of the Thesis model is the Thesis exhibition and accompanying Thesis document.

Admittance into each Thesis course is contingent on Full Faculty approval. The Full Faculty will take into consideration the presentation, organization, clarity and creativity of works submitted at end-of-semester review, as well as input from faculty members of a student's thesis committee if applicable, when making decisions. Decisions are based on the majority vote of participating faculty.

Course Catalog Descriptions

ATS 498 - Bachelor of Fine Arts - Thesis I

Thesis research and experimentation in consultation with thesis committee for BFAS majors. **Consent of department.** (3 cr. hr.)
Frequency code A = offered every semester

ATS 499 - Bachelor of Fine Arts - Thesis II

Continuation of ATS 498 for BFAS majors. **Consent of department.** Prerequisite: ATS 498. (3 cr. hr.)
Frequency code A = offered every semester

Timeline

- Completed or In-Progress 400 level media specialization course
- Apply for admittance into ATS 498 at end-of-semester BFA review, three semesters prior to graduation
- Full Faculty approval required for admittance into ATS 498. If approved, registration flags will be lifted to allow student to register for ATS 498. *Must earn a grade of "C" or better to continue to ATS 499.*
- Apply for admittance into ATS 499 at end-of-semester BFA review preceding final semester.
- Full Faculty approval required for admittance into ATS 499. If approved, registration flags will be lifted to allow student to register for ATS 499. *Student*

must have earned a grade of "C" or better in ATS 498 to be eligible to register for ATS 499.

- Thesis Exhibition during final semester

If the Full Faculty do not approve admittance into a specific Thesis section, the BFA student will be prohibited from registering for the course at that time. A student may choose to re-apply for the Thesis course the following semester or change majors. Be aware that this may affect your graduation timeline.

Requirements

Exhibition Requirements

The capstone experience of the BFA program is an exhibition of an individualized, self-directed body of cohesive work that reflects the conceptual core of your artistic and visual goals and is relevant to contemporary research in your field(s) of specialization.

Publication Requirements

You are responsible for the design and production oversight of your exhibition poster and postcard. You are also responsible for creating a press release to be submitted to campus public relations department (refer to ATS 499 thesis II syllabus for timeline)

Thesis Writing Requirements

Writing requirements for the BFA are provided in the ATS 498 Thesis I and ATS 499 II syllabi.

Artist Talk Requirements

BFA candidates will conduct an artist talk and answer questions regarding the work for approximately one-half hour during the opening of the Thesis exhibition. The following is a list of the content that should be included in your artist talk: introduction, thesis statement, general information or background, historical and contemporary influences (art, artists, art theory that informed this body of work or individual components within the body of work.), process and medium with justification as to how it supports your concept (thesis), description of the formal (physical) qualities of the work, external qualities of the work that inform on its meaning (social, political, historical, economic, philosophical, biographical), analysis, conclusion.

Thesis Document Contents and Submission

After the thesis installation, you will be required to submit paper versions, compiled in a three-ring binder, and digital versions of the final written Thesis document to both the BFA Coordinator and the Chair of your thesis committee

Thesis Document Contents:

- The finalized Thesis paper
- 10 to 20 images that visually document the work exhibited (in situ)
- Visual documentation list
- Exhibition poster and postcard
- Artist's resume
- Digital copy of Thesis document containing the above documents

Evaluation

Thesis committee end of semester evaluation and wrap up

Following your artist talk meet with your BFA advisor and faculty Thesis committee for a final evaluation and wrap up meeting. All written work, and portfolio contents must have been submitted before this meeting so they may be included in the final review.

Thesis courses are graded based on feedback from the faculty advisors that make up thesis committee.

Health and Safety

In order to maintain safe and productive workspaces, all policies and procedures for each media's specializations studio(s) must be followed. Failure to do so may result in loss of studio access and privileges.

At SUNY Cortland, and in any workplace in America, you have the right to know the health hazards of all substances you might come in contact with. If you have any questions regarding any chemical at SUNY Cortland there is a section of our website which has the Material Safety Datasheets (MSDS) on file.

1. Go to <http://www.cortland.edu/envirohlth>
2. On the left will be a link to Chemical Management Database
3. All chemicals are listed by department, chemical name, and manufacturer

Code of Conduct

It is expected that BFA students conduct themselves honorably within studio interactions and apply themselves to all studio course work. It is also expected that you will attend department events, Gallery exhibitions and artist talks whenever possible. For an additional description of the College's code of conduct please refer to the Cortland College Handbook

<https://www2.cortland.edu/offices/judaffairs/Code%20FINAL%20WEB.pdf>

This program, like any other, is open to revision and change to allow it to best serve the needs of students. Suggestions are welcome. Your BFA advisor is your prime resource for help and direction through the program. Additionally, your thesis committee, and any other department faculty can be consulted whenever you think it will be of benefit. Additional questions and concerns can be addressed to the BFA Program Coordinator or the Chairperson of the Art and Art History Department. We are here to help support and guide you toward your objectives!