

# **Visual Studies Program Student Handbook**

## **Policies and Guidelines for Earning the PhD**

Visual Studies Program  
School of Humanities  
University of California, Irvine  
**Academic Year 2022-2023**

# Introduction

The Ph.D. program in Visual Studies, administered by the faculty of the Department of Art History, offers students the opportunity to pursue a doctorate in the cultural analysis of visual, spatial and environmental artifacts and experiences from antiquity to the present day. With a commitment to theoretically rigorous inquiry, Visual Studies synthesizes methodological insights from a wide variety of disciplines and interdisciplinary fields, including art history, archaeology, architectural history, design history, and environmental studies.

The Visual Studies program welcomes students with diverse research interests. For this reason, the faculty has made every effort to allow you as much flexibility as possible in your studies.

Your faculty advisor, the Visual Studies Graduate Coordinator (Clara Quijano), and the Director of Graduate Studies (Matthew Canepa) can answer questions you might have about how best to navigate the Visual Studies PhD program.

Your best strategy for succeeding in Visual Studies is to meet regularly with your Primary Advisor before your advance to candidacy and your Dissertation Chair after you have advanced.

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# Directory

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145 Langson Library

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# Program Overview and Sample Timelines

## Program Requirements At a Glance

Course Requirements See p. 33

You are required to complete 14 courses as follows:

3 Visual Studies core courses: VS 290 A, B, and C

10 Electives

6 within Visual Studies (VS 295 or VS 296)

2 outside Visual Studies

2 in or outside Visual Studies

1 VS 297: Writing Practicum

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14 Required Courses

All coursework must be completed before you enroll in VS 298A: Preliminary Exam in the Spring of your second year. Although you will register for VS 298A Preliminary Exam and VS 298B: Prospectus Research, these do not count toward your 14 required courses

Language Requirement See p. 34

You must demonstrate reading knowledge of one language other than English before you advance to candidacy in the Spring of your third year. In some cases, this will require two years of course work, so be sure to identify how you will satisfy this requirement before the end of your first year.

Master's Paper and the M.A. See p. 41

If you have not already earned an MA in a related field, you will write an MA paper under the supervision of your primary advisor in the Fall of your second year. In the first week of the Winter quarter in the second year, you will submit the MA paper to the VS Director and the VS Graduate Coordinator. The VS Director will convene an MA committee who will read and comment on your paper. Typically, you will be required to complete revisions and resubmit your paper during Winter quarter. The MA paper must be approved by your committee before you register for VS 298A: Preliminary Exam in the Spring of your second year.

Written Preliminary Examinations See p. 43

Working with your principal advisor, you will define two scholarly fields in which you will be examined. These fields will usually serve two functions: they will lay the groundwork for your dissertation research, and they will prepare you to teach on specific topics.

In the Spring Quarter of your second year and Fall of your third year, you will register for VS 298A: Preliminary Exam and complete your exam readings under the direction of an exam supervisor. For each exam reading, you will work in close consultation with your exam supervisor to prepare a reading list of 25-40 books, journal articles, and/or book chapters. During the quarter, you will meet regularly with the exam supervisor to discuss these readings. And at the end of the quarter, you will complete the written portion of the preliminary exam. You will have three hours to complete each written exam, which will generally consist of one or two essay questions. You will write the exam on a university-owned computer in a controlled environment with no access to books, notes, or the internet. (See Appendix for instructions on completing the exam when campus is closed due to COVID.)

Dissertation Prospectus See p. 47

In the Fall Quarter of your third year, you will work with your Primary Advisory to identify a dissertation topic. In the Winter quarter, you will enroll in VS 297: Writing Practicum. Working in close consultation with your primary advisor, you will complete a draft of your dissertation prospectus during Winter quarter. In the first week of the Spring quarter, you will distribute the prospectus to your 3-person doctoral committee and ask for written feedback. You are also encouraged to meet individually with your committee members. After you've received feedback on the prospectus, you will meet with your advisor to discuss your revision plan. You will distribute the revised prospectus to your 5-person prospectus committee three weeks before your planned prospectus defense and oral preliminary exam.

Oral Preliminary Examination See p. 43

In the Spring quarter of your third year, you will convene a 5-member preliminary exam committee and sit the oral portion of your preliminary exams. Committee members will have read your written exam responses and your dissertation prospectus. You will begin the 2-hour examination with a brief overview of your proposed dissertation research followed by a discussion of your written exams and the prospectus. When the oral portion of the exam is completed, you will be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates on your exams and the prospectus.

Advancement to Candidacy *See p. 47*

You will advance to candidacy after you have completed your course work, language requirement, MA paper (if applicable), and written exams, and when you have passed the oral exams and your prospectus has been approved.

Dissertation *See p. 49*

You will complete your dissertation within three years of advancing to candidacy. After submitting the full dissertation to your three-person doctoral committee, you will present an oral defense, which will be open to all members of the academic community. The oral defense will typically include a brief presentation of the project followed by questions from the committee and audience, closed deliberation, and feedback.



## Sample Timeline

Normative Time to Advancement to Candidacy: Three Years

Normative Time to Degree: 6 years

Maximum Time to Degree: 7 years.

Students who are beyond maximum time to degree may be unable to register.

### Year 1

Fall	Winter	Spring
VS 290A	VS 290B	VS 290C
Elective 1 (VS 295, VS 296, or courses outside VS)	Elective 3	Elective 5
Elective 2	Elective 4	Elective 6

### Year 2

Fall	Winter	Spring
Elective 7	Elective 9	VS 298A: Preliminary Exam
Elective 8 <i>Write MA paper</i>	Elective 10 <i>Week 1: Submit MA paper to VS Director. Revise and resubmit by end of quarter</i>	<i>First written exam</i>
TA (Register for 399)	TA (Register for 399)	TA (Register for 399)

### Year 3

Fall	Winter	Spring
VS 298A: Preliminary Exam	VS 298B: Prospectus Research	VS 298B: Prospectus Research
<i>Second written exam</i>	VS 297: Writing Practicum <i>Complete first draft of dissertation prospectus</i>	<i>Advance to Candidacy</i>
TA (Register for 399) <i>Apply for fellowships</i>	TA (Register for 399)	TA (Register for 399)

Year 4

Fall	Winter	Spring
VS 299: Dissertation Research	VS 299	VS 299
TA (Register for 399) <i>Apply for fellowships</i>	TA (Register for 399)	TA (Register for 399)

Year 5

Fall	Winter	Spring
VS 299	VS 299	VS 299
TA (Register for 399) <i>Apply for fellowships</i>	TA (Register for 399)	TA (Register for 399) <i>Apply for TAship or Research Position (GSR) for year 6 (See below)</i>

Year 6

Fall	Winter	Spring
VS 299	VS 299	VS 299: File Dissertation
<i>TAships are not guaranteed</i>	<i>TAships are not guaranteed</i>	<i>TAships are not guaranteed</i>

## Year 1

Week	Fall
0	If you are relocating to California from another state, you must establish <a href="#">California residency</a> by next September. Read <a href="#">Ten Things Graduate Students Need to Know</a> . Keep all receipts from your move to validate when you began residing in California.
0	Attend orientation events and submit your updated contact information to the Graduate Coordinator
0-2	Meet with the Primary Advisor who has been assigned to you to discuss your academic goals and plan of study, including pursuing a graduate emphasis. A Primary Advisor will be assigned to you during your first year in the Program; you will determine your continuing Primary Advisor by the end of the year. Discuss your plans for completing the language requirement and MA paper, if applicable. If you have already earned an MA, discuss your petitions for course waivers. <i>See Language Requirement below.</i>
0-2	Meet with the VS Director to discuss your plan of study and any petitions you plan to submit. <i>See Petitions below.</i>
1-11	Complete VS 290A and two electives (Seminars or Directed Readings). <i>See Seminars and Directed Readings below.</i>
Week	Winter
1-11	Complete VS 290B and two electives
1-3	Meet with your Primary Advisor to discuss your progress and plan of study
5	Update or create your <i>curriculum vitae</i> (CV). <a href="#">The Professor is In</a> offers guidance on what to include and in what order. You will need your CV and a teaching statement for your TA application and your end-of-year report. You will also be asked to report on VS-sponsored events you've attended this year.
Week	Spring
1-11	Complete VS 290C and two electives
1-3	Meet with your Primary Advisor to discuss your progress and plan of study
5	You should receive the call for TA applications for the next academic year around week five. <i>See Teaching below.</i>
8	Select your Primary Advisor for the next academic year and notify the VS Director and Graduate Coordinator of your selection

8	If your MA requirement has not been waived, talk to your selected Primary Advisor about which seminar paper you will revise. Develop a plan for revising the seminar paper into your MA qualifying paper in the fall. See <i>MA Paper below</i> .
9	Complete your degree audit with the VS Graduate Coordinator and submit your updated CV, a report of your accomplishments for the academic year (requirements fulfilled; events attended; conference proposals and articles submitted; awards and fellowships you have applied for), and your goals for the next academic year.

Language Requirement, See *Language Other than English*

- You are required to demonstrate reading knowledge of at least one language other than English. This requirement can be satisfied by:
  - Completing, with a grade of "B" or better, a language course at the 2C level or equivalent, with the exception of Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, which must be completed at the 3C level or equivalent. You will need to start taking these language classes in your first year or enroll in an accelerated Summer Session course in order to complete these courses.
  - Passing the program's foreign language exam. This request must be made to the VS Staff within the first two weeks of the quarter you plan to take the exam. See p. 33 for more details on this exam.
  - Attaining a proficiency level of 2C on the Russian Exemption Exam or a proficiency level of 3C on the Chinese Exemption Exam offered by UCI's Academic Testing Center.
  - By enrolling in and completing, with a grade of "B" or better, one of the following three translation seminars: French/German/Spanish 97, "Fundamentals of French/German/Spanish (with Emphasis on Reading)."
    - Note that these classes are seldom offered. You are advised not to rely on this option.
  - Petitioning the program. Grounds for a petition might include being a native speaker in a language other than English or having satisfied an equivalent language requirement at a different institution.
- You are encouraged to demonstrate reading knowledge of one or more additional languages in order to be eligible to compete for external fellowships that require proficiency in two languages other than English.
- You must satisfy your language requirement before you can earn the MA or advance to candidacy.

### Seminars and Directed Readings, See Course Requirements

- Course listings and descriptions can be found on the School of Humanities' Office of Graduate Study [website](#). The Registrar's [Schedule of Classes](#) includes courses offered campus-wide.
- VS 295 denotes elective graduate Seminars offered by the program. Students can expect to enroll under the number repeatedly during their period of class work, studying with a number of different professors.
- VS 296 denotes a Directed Reading under the supervision of a VS faculty member. To enroll in VS 296, first speak to the faculty member whom you would like to work with. Typically, the faculty member will help you develop a reading list and meet with you weekly or biweekly to discuss the readings. Written assignments typically include weekly or biweekly reading responses and a seminar paper. You must take the lead when embarking on a Directed Reading; rather than the professor presenting material to you, you should plan to present material to the professor.
  - Students who have not had the MA requirement waived should also enroll in VS 296 during the fall quarter of their second year for the sake of revising a previously written paper up to the length and quality expected for a Master's paper.
  - If an undergraduate class is being taught on a topic that is of interest, speak to the faculty member teaching the class to see if they would be willing to supervise a concurrent Directed Reading. Typically, this would mean that you will attend the undergraduate class and the faculty member will devise alternate assignments for you.
- If you plan to submit seminar papers on the same topic to more than one instructor, you must first obtain written permission to do so. See *Academic Integrity*, p. 36.
- Active participation in Seminars and Directed Readings is a very important part of your graduate education. Faculty will address your performance in these discussions in their end-of-year comments on your progress.
- Unless the faculty member teaching the course has specific guidelines for thinking through the readings, consider the following questions in relation to each assigned text:
  - What is/are the author's
    - Research question(s)
    - Argument or Intervention
    - Methods (Are their methods typical or atypical within the discipline? Which theorists do they cite?)

- Key evidence (think broadly here rather than getting too bogged down by detail)
- Limitations (What questions aren't answered? What perspectives aren't considered? What might be the cause of these limitations?)
  - Avoid the temptation to focus on limitations at the expense of thinking through what is generative about the reading
- How does this relate to other things you've read? (When was it published? What books/articles does it cite? Whose ideas does the author build on or challenge? Have you read books/articles that build on or challenge this?)
- What research questions arise from this reading?
- If you don't already have Bibliographic Management Software, select one (the UCI libraries have put together a helpful [guide](#) to your choices) and start building your bibliography.

### Petitions

- If you completed two years of college-level language instruction at a previous institution or are a native speaker in a language other than English, submit a petition to have that coursework/native proficiency applied to satisfy your language requirement.
  - If you have completed two years of language instruction, you will need to submit your transcripts with the petition.
- If you completed an MA in a related field before arriving at UCI, petition to waive your MA requirement.
- If you were previously enrolled in a graduate program in a related field, petition for course waivers. Be sure to indicate whether these waivers will replace one or more of the 6 required VS courses or the 2 required courses outside VS. Typically, the VS Graduate Committee will approve up to three course waivers.
- The Graduate Coordinator can offer you guidance on how to complete and submit these petitions.
- These petitions will be reviewed by the VS Graduate Committee, which typically meets early only once per quarter, so submit your petitions as early as possible.

### TAships See *Teaching*

- Every effort will be made to assign you to Art History or Film and Media Studies courses if this is your preference. However, you may be assigned to another department if there aren't enough TAships available in AH or FMS.
- FMS 101A, B, and C are upper-division courses that assume familiarity with the language of film analysis. FMS 85A is a prerequisite for the course.

MA Paper *See MA Paper and M.A.*

- You will refine and expand upon a seminar paper for your MA paper.
- You must complete the language requirement and all course requirements, with the exception of VS 297: Writing Practicum in order to earn the MA.

## Year 2

Week	Fall
1-11	<p>Complete two electives and enroll in the 399 University Teaching associated with the class you are TAing. The 399 course code is located in the Schedule of classes for the department for which you will be teaching (Art History 399, Film &amp; Media Studies 399, etc.)</p> <p><u>If your MA requirement has not been waived</u>, enroll in VS 296 Directed Reading with your Primary Advisor, who will supervise your MA paper. See <i>MA paper, below</i></p>
0	Petition for Resident Classification. Review <a href="#">"How to Establish Residency"</a> for general guidelines and contact the <a href="#">Assistant Resident Officers</a> if you have additional questions.
0	Attend TA orientation events.
1	Meet with your Primary Advisor to discuss your exam topics and supervising faculty and your progress toward meeting the language requirement (if applicable). Be sure you have a plan in place to complete the language requirement by Winter of your third year.
1	<u>If your MA requirement has not been waived</u> , meet with your Primary Advisor to discuss your revision plan for the MA paper. You must complete revisions before the end of the fall quarter See <i>MA Paper, below</i>
6	<u>If your MA requirement has not been waived</u> , submit the " <a href="#">Advancement to Candidacy/Final Degree Report</a> " to the Graduate Coordinator by the end of week 6. See <i>Completing the Advancement to Candidacy/Final Degree Report below</i>
Week	Winter
1-11	Complete two electives and register for 399: University Teaching
1	<u>If your MA requirement has not been waived</u> , submit your MA paper to the VS Director and the VS Graduate Coordinator See <i>MA Paper below</i>
1-3	Schedule exam readings with two supervising faculty, typically your Primary Advisor and an additional faculty member who will serve on your Doctoral Committee. See <i>Exam Readings below</i>
1-3	Meet with your Primary Advisor to discuss your progress towards scheduling exams, completing your language requirement, and advancing to candidacy
7-9	Meet with the faculty member who will supervise your first exam reading in the Spring Quarter to decide how your reading list will be developed, schedule your weekly or biweekly meetings, and determine what written work will be required of you. See <i>Exam Readings below</i>



Week	Spring
1-11	Complete your first exam reading (VS 298A: Preliminary Exam) and register for 399: University Teaching
1	Submit your finalized reading list to the faculty member who will supervise your first exam reading and have your first weekly or biweekly meeting
2	Schedule your first written exam with the VS Graduate Coordinator. You will sit the exam in week 10 or 11.
5	You should receive the call for TA applications for the next academic year around week five
7-10	Meet with your Primary Advisor to discuss the composition of your Exam/Prospectus Committee and ideas for dissertation topics.
9	Submit your updated CV, a report of your accomplishments for the academic year (requirements fulfilled; events attended; conference proposals and articles submitted; awards and fellowships you have applied for), and your goals for the next academic year to the VS Graduate Coordinator
10-11	Sit for your first written exam. See <i>Sitting for the Written Exam</i> below

#### Completing the [Advancement to Candidacy/Final Degree Report Form](#)

- Complete the form the quarter PRIOR to the quarter in which you will earn the M.A.
- The degree title is "M.A. in Visual Studies";
- List your required VS classes (excluding VS 297) in the left-hand column and your elective courses in the right-hand column;
- Check "Plan II: Comprehensive Exam";
- Have your Primary Advisor sign;
- Submit to VS Graduate Coordinator by end of week 6
  - The Graduate Coordinator will gather the VS Director's signature, fill out the rest of the form, and submit it to Graduate Division.
  - After the M.A. paper has been approved and you have satisfied the language requirement, the VS Graduate Coordinator will resubmit the form to Graduate Division;
  - You will receive two formal letters notifying you 1) when you have advanced to candidacy for the M.A. and 2) when you have earned the M.A.

#### MA Paper See *MA Paper and M.A.*

- The VS Director will convene an MA committee of three VS faculty members, including your Primary Advisor, who will chair the MA committee. You are

encouraged to suggest potential committee members, but there is no guarantee that they will serve on your MA committee.

- Within three weeks of receiving your MA paper, the MA committee will discuss your work. Typically, the committee will require that you make revisions. Revision requirements will be submitted to you in writing and will include a due date.
- If the committee requires revisions, meet with your MA chair to discuss how you will revise the paper. Be sure you understand what is expected of you.
  - In their deliberations, the MA committee will discuss your ability to respond to feedback and make revisions.
  - If you have questions about any of the required revisions, you should discuss this with your MA chair and, if appropriate, the committee.
  - Typically, problems arise if you give your committee the impression that you don't value their feedback enough to engage it or make revisions based upon it
- After you have submitted your final MA paper, the committee will deliberate on your work and your progress in the VS program. The committee will make one of three recommendations:
  - your MA paper is accepted and you are recommended to continue with the PhD;
  - it is accepted but you are not recommended to continue with the PhD; or
  - that it is not accepted and you are not recommended to earn the M.A. or continue with the PhD.

### Prospectus and Doctoral Committees

Chair, Dissertation and Exam/Prospectus Committees	VS Core Faculty only
Exam/Prospectus Committee	5 Minimum, including the Doctoral Committee, at least 51% VS Core or Affiliate Faculty, 1 outside/non-VS Core Faculty
Doctoral Committee	3 Minimum, including the chair, at least 51% VS Core or Affiliate Faculty

- Only members of the VS Core Faculty can chair your Exam/Prospectus and Doctoral Committees.
- The Exam/Prospectus Committee must consist of five faculty, including the two faculty members with whom you did your exam readings.

- At least one member of the Exam/Prospectus Committee must be from outside the program (non-VS Core or Affiliate Faculty).
- Typically, three of the Exam/Prospectus Committee members will also serve on your Doctoral Committee.
- No more than 51% of either committee can be non-VS Core or Affiliate Faculty.
  - If you have two non-VS Core or Affiliate Faculty on your Exam/Prospectus Committee, three committee members must be VS Core or Affiliate Faculty.
- You may invite any faculty member from any college or university to serve on your Exam/Prospectus and/or Doctoral Committee
  - If you would like to have a faculty member from outside UCI serve on your committee, you will need to submit the person's CV and a memo from your advisor addressed to the Graduate Dean explaining why this faculty member is a good fit for your committee
  - If you would like to have a faculty member who has an MFA rather than a PhD serve on your Doctoral Committee, you will need to submit the person's CV and a memo from your advisor addressed to the Graduate Dean explaining why this faculty member is qualified and a good fit for your committee.

#### Exam Readings See *Preliminary Examination*

- You must earn the MA before you begin your preliminary exam reading.
- Exam readings should take place in the Spring of your second year and Fall of your third year.
- Be sure you have a clear understanding of how your reading list will be developed. In some cases, faculty prefer that you bring them a draft bibliography, in other cases faculty prefer to give you a reading list upon which you will build.
- Reading lists should be comprised of 25-40 titles, which may include a mix of books, articles, and book chapters.
- Reading lists must be finalized before the start of Spring quarter. If readings are added during the quarter, the list must remain within a reasonable length of 25-40 journal articles, book chapters, or books.
- Typically, you will be asked to submit a written response to each of the readings, which you will discuss during your weekly or biweekly meetings. It is important to meet your deadlines for these written responses.

#### Sitting for the Written Exam See *Preliminary Examination*

- You will sit for the first written exam in week 10 or 11 of Spring quarter. You will have three hours to complete the exam, working in a private space with no

internet access. You will leave your personal belongings with the Graduate Coordinator, and you will be given access to a computer with word processing software that includes a spellcheck function. See *Appendix C if campus is closed and in remote operations in Spring*

- If you have a disability that requires accommodations, please be sure to register with the [Disability Services Center](#). We cannot make accommodations independently of the DSC.
- Students who have taken their exams recommend that you bring snacks, drinks, and a microfiber cloth to wipe down the computer keyboard and screen.
- The faculty have not recommended a page length for your exam responses. Talk to the faculty member with whom you did the exam reading about their expectations.
- The exam question(s) will be given to you at the beginning of the testing session, and your response will be collected after three hours. Be sure to budget your time during the exam so that you leave plenty of time to a) plan your response, b) draft your response, and c) revise and proofread your response within the three-hour time frame.
- The Graduate Coordinator will email your written response to you and the faculty member with whom you completed the exam reading.
- Within two weeks of your exam date, the faculty member who supervised your exam reading will notify you and the Graduate Director whether you have passed this portion of the exam.
- In spring of your third year you will complete the oral portion of the exam.

#### Prospectus See *Prospectus and Advancement to Candidacy*

- Ideally, you will have an idea of your dissertation topic by the end of your second year.
  - *The Craft of Research* by Booth, Colomb, and Williams is a classic guide to developing a research project. It is written with the social sciences in mind, but much of the advice is applicable to humanities scholarship.
- Over the summer will be a good time to familiarize yourself with what a dissertation looks like by looking at dissertations within your subject area. Using the library VPN, you can search for dissertations on [ProQuest](#).
  - Different disciplines have different conventions, so pay attention to the department or graduate program the dissertation came out of.
  - Be sure to pay close attention to bibliographies and footnotes. These will likely point you to resources and existing scholarship related to your topic.

## Year 3

Week	Fall
1-11	Enroll in VS 298A: Preliminary Exam with the faculty member who will supervise your second exam reading and register for 399 University Teaching
1	Arrange to meet regularly with your Primary Advisor to discuss your dissertation topic and prospectus. Your Primary Advisor may develop a plan for you to do pre-writing toward your prospectus during Fall. <i>See Prospectus below</i>
1	Submit your finalized reading list to the faculty member who will supervise your second exam reading and have your first weekly or biweekly meeting
1	Meet with the Chair of Art History or Film and Media Studies to discuss proposing a course for Summer Session
2	Schedule your second written exam with the VS Graduate Coordinator. You will sit the exam in week 10 or 11
5	You should receive the call for TA applications for the next academic year around week five
10-11	Sit for your second written exam
Week	Winter
1-11	Complete VS 297: Writing Practicum and enroll in VS 298B: Prospectus Research and 399: University Teaching
1	Complete your Degree Audit Form. All your degree requirements except the dissertation must be completed <i>before</i> you advance to candidacy in the Spring.
2	After you have had your first class meeting for VS 297, meet with your Primary Advisor to discuss expectations for the quarter. Will your advisor read and provide written comments as you draft each section of the prospectus? Or will they provide written comments only when you have a complete draft? How often will you meet during the quarter? It is important that you work in close consultation with your Primary Advisor while developing your prospectus.
1-3	Meet with the chair of Art History and/or Film & Media Studies to discuss proposing a Summer Session course
6-10	Ask faculty—including your non-VS member—to serve on your Prospectus and Doctoral Committees. <i>See Prospectus and Doctoral Committees below</i>
8	Enroll in VS 298B: Prospectus Research, and 399 University Teaching associated with the class you will be TAing in Spring
11	Complete your prospectus

Week	Spring
1-11	Enroll in VS 298B: Prospectus Research and 399: University Teaching
1	Distribute your prospectus to your Doctoral Committee and ask for written comments within three weeks
1-3	Schedule your two-hour Oral Exam and Prospectus Defense with the Exam/Prospectus Committee.
4-5	Meet with your chair to discuss the committee's comments on your prospectus and develop a revision plan so that you can distribute a revised prospectus in plenty of time for people to read it before the oral exam/prospectus defense <i>See Revising below</i>
5	You should receive the call for TA applications for the next academic year around week five
6-8	Distribute your written exams and your final prospectus to your Exam/Prospectus Committee
6-11	Establish a writing/accountability group for summer and the coming academic year. VS students who have earned their PhDs report that writing groups are extremely helpful. Graduate Division offers many forms of <a href="#">writing support</a> , or you can form a group within your cohort.
9	Submit your updated CV, a report of your accomplishments for the academic year (requirements fulfilled; events attended; conference proposals and articles submitted; awards and fellowships you have applied for), and your goals for the next academic year to the VS Graduate Coordinator
9-11	Sit for your Oral Exam and Prospectus Defense with the five-person Exam/Prospectus Committee. <i>See Oral Exam and Prospectus Defense below.</i>

#### Prospectus *See Prospectus and Advancement to Candidacy*

- It is a good idea to find out as much as you can about your object(s) of study and available resources before you begin to write the prospectus.
  - Identify potential objects (art works, artifacts, films, television shows, video games, etc.) as early as possible.
  - Visit local archives and explore on-line databases.
  - Talk to the Visual Studies librarian about resources you might draw on.
  - Determine if your claims are driven by your case-study objects or if they are driven by historical and/or theoretical questions for which you need to find objects in order to work through these concepts.
- Before the start of Winter quarter, carefully review the guidelines for the dissertation prospectus (p. 46) so you have a clear idea of what the expectations are.

- It might be helpful to think of the Project Overview as answering the question of *what* your dissertation will do. The Literature Review explains *why* this research needs to be done by framing it in relation to existing scholarship, and the Methodology section explains *how* you will do it, framing your methods in relation to scholarship in the field.
- Talk to your advisor and the Humanities Center Executive Director about fellowships and grants you might apply for.

Prospectus and Doctoral Committees

Chair, Dissertation and Exam/Prospectus Committees	VS Core Faculty only
Exam/Prospectus Committee	5 Minimum, including the Doctoral Committee, at least 51% VS Core or Affiliate Faculty, 1 non-VS Core Faculty
Doctoral Committee	3 Minimum, including the chair, at least 51% VS Core or Affiliate Faculty

- Only members of the VS Core Faculty can chair your Exam/Prospectus and Doctoral Committees.
- The Exam/Prospectus Committee must consist of five faculty. Typically, this will include the two faculty members with whom you did your exam readings.
- At least one member of the Exam/Prospectus Committee must be non-VS Core or Affiliate Faculty, though they may be VS Allied faculty (See p. 46).
- At least three of the Exam/Prospectus Committee members will also serve on your Doctoral Committee.
- 51% of each committee must be VS Core or Affiliate Faculty.
  - If you have two non-VS Core or Affiliate Faculty on your Exam/Prospectus Committee, three committee members must be VS Core or Affiliate Faculty.
  - If you have two non-VS faculty on your Doctoral Committee, three committee members must be VS Core or Affiliate Faculty (meaning you will have five faculty on your doctoral committee).
- You are not required to have a non-VS faculty member on your Doctoral Committee.
- You may invite any faculty member from any college or university to serve on your Exam/Prospectus and/or Doctoral Committee
  - If you would like to have a faculty member from outside UCI serve on your committee, you will need to submit the person's CV and a memo from your

advisor addressed to the Graduate Dean explaining why this faculty member is a good fit for your committee

- If you would like to have a faculty member who has an MFA rather than a PhD serve on your Doctoral Committee, you will need to submit the person's CV and a memo from your advisor addressed to the Graduate Dean explaining why this faculty member is qualified and a good fit for your committee

### Revising

- If you choose not to incorporate feedback from one or more of your committee members, talk to your chair and the committee member who gave the feedback. You might have misunderstood their advice, or they might have misunderstood your project
- If they misunderstood your project, think about what you can do to clarify things and talk to your chair about how to address their feedback
- If you simply don't have time to incorporate all their suggestions, let your chair and the committee member know how you will address their feedback in the future
- Do everything in your power to avoid giving your committee the impression that you don't value their feedback enough to engage it or make revisions based upon it

### Oral Exam and Prospectus Defense

- Ask your chair how they plan to conduct the exam.
  - Often, you will be asked to step out of the room at the beginning of the exam while the committee shares preliminary comments on your Written Exams and Prospectus, and you will be asked to leave the room again at the end of the exam while the committee deliberates on your Oral Exam and Prospectus Defense.
  - Typically, the 2-hour meeting will begin with the Oral Exam followed by the Prospectus Defense.
  - Typically, you will be given the opportunity to give a brief presentation (ten minutes or less) on your prospectus and planned dissertation research.
- How to prepare for the Oral Exam
  - Read through your written exams to identify any errors or omissions and prepare comments to present during the exam, if applicable.
  - Review your notes from the exam readings. Be prepared to discuss *all* of the readings, not just the ones you addressed in the written portion of the



exam. It is a good idea to re-familiarize yourself with the central argument of each journal article, book chapter, and book you read and to think through points of tension or convergence.

- Be prepared to respond to the questions you did not answer in the written portion of the exam if you were given a choice of questions.
- Tips for the Oral Exam
  - Keep in mind that everyone in the room wants you to succeed. The purpose of the Oral Exam is to allow you to demonstrate that you understand and can synthesize the readings
  - Take notes when the examiners are speaking. Don't hesitate to ask for clarification. Before answering a question, rephrase it in your own words so everyone knows precisely what question you're answering
  - Don't rush your responses. For complex answers, take a moment to jot down an outline that you can refer to if you lose your train of thought.
- Tips for the Prospectus Defense
  - The purpose of this discussion is to ensure that you have a viable dissertation project before you advance to candidacy.
  - Prepare a brief description of your dissertation project. What is your intervention? Why is it important?
  - Committee members are likely to suggest books and articles you might read, methods you might use, and/or objects you might consider. It might feel like they are being critical or asking you to move in too many different directions. Think of this as a brainstorming session. Unless the committee explicitly requires changes, it will be up to you to decide which ideas to pursue in the dissertation.
  - Again, take notes, ask for clarification, and rephrase the questions or suggestions in your own words.
  - Meet with your chair after the Prospectus Defense to talk through the committee's feedback during the defense and to plan your next steps.
- Confirm with members of the Prospectus Committee before the oral exam whether or not you would like them to serve on your Doctoral Committee and whether they are willing to continue. They will need to indicate this on the PhD Form I.
- Be sure to bring
  - Pen and paper to take notes during the oral exam and prospectus defense
  - A bottle of water (you'll be talking a lot)
  - A completed [PhD Form I, Advancement to Candidacy](#) See Appendix B; See Appendix D if you must take the Oral Exam/Prospectus Defense remotely

- A black pen for the committee to sign your PhD Form I. (Be sure your Doctoral Committee members put an asterisk next to their names!)
- If you do not pass this portion of the exam, the committee will give you a deadline by which you must distribute a revised prospectus and/or re-take the oral exam(s). No student will be given more than two chances to pass any given section of the examination.

### Advancing to Candidacy

- The absolute deadline for filing the PhD Form I and paying your \$90 filing fee is 5:00pm on Friday of week 11. *If you miss this deadline, you will not be eligible to TA in your fourth year.*
- In order to advance to candidacy, you must have
  - Satisfied your language requirement
  - Earned the M.A.
  - Completed your course requirements
  - Passed your written exams
  - Passed your oral exams
  - Had your prospectus approved by your Prospectus Committee

## Year 4

Fall
Enroll in VS 299: Dissertation Research and 399: University Teaching
Meet with your chair to discuss your goals for the year. What written work will you complete? Will you apply for any fellowships? Submit a conference proposal? Submit journal articles or book chapters for publication?
Apply to teach a Summer Session course
Winter
Enroll in VSS 299: Dissertation Research and 399: University Teaching
Meet with your Chair to discuss your progress and goals for the quarter
Spring
Enroll in VSS 299: Dissertation Research and 399: University Teaching
Meet with your chair to discuss your progress and goals for the quarter
Submit least one full dissertation chapter to your Chair
Submit your updated CV, a report of your accomplishments for the academic year (requirements fulfilled; events attended; conference proposals and articles submitted; awards and fellowships you have applied for), and your goals for the next academic year to the VS Graduate Coordinator.

## Year 5

Fall
<p>Enroll in VS 299 and 399: University Teaching</p> <p>(If you are on track to complete your dissertation in your fifth year, look ahead to instructions for completing, defending, and filing your dissertation below on the Year Six timeline)</p> <p>Meet with your chair to discuss your progress and goals for the quarter, including fellowship applications. Let them know if you are in need of a TAship or GSR (Graduate Student Researcher position) for your sixth year. They may have leads on GSRs or other positions.</p> <p>If you have not secured a TAship or GSR for your sixth year, meet with the Visual Studies Director. They often receive calls for applications or nominations for positions within the School of Humanities and/or across campus, and will keep you in mind if they know you are in need of funding</p> <p>Apply to teach a Summer Session course and consider registering for University Studies 390X and apply to serve as a <a href="#">Pedagogical Fellow</a> for Visual Studies</p>
Winter
<p>Enroll in VS 299 and 399: University Teaching</p> <p>Meet with your chair to discuss your progress and goals for the quarter</p>
Spring
<p>Enroll in VS 299 and 399: University Teaching</p> <p>Discuss your career plans with your chair. They can offer advice on where to find job ads and how to prepare your application materials. Start to develop your CV and Research and Teaching statements, if you plan to apply for academic jobs. Ask your chair and other mentors to look over these documents.</p> <p>Depending on your funding package, you may not have guaranteed TAships next year. Apply for TAships in the School of Humanities, including in Composition and/or Humanities Core. (TAs for Composition will need to concurrently enroll in a course for teaching Comp in Fall.) Speak to the Department Manager for Art History and Film &amp; Media Studies about your options</p>

## Year 6

Fall
<p>Meet with your chair to discuss your timeline for filing the dissertation in Spring quarter. Your Doctoral Committee will most likely suggest revisions, so be sure to schedule enough time to revise</p> <p>Consider giving a mock job talk to the VS community.</p> <p>Notify your Doctoral Committee that you plan to file your dissertation in Spring. Let them know when they can expect to see a draft of the completed dissertation</p>
Winter
<p>Meet with your chair to discuss your plan for completing the dissertation.</p> <p>Distribute a draft dissertation to your Doctoral Committee and ask for feedback. If appropriate, ask committee members to identify which feedback is required for the dissertation and which is suggested for eventual publication. Expect and allow time for at least some revisions.</p> <p>Consult the <a href="#">UCI Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Manual</a> for instructions on formatting your Dissertation and take a look at Graduate Divisions instructions for <a href="#">Doctoral Degree Completion</a> to be sure you understand all the steps you'll need to take to file your dissertation next quarter</p>
Spring
<p>After your Doctoral Committee has approved the dissertation, talk to the Graduate Coordinator about scheduling your Oral Defense at least three weeks before the filing deadline. <i>See Oral Defense below</i></p> <p>Distribute your completed dissertation four weeks before the Oral Defense.</p> <p>Request a <a href="#">Pre-Submission Critique</a> well ahead of the filing deadline to be sure the dissertation is formatted correctly.</p> <p>Ask your Chair whether they recommend that you embargo the dissertation.</p>

### Oral Defense *See Dissertation*

- You must distribute your completed dissertation at least three weeks prior to the Oral Defense, and the Oral Defense should take place approximately three

weeks before the filing deadline so that you have time to make revisions based on recommendations that are made during the defense.

- The Oral Defense will be open to all members of the academic community. Visual Studies faculty and students, the Dean of the School of Humanities, and the Graduate Dean must be given at least five days' advance notice of the date, time, and place of the examination.
- Ask your Chair what to expect during the defense. Typically, it will begin with your brief presentation on the project followed by questions from your Doctoral Committee and audience members. After this portion of the defense, the Doctoral Committee will engage in a closed deliberation in order to provide you with specific feedback.
- The purpose of the dissertation defense is to provide a forum for conversation among committee members with the goal of communicating substantive final feedback. The defense also offers closure to your training in the program and an important transitional discussion for advice on revising the dissertation for potential publication and post-graduate professional development.

## Requirements and Policies

The policies and guidelines in this handbook supplement the requirements described in the [UC Irvine General Catalog](#) and Graduate Division's [Academic Policies](#).

The Visual Studies Program requirements are published in the UCI General Catalog and are reproduced below. These requirements have been approved by the Visual Studies core faculty, the Dean of the School of Humanities, Graduate Council, and Graduate Division. Any exceptions to these requirements can only be made by permission of the Graduate Dean. Students are governed by the requirements that were enumerated in the General Catalog in the year they first enrolled in the Visual Studies program.

The Visual Studies faculty have voted to approve the policies described below. These represent the faculty's consensus on best practices for the program. Any exceptions to these policies can only be made with the approval of the Visual Studies director and/or the Visual Studies Graduate Committee in consultation with your Primary Advisor/Chair.

## Advising

When a student enters the program they are assigned an advisor. By the end of their first year all students are expected to identify a Principal Advisor who fits their research interests. The Principal Advisor can be changed before preliminary exam readings are undertaken. Typically, the Principal Advisor will become the student's Dissertation Chair.

Students should meet with their Principal Advisors or Dissertation Chairs at least once per quarter.

See also the [Graduate Mentoring and Advising Policy](#) approved by UCI's Graduate Council.



## Course Requirements

[From the UCI General Catalogue](#): Beyond the core series (VIS STD 290A, VIS STD 290B, and VIS STD 290C) students are required to complete an additional 11 courses for a total of 14 courses. Out of this total, at least 10 courses (including the core series and VS 297) must be within the program in Visual Studies, and at least two courses are to be from outside the Visual Studies discipline.

Students admitted with an M.A. in a related field may petition the Visual Studies Graduate Committee to have some of their course requirements waived; such petitions will be considered in close consultation with the primary advisor and on a case-by-case basis (though all students must take the core sequence). While students may accrue units for University Teaching (Art His 399 or FLM&MDA 399), Reading for the Preliminary Examination (VIS STD 298A), and Prospectus Research (VIS STD 298B) these do not count toward the required number of courses.

*Any changes to these requirements, including course waivers, must be approved by Graduate Division.*

Since this is a small Ph.D. program, students' academic plans can be tailored to address their individual backgrounds and to enhance their specific research interests. In consultation with the Director of Visual Studies and/or their principal advisor, students will develop their programs of study.

For electives to count towards the 10-course minimum, they must be graduate level courses (courses numbered 200 and above). Visual Studies 295 and Visual Studies 296 may be repeated for credit and count towards degree requirements.

Visual Studies 298A, VS 298B, and 399: University Teaching do not count toward the 14 required courses.

## Language Other than English

[From the UCI General Catalogue](#): All students are required to demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language and are strongly encouraged to develop competence in a second. Students consult with the Director and/or their principal advisor(s) to determine the appropriate language on which the student will be tested, based on their interests and program of study. Advisors, moreover, may require the demonstration of reading knowledge in additional languages according to the scholarly demands of the student's specific field. All language requirements must be satisfied before students are advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. *Any changes to these requirements must be approved by Graduate Division.*

In addition to the language requirement described in the UCI General Catalog, students are encouraged to demonstrate proficiency in an additional language to be eligible to compete for external fellowships requiring two languages other than English. The same options for certification are available for the additional language as the first, but these should be satisfied before fellowship nominations from the program will be considered.

The language requirement may be satisfied by one of the following means:

1. By passing the Visual Studies language exam. This request must be made to the VS Staff within the first two weeks of the quarter the student wishes to take the exam. See below for more information on the Visual Studies language exam.
2. By completing, with a grade of "B" or better, a language course at the 2C level or equivalent, with the exception of Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, which must be completed at the 3C level or equivalent.
3. By attaining a proficiency level of 2C on the Russian Exemption Exam or a proficiency level of 3C on the Chinese Exemption Exam offered by UCI's Academic Testing Center.
4. By enrolling in and completing, with a grade of "B" or better, one of the following three translation seminars: French/German/Spanish 97, "Fundamentals of French/German/Spanish (with Emphasis on Reading)."
  - o Note that these classes are seldom offered. You are advised not to rely on this option.
5. By petitioning the program. Grounds for a petition might include the student's being a native speaker in a language other than English or having completed an equivalent language requirement at a different institution. The granting of this

petition remains at the discretion of the VS Director, although students dissatisfied with this determination may request the petition be considered by the full faculty.

- If you have completed the language requirement at a different institution, you will need to submit your transcripts with the petition.
- Speak to the Graduate Coordinator about completing a petition

## Visual Studies Language Exam

### Scheduling:

- It is the responsibility of the student to inform Graduate Coordinator within the first two weeks of the quarter that they intend to take the examination for a particular language during that quarter.
- Exams will be scheduled and administered between weeks 3-8 of the quarter depending on student and faculty availability.
- Exams will be graded and results communicated to students within 3 weeks of the exam date.

### Content:

- This exam consists of the translation of two passages, each approximately 250 words in length.
- The passages will be texts within the student's general field, written for a broad audience.
- In the case of European languages, one passage will be translated with the aid of a translation dictionary and one without; in the case of Asian languages, an electronic dictionary may be used for both passages.
- Students will be given one hour to complete their translation of each passage.
- Passages will not be used more than once.
- There will not be an oral component to the exam.

### Misc.

- Exams are conducted in a quiet, closed environment. Students leave their belongings with the Graduate Coordinator. Paper, a pencil and a laptop computer with a word processor only will be provided to the student. The exam will be typed.
- A student can attempt the test only once per quarter.
- The exam will be evaluated by a faculty member appropriate to the language. This person is chosen by the program, not the student.

- Where possible, VS will make one practice exam available per language. These samples will be culled from exams administered from Fall 2010 forward.
- The practice exams will indicate the language and the date (quarter/year) administered but will not provide an answer key to the passages for translation.

## Academic Integrity

Graduate students are expected to be familiar with standards of [academic integrity](#) and should be particularly attentive to one category of academic misconduct described by the Office of Academic Integrity and Student Conduct:

“Submitting substantial portions of the same work for credit in more than one course without consulting all instructors involved” is an example of [Dishonest Conduct](#):

- This includes reusing your own work from a previous quarter, unless the instructor has explicitly permitted you to do so”

If you plan to submit seminar papers on the same topic to more than one instructor, you must first obtain written permission to do so.

## Teaching

In the spring, students who wish to teach the following year complete an application through the School of Humanities portal. You will be asked to identify the classes you would like to TA and to note any special circumstances or qualifications. As part of the application, you will upload your CV and sample course evaluations.

TA assignments are made by the Chairs of Art History and Film and Media Studies in consultation with the Graduate Director and Department Manager.

- Although TAs are part of your Visual Studies financial package, they are administered by the departments of Art History and Film & Media Studies rather than the Visual Studies program. Questions and concerns about TAs should be directed to the relevant Department Chair and/or the Department Manager.
- To qualify to TA, you must maintain satisfactory academic progress, including earning letter grades of C, S, or above in all courses completed in the last three quarters and *having no more than two Incomplete grades in the last three quarters*. Please speak to the Visual Studies Director if you do not meet these qualifications.
- Students who are more than nine quarters past advancement to candidacy (Doc 2A) are not eligible to TA.
- Most graduate students are eligible to receive up to twelve quarters of teaching as TAs before advancement to candidacy and eighteen quarters of total support. This is an eligibility for employment but not a guarantee.
- All Academic Student Employee (ASE) appointments are covered by a collective bargaining agreement between the University of California and the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW). Click here to view the [entire contract](#).

## Addressing Abuse

- If a student tells you they have been abused or assaulted, please consult with the Instructor of Record for the course and get their support in addressing their abuse or assault.
- Like faculty, graduate student instructors are mandatory reporters under UC's Title IX provisions, which means you are required to report all incidents and disclosures of sex offenses to UCI's Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity ([OEOD](#)).

- Before a student confides in you, alert them that you are obligated to report abuse or assault.
- For more information on policies and guidelines for reporting, please consult the [OEOD web site](#).
- If the student does not want their disclosure to be reported, point them to the following resources for learning about procedures and potential outcomes while remaining anonymous:
  - Campus Assault Resources and Educations (CARE) is located on the third floor of the Student Center (Suite G320) and can be reached at 949-824-7273 or by going to <https://www.care.uci.edu>
  - Campus Social Workers can be reached at 949-824-0101, via email at [campussocialworker@uci.edu](mailto:campussocialworker@uci.edu) or by going to <https://whcs.uci.edu/csw/>
  - The [Campus Counseling Center](#) has walk-in Urgent Care during weekdays, 8-4:30 PM (949-824-6457).
  - Additionally, the student may make a report to UCI police and request to be treated as a “confidential victim.”
- If a student is rude or abusive to you, please work with the Instructor to develop a plan for addressing the student’s behavior.
  - For more information on dealing with disruptive or threatening students, consult the Office of Academic Integrity & Student Conduct [website](#).
  - If the behavior of students is threatening or if you are harassed on the basis of your gender, race, sexual identity, or disability, you can call the UCI Police at 949-824-5223.

### International Students

- All international students, including those with Permanent Resident status, must pass an oral English proficiency exam approved by UCI prior to teaching. The only exemptions to this exam are given to students who have:
  - U.S. citizenship,
  - Completed a four-year high school degree in the U.S., or
  - Citizenship in a country where English is either the primary or dominant language, as approved by UCI Graduate Council. See list of approved countries [here](#).
- Students can fulfill this requirement by passing one of the following exams:
  - Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet-based Testing ([TOEFL iBT](#)) is administered by ETS in U.S. centers and abroad;
  - International English Language Testing System ([IELTS](#)) is available in over 140 countries including the U.S.;

- Spoken Proficiency English Assessment Kit ([SPEAK](#)) is available at UCI only after a student is admitted;
- Test of Oral English Proficiency ([TOEP](#)) is administered at UCI and is only an option if a student fails to pass the TOEFL iBT, IELTS or SPEAK.
- You will be reimbursed for the exam fee. Please submit your receipt to the Graduate Coordinator.
- For more detailed information on these exams of spoken English proficiency, including the respective passing scores, please review the [English Proficiency Summary Chart](#).
- To help UCI graduate students strengthen their oral English proficiency, UCI offers a [Program in Academic English/ESL](#).
- Please talk to the Visual Studies DECADE advisor if you have any concerns about inequities or exclusionary practices related to the exam.



## MA Paper and M.A.

[From the UCI General Catalogue](#): During their second year, students admitted without an M.A. in a related field will enroll in [VIS STD 296](#) for the purpose of expanding and developing a seminar paper into a Master's paper under the supervision of a faculty advisor. The Master's paper is an essay of near-publication quality, approximately 30 pages in length. In addition to the advisor, two additional readers from the Visual Studies faculty will assess the Master's paper and the student's overall academic performance. The committee will assess whether or not the student has satisfied all requirements for the M.A. Those students who have satisfied the M.A. requirements, but whose committees assess their work as not meeting the standards for Ph.D. study, will receive a terminal M.A. *Any changes to these requirements must be approved by Graduate Division.*

All graduate students, whether arriving with a B.A. or an M.A., have been admitted as doctoral students; the faculty expects that all students entering the program plan to complete the Ph.D. at UC Irvine. However, the program does award an M.A. en route to the Ph.D. for those students admitted initially with a B.A. only.

Submission and approval of the M.A. paper is a prerequisite for enrolling in VS 298 Preliminary Exam readings. Normally, the M.A. paper submission and approval process should have been completed before Spring quarter of the second year for students entering the Ph.D. Visual Studies Program without an M.A.

### MA Paper Requirements

- The MA paper must present a substantial and original argument that contributes to the study of visual culture.
- It must demonstrate a command of the relevant literature;
- It must present adequate evidence to support its claims;
- It must be clearly written in an appropriate academic style;
- It must be formatted according to MLA or Chicago Manual of Style guidelines;
- It must be between 6,000 and 10,000 words including notes, and excluding bibliography.

### The MA Committee

The VS Director will convene the MA Committee, which will be chaired by the student's Primary Advisor. In convening the committee, the VS director will take into account

both requests from the students and the need to balance workload across the Visual Studies faculty.

- Final essays will be due to the VS staff person by Friday of the first week of Winter quarter. Papers will then be distributed to the MA Committee
- Each committee member will write up an evaluation of the essay, which will be placed in the student's file, and which must be made available to the student within three weeks of the essay's submission to the program.
- The MA committee will discuss each essay and assess the overall academic performance of the student to determine whether or not the student has satisfied all requirements for the M.A.
- Those students who have satisfied the M.A. requirements, but whose committees assess their work as not meeting the standards for Ph.D. study, will not continue in the PhD program.

## Preliminary Examination

[From the UCI General Catalogue](#): By the end of the first year, a student must reach an agreement with one of the program's core faculty members to serve as principal advisor. The student will work with the principal advisor to plan completion of their program requirements and to select the faculty who will supervise examination fields. The examination committee will be constituted in accordance with UCI Senate and Visual Studies program policies.

The student and principal advisor define two fields, one major and one minor to be examined by the faculty. The fields should combine historical breadth and some variety in media. Over the course of two quarters, students prepare reading lists in close consultation with their principal advisor and field supervisor, and complete the reading of those lists. The examination normally takes place at the end of each of the two quarters of study.

The first part of the examination consists of a written component, in which the student is called upon to respond to questions posed in the two examination fields. The student's written responses are assessed by the director of each exam reading as pass or fail; however, the responses are circulated to all committee members. There is also an oral component to the preliminary exam process.

*Any changes to these requirements must be approved by Graduate Division.*

After completing all required coursework, students complete two exam readings: one with their Primary Advisor and one with another faculty member who will serve on their Prospectus Committee. (For students who have not had the MA requirement waived, submission and approval of the MA paper is a prerequisite for enrolling in VS 298A: Preliminary Exam and completing an exam reading.) Students complete two written exams and one oral exam. The written portion of these exams must be completed in order for the student to begin work on the dissertation prospectus.

Working with their Principal Advisor, the student will identify two scholarly fields to be examined by the faculty. Over the course of the following quarters, students normally enroll in eight to twelve units per quarter of VS 298A: Preliminary Exam during which time they prepare reading lists in close consultation with their principal advisor and

field supervisors, and complete the reading of those lists. The written examination takes place near the end of the respective quarters of study.

Except in extraordinary circumstances, no student will be given more than two chances to pass any section of the examination.

#### Exam/Prospectus Committee

Three members of the Exam/Prospectus Committee shall also serve on the student's Dissertation Committee. These committees must be chaired by VS Core Faculty and no fewer than 51% of either committee must be VS Core or Affiliated Faculty. The Exam/Prospectus committee must also include one "outside member" who is not a member of the VS Core or Affiliated Faculty. The outside member can be selected closer to the date of the Oral Exam/Prospectus Defense.

Chair, Dissertation and Exam/Prospectus Committees	VS Core Faculty only
Exam/Prospectus Committee	5 Minimum, including the Doctoral Committee, at least 51% VS Core or Affiliated Faculty, 1 non-VS Core or Affiliated Faculty
Doctoral Committee	3 Minimum, including the chair, at least 51% VS Core or Affiliated Faculty

#### Exam Readings

Reading lists must be of a reasonable length, i.e., between 25 to 40 sources, which may include a mix of books, articles, and book chapters. Reading lists must be finalized at the beginning of the quarter of VS 298A enrollment. Should any readings be added to the list during the course of the enrolled quarter, the reading list must remain within the reasonable length designated above.

Faculty are discouraged from supervising more than two VS 298As per quarter.

#### Written Exams

The first part of the Preliminary Examination consists of a written component, in which the student is called upon to respond to questions posed in their two examination fields.

- The written portion for each of the two exam readings consists of three hours of writing in a controlled environment, without access to books, the internet, or notes.

- A paper, pencil and laptop computer with a word processor only will be provided to the student. The exam will be typed.
- The questions to be answered in each area will be given to the student at the beginning of the appropriate testing session, and will be collected precisely at the scheduled end of the session, with no extra time allocated for breaks, spell-checking, and so forth.
- The Graduate Coordinator will submit the student's written response to the faculty member who supervised the reading.
- The faculty supervisor will notify the student and members of the Prospectus Committee when the student has passed the written portion of the exam.

After completing each set of readings for the exam each student assumes responsibility to schedule the written and oral examinations. Students should contact the VS Staff as soon as possible about scheduling their exams.

- Students indicate:
  - The dates and times they would like to take the exam.
  - Which faculty member supervised the exam reading.
  - Who their primary advisor is.
- VS Staff:
  - Find a suitable room for each exam and communicate that to the student.
  - Contact the faculty member who supervised the exam reading to solicit the exam question(s).
- Exams are conducted in a quiet, closed environment. Students leave their belongings with the VS Staff. A paper, pencil and laptop computer with a word processor only will be provided to the student. The exam will be typed.

You will leave your belongings with the Graduate Coordinator and be provided with paper, pencils, and a laptop computer on which to type your response.

### Oral Exams

The oral portion of the Preliminary Exam will take place in conjunction with the Prospectus Defense before the five-person Exam/Prospectus Committee. Except in extraordinary circumstances, it must take place during the regularly scheduled academic year; faculty members are not expected to participate in examinations over the summer or during any other inter-term break.

Only after the student has completed all their course requirements, their language requirement, their MA, and written exams will they will sit for the Oral Exam/Prospectus Defense.

The combined Oral Exam and Prospectus Defense is typically two hours long. The exam portion shall consist of questions prompted by the student's reading lists and by their written examinations. Students are allowed to bring notes to this exam.

Students must bring a completed [PhD Form I](#) to their Oral Exam. Students fill out the top portion and list the members of their 5-person committee. The student must indicate with an asterisk ("\*") those members of the Prospectus Committee who will also serve on the Doctoral Committee. After the student has passed the Oral Exam and Prospectus Defense, the five-person Prospectus Committee must sign the form, in ink with their original signatures.

- All paperwork must be submitted to Graduate Division by 5:00pm of the [filing deadline](#) in order for the student to advance to candidacy

## Prospectus and Advancement to Candidacy

[From the UCI General Catalogue](#): During their third year, students draft a prospectus that defines the scope, approach, and rationale for a proposed dissertation and begin research on the dissertation. At the end of the third year the student should defend the written exams and prospectus with the entire five-person committee. Based on the student's written exam results, prospectus, oral defense, and overall progress, the committee will determine whether the student has successfully advanced to candidacy. Except in extraordinary circumstances, no student will be given more than two chances to pass any given section of the examination.

Advancement to candidacy for the Ph.D. is contingent upon successful completion of both the preliminary exams, subsequent approval of the prospectus by the dissertation committee, and satisfaction of all language requirements. The normative time for advancement to candidacy is three years.

*Any changes to these requirements must be approved by Graduate Division.*

The winter quarter after students take their exams (normatively in year three), they are required to take VS 297, a writing practicum in which they finalize a prospectus that defines the scope, approach, and rationale for a proposed dissertation and begin research on the dissertation. A full prospectus draft must be finished by the end of the winter quarter at the latest.

### The Prospectus

Your prospectus is a document in which you articulate your dissertation project, situate it in relation to the existing scholarship, and map out your research plan. The prospectus gives you a structure to think through, formulate, and rationalize your project, as well as a plan to begin writing your dissertation. You may also be able to excerpt passages from your prospectus in abstracts and applications. Your ultimate dissertation will likely evolve—for instance in the number of chapters or specific case studies—as you research and write, but the prospectus gives you a foundation from which to work.

The length of prospectuses vary, but these are the six basic elements of a prospectus:

1. The Project Overview introduces the dissertation topic, articulates your guiding research questions, advances a preliminary thesis, and explains the stakes or intervention of your project.
2. The Literature Review offers a synthetic survey of the relevant topical scholarly fields upon which you are building or are putting into dialogue. Rather than offering a laundry listing of every scholar's argument, this should give a sense of the major and most pertinent discourses and debates. Position your work in relation to the existing scholarship.
3. Methodology explains the theoretical frameworks and disciplinary methods you are employing in your analysis. This is distinct from the literature review and will likely be shorter. This section is particularly important if you are proposing innovative or alternative methods.
4. Your Chapter Breakdown explains the subjects of each individual chapter (typically one paragraph per chapter) and the structural logic of the dissertation as a whole.
5. The Research Plan provides a pragmatic overview of how you will accomplish the dissertation. The plan includes a forecast schedule for research and for completing chapter drafts, revisions, and delivering the whole dissertation to your committee. It also identifies archives where you plan to conduct research and fellowships and grants for which you plan to apply for additional funding. The plan should build in sufficient time for feedback and revision. Very few students meet the deadlines they set for themselves, but it is helpful to approach writing the dissertation as a series of smaller component parts, rather than being intimidated by taking on the project as a whole. It will also be important for you to figure out a personal writing rhythm that works well for you.
6. The Bibliography includes the scholarship that you anticipate citing. You may find it useful to organize your bibliography by subject rather than solely alphabetically.

### Advancing to Candidacy

Advancement to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree is contingent upon successful completion of the written and oral Preliminary Exams, subsequent approval of the prospectus by the dissertation committee, and satisfaction of all language requirements. The normative time for advancement to candidacy is three years.



## Dissertation

[From the UCI General Catalogue](#): The student and the principal advisor consult to determine the composition of a doctoral committee of three members including the principal advisor, which then must unanimously approve the prospectus before the student proceeds with the dissertation. The doctoral committee, on the basis of the candidate's past academic performance and proposed dissertation topic, may require additional course work or other forms of preparation for the dissertation. The doctoral committee, under the direction of the principal advisor, supervises the student's research program and ultimately approves the dissertation. The normative time for completion of the Ph.D. program is six years, and the maximum permitted is seven years.

After submitting a full dissertation to their committee members, students will be required to pass an oral dissertation defense with their three-person doctoral committee prior to filing their dissertation and graduating. The examination will be open to all members of the academic community. Faculty and graduate students of the school (or academic unit) and the Graduate Dean must be given appropriate written notice at least five days in advance of the date, time, and place of the examination.

*Any changes to these requirements must be approved by Graduate Division.*

Dissertation work begins once the student has been formally advanced to candidacy with the university. Research and writing goals are communicated on an individual basis between the primary advisor and the student.

### Guidance and Approval

The doctoral committee, on the basis of the candidate's past academic performance and proposed dissertation topic, may require additional course work or other forms of preparation for the dissertation. The doctoral committee, under the direction of the principal advisor, supervises the student's research program and ultimately approves the dissertation. The normative time for completion of the Ph.D. program is six years, and the maximum permitted is seven years.

The recommended length for a dissertation is 200-250 pages of text and notes, not including bibliography.

### Filing the Dissertation

Information on filing the dissertation can be found on the Graduate Division website under [Thesis and Dissertation Submission](#). Online filing is the easiest and recommended method. Make sure to follow the requirements of the checklist provided. Remember the Ph.D. II Form requires many signatures and may take some time to complete, so be sure to plan in advance.

### Dissertation Defense

After submitting a full dissertation to their committee members, students will be required to pass an oral dissertation defense with their three-person doctoral committee prior to filing their dissertation and graduating. The examination will be open to all members of the academic community. Faculty and graduate students of the school (or academic unit) and the Graduate Dean must be given appropriate written notice at least five days in advance of the date, time, and place of the examination.

A dissertation defense typically lasts two hours. The format of the defense will typically include a brief student presentation of the project, followed by questions from the committee and audience, closed deliberation, and feedback. The goal of the dissertation defense is to provide a forum for conversation among committee members about the project and to communicate substantive final feedback to the student. The defense also offers closure to the student's training in the program and an important transitional discussion for advice on revising the dissertation for potential publication and on post-graduate professional development.

The student should circulate the complete dissertation to committee members at least three weeks prior to the scheduled defense; committee members may have already previously requested and commented on drafts of individual chapters or of the complete dissertation at their discretion. After reading the complete dissertation, committee members will determine if the student is ready to move to the oral defense.

It is recommended that students make scheduling arrangements with committee members and program staff far enough in advance to ensure faculty and room availability. The date of the defense should allow sufficient time (approximately two or three weeks) for minor revisions prior to filing and graduation. Students can anticipate minor revision requests to emerge from the discussion.

## Maintaining a Safe and Inclusive Environment

The Visual Studies program is committed to creating and maintaining an environment in which faculty, staff, and students can thrive. Discrimination, harassment, and exclusionary practices are antithetical to this goal.

If you encounter any instances of discrimination, harassment, or exclusion, please speak with the Director of Graduate Studies and/or the DECADE advisor as soon as possible so that the issue can be addressed.

If you have ideas about how the program can develop better practices for fostering an atmosphere in which all students can thrive, please speak with the Visual Studies DECADE (Diverse Educational Community and Doctoral Experience) advisor and/or DECADE student representative. You are also encouraged to join the [DECADE](#) listserv in order to find out more about DECADE events, programs, and initiatives, including travel awards.

Alternatively, or if you have a problem that cannot be resolved within Visual Studies, you can speak to the Director of the Humanities Graduate Office, Amy Fujitani and/or the Assistant Director of Academic Counseling, Phong B. Luong. You may also seek external mediation through the [Office of the Ombudsman](#) or the [Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity](#).

If you have been sexually harassed or assaulted on campus, it is important that you know that faculty and staff are mandatory reporters under UC's Title IX provisions, which means they are required to report all incidents and disclosures of sex offenses to UCI's Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity ([OEOD](#)).

If you do not want your disclosure to be reported, you can draw on the following resources to learn about procedures and potential outcomes while remaining anonymous:

- Campus Assault Resources and Educations (CARE) is located on the third floor of the Student Center (Suite G320) and can be reached at 949-824-7273 or by going to <https://www.care.uci.edu>
- Campus Social Workers can be reached at 949-824-0101, via email at [campussocialworker@uci.edu](mailto:campussocialworker@uci.edu) or by going to <https://whcs.uci.edu/csw/>
- The Campus Counseling Center has walk-in Urgent Care during weekdays, 8-4:30 PM (949-824-6457). It is located upstairs in Student Services 1, behind the

Career Center and you can find more information here:

<https://counseling.uci.edu/contact/>

- Additionally, individuals may make a report to UCI police and request to be treated as a “confidential victim.”

# Faculty

## Visual Studies Core Faculty

Core Faculty may serve as primary advisors and chair MA and doctoral committees. They may serve as internal members on exam and doctoral committees.

Catherine Benamou: Associate Professor of Film and Media Studies

Interests: Hispanophone and Lusophone cinema and television, U.S. Latino media, Orson Welles and maverick cinema, Transnational flows, Spectatorship, Cinematic memory and cultures of preservation. [cbenamou@uci.edu](mailto:cbenamou@uci.edu)

Roland Betancourt: Director of the Visual Studies Program and Chancellor's Fellow and Professor of Art History

Interests: Byzantine and Medieval Art, Critical and queer theory, Histories of race, gender, and sexuality. [roland.betancourt@uci.edu](mailto:roland.betancourt@uci.edu)

Matthew Canepa: Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Presidential Chair in Art History and Archaeology of Ancient Iran

Interests: Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanian art and archaeology, Iranian visual cultures and Afro-Eurasian exchange, Critical approaches to space, place, landscape, urbanism, and memory. [matthew.canepa@uci.edu](mailto:matthew.canepa@uci.edu)

Bridget R. Cooks: Associate Professor of African American Studies; Art History; Culture and Theory

Interests: African American art, Museum studies, Feminist and post-colonial theory. [bcookscu@uci.edu](mailto:bcookscu@uci.edu)

Sohail Daulatzai: Associate Professor of Film and Media Studies; African American Studies

Interests: African American Studies, Postcolonial Theory, Race, Hip Hop, Muslim Diasporas. [sdaulatz@uci.edu](mailto:sdaulatz@uci.edu)

Bambi Haggins: Associate Professor of Film and Media Studies

Interests: Comedy as social and political discourse, African American performance, Television history, Podcasting, African American studies, American studies, Cultural studies. [bhaggins@uci.edu](mailto:bhaggins@uci.edu)

Kristen Hatch: Associate Professor of Film and Media Studies

Interests: Classical Hollywood, Stardom, Melodrama, Histories of race, gender, and sexuality, Feminist Historiography, Cultural studies, Childhood studies. [khatch@uci.edu](mailto:khatch@uci.edu)

James D. Herbert: Professor of Art History; Visual Studies

Interests: Modern European art. [jdherb@uci.edu](mailto:jdherb@uci.edu)

Lucas Hilderbrand: Professor of Film and Media Studies

Interests: Queer studies, Cultural studies, Video, Pornography, Documentary, Popular music, Histories of technology, Cinema and media studies. [lucas.h@uci.edu](mailto:lucas.h@uci.edu)

Victoria E. Johnson: Professor of Film and Media Studies; African American Studies, Culture and Theory

Interests: Television studies (broadcast, cable, and digital history and theory), Sports media, Media policy, Cultural studies, Cultural geography, Critical race theory. [vejohno@uci.edu](mailto:vejohno@uci.edu)

Meryem Kamil: Assistant Professor of Film and Media Studies

Peter Krapp: Professor of Film and Media Studies; English; Informatics; Music

Interests: Media History, Secret communications, Models and simulations, Game studies, History of computing, Film music, Title design, Media theories. [krapp@uci.edu](mailto:krapp@uci.edu)

André Keiji Kunigami: Assistant Professor of Film and Media Studies

Bliss Cua Lim: Professor of Film and Media Studies

Interests: Philippine Cinema, Film archives, Cinematic and queer temporality, Queer Asian cinemas, Postcolonial and feminist film theory, Transnational horror and the fantastic. [flim@uci.edu](mailto:flim@uci.edu)

Catherine Liu: Professor of Film and Media Studies; Comparative Literature

Interests: Hou Hsiao-hsien, Culture wars, Frankfurt School, Historiography of critical theory/cultural studies, Surveillance, Cold War Culture, Neoliberalism. [catherine.liu@uci.edu](mailto:catherine.liu@uci.edu)

Lyle Massey: Associate Professor of Art History

Interests: Italian Renaissance and early modern European art, Gender Theory, Science Studies, Medical Humanities. [lmasssey@uci.edu](mailto:lmasssey@uci.edu)

Tyrus Miller: Dean of the School of Humanities and Professor of English; Art History  
Interests: Modernist and avant-garde studies in literature and visual arts, Critical theory and aesthetics, Modern architecture and urbanism, East-Central European studies, Culture of socialism and post-socialism, Frankfurt School theory. [tyrus@uci.edu](mailto:tyrus@uci.edu)

Glen Mimura: Associate Professor of Film and Media Studies  
Interests: Minoritarian and political film, Media and race, Popular culture and social movements. [gmimura@uci.edu](mailto:gmimura@uci.edu)

James Nisbet: Associate Professor of Art History  
Interests: Modern and Contemporary Art, theory, and historiography, Ecocriticism, Environmental history, History of modern science, History of photography.  
[jnisbet@uci.edu](mailto:jnisbet@uci.edu)

Alka Patel: Associate Professor of Art History; History; Religious Studies  
Interests: South Asian and Islamic art and architecture, eleventh-eighteenth centuries, Early modern Islamicate diasporas in Cuba, Modern historiographies.  
[alka.patel@uci.edu](mailto:alka.patel@uci.edu)

Allison Perlman: Associate Professor of History; Film and Media Studies  
Interests: Television studies, Broadcasting history, Media law and policy, Media activism, Media and popular memory, Media and American social movements.  
[aperlman@uci.edu](mailto:aperlman@uci.edu)

Fatimah Tobing Rony: Professor and Chair of Film and Media Studies; Culture and Theory  
Interests: Ethnographic film, Race and representation, Film production, Biopolitics.  
[fatimah@uci.edu](mailto:fatimah@uci.edu)

Bonnie ("Bo") Ruberg: Assistant Professor of Film and Media Studies  
Interests: Digital media, Digital cultures, Digital Humanities, Queer studies, Gender and sexuality studies, Video games. [bruberg@uci.edu](mailto:bruberg@uci.edu)

Braxton Soderman: Assistant Professor of Film and Media Studies;  
Interests: Game studies, New media, Digital aesthetics, Critical theory.  
[asoderma@uci.edu](mailto:asoderma@uci.edu)

Aaron Trammell: Assistant Professor of Informatics

Interests: Analog games and Video games, Sound, Fan studies, Digital subjectivity.

[trammell@uci.edu](mailto:trammell@uci.edu)

Cécile Whiting: Chancellor's Professor of Art History

Interests: American Art, 20<sup>th</sup>-Century visual culture. [cwhiting@uci.edu](mailto:cwhiting@uci.edu)

Bert Winther-Tamaki: Professor and Chair of Art History

Interests: Modern and contemporary Japanese art and visual culture, Asian American art, Ecocriticism. [dewinthe@uci.edu](mailto:dewinthe@uci.edu)

Roberta Wue: Associate Professor of Art History

Interests: Modern Chinese art, Photography, Print culture. [rwue@uci.edu](mailto:rwue@uci.edu)



## Visual Studies Affiliated Faculty

Affiliated Faculty serve as internal members on exam and doctoral committees. They may not chair graduate committees in Visual Studies.

Edward Dimendberg: Professor of Humanities

Interests: Architecture, Urbanism, Modernism, Modernity

[ed1@uci.edu](mailto:ed1@uci.edu)

Elizabeth Tinsley: Assistant Professor of Buddhist Studies, Department of East Asian Studies

Interests: Buddhism in East Asia, Japanese Buddhism, East Asian Religions, Buddhist Visual and Textual Cultures, Visual Theory

[etinsley@uci.edu](mailto:etinsley@uci.edu)

Touraj Daryaee: Director of the Samuel M. Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture; Maseeh Chair in Persian Studies and Culture; Professor of History

Interests: Iran, Zoroastrianism, Ancient Medieval World

[tdaryaee@uci.edu](mailto:tdaryaee@uci.edu)

## Visual Studies Allied Faculty

Allied faculty conduct research in fields related to Visual Studies. They cannot serve as internal members on exam and doctoral committees or chair graduate committees in Visual Studies. They may serve as external members on exam and doctoral committees.

Geoffrey C. Bowker: Professor of Informatics; Anthropology

Interests: Values in Design, Social Studies of Databases, Science and Technology Studies

[gbowker@uci.edu](mailto:gbowker@uci.edu)

Laura Kang: Professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies

Interests: Feminist and Gender Studies; Feminist Epistemologies and Theories; Cultural Studies; Political Economies of Globalization; Asian American Literature; Ethnic Studies; Visual Cultures

[laura.kang@uci.edu](mailto:laura.kang@uci.edu)

Kyung Hyun Kim: Professor of Korean Culture; East Asian Studies; Film and Media Studies

Interests: East Asian cinema, modern Korea, critical theory

[kyunghk@uci.edu](mailto:kyunghk@uci.edu)

Julia Reinhard Lupton: Professor of English, Comparative Literature, and Education

Interests: Shakespeare: Renaissance Literature: Religious Studies: Humanities and the Public Sphere; design and everyday life.

[jrlupton@uci.edu](mailto:jrlupton@uci.edu)

William Maurer: Dean, School of Social Sciences; Director, Institute for Money, Technology, and Financial Inclusion; Co-Director, Center for Social Computing; Professor of Anthropology; Law

Interests: Anthropology of Law, Globalization, Transnationalism, Citizenship and Nation

[wmmaurer@uci.edu](mailto:wmmaurer@uci.edu)

Jared Sexton: Professor of African American Studies; Film & Media Studies

Interests: Critical Theory, Race & Sexuality, Coalition Politics, Contemporary U.S. Cinema

[jcsexton@uci.edu](mailto:jcsexton@uci.edu)

Michael Szalay: Director, The Culture and Capital Center; Department Chair and Professor of English; Film and Media Studies

Interests: 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century U.S. Literature, Media, and Politics

[mszalay@uci.edu](mailto:mszalay@uci.edu)

Jennifer Terry: Professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies

Interests: Cultural Studies, Social Theory, Science and Technology Studies, Historical Formation of Gender and Sexuality

[jterry@uci.edu](mailto:jterry@uci.edu)

Roxanne Varzi: Professor of Anthropology; Film and Media Studies

Interests: Anthropology, multi-modal and visual, Iran, Media, War, sound ethnography, Film studies, creative and experimental writing, experimental ethnography, theater

[rvarzi@uci.edu](mailto:rvarzi@uci.edu)