

Type of Program / Measuring Academic Achievement

Cranbrook offers a studio program based upon individual study and research, and the actual creation of art, design, and architectural projects. Specific classes are not offered and traditional grades are not awarded; satisfactory academic progress is evaluated subjectively on a pass/fail basis by the department head. Students whose work is judged satisfactory earn 15 credit hours in a semester. Credits are recorded on permanent transcripts. A total of sixty (60) credit hours, the presentation of a satisfactory written thesis, and a museum exhibition of completed projects are required for graduation. Enrollment is on a full-time basis only and no transfer credits are accepted.

Within each discipline, faculty members set their own program of critiques, discussion, seminars, off-campus activities, and of course, studio work. They establish the standards, expectations, and goals, and they explain them clearly to their students. In addition to working with faculty to bring visiting artists and critics to campus, the Dean of the Art Academy plans the Critical Studies and Humanities program and the Professional Practices program. The scope of programming available to students, as well as the high expectations of faculty for the individual student, ensures that students will meet or exceed the time requirements for credit hours.

Explanation of Credit Hours

Because of the Art Academy's unique program structure, credit hour assignment is not made based on individual courses or programs. As described below, credit is awarded based on time spent in the studio, discussion, lecture, and departmental activities. Credit hours are calculated based on the Art Academy's stated educational program components: academic programming and departmental activities. Each semester is 15 weeks in length. Because there are no formal classes, each semester is assigned 15 credits for the student's Major; a student either receives 15 credits or receives no credit in the Major for a given semester. A minimum of 60 credit hours is required for graduation. The breakdown of expectations for student engagement to receive a passing grade, and thus receive 15 credits, is as follows:

Studio Work and Research

12 credits per semester; one credit hour equals 45 hours of work in the studio.

While some faculty members may use focused projects, for the most part students are expected to work on self-initiated projects. Individual critiques, both group and one-on-one with the Artist-in-Residence, are included in studio requirements. All students prepare for annual formal reviews by faculty from other departments, as well as for their degree exhibition and Master's Statement. A minimum of 36 hours per week of independent studio work is expected.

Lecture and Discussion

3 credits per semester

This includes the Academy's Critical Studies and Humanities program, the Academy's Professional Practices program, visiting artists and critics, written critiques, and reading/discussion sessions. Three hours of participation in a formal setting and 6 hours of individual work and preparation outside of the formal setting, for a minimum of 9 hours per week, are expected.

Departmental Activities

Additional hours are expected to be spent in various departmental activities, including field trips, attendance at off-campus lectures, and sessions with visiting artists and critics. Departmental activities augment the 45 hours per week expected in the studio and in lecture and discussion activities.

Electives

1 credit per semester (optional)

In addition to the required 15 credits per semester in the student's major, students have opportunities to earn one credit by completing a semester-long Elective in a discipline outside the major. The academic content of and participation in the Elective is determined by the student and the Elective department's Artist-in-Residence. General expectations are that a student in an Elective will join the department in critiques, seminars, and discussions as well as in events that may be a part of both their major and elective areas. At least 3 hours per week of formal participation and/or studio work and preparation is expected for students in an Elective.

Course Description

Studio Work and Research: Working in dedicated studios, students complete self-initiated studio work by researching and creating actual works. Working with the department head, students set forth a plan of study based on personal interests. The department head acts as mentor and advisor in monitoring the student's academic progress. Individual critiques, both group and one-on-one with the Artist-in-Residence, are included in studio requirements.

Critical Studies and Humanities Program: The Critical Studies program is a central piece of the academic program and is designed to foster inter-departmental exchange through a series of lectures, discussions, debates, films and seminars. Each semester, a visiting Critical Studies Fellow is in residence at the Academy. Selected for their perspectives on contemporary theory and culture studies, the visiting Fellow presents public lectures, conducts student discussion groups and is an active presence in studio critiques and reviews. This is complemented by a rich, year-long program of public lectures that includes artists and designers who are visiting the Academy's ten departments, as well as critics and scholars brought to campus by the Cranbrook Art Museum and the Critical Studies program. A lecture series poster with the full schedule of lectures is posted in all departments and around campus. Lectures and discussion groups are listed in Hotline, the Academy's weekly electronic student newsletter, and posted on the Intranet.

Professional Practices Series: The Professional Practice program at the Academy is open to all students and is designed to offer the skills and knowledge that will be useful while at the Academy and in the years after graduation. Topics have included: Studio Lighting and Basic Camera Techniques; Grants and Residencies Application Workshop; Art and Design Job Application Workshop; Rhino 101; Learn How to Speak Arduino; Rhino: To the Machines: CNC/Plasma; Overview of Video Editing: Options and Basic; Digital Presentations of Your Work.

Visiting Artists: The program is supplemented by visiting artists and critics who lecture and offer critiques on students' work.

Assigned Projects: On infrequent occasions, a department head will assign projects to his/her student(s) as part of the particular department curriculum. These may take the form of seminars, written reports, exhibitions on or off campus, or projects undertaken with other departments.

Reading and Discussion: The department head assigns readings and holds seminars on works relevant to studio activity. Students are expected to read widely about timely issues within the field and to make appropriate presentations from their research.

Museum, Gallery, and Field Trips: Departments frequently travel to other cities, and, in some cases, other countries, to view significant exhibitions and study art of other cultures. These experiences contribute to the ongoing critical dialog in the department and provide a broader context for student's ideas and studio work.

Course Description Continued

Reviews: All students prepare for annual formal reviews by faculty from other departments.

Degree Show and Master's Statement: Students petitioning to graduate must participate in the annual Degree Show Exhibition by mounting an installation in the Cranbrook Art Museum and must complete a written Master's thesis statement. Both efforts must be reviewed and approved by the Department Head. The thesis statement represents the culmination of a deliberate, well-rounded course of study and comprehensive research performed by the student in his chosen field.

Electives (optional): With permission from the respective department heads, students may enroll for an elective in another department. Students will establish the criteria for credit with the elective department head, which will include attendance at critiques and lectures and individual meetings with the department head. If successfully completed, electives carry one hour of credit per semester. The evaluation process is the same as for the student's major department. A student may enroll in only one elective per semester.

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“Reviews”

Formal review of the student’s work is conducted both in the second and fourth semester of study. Students put their work up for discussion and review by a group of 4-5 reviewers who may include the Director, Dean, a selection of the Artists-in-Residence, and others as determined by the Dean. Students are expected to be able to articulate objectives and ideas, discuss sources and technical explorations, and describe the relevance and originality of the ideas expressed in the work. The reviews are structured to provide students the opportunity for feedback from a variety of perspectives. The outcome of Reviews is linked to Satisfactory Academic Progress.

Grading Process

The department head evaluates student work and academic progress, assigning grades for each student twice each semester, at midterm and at the end of the term. The midterm review is advisory and will not appear on a student’s transcript. Semester grades and all credits received are recorded on permanent transcripts. Reports of passing grades are not issued unless specifically requested by the student. Students will receive written notice from Leslie Tobakos, Registrar, Financial Aid & Admissions Manager, whenever a grade other than Satisfactory (midterm) or Pass (semester) is assigned. A student’s progress is observed and reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Artist-in-Residence. The evaluation of such progress is subjective, and is based on performance and participation in all elements of the curriculum.

Mid-Term Grades: Students are evaluated at midterm with an advisory grade of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. Students who receive an Unsatisfactory at Mid-Term will receive written notification from Leslie Tobakos, Registrar, Financial Aid & Admissions Manager, as well as written communication from their Department Head outlining the steps necessary to improve performance. A student who receives an Unsatisfactory Mid-Term evaluation in the second semester of the second year of study is in jeopardy of not being able to graduate. In such a situation, the Department Head, in consultation with Amy Deines, Dean, will determine the course of action appropriate to the individual situation; students may be asked to leave the program.

Semester Grades: Successful completion of a semester of study is recorded on the student’s official transcript as “Pass,” and 15 hours of credit are awarded. Failure is recorded as “No Credit” and no credit hours are accumulated. Students who enroll in an Elective course and stop attending, but fail to formally withdraw in the prescribed time frame, will receive a grade of No Credit. The evaluation of “Incomplete” is recorded in appropriate instances. In the event that an Incomplete is recorded, the incomplete grade must be resolved by Mid-Term of the succeeding semester or a permanent grade of No Credit is recorded for the term. A student who receives a final grade of No Credit at Mid-Term of the semester following a semester in which the student received a semester grade of Incomplete may be asked to leave the program at that time. In such a case, there is no refund of tuition or fees. A grade of “Withdrew” is recorded when appropriate. Students who formally withdraw from the Academy or from an Elective during the course of a semester will receive a grade of Withdrew.

Academic Probation

Failure to meet academic requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct (contained in the Cranbrook Academy of Art Student Handbook, issued to current students and published on the Intranet), and results in disciplinary action as outlined in the Disciplinary Actions section. At the time a student receives a grade of Unsatisfactory (Mid-Term), Incomplete, or No Credit, the student is placed on Academic Probation. The student remains on Academic Probation until a grade of Pass is received; details are contained in the Due Process (Academic) section of the Cranbrook Academy of Art Student handbook. Refer to the Handbook for details regarding Academic Probation and the appeals process. Students may be dismissed for unsatisfactory academic progress.

Attendance

Full time, on-campus attendance is required throughout the duration of each semester. "Full Time" shall be a minimum of 36 hours per week of individual studio work, a minimum of 9 hours per week devoted to lectures and discussion, and additional time as required for meetings, special projects, or other activities as recommended by the Department Head. Formal records of attendance are not maintained; any attendance concerns will be addressed by the Department Head.

Graduation Requirements

Candidates for the Cranbrook Academy of Art Master's degree must:

- Earn at least sixty semester hours of credit. All credits must be earned in residence. The Academy does not accept transfer credits.
- Present a written Master's Statement for faculty approval.
- Prepare a degree exhibition.

Present the Library with a set of slides and CV documenting the two years of graduate work at the Academy. All requirements for degrees must be completed within five calendar years of the date of matriculation. The date of matriculation is the beginning of the student's first semester in residence. Degrees are conferred in December and May. Diplomas are issued in May at Commencement. Admission to the Academy does not guarantee graduation or the awarding of a degree. Students may be dropped from enrollment or asked to remain at the Academy beyond the customary two years if their work does not meet the Academy's standards of quality and quantity. These decisions are made at the discretion of the faculty and administration.