College: COTA  
Department: Graphic Design  
Degree: B.A., B.S.

Introduction
Many prominent Northwest artists, designers, and art historians began their professional careers by studying art at Portland State University. An even greater number of successful and productive people have used their training in the Department of Art as the basis for careers in commerce, industry, education, and a variety of fields limited only by imagination. Art, which requires personal initiative and imagination and develops skills in mental and manual dexterity, can provide the student with a background well suited for applications that are wide reaching and greatly rewarding.

The Department of Art at Portland State University consists of artists and designers, educators, and art historians actively engaged in their respective fields and with the extended community. As part of an urban university, the mission of the Department of Art is dedicated to helping students understand and experience ways that artists and their works are involved in a larger social context, both in the contemporary world and in the course of world history.

The foundation of the Department of Art is the development of a visual, verbal, and critical language of the arts for future artists and scholars, as well as for members of the community. Since visual arts are a form of communication related to all other forms, understanding the theoretical bases and critical interpretations of this communication is a crucial component of our curriculum. At the same time, because the visual arts are a unique form of communication, students are trained in the necessary technical skills, the theories, the terminology and processes specific to the production of the visual arts.

Because learning “to see” is a most crucial component of any art program, the department requires all students to study both the history of art and to have studio experience. The Department of Art supports the full integration of art/design studio practice with art history and theory. Whether in the studio, computer lab, lecture hall, or seminar room, students have the opportunity to forge connections between traditions of visual art and their own developing imagination and expression.

Art programs are designed to develop the student’s creative faculties, a sense of critical judgment, and fundamental skills and techniques. Within the art major, the principal and supporting courses have one general purpose: to instill a mature, professional attitude toward the process of artistic creation and expression.

Students enrolled in the Department of Art at PSU will acquire:
• Knowledge and experience of the creative problem solving processes.
• Knowledge of discipline-specific skills and vocabulary.
• Knowledge of art history and design.
• Knowledge of critical theories in art.
• Knowledge and experience to formulate a cumulative body of work in their discipline.

At the same time, the programs seek to permit the student a choice upon graduation. The alternatives are: (1) to undertake formal graduate study; (2) to begin a professional career in the fine or applied arts; or (3) to combine the student’s degree program with the basic teaching norm in order to qualify to teach in Oregon public schools.

As a general rule, the major in art requires a minimum of 88 credits in art courses. Included are extensive experiences in studio work and a comprehensive study of the history of art. Majors in art history require a minimum of 68 credits.
Graphic design—BA, BS degree.

The graphic design program provides a comprehensive education in design principles, applications, theories, history, and practice. The curriculum places particular emphasis on craft, concept, and research skills, as well as the development of effective design processes, the generation of meaningful narratives and story-telling techniques, and engagement with various community partners. Students work with faculty primarily through studio courses that introduce an increasing complexity of design problems and methodologies, combined with opportunities for independent development and interaction with professionals. The 100-level courses in graphic design introduce basic principles of design and art and their specific applications in graphic design. The 200-level courses provide a comprehensive studio experience with an increased emphasis on design thinking.

The first two years of study culminate with a required Sophomore Portfolio Review, occurring once each year at the end of the Spring term. All students majoring in graphic design (including students transferring in with lower- or upper-division credits) must pass this Review to enroll in 300-level graphic design courses. Contact the Art Office at 503-725-3515, or visit the Art Department's web site (www.pdx.edu/art) or the graphic design program site (www.psu.gd) for details. Only after successfully passing the Review are graphic design majors allowed to continue progression through the program. In their 300- and 400-level course work, students choose courses of increasing specialization have opportunities for engaging in professional internships, and work to develop a professional portfolio as the culmination of their design studies.

It is important to note that owning a laptop computer provides students with critical advantages for successful progression through the graphic design program. Especially in regards to their ability to work in our classrooms and studio spaces, students with laptop computers are better equipped to complete project assignments, conduct research, and maintain an awareness of activities occurring in design both within the program and beyond. Therefore, beginning in the 2010-2011 academic year, all students majoring in graphic design who enroll in 200-level graphic design courses are required to own a laptop computer that meets minimum system specifications, including software required for courses in the program. The current laptop policy is available for review at www.pdx.edu/art/bachelor-arts-or-sciences-graphic-design.

All students majoring in graphic design and taking 100-level graphic design courses are advised to purchase one of the recommended laptop systems. The sooner students make a commitment to owning a laptop system, the sooner the advantages of ownership will impact their ability to perform competitively and successfully in graphic design.

Undergraduate Program Learning Outcomes

LO #1: Acquire/ apply knowledge of formal/ conceptual/ technical design.

LO #2: Understand/ apply cultural, historic & aesthetic design theory.

LO #3: Understand/ apply strategies for creative idea generation.

LO #4: Initiate/ define/ solve visual problems using analysis, synthesis, and evaluation structures.

LO #5: Acquire/ apply formal analysis of design works.

LO #6: Knowledge/ application of client-designer strategies, structures & theories.