



UNIVERSITY
OF ABERDEEN

SCHOOL OF DIVINITY, HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

ACADEMIC SESSION 2018-2019

HA4588 – HISTORY OF ART DISSERTATION

30 credits

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the **Undergraduate Student Handbook** which is available online at your [MyAberdeen](#) page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any school regulation or procedure.

You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR

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Students are asked to make themselves familiar with the information on key university policies, which is available on MyAberdeen (<https://abdn.blackboard.com/bbcswebdav/institution/Policies>).

These policies are relevant to all students and will be useful throughout your studies. They contain important information, including what to do if you are absent, how to raise an appeal or a complaint, and explain why the University takes your feedback seriously.

These institutional policies should be read in conjunction with the course guide, in which School specific policies are detailed. Further information can be found on the [University's Infohub webpage](#) or by visiting the Infohub.

HISTORY OF ART

HA4588 – Dissertation (30 credits): guidelines

This guide is issued to Level 3 students to make you aware of the guidelines for the dissertation course, which will run at Level 4.

Your dissertation is intended to give you the opportunity to carry out a piece of sustained research on a topic of your own choice and to demonstrate to the examiners your ability to present the results of such research in a proper, scholarly manner.

Your research may be of various kinds. It may address works of art (or a single work of art) directly, through first-hand study in galleries, museums, or private collections, or it may be of a more literary kind, addressing critical or theoretical problems. Or it might involve both.

The term 'work of art' should be interpreted broadly to mean any form of art, architecture or craft. Research may concern works of art of any period, not necessarily works or periods studied during the two Honours years. Critical/theoretical issues may involve the study of books, articles, pamphlets, catalogues, videos, films, newspaper and magazine reviews.

Whatever your topic, *you must show by the way you treat it that you understand the aims and methods of art history.* The criteria by which your dissertation will be judged are therefore essentially the same as are used in grading other written work during your two Honours years. However, because you have about 17 months to research and to write, you are expected to investigate your chosen topic in greater depth. For instance, the examiners will expect you to check a much greater range of appropriate sources than you have time for in a typical course essay.

Assessment will include consideration of the following aspects of your work:

- Structure of the dissertation (all the scholarly apparatus and the logical progression of chapters)
- Clear explanation of your aims
- Critical review of relevant literature
- Provision of a short general background, followed by the detailed analysis of your topic

- Quality and breadth of data collection
- A conclusion which briefly draws together the evidence and explains the results of your investigation.
- A good grasp of English grammar. Marks may be deducted for weaknesses in this respect.

Scholarly Presentation

‘Scholarly presentation’ means the correct use of footnotes, bibliography, page and plate numbering. Marks will be deducted for deficiencies in this area. Your dissertation must conform to the following guidelines:

- It must be word-processed, double-spaced, on A4 paper, the pages numbered consecutively, with wide margins. ‘Outsize’ dissertations are not acceptable.
- It should be **between 8,000 and 10,000 words** in length (including footnotes but excluding bibliography). **Please indicate the word count at the beginning of the dissertation.** Students should note that they will be penalised for work which is either too long (over 10,000 words) or too short (under 8,000 words).
- It should be bound, either in soft or hard covers. The Print Shop on the ground floor of the University Library will bind your thesis for a modest fee. Ask for a solid spine (not a ‘comb’ spine, or ringback).
- You should submit **two copies** of your dissertation, one of which you may have back after the examinations. You are also required to submit a third copy to TurnitinUK via [MyAberdeen](#).

Your dissertation must be organised in the following order:

The cover should clearly show the title, your name and the year. The plagiarism cover sheet should be signed and inserted after the cover. This sheet is available on [MyAberdeen](#).

The dissertation itself should be in the following order:

1. **Title page**, which should give your name, plus the title and the date of the dissertation, and the word count. It should also include the words: ‘M.A. Dissertation in the History of Art, University of Aberdeen’.
2. One page **synopsis**. This is a short summary or overview of your

dissertation, not an introduction, and should be roughly 20 lines in length.

3. List of **contents**.
4. List of **illustrations**, numbered 1, 2, 3 etc., and including medium, location and measurements of works where known (in centimetres, height before width for paintings and drawings, just height for sculptures).
5. The **dissertation** itself, divided into chapters. Illustrations should be referred to in the text as Pl. 1, Pl. 2, etc.
6. **Footnotes** (at the bottom of the page, numbered 1, 2, 3) are preferred to endnotes
7. **Bibliography** of works cited and used.
8. **Illustrations**, numbered (Pl. 1, 2, 3) and clearly labelled, placed either at the end, or inserted appropriately within the text. A caption to an illustration requires at least the following: artist/architect, title, date, current location, dimensions of artwork in centimetres, height before width (if known).

Footnotes and Bibliography

All material must be sourced in the appropriate manner, with scholarly footnotes, preferably at the foot of the page. The minimum information required in a footnote is author, date, page (as in Bloggs, 1929, 123).

The bibliography should separate primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include books and manuscripts contemporary with, or relatively near in date to, the works of art discussed. Library has referencing & citing guide:

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/documents/guides/cit/ggcit001.pdf>

IT Services provide Word guides etc in the Learners' Toolkit
<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/toolkit/>

There is a good deal of useful advice in *A Short Guide to Writing about Art* by Sylvan Barnet, copies of which are kept in Heavy Demand.

Illustrations

You should discuss with your supervisor the extent to which your dissertation needs the inclusion of photographs in the text. In some cases references to where illustrations can be found in published works may be adequate. If taking your own photographs, make sure they are clear and in focus. If using images from the internet, aim to find versions with a high resolution. The look

of a dissertation can be spoilt by poor illustrations. Good photocopies, either black and white or, preferably, colour, or laser prints, are acceptable. DO NOT submit your images on a CD.

Do remember that some illustrations ordered from museums, etc., may take some time to come. Get advice from your supervisor at an early stage. Photographs and purchased scans can be very expensive: do not commit yourself to high bills without getting estimates in advance.

The Stages of Preparation

Third Year

1. At the beginning of the first sub-session, you will assemble for a group briefing on the aims and methods of writing the dissertation. **The meeting in 2018 will be on Monday 24 September at 1 pm in CB203.** This is the time to start thinking about your topic. Feel free to contact either the dissertation co-ordinator or any member of staff during the course of the year to discuss any ideas that you might have.
2. All Single and Joint Honours students will take the course *HA3079 Critical Perspectives in Art History* during the first half session. It is expected that the theoretical and analytical methods you learn will inform your construction of the dissertation. As you take this course, continue thinking how these methods might apply to your topic.
3. During the second sub-session you will attend a class meeting where you will be assigned to a personal supervisor with the appropriate area of expertise who will guide you from then on. This will not last more than one hour. You will have had about 5 months in which to decide on a 'ball-park' area for your dissertation. At this meeting, you will have to **disclose your topic in broad terms** in order to find the right supervisor. Before the summer vacation begins, you will have one supervision meeting with your own allocated supervisor, to work up a strategy for research during the vacation. **You will be responsible** for contacting your supervisor to arrange this meeting.

Fourth Year

1. At the start of the first sub-session, in 2019-20, you will see your supervisor again to discuss the vacation work. It may emerge at this stage that your original topic was unsuitable. Over the summer, your original topic may

have proved fruitless, and you have already started on something else. This is the **last point at which you may change your subject. You may also be allocated to a different supervisor at this stage.**

2. During both sub sessions you may make arrangements to see your supervisor whenever you wish to discuss matters, but much of the time you will be working on your own and under your own initiative.
3. After the December exam diet, either during or immediately after the Christmas vacation, you should prepare a **15-minute oral presentation on your topic**. You should be able to explain the basic outline of your dissertation and what problems you are attempting to solve. You will make this **PowerPoint presentation** during the **last two weeks of January 2020** to a very small group - normally, but not always, with your supervisor and the other students who are working with the same member of staff. The process will be similar to the small presentations you made at The Burn, but without being recorded. This aims to both improve your oral presentation skills and clarify your dissertation plan. After the presentation you may continue to see your supervisor as you work on the writing-up. Supervisors will not pre-read your dissertation as a whole, but will be prepared to read *a few pages of draft*, if submitted **before 14th March, 2020**.
4. By **5th February at the latest**, all students must **hand in to their supervisor**
 - a) **A bibliography** which should normally include at least 20 sources. The bibliographical entries should be divided into *primary sources* (documents, early printed books, letters etc, where applicable) and *secondary sources* (monographs, essays, articles, catalogues). This should be laid out in the correct, formal manner:

Bloggs, 1999 *Paintings I have known and loved*, ed. P.Bloggs, London, 1999

Jones, 1975 D.Jones, *My Favourite Paintings*, London, 1975

Smith, 1962 P.Smith, 'My Favourite Paintings', *Apollo*, LXV, 1975, 23-30

White, 1999 J.White, 'My Favourite Paintings' in Bloggs, 1999, 23-40

Note: you do not need to write the letters pp., or vol., or publisher.
 - b) **A critical review of sources**. This is a sample of your writing which will be carefully corrected to make sure you are delivering work on the right lines. The **critical review** should be **not more than 3 sides**. It

should explain what your key authors provide in terms of information and outlook. Contrast the angle or types of evidence produced by the various books and articles and explain where your research fits into the available literature. This sample section must be accompanied by the correct layout of footnotes. For clarification see the most recent Library Guide to referencing and citing:

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/documents/guides/cit/ggcit001.pdf>

Please note, however, that the critical review of sources should not be included in your finally submitted dissertation, just the Bibliography. Your final Bibliography may well also be longer than the one submitted at this stage.

5. Make appropriate arrangements to obtain your illustrations well in advance, and **complete writing your chapters either before the Easter vacation or during the first part of the vacation, but remember to allow enough time for the binding of the dissertation.** *Remember to regularly save your work and make backups as you go.*

6. SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS & DEADLINE

Make **two copies** of the dissertation. Sort out timing and arrangements for the binder. **HAND IN BOTH COPIES TO CB008** not later than **3.00 pm** on the **Tuesday of the first week after the Easter vacation (The Revision Week)**. Also remember to submit a third copy to TurnitinUK by **3.00pm**. *Late submission will be penalised.*

Please note: Failure to submit both an electronic copy to TurnitinUK, and two identical paper copies, with the digital receipt attached, will result in a deduction of marks.

Failure to submit to TurnitinUK will result in a zero mark

You are asked to sign a plagiarism statement on the coversheet of each dissertation that you submit. This states that you acknowledge that you have read, understood and accept the University's rules on plagiarism: your signature will be taken to mean that you certify the dissertation as being all your own work.

ASSESSMENT

The dissertation counts for 100% of the final course grade. It is not permitted to resubmit previous work.

To view the CGS Descriptors please go to **MyAberdeen - Organisations-Divinity, History, & Philosophy Student Information for Undergraduates**. The link to the CGS Descriptors is on the left hand menu.