

HISTORY OF ART

Exam board: Edexcel

Assessment methods: The A Level is made up of two externally examined papers (100% exam) Students must complete all assessment in May/June in any single year.

Length of exams: 2 x 3 hour papers

This course develops students understanding of the relationship between society and art; art historical terms, concepts and issues; the influence of cultural, social and political factors as well as developments in materials, techniques and processes of both art and architecture over time.

The study of art in its historical and contemporary forms gives students crucial knowledge of world civilisations. It gives students visual and analytical skills that can be applied in many walks of life and the tools to understand how images and objects work to shape our social and political identities. This specification allows students to develop particular strengths and interests, encourages lifelong learning and provides access to higher education and university degree courses in art history and related subjects, as well as art historical-related and other careers.

Breakdown of units

Paper 1 – Visual Analysis and Themes

Visual Analysis

For each of the following types of art and architecture, students answer a single compulsory question that requires them to comment on an unseen photograph of:

- a painting;
- a sculpture
- a building.

Themes

Choose two Themes from a choice of three:

- B1 Nature in art and architecture
- B2 Identities in art and architecture
- B3 War in art and architecture.

For each Theme, students answer a single compulsory question in two parts

Paper 2 – Periods

Choose two Periods from a choice of five:

- C1 Invention and illusion: the Renaissance in Italy (1420–1520)
- C2 Power and persuasion: the Baroque in Catholic Europe (1597–1685)
- C3 Rebellion and revival: the British and French Avant-Garde (1848–99)
- C4 Brave new world: Modernism in Europe (1900–39)
- C5 Pop life: British and American contemporary art and architecture (1960–2015).

For each Period, students answer a single compulsory question in four parts

It is important to view works of art firsthand and the History of Art department regularly visits London's galleries including the Courtauld Institute, The National Gallery and The Tate Modern. Past trips have also included visits to Barcelona, Florence and Rome.

Overlap with other subjects

History of Art overlaps effectively with analytical essay based subjects such as English Literature and History. The discipline develops in students the ability to deconstruct artworks in their historical contexts which is a key aspect of English Literature and Film Studies. Many Fine Art students also take the subject as it enhances the visual analysis skills needed to comment on their own artwork.