Art Department Student Handbook

A Word From the Art Department Chair
On behalf of the faculty, I would like to welcome you to the Art Department of SUNY Oneonta! I hope you have a productive tenure here that can help you enhance your artistic talents and creative abilities.

Please take a moment to review the information in this handbook. I hope you will find it useful for your studies here and for your future career as an artist.

The Art Office
The Art Office is located on the second floor of the Fine Arts Center, in room FA 222 (tel. 607 436-3717)

This is the place where you may acquire forms and information about the Department and its functions.

Updated contact information for the Art office and the entire faculty can be found at the art department web site: http://art.oneonta.edu

Communications and Information
The Art Department uses several different means to communicate with all the Art majors:
- The Art Department web site: http://art.oneonta.edu
- Join the community at the Art Department’s official Facebook page: http://www.facebook.com/groups/73336280259/
- Email: Periodically you will receive valuable and many times urgent information through email from the art office, so it’s important that you keep your email address current.

- The bulletin board outside the Art office includes exhibition and internship opportunities alongside important announcements for our students.

The Classes
The Art Department offers an expansive menu of classes in the majority of areas considered “industry-standard”. The courses are designed to help students advance their career either in the private industry, or through graduate study.

The goal of the classes in broad terms is to help students understand Art and Design, and to sharpen their skills in Art. You should aim to take as many classes from a variety of areas and professors. While narrowing your interests in one area is the ultimate goal, it is also important that you acquire as diverse knowledge of concepts and tools as possible.

Pre-Enrollment (or Pre-Registration)
The art classes are in high demand and the seats disappear quickly during registration. It is very important that each Art and Computer Art Major participates in the department’s pre-enrollment.

Pre-enrollment in Art classes takes place before the general college population has access to them, and therefore it guarantees a place in the classes you need to graduate on time. Failure to pre-enroll will complicate your registration in the classes you need and it might delay your graduation.

The Art office will notify all declared Art and Computer Art majors of the dates and the process each semester. The notification will come to your primary email address.

Sequence Of Classes
Taking the right sequence of classes can maximize the benefit of the more advanced courses. As a good practice, you should aim to fulfill your General Education requirements and to take the required 100-level Art classes in your freshman and sophomore year, leaving the advanced course for your Junior and senior years.

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Beyond requirements, you should begin thinking about your future beyond college. Take diverse art courses and keep your mind open about what you would like to do for the rest of your life. If you are able to make up your mind on a concentration or an area of study, you can then focus your studies towards your area of interest during your Senior year.

While pre-requisites are there to ensure the right sequence of classes, you should work with your advisor to find what is the best sequence of classes. For example, it is best to take 3D Modeling before you take 3D Animation, and to take Design II before, or during your junior year.

Your Advisor
Every art student will be assigned a faculty advisor. Your advisor will help you choose the right classes for your major or concentration, and with all other aspects of your studies and career choices.

Feel free to visit your advisor during their office hours (posted on their office door), or to make an appointment to see them.

You will be required to see your advisor at least once per semester, during pre-enrollment.

The Art Studios
The studios are available for you to use in completing your classwork. You will be able to enter the studios with your college ID.

Your college ID will be activated to give you access to specific studios for the classes you enroll by the second week of classes, and if you have problems with card access after that, notify the Art Office immediately.

Our computer labs (FA 164, FA 301, and FA 321) and the design studio FA 319 are open and available to all Art and Computer Art majors as long as they are active students in our programs.

The studios are open for your use at any time between 6:00 AM and 11:00 PM, as long as there is no class. They are only open when the classes are in session, and closed when the college is officially closed.

We have invested in card access for your convenience and safety, and we need your help to keep the doors closed at all times (even when you make frequent trips outside).

Use the studios in a manner that is respectful for those around you and the facilities. Clean up after yourself and leave the studio in a state that would allow other students to work unimpeded.

The studios are available only for the creation of artwork for your classes, so do not use them for other personal or professional projects.

Safety
We have made safety in our studios our first priority. You should make safety a priority too.

Pay particular attention to instructions for each class, and consult your professor in if you are not sure about a particular process or tool before you use it.

Bring all safety concerns to your professors’ attention, or report them to the Art Office.

Lockers
Lockers are available on the second and third floors of the Art wing on a first-come first/serve basis. You don’t have to talk to anyone; simply find a locker you like and put a padlock on it to make it yours.

Certain studios have dedicated storage space and lockers for use in each class. Your professor will inform you of the protocol for acquiring such lockers.

At the end of each semester you must remove all personal artifacts from the lockers and studios. The Art Department is not responsible for items left behind after the final exam period.
**Exhibition Opportunities**

As an artist, you should begin getting familiar with exhibiting and sharing your artwork with the world.

You are encouraged to create gallery-quality artwork in your classes, and you should take advantage of all exhibition opportunities in the Oneonta area or back in your hometown.

The art department offers exhibition space to individual students or to groups of artists who wish to exhibit their artwork. The Project Space Gallery is available for several shows throughout the year, and the Martin Mullen Gallery hosts the Annual Juried Student Exhibition every Spring semester.

Questions regarding exhibition opportunities should be forwarded to the Gallery Director.

**Internships**

Students may earn credit for internships they locate. For more information regarding internships consult the Undergraduate Catalogue and the Art office.

**Your Career**

**Your Portfolio**

While graduation might seem like a distant affair, it will come faster than you think and preparing for that day should be your full-time job during your studies here. These studies should culminate in the creation of your ultimate "portfolio".

An Artist’s portfolio is a collection of their best work in a tangible and attractive format.

Unlike other disciplines, in Art and Design a portfolio is the most important tool for an Artist’s career. Employers, galleries, and graduate schools make hiring/admission decisions based in large part on the quality of the work presented in the portfolio that’s always required with each application.

Despite common belief, an artist’s portfolio is not something that can be built in one class or one semester. You should begin building your portfolio from the first art class you take. Each semester, and as you take more classes and expand your knowledge, you should renew your portfolio by adding your best work and removing older art that might not belong there any longer. You should aim to have a competent portfolio of your best work by the time you graduate.

A typical portfolio consists of about twenty pieces of art that you have created. It is expected that work in a portfolio is always original and that reflects the artist’s creativity at its best. A strong portfolio will not include copies of other artists’ artwork or typical foundation class assignments. Our upper division Art Classes will help you develop your portfolio, but you will gain an advantage by including artwork you have created on your own, outside the classroom environment.

Portfolio formats vary by area, but typically companies, galleries, and graduate schools ask for a collection of images in digital format (either CD, DVD, or Web Site). To create such a portfolio, you should organize and document every single art piece you complete in and outside the classroom environment. Having redundant backups of this collection is an excellent idea. You should be able to draw from this collection when you update your portfolio.

**Your Resume**

Your Resume is also an important tool to further your career, which should accompany your artist’s portfolio, and the most important one if you are concentrating in Art History. The aesthetic appearance of the resume is important, but most important is the content.

A typical student graduating from college populates their resume with the typical items a student does during college. You should make it your goal to populate your resume with items that are unique and topics that directly relate to the career path you plan to take. For example, if you are concentrating in any Studio area, your
resume should show participation in several Fine Art exhibitions. Similarly, if you are a Computer Art major, your resume should reflect experience within the area of your study – freelance work, volunteer work, internships, assistantships, etc.

Letters of Recommendation
Applying for exhibitions, employment, or graduate study will always require relevant letters of recommendation. Such letters are most useful when they come from persons who know you well as an artist and as a person. While “resume banks” like the one maintained by our college’s career development, and general letters you acquire for your collection can be useful on occasion, letters that are targeted towards specific goals are the most important ones.

Each employer, gallery, and graduate school has their own requirements for letters of recommendation and they will specify those when you apply. At that time you should contact the people who are best equipped to write such an important letter. Such people may include faculty members you studied under, internship coordinators, employers, etc. Obviously, you should always work by preforming beyond the minimum requirements of a classroom, a job, or an internship if you want the letters to reflect such a fact.

If you ask a faculty member for a letter of recommendation make sure that they know you well and that you give them all the time and information they need to write it. In general, asking for a letter of recommendation from a faculty member who only knows you from one class you took might not resort in the most useful letter. To help the faculty member generate the best letter possible, provide them with a copy of your resume and highlight aspects of yourself with which they might not be familiar.

Epilogue
We are excited you are here, and we look forward to working together towards achieving your goals.