

MASTER IN ART CRITICISM AND CURATORIAL STUDIES

Main Language of Instruction:

French English Arabic

Campus Where the Program Is Offered: CSH

OBJECTIVES

The Master in Art Criticism and Curatorial Studies (2 years, 120 credits) trains specialists in regional art and professionals within the art and culture fields. It addresses the growing demand for professionalization and contributes to the emergence of innovative projects. It also enables students to understand the issues surrounding contemporary creation and the local as well as regional context, with an open perspective on the global stage. As a result, students become active participants in the artistic and cultural scene.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (COMPETENCIES)

- Master the fundamental theoretical frameworks within the art field
- Understand the key factors shaping the evolution of the local and regional art scene
- Manage art collections
- Design exhibitions
- Lead and manage an artistic or cultural project
- Create and produce content

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Candidates are selected based on their submitted application file:

- Candidates holding a Bachelor in Literature, Fine Arts, Art History, Film, Humanities, or an equivalent qualification are eligible for admission to the first semester (M1).
- Candidates holding a Master's degree in another discipline or an equivalent qualification are eligible for admission to the second (M2) or third semester (M3).

COURSES/CREDITS GRANTED BY EQUIVALENCE

Equivalencies are granted based on the student's application file.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Required Courses (120 credits)

Art in the Arab World (2 Cr.). Art Management (3 Cr.). Art Market (3 Cr.). Conservation and Management of Collections and Archives (2 Cr.). Contemporary Artistic Practices (6 Cr.). Critical Writing Workshop (3 Cr.). Cultural and Arts Law (3 Cr.). Cultural Policies in Lebanon and the Arab World (3 Cr.). Cultural Studies (4 Cr.). Development of an Artistic Project (3 Cr.). Development of an Artistic Project II (4 Cr.). Exhibition: History, Methods, and Issues (4 Cr.). Exhibition Scenography (2 Cr.). Event Planning and Management (4 Cr.). Long Internship (Institutional Internship) (6 Cr.). Literature and Painting (4 Cr.). Seminar I – Master Art Criticism and Curatorial Studies (Professional Seminar) (2 Cr.). Seminar II – Master in Art Criticism and Curatorial Studies (Interdisciplinary Seminar) (2 Cr.). Museum Studies and Heritage (4 Cr.). Restoration Internship (3 Cr.). Short Internship (Research Internship) (4 Cr.). Thesis (20 Cr.). Thesis Methodology Seminar (2 Cr.). Thesis Night (1 Cr.). Tutoring I (2 Cr.). Tutoring II (2 Cr.). Tutoring III (2 Cr.). Other Activities I (2 Cr.). Other Activities II (2 Cr.).

SUGGESTED STUDY PLAN

Semester 1

Code	Course Name	Credits
011LAAAM1	Approaches to Contemporary Art	4
011LALAM1	Art in Lebanon: 1880-1990	4
01002M11	Contemporary Artistic Practices	6
011L8PLM1	Literature and Painting	4
011LASEM1	Seminar - Master in Art Criticism and Curatorial Studies (Research Seminar)	4
011LAMPM	Museology and Heritage	4
011LATOM1	Tutoring I	2
011LAADM1	Other Activities I	2
	Total	30

Semester 2

Code	Course Name	Credits
011LATAM3	Art Theory	4
011LAGCM2	Conservation and Management of Collections and Archives	2
011L8ASM4	Cultural Studies	4
011TCC1M1	Event Planning and Management	4
011LASCM2	Exhibition Scenography	2
011LAHEM1	Exhibition: History, Methods, and Issues	4
011LAS2M4	Long Internship (Institutional Internship)	6
011LASM2	Seminar I – Master in Art Criticism and Curatorial Studies (Professional Seminar)	2
011LASEM2	Seminar II – Master in Art Criticism and Curatorial Studies (Interdisciplinary Seminar)	2
	Total	30

Semester 3

Code	Course Name	Credits
011LAAWM2	Art in the Arab world	2
011LAM1M1	Art Management	3
011LAMAM2	Art Market	3
011LAACM3	Critical Writing Workshop	3
011LADCM2	Cultural and Arts Law	3
011TCPOM2	Cultural Policies in Lebanon and the Arab World	3
011LAP3M3	Development of an Artistic Project	3
011LAS2M2	Short Internship (Research Internship)	4
011LAS2M3	Thesis Methodology Seminar	2
011LATOM3	Tutoring II	2
011LAADM3	Other Activities II	2
	Total	30

Semester 4

Code	Course Name	Credits
011LAPP4	Development of an Artistic Project II	4
011C8SRM2	Restoration Internship	3
011LAMEM4	Thesis	20
011LANM4	Thesis Night	1
011LATO4	Tutoring III	2
	Total	30

COURSE DESCRIPTION

011LAAA1 Approaches to Contemporary Art 4 Cr.

This course explores and theorizes artistic practices where the blending and hybridization of media are central themes. It aims to clarify and facilitate understanding of contemporary artistic genres such as installation art, video art, photomontage, performance, and spectacle, laying a foundation for studying 21st-century artworks. It also seeks to enhance creativity and originality, encouraging students to experiment with new media and artistic concepts while developing critical thinking skills.

This course equips students with the necessary tools to understand, reflect, and analyze, allowing them to approach contemporary art from new perspectives and fostering their inventiveness and analytical abilities.

This course includes an analysis of works by artists such as Chris Marker, Christian Boltanski, Bill Viola, Nam June Paik, Harun Farocki, Stan Douglas, Bruce Nauman, Jochen Gertz, Sophie Calle, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Sally Mann, Joseph Beuys, Thierry Kuntzel, Marina Abramovic, Carolee Schneemann, Allan Kaprow, Daniel Buren, Chris Burden, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Olafur Eliasson, Gina Pane, Rebecca Belmore, Santiago Sierra, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Gilbert & George, Wafa Bilal, Jenny Holzer, and Tino Sehgal. This course will also include a brief study of theoretical texts by contemporary philosophers who have influenced artistic practices globally and in the Middle East, such as Walter Benjamin, Jean Baudrillard, and Roland Barthes.

011LALAM1 Art in Lebanon: 1880-1990 4 Cr.

This course introduces the key periods that structure the history of art in Lebanon. It covers the emergence of early artistic productions in dialogue with the West, and the development of contemporary artistic practices following the Lebanese Civil War. This course explores and defines what constitutes Lebanese modernity.

011LAAW2 Art in the Arab World 2 Cr.

This course features researchers and curators whose work focuses on modern and contemporary art in the Arab world. It provides frameworks for understanding modernity and contemporaneity concepts.

011LAM11 Art Management 3 Cr.

This course serves as the core marketing management course for USJ students majoring in Arts. It aims to provide a rigorous and comprehensive introduction to the business aspects of the art world, with a focus on contemporary marketing practices and principles. This course includes:

- Defining arts and entertainment.
- Providing a brief historical overview of management and the role of an arts manager.
- Defining the marketing process for the arts.
- Understanding the marketplace and customer needs.
- Designing a customer-driven marketing strategy.
- Implementing Customer Relationship Management.
- Defining a mission statement.
- Planning a business portfolio using the BCG matrix.
- Developing marketing strategy and marketing mix in the arts.
- Analyzing marketing, planning, implementing, and controlling human resources in the arts.

- Understanding leadership and group dynamics.
- Conducting market segmentation and target marketing.
- Defining competitive advantage.
- Creating a financial business plan, including feasibility studies.
- Calculating Cashflows, EBIT (Earnings Before Interest and Taxes), benefits, etc.
- Exploring fundraising strategies.

011LAMA2	Art Market	3 Cr.
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This course offers an in-depth and intensive introduction to the essential characteristics of the modern and contemporary art market. It explores the structure and globalized ecosystem of the art market, tracing its history and dynamics from inception to the present. This course equips students with the necessary analytical tools to assess art value and investment risks, understand the obligations of sellers, buyers, and intermediaries in transactions, and stay updated on the latest trends in art collection, financialization, and digitalization.

011LATAM3	Art Theory	4 Cr.
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This course integrates foundational principles of philosophical aesthetics from the modern European tradition with contemporary art theory, extending beyond historical linearity. It offers a comprehensive exploration of philosophical and theoretical perspectives on modern and post-modern art, addressing current debates on politically engaged aesthetics and art. Students will explore the works of Kant, Heidegger, Benjamin, Deleuze, Nancy, Derrida, Barthes, Krauss, and Virilio, analyzing how their aesthetic and artistic theories intersect with visual media. Emphasizing the role of theory and criticism within contemporary art, this course introduces art theory and explores various non-linear notions of theoretical praxis in relation to art and aesthetics. Rather than following a rigid curriculum, this course fosters an open, flexible, and collaborative learning environment that encourages critical engagement with the theories discussed. It introduces, implements, and critically evaluates key concepts of contemporary art theory, both modern and post-modern, and examines their impact on significant visual and sonic artworks from the early 20th century to the present day.

011LAGCM2	Conservation and Management of Collections and Archives	2 Cr.
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This course introduces students to the management and conservation of museum collections and archives. It familiarizes them with concepts such as “preventive conservation”, “art handling”, and principles of artwork and archive deterioration, as well as methods for conditioning, packaging, handling, and storing these items. This course combines theoretical knowledge with practical application, including student-led case studies and, where feasible, visits to collections and storage facilities.

01002M11	Contemporary Artistic Practices	6 Cr.
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This course is designed for Master students in Cinema and Theater at IESAV, as well as the Master in Art Criticism and Curatorial Studies. It allows them to analyze the formal, thematic, and narrative specifics of contemporary artistic practices in Lebanon from the post-war period (1990-present). This course focuses on artists who challenge the medium, form, and narrative, many of whom work across multiple disciplines. The primary areas of reflection include the image, the medium, exhibition practices, and key themes addressed by these artists such as war, memory, history, the city, the body, space, and time. Some artists are invited to contribute to the course.

011LAACM3	Critical Writing Workshop	3 Cr.
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This workshop enables students to compose written analyses on contemporary art and cultural issues.

011LADCM2	Cultural and Arts Law	3 Cr.
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This course familiarizes students with fundamental legal principles, including primary sources of law, types of commercial companies, and their characteristics. It explains how to draft contracts and legal obligations, including essential requirements and rights protections. Students will also gain insights into intellectual property law, including its application, the process for registering artistic or literary works, the duration of protection for artistic, literary, and visual works, and the scope of local and international protection, including relevant international agreements. This course also trains students in establishing legal entities for artistic or cultural activities, drafting contracts, protecting artistic works, and preventing rights infringement.

011TCPOM2	Cultural Policies in Lebanon and the Arab World	3 Cr.
<p>This course is designed for Master students in Event Planning and students in Humanities. It is divided into two parts to help students better understand the mechanisms employed by states to promote their country's culture and heritage. The first part defines cultural policy and diplomacy, highlighting the various types. The second part illustrates these concepts with examples from the Arab world, including Lebanon.</p>		
011L8ASM4	Cultural Studies	4 Cr.
<p>This course explores various perspectives centered around the concept of power. It focuses particularly on post-structuralism and deconstruction theory, postcolonial studies, and gender studies. This course also involves analyzing a range of literary and artistic works to engage with these theoretical frameworks.</p>		
011LAP3M3	Development of an Artistic Project	3 Cr.
<p>This course assists students to the development of an artistic project by applying the various tools and skills acquired throughout their master's program. It serves as a platform where theoretical and practical courses converge and culminate.</p>		
011LAPPM4	Development of an Artistic Project II	4 Cr.
<p>This course enables students to develop an artistic project by applying the tools and skills gained during their master's studies. It provides a space where theoretical and practical knowledge comes together and culminates.</p>		
011TCC1M1	Event Planning and Management	4 Cr.
<p>This seminar explores the complex network of technical and human roles crucial for successful event management. Students will engage with key figures in the field, such as artistic agents, venue safety managers, tour organizers, set designers, exhibition managers, casting directors, editors, and producers. The focus is on understanding their essential contributions and experiences. By examining their roles within their specific contexts, students will gain valuable insights into how material, regulatory, and technical environments shape and influence event outcomes.</p>		
011LASCM2	Exhibition Scenography	2 Cr.
<p>This course provides a comprehensive understanding of scenography, with a particular focus on exhibition scenography. It aims to design and implement an immersive and communicative scenography that highlights and presents a specific artwork while integrating it with other works within a cohesive scenographic framework. Students will examine concrete examples and explore the use of new technologies in scenography, including interactive video, holograms, interactive holograms, multiple screens, volumetric projections, and specialized projection surfaces such as specific fabrics, as well as augmented texture. This course also equips students with the skills needed to incorporate these digital tools into the creation of an interactive and immersive digital scenography for art exhibitions.</p>		
011LAHEM1	Exhibition: History, Methods, and Issues	4 Cr.
<p>This course provides an overview of exhibition design and the relationships between the public and the artwork, gallery, and museum, from 1897 to the present day. It covers the fields of photography, modern art, and contemporary art.</p>		
011L8PLM1	Literature and Painting	4 Cr.
<p>This course explores the intertwined evolution of literature and painting since antiquity, examining how thinkers and philosophers have either asserted or challenged the equivalence between these arts. It delves into the historical and traditional discourse on art, focusing on literary ekphrasis (descriptions of paintings), writings by painters, and both aesthetic and literary texts that reflect on the relationship between text and artistic objects or images. This course traces the history of art criticism from the classical texts of ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy, through 17th-century French critiques, and culminating in the works of 18th, 19th, and early 20th-century authors such as Diderot, Baudelaire, Zola, Huysmans, and Proust. Key questions addressed include: What does it mean to write about art? How has art criticism evolved in the contemporary era?</p>		

011LAS2M4	Long Internship (Institutional Internship)	6 Cr.
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This professional internship involves 300 hours in a cultural institution. It is essential for writing the thesis, allowing students to enrich their theoretical knowledge with practical experience. For a research thesis, it provides valuable fieldwork insights, while for an action paper; it serves as a foundational element.

011LASM2	Seminar I – Master in Art Criticism and Curatorial Studies (Professional Seminar)	2 Cr.
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This seminar features professionals and institutional figures from the art and culture sectors.

011LASEM2	Seminar II – Master in Art Criticism and Curatorial Studies (Interdisciplinary Seminar)	2 Cr.
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This interdisciplinary seminar features theorists, practitioners, and artists discussing various fields that intersect with visual arts, including architecture, contemporary dance, literature, film, and music.

011LASEM1	Seminar in Art Criticism and Curatorial Studies (Research Seminar)	4 Cr.
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This research-focused seminar features discussions with intellectuals, academic researchers, and artists on issues and themes that shape the field of contemporary art.

011LAMP M	Museology and Heritage	4 Cr.
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This course explores museology and museography, covering the disciplines and techniques related to museums, including management, research, conservation, cataloging, presentation of objects, works, or heritage (collections), and museum activities. Museology encompasses the overall science and methods of museum management, while museography involves the graphic design and physical realization of exhibitions. According to the official definition by ICOM (International Council of Museums), “A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.” This course covers approximately ten themes spanning multiple sessions. Themes 2 to 6 focus on museology, while themes 7 to 10 address museography. The order of themes presented below is tentative, and the schedule may vary throughout the academic year; museum visits will also be organized, with dates set in coordination with students.

Content:

Theme 1: Introduction to Museology and Museography

- Definitions
- Different types of museums

Theme 2: Museum Concept

- Theories and practices of museums
- Museum goals and functions: strategic planning

Theme 3: Collection Management

- Inventory of collections
- Organization of reserves

Theme 4: Research and Documentation

- Analysis of collections and dissemination of research
- The role of documentation

Theme 5: Maintenance and Conservation

- Collection environment
- Preventive conservation

Theme 6: Museum Mission and Public Impact

- Value and role of museums
- Permanent collections and temporary exhibitions: what message?

Theme 7: Architectural Program of Museums

- Architectural layout
- Relationship between the collection to be exhibited and its spatial organization

Theme 8: Presentation of Works

- Arrangement of objects in space
- Exhibition materials and presentation requirements

Theme 9: Presentation Exercises

- Example of museographic furniture: display cases
- Signage, multimedia, and communication

Theme 10: Museum Visits

- National Museum of Beirut
- AUB Archaeological Museum
- USJ Museum of Lebanese Prehistory
- Robert Mouawad Private Museum
- The Wonders of the Sea Museum
- Others

011C8SRM2	Restoration Internship	3 Cr.
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This internship familiarizes students with art restoration techniques, particularly focusing on paintings. They work directly with the Lebanese modern art collection managed by the Ministry of Culture.

011LAS2M2	Short Internship (Research Internship)	4 Cr.
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This short internship involves 200 hours working on a collection, during which students will gain experience in cataloging, archiving, and conducting documentary research.

011LAME4	Thesis	20 Cr.
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The thesis represents the culmination of a research project in which students must showcase their abilities to analyze, synthesize, and organize ideas on a topic related to art, its history, sociology, exhibition practices, or institutions.

011LAS2M3	Thesis Methodology Seminar	2 Cr.
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This interdisciplinary seminar enables students to develop their thesis project, including defining a topic and corpus, establishing the research problem, approaches, methodology, and working hypotheses. Students will also construct a bibliographic research framework.

011LANM4	Thesis Night	1 Cr.
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This session provides students in Art Criticism and Curatorial Studies with the opportunity to present an initial oral overview of their thesis to instructors.

011LATO1	Tutoring I	2 Cr.
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This course facilitates students' integration into their academic environment and enhances their discipline-specific writing skills. It addresses various university projects and the academic writing demands throughout their studies. Additionally, it introduces effective writing techniques, including strategies for note-taking during lectures, seminars, as well as from supplementary written materials.

011LATO3	Tutoring II	2 Cr.
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This course facilitates students' integration into their academic environment and enhances their discipline-specific writing skills. It addresses various university projects and the academic writing demands throughout their studies. Additionally, it introduces effective writing techniques, including strategies for note-taking during lectures, seminars, as well as from supplementary written materials.

011LATO4	Tutoring III	2 Cr.
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Building on the objectives of Tutoring I and II, this course supports students in writing their thesis.



011LAAD1

Other Activities I

2 Cr.

This course involves field activities such as visiting exhibitions, engaging in cultural mediation, and organizing forums and panel discussions.

011LAAD3

Other Activities II

2 Cr.

This course involves field activities such as visiting exhibitions, engaging in cultural mediation, and organizing forums and panel discussions.

