

VISUAL COMMUNICATION ARTS

Turn creativity into impact. Franklin's Visual Communication Arts major empowers students to explore fine arts, design, illustration, photography, and media while developing critical thinking and a deep understanding of visual culture.

LUGANO, SWITZERLAND

FRANKLIN SWITZERLAND
U.S. UNIVERSITY & SWISS UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE

MAJOR OVERVIEW

The Visual Communication Arts (VCA) major blends artistic practice with interdisciplinary study, integrating fine arts, design, photography, and media with courses in communication, cultural studies, and film. You will develop both technical skills and critical insights, exploring how visual expression shapes society and culture. The program will prepare you for careers in galleries, media, publishing, and creative industries, or for advanced study in the arts.

YOUR DEGREE

A 120-CREDIT DEGREE DESIGNED AROUND YOUR INTERESTS

To earn a Bachelor's degree at Franklin, students must complete 120 credits across university-wide core requirements, major requirements, and elective courses. The curriculum combines a shared liberal arts foundation with specialized study in your chosen major, giving you both breadth and depth throughout your undergraduate experience.

CORE REQUIREMENTS

Courses and academic experiences shared by all Franklin students, designed to build essential skills and knowledge across disciplines.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Courses specific to your chosen major, including foundational, required, and elective courses within the discipline

INTERDISCIPLINARY ELECTIVES

Courses selected from across Franklin's curriculum to explore additional interests and complement your major.

Shared by all Franklin students

66 CREDITS

CORE REQUIREMENTS	WHAT IT DEVELOPS
First-Year Seminar, 3 credits	Introduces students to Franklin's liberal arts approach and develops critical thinking, academic research, and communication skills.
Academic Travel, 12 credits	Connects classroom learning with experiential study across different cultural and geographic contexts.
Academic Writing, 12 credits	Develops written and oral communication skills for academic and professional contexts.
Global Responsibility, 18 credits	Examines intercultural competencies, international engagement, and social responsibility.
Modern Language, 15 credits	Builds language skills and cultural literacy, with a focus on Swiss languages.
Quantitative Literacy, 6 credits	Develops the ability to interpret, analyze, and communicate numerical information and data.

Please note: in some cases, courses may fulfill both a Core Requirement and a Major Requirement.

VISUAL COMMUNICATION ARTS REQUIREMENTS — 42 CREDITS

REQUIRED COURSES — 9 credits

AHT 102	Introduction to Art Histories, Ecologies, Industries I: Antiquity to Early Renaissance
AHT 103	Introduction to Art Histories, Ecologies, Industries II: High Renaissance to Contemporary Art
COM 105	Introduction to Communication and Media Studies in the Global Context

MAJOR ELECTIVES — 6 credits

Two of the following courses

STA 106	Introduction to Printmaking
STA 107	Introduction to Digital Photography
STA 111	Introduction to Drawing
STA 115	Introductory Painting
STA 117	Introduction to Digital Video Production
VCA 120T	Documentary and Street Photography on Location: Munich

200-LEVEL COURSES — 9 credits

Three of the following courses

AHT 222T	Design Studies
STA 200	Computer Graphics in Advertising
STA 206	Intermediate Printmaking
STA 207	Intermediate Digital Photography
STA 211	Intermediate Drawing
STA 215	Intermediate Painting
STA 217	Intermediate Digital Video Production
STA 219	Academic Travel Log: Picturing the world around you
VCA 200	Creative Publishing
VCA 205	AI & Cinema Practice: Crafting The Future of Film
VCA 212	Design Thinking for Academic and Entrepreneurial Minds

UPPER-LEVEL COURSES — 6 credits

Two of the following courses

STA 300	Computer Graphics in Advertising, Advanced
STA 306	Advanced Printmaking
STA 307	Advanced Digital Photography
STA 311	Advanced Drawing
STA 315	Higher Painting

STA 317	Advanced Digital Video Production
VCA 370	Topics in Visual Communication Arts

MAJOR ELECTIVES — 9 credits

Three of the following courses, with at least one at the 300-level

AHT XXX	Any course in Art History
CLCS 110	Reading Cultures: Approaches to Cultural Studies
CLCS 220T	Inventing the Past: The Uses of Memory in a Changing World
CLCS 230	Science / Fiction: Envisioning the Possible
CLCS 250	Ecocritical Approaches to Film
CLCS 300	Masculinities in Literature and Film
CLCS 350	Culture and Human Rights
CLCS 360	Critical Race Studies in a Global Context
CLCS 371	Law and Culture
CLCS 372	Tales of Catastrophe
COM 201	Fundamentals of Media Studies and Criticism
COM 202	Fundamentals of Interpersonal Communication
COM 225T	Technologized Bodies: Mobile ICTs in the City
COM 230T	Communication, Fashion, and the Formation of Taste (Italy)
COM 295	Media Consumption, Fashion, and Identity
COM 301	Globalization and Media
COM 330	The Digital Innovation and Media Strategies for a New Consumer Culture
COM 347	Organizational Communication
COM 352	Environmental Discourses
FRE 376	French Cinema: The New Wave
ITA 373	Italian Film and Society
ITA 374	Italian Cinema
MUS 206	Music History From Mozart to Mahler; Classicism, Romanticism, Modernism
MUS 213	Classical Music in Film
MUS 216	A History of Opera: From Orpheus to West Side Story
MUS 217	Masterpieces of Western Classical Music
MUS 218	Music and Politics: From the French Revolution to Communism

SENIOR CAPSTONE — 3 credits

One of the following courses

VCA 495	Senior Project in Visual Communication Arts
VCA 497	Visual Communication Arts Internship
VCA 499	Visual Communication Arts Thesis

*The remaining credits required to complete the degree are fulfilled through **interdisciplinary electives,** allowing students to explore courses across Franklin's academic offerings.*

CLICK HERE TO **LEARN MORE** ABOUT THE MAJOR

3-YEAR OPTION

This major is also available as a three-year accelerated bachelor's degree for students who qualify for advanced standing based on their high school academic credentials. Students admitted with 30 U.S. credits of advanced standing receive a head start on their university studies, allowing them to complete their degree in three years.

GET TO KNOW OUR FACULTY



JOHANNA FASSL

Professor and Program Director, Art History and Visual Communication



GABRIEL GEE

Professor, Art History and Visual Communication

ACADEMIC TRAVEL

EXPERIENCE THE PLACES YOU STUDY

Academic Travel courses allow students to learn beyond the classroom by exploring real-world environments alongside knowledgeable and passionate professors, turning travel destinations into immersive, living classrooms.

EXPLORE SOME MAJOR-RELATED ACADEMIC TRAVELS



VCA 120T DOCUMENTARY AND STREET PHOTOGRAPHY ON LOCATION: MUNICH – GERMANY
Discover documentary and street photography through hands-on projects and visual analysis, capturing the essence of Munich, Bavaria, and Austria. Study photography's history, semiotics, and its interaction with other visual media.

AHT 222T DESIGN STUDIES
Examine the histories and meanings behind iconic designs from architecture to fashion, and discover how objects become cultural symbols. Develop your own design prototype through a creative, interdisciplinary design-thinking process.

AHT 263T ART AND FOOD
Explore the connections between art and food, from historical representations to contemporary practices that use food as material and subject. Students examine food's social, cultural, and environmental dimensions through artistic perspectives, with visits and workshops during the Academic Travel component in France.



AHT 285T TECHNOLOGY IN ART, VISUAL COMMUNICATION, AND FASHIOn
Learn more about art, technology, and creative processes in Venice, using the Venice Biennale and the city's museums, archives, collections, and production sites as resources. Students examine the evolving relationship between humans and machines in art, fashion, design, and visual communication.

LEARN MORE ABOUT ACADEMIC TRAVEL AND EXPLORE OUR COURSES

WHY CHOOSE FRANKLIN?

Dual Accreditation
United States (MSCHE) & Switzerland* (AAQ)

Residential Campus
with 6 residence halls

350+ Students representing
55+ Countries
8K+ Alumni Community

Academic Travel
once a Semester for Experiential Learning

19 Majors
1 Master
(Master of Arts in Sustainability and Transformation)

Language
Programs fully taught in English

Small Class Sizes
with 16 students on average; 10:1 student-to-faculty ratio

Career-Ready Graduates
75% secure full-time employment within 6 months of graduating; 95% within 12 months



HOW TO APPLY

1. **Online Application**
   Apply online through our **website** or **Common App.**
2. **Academic Transcripts**
   Submit at least 3 years of High School transcripts.
3. **Personal Statement**
   Share what motivates you, the experiences that have shaped you, and the goals you hope to achieve.
4. **Recommendation Letter**
   The recommendation letter can come from a teacher, counselor, or other staff member who is well acquainted with your academic profile.
5. **English Proficiency (if required)**
   If your studies were not in English, submit a TOEFL, IELTS, or Duolingo.
6. **WELCOME TO FRANKLIN**

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Write to our counselors at **admissions@fus.edu** or visit **www.fus.edu**