

BOOK ARTS, MFA

The MFA Book Arts Program is a 60-credit hour course of study in the fine art and traditional practices of making books by hand. Individual artistic expression is emphasized through development of craft skills based in historical principles, practice, and technique. Courses in letterpress printing and publishing, typography, hand bookbinding, hand papermaking, and the history of the book provide training and context for the role of the book as a medium for expression in art and society.

Our emphasis is on the book as an integrated unit, although there are opportunities for students who wish to pursue specific interests in one or more of these areas after the initial year of general study.

Admission Requirements

Applications are considered holistically, so no single factor determines acceptance to the program. The MFA Book Arts program is selective, and does not admit every applicant.

In addition to the minimum Graduate School admission requirements, to be considered for regular admission an application must include: a statement of purpose, resume, portfolio (in their area of experience), and three letters of reference.

Students who do not meet these requirements, but who excel in other areas, may be considered for "Admission with Permission to Continue."

Non-degree Admission Requirements

An applicant may be admitted as a non-degree student if the applicant has either a 3.0 undergraduate GPA or a 3.0 graduate GPA. No more than 12 hours may be taken as a non-degree-seeking student and applied to a degree.

See the Admission Criteria section of this catalog for more information.

Curricular Requirements

Candidates for the MFA Book Arts degree must earn a minimum of 60 semester hours of credit, including at least 6 hours in the history of the book and 3 hours in a historical/theoretical course appropriate to the goals of the individual student; at least 36 hours in the book arts studio; a minimum of 12 hours of electives within or outside the book arts program. All coursework must be completed with a grade average of "B" or better. All students must spend at least four semesters in residence.

All MFA students must complete, as part of the 60 hours, the following required courses:

| Code and Title | Hours |
|--|-----------|
| Required Courses | 33 |
| BA 520 Elements of Letterpress | |
| BA 521 The Printed Book | |
| BA 530 Elements of Bookbinding | |
| BA 531 Case Binding and Edition Work | |
| BA 541 Techniques of Hand Papermaking | |
| LS 653 Descriptive Bibliography | |
| LS 655 Book Artifact Materiality Text | |
| BA 592 Graduate Seminar (3 hours) | |
| BA 599 Creative Thesis Project (9 hours) | |
| Areas of Emphasis | 12 |
| Printing and Publishing | |
| BA 522 Advanced Letterpress (3 to 9 hours) | |

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| BA 523 Artist Book & Fine Press Publ. (3 to 9 hours) | |
| BA 524 Artist Books | |
| BA 593 Workshops In Book Arts | |
| Bookbinding | |
| BA 532 Leather Bound Books (3 to 9 hours) | |
| BA 533 Advanced Bookbinding (3 to 9 hours) | |
| BA 534 Boxmaking | |
| BA 593 Workshops In Book Arts | |
| Whole Book | |
| BA 522 Advanced Letterpress | |
| BA 523 Artist Book & Fine Press Publ. | |
| BA 524 Artist Books | |
| BA 532 Leather Bound Books | |
| BA 533 Advanced Bookbinding | |
| BA 534 Boxmaking | |
| BA 542 Contemporary Hand Papermaking | |
| BA 593 Workshops In Book Arts | |
| Electives | 15 |
| BA 501 Mat & Tech of Bookbinding | |
| BA 502 Beyond Letterpress | |
| BA 510 The Whole Book | |
| BA 522 Advanced Letterpress | |
| BA 523 Artist Book & Fine Press Publ. | |
| BA 524 Artist Books | |
| BA 532 Leather Bound Books | |
| BA 533 Advanced Bookbinding | |
| BA 534 Boxmaking | |
| BA 542 Contemporary Hand Papermaking | |
| BA 593 Workshops In Book Arts | |
| BA 594 Pract Teaching Book Arts | |
| BA 595 Independent Project | |
| BA 596 Dir Research Book Arts | |
| BA 597 Internship | |
| BA 599 Creative Thesis Project (1 to 3 hours) | |
| CIS 656 Electronic/Contemporary Pub. | |
| LS 555 Intro Archival Studies | |
| LS 654 Print Culture and Society | |
| ART 520 Printmaking | |
| ART 620 Printmaking | |
| One course must be historical/theoretical non-studio | |
| Students may also take elective courses at the 500 or 600 level from any department in the university if approved by their advisor | |
| Total Hours | 60 |

NOTE: Students who are not enrolled in the MFA program and who wish to take book arts classes must obtain permission from the instructor before enrolling.

Transfer Credit

Up to 6 graduate credits, excluding thesis hours, may be transferred from another accredited university with approval of the approval of the student's advisory committee and the dean of the Graduate School.

More information about transfer requirements can be found from the Graduate School.

Comprehensive Examination/Capstone Requirements

All MFA Book Arts students are required to complete a creative thesis project. The creative thesis project demonstrates, by means of a body of work, mastery of selected skills, a strong creative research agenda, and the capacity for critical and independent thought. Creative thesis projects reflect student learning in relation to the MFA Book Arts program learning outcomes (PLOs).

All creative thesis projects must be related to the book arts and must be approved by the student's thesis director and the student's thesis committee. The creative thesis project committee must include three individuals, including at least two full-time Book Arts faculty members, at least one of whom must be a full member of the graduate faculty; a third committee member may be a faculty member from another department of the University, a faculty member from another institution, or a well-qualified practitioner.

The student must obtain committee approval of their creative thesis project proposal prior to enrolling in thesis credit; a formal defense, public presentation, public exhibition, and written paper will constitute the final examination for the MFA Book Arts degree. The candidate must give members of the examining committee a minimum of two weeks to review the creative thesis project and written paper before the date of the final oral defense.

The creative thesis project should be completed, if possible, while the student is in residence at the University. To request permission to complete a thesis in absentia, the student must, before leaving the University, submit a satisfactory outline of the creative thesis project, as well as evidence that adequate facilities are available where the work will be done, to the head of the student's major department.

Protection of Human Subjects for Research

Scientific research involving human subjects has produced substantial benefits for society, but it also has posed troubling ethical questions. The mission of the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Protection of Human Subjects is to ensure that research involving human subjects is conducted ethically. University and federal policies require that review and approval to use human subjects in research precede the research. In the case of thesis research that involves the use of human subjects, the principal investigator – normally the student – is responsible for contacting the college's Human Research Review Committee to obtain approval for the planned research. Both the student and the thesis chair are responsible for completing IRB training.

Programmatic Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for the MFA Book Arts Degree

The programmatic learning outcomes (PLOs) for students enrolled in the MFA Book Arts degree are :

- (1) Students will possess fundamental technical skills in the book arts.
- (2) Students will possess advanced technical skills in the area(s) of professional specialization.

(3) Students will demonstrate a strong knowledge of the heritage, responsibilities, trends, and standards of the Book Arts profession, including an understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of the books arts.

(4) Students will demonstrate an ability to think and speak critically about their own work and its place within contemporary book arts and book craft.

Time Limits for Degree Completion Requirements

All requirements for the master's degree must be completed during the six years (18 consecutive semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the degree is to be awarded. Additional information about time limits for degree completion for Masters programs is available at the Graduate School.

Student Progress Requirement

All graduate students must earn and maintain an overall graduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or better for all graduate courses undertaken at The University of Alabama. Grades below "C" count in computing the GPA but do not carry credit toward a degree. A graduate student with good academic standing whose GPA drops below 3.0 at any time after earning 12 semester hours will have earned Academic Warning.

Students who have earned academic warning or are in non-degree status may not hold graduate assistantships.

A student placed on Academic Warning has the next 12 hours of graduate work to raise the overall graduate GPA to 3.0 or better. The overall graduate GPA after the next 12 hours following academic warning must be at least 3.0 to avoid Academic Suspension (dismissal) from the Graduate School.

Note that academic dismissal from the department or Graduate School differs from dismissal for academic misconduct. Academic misconduct results in dismissal from the University. The Academic Misconduct policy may be found at the Provost's website.

Additional information about student progress and scholastic requirements is available on the Graduate School website.

Permission to Continue Admission

Under exceptional circumstances, a student may be admitted to the MFA Book Arts program if they do not meet the GPA requirement for regular admission (GPA of 3.0). If such an applicant is admitted, they will need to obtain permission to continue in the program after the first 12 semester hours of graduate-level work have been completed. Permission to continue is earned by achieving a GPA of "B" or better (3.0) in the first 12 semester hours. If the 12 hours are completed in a term in which the total credits exceed 12, the evaluation is made on the basis of all graduate-level work completed at the end of that term of enrollment. Once a student has been given the permission to continue they will be evaluated by the same student progress guidelines as regular admission students.

Students admitted under permission to continue designation who do not meet the 3.0 requirement after their first 12 hours of graduate-level work will not receive permission to continue in their graduate program and will be dropped from the program.

Academic Misconduct Information

Student academic misconduct is not permitted. In the event of perceived academic misconduct, the University Academic Misconduct Policy will be followed. More information is available [here](#).

Withdrawals or Leave of Absence Information

Students who need to withdraw from a course, the university or take a leave of absence should contact their academic advisor and the SLIS director. Additional information is available on the Graduate School website related to withdrawals and leaves of absence.

Academic Grievances Information

Academic grievances are addressed according to the "University-Wide Academic Grievance Procedures" outlined in the University of Alabama Faculty Handbook.

Grades and Academic Standing

See [here](#) for Graduate School Policy information.

Graduate School Deadlines Information

The University of Alabama Graduate School keeps a calendar of specific student deadlines available on the Graduate School website.

Application for Graduation Information

Once requirements for the degree are completed, each candidate for a master's degree must apply for graduation through the Office of the Graduate School prior to the deadline posted each semester on the University of Alabama's Registrar Academic Calendar. The form "Application for Degree" is required for this purpose, and must be completed online via [mybama](#).