

CRITICAL AND VISUAL STUDIES, BA

Critical and Visual Studies is a dynamic interdisciplinary bachelor of arts degree with a strong foundation in the social sciences, history, and philosophy while immersed in Pratt's uniquely vibrant environment. Critical and Visual Studies emphasizes critical thinking and research, writing, and social theory.

If you are excited about the interconnections of society, culture, the environment, and urban space, then Critical and Visual Studies is the major for you.

About the Bachelor of Arts in Critical and Visual Studies

Students are encouraged to pursue individual paths of study grounded in a core curriculum emphasizing both theoretical foundations and practical applications. Critical and Visual Studies merges the liberal arts and the social sciences with the study of visual and material culture. Our innovative program emphasizes the importance of being able to write persuasively, represent one's ideas effectively, and to communicate efficiently. These skills are honed through the systematic and rigorous study of the social, political, and artistic meanings of cultural and aesthetic production. In the Critical and Visual Studies program, every aspect of social life— art, political systems, music, media, fashion, sustainability and the environment in a global economy—is a potential object of study.

The Liberal Arts and Sciences Context at Pratt: Strong Foundations, Multidisciplinary Programs

The curriculum is grounded in both classic and innovative texts of critical theory, visual studies, philosophy, social science, and history. Students choose from a diverse offering of electives and the department's formal Minors in Psychology, Cultural Studies, Philosophy, Sustainability, Gender/Sexuality, and Social Justice/Social Practice. Students may also choose electives and concentrations from within the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences and across the Institute. The fundamental goal of the faculty in Critical and Visual Studies is to provide students with a challenging and rigorous liberal education that helps them become critical, articulate, well read, intellectually flexible, and culturally literate – students who write well, know empirical methods of research and field work, and are able to express their views. In the Senior year, this work culminates in either a written capstone thesis or project.

The Critical and Visual Studies program will offer students:

- a critical understanding of culture grounded in philosophy, history, and the social sciences;
- training in social theory, analytical/empirical research methods, and modes of communicating results;
- the ability to critically interpret and integrate written, oral, and cultural expressions and objects;
- the opportunity to pursue in-depth studies and make links between academic work and the wider world with a faculty whose work and teaching is on the cutting edge of scholarship and cultural criticism.

Uniquely well versed in a wide range of intellectual disciplines and creative approaches, our faculty are approach a liberal arts education as "learning to learn" rather than "schooling" or training. We provide our students graduate with a foundation for independent lifelong learning,

preparing them to thrive in a future economy where they will need critical and analytical skills to move seamlessly amid changing economic circumstances and evolving career paths in the public and private sectors.

The faculty's teaching and research interests span the fields of sociology, cultural studies, philosophy, global history and historiography, globalization/imperialism/colonialism/post-colonialism, critical theory, psychology, gender and sexuality, environmental studies, sustainability, science and technology, ethnography, urban studies, visual culture, cinema, documentary film, theater and performance studies.

The dynamic array of cultural events and institutions offered by New York City provide students and faculty the opportunity to immerse themselves in the intellectual life of the city, both outside of the Institute and by participating in a rich array of on-campus events including:

- **The Departmental Speaker Series**, which brings renowned scholars and intellectuals to Pratt and gives our students the opportunity to meet and interact with them. Past speakers have included: Randy Martin (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Randy_Martin/) (who as Chair of SS&CS laid the foundation of the major), Manthia Diawara (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manthia_Diawara/), Coco (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coco_Fusco/) Fusco (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coco_Fusco/), Licia Fiol-Matta (<https://as.nyu.edu/faculty/licia-fiolmatta.html>), Leticia Alvarado (<https://vivo.brown.edu/display/la18/>) & Nao Bustamante (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nao_Bustamante/), Nona Sheppard (<https://www.rada.ac.uk/about-us/acting-teaching-staff/nona-sheppard/>), Frances Negrón-Muntaner (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frances_Negr%C3%B3n-Muntaner/), Gayatri Gopinath (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gayatri_Gopinath/), Franco "Bifo" Berardi (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franco_Berardi/), Subhankar Banerjee ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subhankar_Banerjee_\(photographer/\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subhankar_Banerjee_(photographer/))), Cecilia Vicuña (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cecilia_Vicu%C3%B1a/), T.J. Demos (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T._J._Demos/), J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K%C4%93haulani_Kauanui/) Jaskiran Dhillon (<https://www.newschool.edu/nssr/faculty/jaskiran-dhillon/>), Julietta Singh (<https://english.richmond.edu/faculty/jsingh/>), Roderick Ferguson (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roderick_Ferguson/), Jasbir K. Puar (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jasbir_Puar/), Arjun Appadurai (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arjun_Appadurai/), Jack Halberstam (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Halberstam/), Lisa Duggan (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lisa_Duggan/), Alain Badiou (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alain_Badiou/), Tina Campt (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tina_Campt/), Simon Critchley (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_Critchley/), Vijay Prashad (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vijay_Prashad/), Gina Dent (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gina_Dent/), Robert Gooding-Williams (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Gooding-Williams/), Saidiya Hartman (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saidiya_Hartman/), David Harvey (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Harvey/), Gyan Prakash (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gyan_Prakash/) Vicente Rafael (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vicente_L._Rafael/), Martha Rosler (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martha_Rosler/), Sukhdev Sandhu (<https://www.poetryproject.org/people/sukhdev-sandhu/>), Michael Taussig (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Taussig/), and Ruthie Gilmore (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruth_Wilson_Gilmore/).
- **The Scholar-in-Residence Program has brought major scholars** to the department for extended lecture/discussion series. Past scholars-in-residence have included Partha Chatterjee ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Partha_Chatterjee_\(scholar/\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Partha_Chatterjee_(scholar/))), Stanley

Aronowitz (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanley_Aronowitz/), Patricia Clough (<https://help.gc.cuny.edu/people/patricia-clough/>), Juan Cole (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juan_Cole/), Susan Meiselas (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan_Meiselas/), Avery Gordon (<https://www.soc.ucsb.edu/people/avery-gordon/>), Robin Blackburn (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robin_Blackburn/), Susan Buck-Morss (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan_Buck-Morss/), and Laura Mulvey (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laura_Mulvey/).

- **Field Trips** to share and engage with each other and with our "City" at large.
- **Senior Thesis Presentations** which are public presentations by seniors allowing them the opportunity to present their work to their peers and to show the course of their own intellectual development to the broader Pratt community.

The Bachelor of Arts in Critical and Visual Studies

The First Year: Foundation

The first year of the program provides students with a foundation in critical theory, visual studies, philosophy, literary approaches, research methodologies, and social sciences. The centerpiece is the first-year seminar in which students become acquainted with the range of subjects, methods, and theories from which, later in their careers at Pratt, they will be able to assemble their own specialized paths of study.

The Second Year: Free Electives, Symposium, and Moderation

The second year of the program is rich in elective offerings that permit students to explore and expand the interests they discovered in their first year of study. The second year is anchored by the two-course sequence of Symposium and Moderation. In Symposium, department faculty lecture and lead a seminar in which students gain further exposure to models of intellectual work. In Moderation, students reflect on their studies during semesters one through three. Moderation enables students to take stock of their initial experiences in the program, examine their goals and interests, evaluate their performance, establish their commitment to a course of study, and chart their final two years of college.

The Third Year: Guided Electives and the Pursuit of a Focus of Study

In the third year of the program, students pursue Minors and concentrations through electives. The concentrations are individually designed courses of study, such as mass media and society, psychology and the arts, or war and culture. The Department offers Minors in Cultural Studies, Psychology, Philosophy, Sustainability, Gender and Sexuality, and Social Justice and Practice.

Students may also add minors in studio art to their programs. A complete list of Minors available in the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences is available here: <https://catalog.pratt.edu/undergraduate/minors/#minorstext>

Senior Year

In the fourth year, students take all-Institute electives and complete their studies with the capstone courses Senior Thesis I and Senior Thesis II, in which they work with faculty in developing, researching, and writing their thesis or project. The senior thesis hones students' abilities to express themselves, argue their ideas, and make fresh sense of the broader social and cultural worlds they research.

Critical and Visual Studies Coordinator

B. Ricardo Brown, PhD
bbrow993@pratt.edu

Academic Advisement Coordinator

Erich Kuersten
ekuerste@pratt.edu

Office

Tel: 718.636.3567

Fax: 718.399.4575

www.pratt.edu/critical-visual-studies (<http://www.pratt.edu/critical-visual-studies/>)

| Course | Title | Credits |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Semester 1 | | |
| CST-100 | First-Year Seminar | 3 |
| PHIL-208 or PHIL-209 | History of Philosophy- Ancient to Medieval or Modern Philosophy:History and Problems | 3 |
| HMS-101A | Literary and Critical Studies I | 3 |
| MSWI-210C | Science & Society | 3 |
| Social Science "Global" Core Elective | | 3 |
| Credits | | 15 |
| Semester 2 | | |
| SS-250 | The Ethics of Research | 3 |
| SSWI-228T | Introduction to Theory and Critique | 3 |
| SS-356 | Visual Analysis | 3 |
| Math/Science Core Elective | | 3 |
| Department/SSCS Elective | | 3 |
| Credits | | 15 |
| Semester 3 | | |
| SS-225 | Symposium I | 3 |
| SS-417 | Media Ecologies | 3 |
| Modern Thought Elective | | 3 |
| Department/Minor Elective | | 3 |
| All Institute Elective | | 3 |
| Credits | | 15 |
| Semester 4 | | |
| SS-299 | Moderation | 3 |
| HMS-201A | Literary and Critical Studies II | 3 |
| SS-430 | Methods Of Cultural Analysis | 3 |
| Department/Minor Elective | | 3 |
| All Institute Elective | | 3 |
| Credits | | 15 |
| Semester 5 | | |
| SS-325 | Symposium: Critical & Visual Studies | 3 |
| Urban Praxis Elective | | 3 |
| SS-450 | Junior Research Seminar: Critical and Visual Studies | 3 |
| Department/Minor Elective | | 3 |
| All Institute Electives | | 6 |
| Credits | | 18 |

Semester 6

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Social Ecology Elective | 3 |
| PHIL-265 | 3 |
| Department/Minor Elective | 3 |
| All Institute Electives | 6 |
| Credits | 15 |

Semester 7

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| CST-440 | Senior Thesis I | 3 |
| SS-425 | Symposium III | 3 |
| SS-453 | Professionalization Workshop | 3 |
| All Institute Electives | | 6 |
| Credits | | 15 |

Semester 8

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| CST-480 | Senior Thesis II | 3 |
| LAS-499 | Independent Study | 1 |
| All Institute Electives | | 9 |
| Credits | | 13 |
| Total Credits | | 121 |

Students in Critical and Visual Studies:

- Ground their intellectual work in the Social Sciences and Cultural Studies.
- To think clearly, critically, and for themselves, that is, learn to learn.
- Analyze and critique classical, modern, and newly emerging knowledge and social transformations.
- Grasp the interconnections and histories of diverse fields of human inquiry with cultural, social, and political relations.
- Refine their knowledge of diverse cultures and communities.
- Appreciate the importance of material cultural production such as cinema, literature, and the arts.
- Understand analytical and quantitative reasoning and methodologies in comprehending the natural and social worlds.
- Gain an understanding of the historical past both for its own sake and to think creatively about the future.