
PATHS: Architecture, Urban Design, and Sustainability (Green Building) Design

Students interested in Architecture (Historic and New), Urban Design, and the relationship of the built environment and sustainability ethics, are advised to consider a mixture of design and history courses within the Art and Art History Department, augmented by other courses of topical variety and personal interest.

A. Generally about the profession and graduate professional architecture schools:

1. A general liberal arts education is viewed by most architects as the best background for architecture professional schools and for serving society as an architect, -- a practice that benefits from a wide interest in culture, history, the physical and social sciences, mathematics and logical thinking, as well as the visual arts. Learning written, oral, and graphical communication skills is essential for articulating the ideas and concepts to be practiced.
2. Most architecture professional schools are very visual arts based, and typically require visual-arts/activity portfolios. However, an art and/or art history major is not necessary for architectural school admission. Most architecture schools now emphasize sustainability design (or will), for which environmental courses at St. Olaf are excellent foundations.
3. Experiencing the built environment by observation, drawing, photography, study and travel is invaluable.

B. Is there a Pre-architecture program at St. Olaf?

Many paths can be followed to professional architectural schools. While St. Olaf does not offer a concentration or a prescribed set of pre-professional courses, listed below are the standard suggested preparatory courses that are typical of graduate architectural schools. Requirements vary, so it is good to check with schools being considered (or a sample of them). Visit schools. Talk and/or e-mail their admissions staff. Note that a professional graduate program is one that is accredited by a national architectural accreditation board (NAAB) so graduation qualifies one for becoming a licensed architect after sufficient internship experience.

C. Typical courses suggested for most graduate architectural programs:

1. An Art major with History of Art courses, or
2. an Art History major with ample art studio courses for developing a portfolio, or
3. any major plus multiple 100 & 200 level Art studio courses and Art History courses.
4. You will need a visual arts oriented portfolio of work and/or projects, research, studies, etc.
5. Mathematics 120 / 121 - Calculus I, II (or Math 120 + 128 Honors Calculus II)
6. Physics 124 / 125 – Principles I, II (for which Math 120/121 is required)
7. Other courses as required or suggested by particular graduate architecture programs.

D. St. Olaf generally helpful foundational courses for professional architectural background:

1. European, American and Asian history and cultural courses and experiences
2. Environmental studies, sustainability issues courses (ES 222 Campus Ecology, HIST 275 Environ. Hist.)
3. Urban settlement and culture topics, (AH 261 Hist. of World Architecture, ENG 276 Lit. of the Environment)
4. Great Conversations, and multi-cultural literature and/or history courses (AH semester in Florence, IT).
5. Writing and presentation skill-building courses (e.g.: ENG 150 Fundamentals of Creative Writing)
6. Mathematics and computer science, digital graphics (Math 118 Patterns in Islamic culture, etc.)
7. Religion, philosophy and ethics (Philosophy 243 Aesthetics)
8. Special interests: Physics 252 Acoustics, Art 233 Advanced Drawing, Art 205 Photography, and Art 225 Architectural Drawing and Design (offered on even-year Interims), AH 150&151 Intro to World Art.

E. Resources to explore:

1. The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSC) www.asca-arch.org
The ACSC provide great information about accredited architecture schools nation-wide.
2. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) www.aia.org, and AIA Minnesota www.aia-mn.org, have links to educational programs and offices.
3. An interesting web site of links to architecture sites is managed by Jeffrey Howe at Boston College [Google > "architecture web sites" <]