

THE NEW DEGREE COURSES AT CAMBERWELL COLLEGE OF ARTS

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Abstract

Camberwell College of Arts has recently introduced two new degrees in conservation: a BA(Hons) in Conservation and a MA in Conservation. These courses are the culmination of over twenty years experience of teaching paper conservation at Camberwell; their degree status being a reflection of the increasing demands being made on conservators both in the UK and abroad. The BA degree is based on a broad curriculum, whose major elements are: Conservation Theory and Practice (60%); Materials and Conservation Science (20%); and Historical and Cultural Studies (20%). Currently, students study all aspects of paper conservation but from September 1991, a Textile Conservation option will also be available. The two year full-time MA degree is more specialist in nature with a particular emphasis on research. Students may choose to study either Art on Paper or Library and Archive Materials, with a further possibility of specialising in Book Conservation or Photographic Materials.

PAPER TEXTILES CONSERVATION TRAINING DEGREE BA MA CAMBERWELL

The College

Camberwell College of Arts, formally Camberwell School of Art and Crafts (founded in 1898), is one of the six constituent colleges of The London Institute which forms the largest group in Europe of art, design and related courses. The College has a well-established reputation for its teaching of art, design, art history and conservation from foundation through diploma to postgraduate level. Camberwell has an international reputation as a centre which has pioneered paper conservation for over twenty years; the evolution of its teaching programmes having mirrored the evolution of the profession itself.

The Academic Plan of The London Institute includes a policy to develop and extend its conservation courses at Camberwell College of Arts. In September 1990, the first of these developments reached fruition with the introduction of two new paper conservation courses: a BA Hons in Conservation and a Master of Arts in Conservation. These courses, which are run by the School of Art History and Conservation, were introduced in response to the new opportunities and challenges facing conservators to-day.

BA HONS IN CONSERVATION

The three year full-time BA in Conservation provides a broad education as a basis for specific studies in the preservation and conservation of paper artefacts, books, archive, library materials, and from September 1991, Textiles. The aim of the course is to produce competent and versatile individuals who have a variety of options open to them when they graduate. Some will gain employment in museum, library or archive departments, others may opt for the study of conservation at postgraduate level. Graduates will be able to proceed to the second year of the MA in Conservation at Camberwell. Alternatively, graduates may also opt for further specialist study towards a Master's degree in, for example, Art History or Museology, or they may enter Museum/ Arts Administration. The course offers a sound grounding in conservation theory, science, management and ethics, and the programme of practical projects is drawn from local and national collections. Cultural and historical awareness develops through supporting studies in the history of art and design, historical bibliography or the history of textile technology, and either printmaking and drawing or textile techniques. The location in central London makes full use of the wide range of museums, galleries and libraries in both main and supporting studies through programmed visits and directed study.

The Course Curriculum

The course has the following major elements:

1. Conservation Theory and Practice (including Preservation);
2. Materials and Conservation Science;
3. Historical and Cultural Studies.

The course is based on 25 taught hours per week over nine terms. Each term is 12 weeks long. The overall proportion of taught and supervised hours devoted to each element is as follows:

| ELEMENT | PERCENTAGE OF TAUGHT HOURS |
|---------|----------------------------|
| 1. | 60% |
| 2. | 20% |
| 3. | 20% |

CONTENTS OF EACH COURSE ELEMENT

1. CONSERVATION THEORY AND PRACTICE
The Discipline of Conservation
Principles and Practice of Conservation

Principles and Practice of Preservation
Examination and Documentation
Health and Safety
Management

2. MATERIALS AND CONSERVATION SCIENCE

Materials Science
Paper Science (option)
Textile Science (option)
Processes of Deterioration
Methods of Examination and Analysis
Science of Conservation Materials
Science of Preventive Conservation, including environmental control
Science of Conservation Treatments (options in paper and textiles)

3. HISTORICAL/CULTURAL STUDIES

Art and Design History, including options in art on paper or textile design
Historical Bibliography and Archive Theory (option)
History of Textile Technology (option)
Printmaking and Drawing (option)
Textile Techniques (option)

The course progresses through three stages. The first, of two terms, is mainly investigative. The second, of four terms, is concerned with studio based conservation projects and the third, of three terms, introduces an element of individual choice in the form of specialist options within the area of either paper or textiles.

The first stage of the course is intended to give the students an overview of the profession as well as introducing them to the wide range of materials they will encounter in practice. A sound theoretical basis will enable them to understand the context of their work, while lectures and demonstrations will ensure that they are familiar with: a) papermaking, paper history and other related materials; or b) the history of textile technology and textile techniques.

They will also acquire skills in the application of basic preservation strategies and techniques. Theory and practice will be complementary and interdependent.

The development of practical skills is a core study. Although there will be scope for students whose interests centre on conservation management or science for example, the achievement of a high level of manual skill is seen as a key element for success.

The second stage of the course develops these skills in relation to a wide range of conservation problems. The relatively large taught component arises out of the desire to create "live" situations, particularly during studio projects. Students will work on actual items drawn from collections of a long list of institutions with which the college has a well established relationship and, in the case of textiles from its own collection.

The problem-solving aspect and the theoretical background for the project work will be formally taught by weekly lectures and by directing students to use analytical exercises to investigate the consequences of interventional treatments and determine appropriate procedures.

Projects will last 6-8 weeks and the material chosen will follow a logical progression in the introduction of materials and techniques. All project work will be fully documented and justified and items will normally be given an appropriate form of protective covering.

The specialist option programme in the third stage, although allowing a choice between broad areas will follow the main course rationale; that is, selecting material which is appropriate to the type of employment opportunities open to graduates of the course. The potential range is enormous and projects are carefully selected to reflect the range of conservation techniques or skills most relevant to the learning programme.

During this stage theory lectures will cover topics relevant to both options of paper and textiles and encourage contributions by students in the form of debate on the merits or demerits of specific treatments. In this way the two options will have a forum for the exchange of information and will not be totally exclusive. During this period, student will also take part in a three to four week Professional Placement.

The final Major Project falls into two parts: a science project and a conservation project. The science project is to allow an independent investigation to take place without the time constraints imposed through linking it too closely to actual conservation work in progress. The conservation project will entail full analytical examination and documentation and a full 2,000 word historical essay related to work(s) will be required. The Major Project reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the course.

MASTER OF ARTS IN CONSERVATION

The conservation profession has traditionally attracted graduates of many different disciplines. Consequently, postgraduate courses designed to cater for this type of entrant are now well established in many countries.

This Master's degree seeks to meet this need by offering a postgraduate study of one of two major specialisms within the field of paper conservation: Art on Paper and Library and Archive Materials. Within the latter, there is the opportunity to specialise further with the study of Book Conservation or Photographic Materials. This course also complements the BA Hons in Conservation, allowing graduates of that course to progress to study of one of these specialisms at an advanced level.

The full-time course is two years long and is divided into three stages: Stage I is three terms long (35 weeks), followed by a four week professional placement; Stage II is two terms long (24 weeks); and Stage III is one term (11 weeks) followed by summer period spent writing and producing either a Research Report or a Thesis; the Research Report or Thesis being presented by the end of the first week of the following Autumn term.

The course has two entry points. Honours Graduates without significant paper conservation experience are required to complete all three stages. Graduates of the School's BA Hons Conservation or applicants with equivalent qualifications, may be exempted from Stage I and will be required to complete Stages II and III only.

The course will progress through three stages: Stage I is initially concerned with general paper conservation theory and practice, this study is followed by an introduction to an elective specialism; Stage II develops these elective specialisms at an advanced level; while Stage III is concerned with a Major Research Project, culminating in the production of either a research report, plus full supporting documentation, or a thesis.

Stage I
The primary concern of the taught programme in Stage I is a formally structured academic and practical programme of study beginning with General Paper Conservation, for a period of 24 weeks, followed by the following elective specialisms: i) Art on Paper; ii) Library and Archive Materials, for a further 11 weeks. This central study will be supported by both Materials and Conservation Science and Cultural/Historical Studies.

This study is followed by a Professional Placement of four weeks.

The course is based on 25 taught hours per week over 6 terms plus a summer self-study period. Each term is 12 weeks long.

The overall proportion of taught hours devoted to each element is:

| ELEMENTS | % OF TAUGHT HOURS |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Conservation Theory and Practice | 64 |
| Materials and Conservation Science | 20 |
| Historical/Cultural Studies | 16 |

Stage II
Stage II is concerned with an advanced academic and practical study of one of the following elective specialisms: Art on Paper; Library and Archive Materials; Book Conservation; or Photographic Materials. The study programme during Stage II will be less formally structured than Stage I and will place further emphasis on an investigative approach.

The overall proportion of taught hours devoted to each element is:

| ELEMENTS | % OF TAUGHT HOURS |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Conservation Electives | 68 |
| Materials and Conservation Science | 16 |
| Historical/Cultural Studies | 12 |
| Health and Safety Studies | 4 |

Stage III
In Stage III, the course moves on from the interdisciplinary structure of Stages I and II to a greater emphasis on a research based approach. During this stage of the course students undertake a personal research project over a period of 11 weeks.

Students will be working independently on an agreed programme of research and development under tutorial supervision and guidance. Research Projects may take the form of practical experiments or result in a thesis. If a practically realized research project is preferred, a follow up report with full documentation of the project's development and outcome is required.

The preparation of either a Research Report plus documentation or a Thesis is carried out after the end of the Summer term; presentation being in the first week of the following Autumn term.