



AAU MFA PHOTOGRAPHY: ONLINE MIDPOINT REVIEW HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION TO THIS HANDBOOK

Please read though all of this information carefully before preparing your materials for your Midpoint Review.

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If you are an Online Photography student and you have questions about Midpoint Reviews please contact:

Tamara Hubbard, Associate Director, Online Graduate Photography

THubbard@academyart.edu

SECTION I: MIDPOINT REVIEW INTRODUCTION

The **Midpoint Review** is a 1-hour formal presentation before a Review Committee comprised of Department Directors and Faculty Members. At your Midpoint Review, you will present a formal Proposal of what you plan to work on for your Thesis Project. During the Review, you will be evaluated for eligibility of Master's candidacy based on the challenge and quality of your proposed project, your evidenced level of critical thinking and problem solving, and your overall knowledge of the photographic medium.

Your Midpoint Presentation will consist of the following components:

- 1. Formal, Written Proposal of your Proposed Thesis Project**
- 2. Oral Presentation of your Proposed Thesis Project**
- 3. Portfolio of 12-16 photographs that strongly support your Proposed Thesis concept.**

Note: Most online students present their Midpoint Reviews through online web conferencing. However, as an online student, you do have the option to present on-campus in San Francisco if preferred.



SECTION II: MIDPOINT REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

ELIGIBILITY FOR MIDPOINT REVIEW

Prior to scheduling a Midpoint Review, students must have:

- Completed 24-36 units
- Completed all of their core requirements (PH 601, PH 601, PH 612, PH 613, PH 616, and PH 680)
- Completed 2 GLA classes (*one MUST be GLA 625: History of Photography. The second GLA class can be taken concurrent with the term of their Review.*)

NOTE: Please make sure you communicate with your Academic Advisor about when would be the most appropriate time to take your Midpoint Review.

SCHEDULING A MIDPOINT REVIEW

Midpoint Reviews are conducted midway through each semester (Spring, Summer, and Fall). Presentations typically start in the third or fourth week of the Fall or Spring Semesters and in the second week in the Summer semester. To schedule your online Midpoint Review, you must be in contact with your Department Director prior to the beginning of the semester you wish to present. Online students should contact Tamara Hubbard at: THubbard@academyart.edu.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

The following materials must arrive 2 weeks prior to your Review (1 week prior in Summer):

- **3 copies of your Written Proposal, bound in a professional manner**
- **1 CD that contains a PDF document of your Written Proposal**
- **12 - 16 prints in a portfolio box (portfolio books with plastic sleeves are not allowed)**
- **A minimum of 6 of the prints must be matted and/or mounted as outlined later in this handbook**

*These materials must be sent to:
Will Mosgrove, Director, Graduate Photography,
625 Sutter Street, Suite 400,
San Francisco, CA 94102*

The following must be sent to Cyber Campus 1 week prior to your review:

- **PowerPoint file**

The following digital files must be sent to MFAPhoto@academyart.edu 2 weeks prior to your Review (1 week prior in Summer) using the Submission instructions below:

- **PDF of your written proposal**
- **The RAW files of all images presented (if shooting digitally)**

PDF & RAW File Submission Instructions

1. Logon to: www.academyart.edu/upload
2. Enter "Your Contact Information"
3. Input MFAPhoto@academyart.edu as the "Recipient's Information" email address
4. In the "Subject" box please title your portfolio with: Your Name and Midpoint Review (Sample: John Doe--Midpoint Review)

NOTE: You will receive your photography work back after your Midpoint Review if you include return shipping with your prints when you send them to AAU. Your written proposals will NOT be returned to you.



SECTION III: MIDPOINT REVIEW WRITTEN PROPOSAL GUIDE

WRITTEN PROPOSAL

The written proposal book:

- Must be professionally executed, grammatically correct and free of spelling errors and typos.
- Must be typed and professionally bound. You can have your written proposal professionally bound (spiral, perfect, etc.) at any Kinko's/FedEX Office. Blurb books or similar are also acceptable.
- Should not exceed standard letter size (8.5" x 11"), but may be smaller in dimension.
- Images need to be high-resolution and scaled down before being inserted into the PDF in order to ensure image quality and to keep the PDF file size under 20 megabytes.

CHECKLIST:

Your Written Proposal must include the following sections, in this order and with a separate heading for each:

- Cover Page
- Autobiography
- Resume
- Abstract
- Thesis Project Proposal
- Influences
- Capture, Process, and Print Specifications
- Statement of Professional Goals
- Timeline
- Images

COVER PAGE

The Cover of your Written Proposal must include the following:

- Project title
- Your name
- Student ID number
- School and Department name (Academy of Art University, Graduate School of Photography)
- Identify this is your "Midpoint Proposal"
- Date of presentation
- Time of presentation
- Intended area of concentration (Fine Art, Art for Commerce, Photojournalism/Documentary)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

For your autobiography, you will *briefly* address the following in *no more than one page*:

- Explain who you are
- Explain how you became involved in the arts, and with photography in particular
- Discuss what led you to enroll at the Academy of Art University
- You may also include other information that seems appropriate or relevant to your work as an artist/photographer, such as:
 - Relevant work experiences
 - Relevant educational experiences
 - Relevant personal experiences
 - Career goals



Write your autobiography in a concise, succinct manner that is as engaging as possible. Your autobiography is generally the first section read in your proposal, and will serve as an introduction to the rest of the proposal.

RESUME

You will need to include a formal resume in your proposal. This is a 1-2 page professional and concise document that lists your work experiences, skills, and education. In addition, your resume provides the reader with your contact information and a list of past experience, including:

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- E-mail and website
- Recent exhibitions
- Educational background (beyond high school)
- Recent or pertinent employment history
- Other recent information relevant to your career as an artist/photographer, including teaching experience, professional memberships, volunteer experiences, relevant skills, etc.
- Dates should be listed chronologically, with the most recent at the top of the list

ABSTRACT

The Project Abstract is a short but detailed summary of your Proposed Thesis Project. The committee should have a solid sense of what you will be doing without having to read the full proposal. The Project Abstract should include what the project is about, why the project is being created, and what photographic methods you intend to use to fulfill the intent of the project. **The Project Abstract should be approximately 150 words.** The following items must be included in your Project Abstract:

- Area of emphasis (Fine Art, Art for Commerce, Documentary/Photojournalism)
- Genre
- Subject matter
- How you are creating the project (style of capture, mode of processing, etc.)
- How many images you will present for your Final Review (16-20 required)
- How you plan to present the final project (size and presentation)
- You may also include other information that is relevant to your work, such as:
 - Reason for choosing the subject matter
 - Reason for creating the project
 - What the project looks like (aesthetics, style, formal elements, etc.)

THESIS PROJECT PROPOSAL

The Thesis Project Proposal is the focal point of the Written Proposal. You will need to address the following in an articulate and thoughtful manner:

- Define your Thesis Project in detail (what, why, how)
- Your personal involvement with the project
- What led you to the project
- What you feel you will learn from the project
- Any challenges you expect to face with the project
- How you anticipate the project evolving
- Your area of concentration and your specific genre of work
- How you plan to print and present your work
- How you plan to spend your Directed Study time



The Thesis Project Proposal section is the most involved portion of your written proposal, and needs to describe all of the information that you feel the Review Panel should know to consider your project a viable Thesis Project. There is no specified length for the Thesis Project Proposal. While it is always a good idea to be concise in your wording, this section should be as long as it needs to be to clearly and thoroughly articulate your ideas. Avoid direct repetition of sentences from your Abstract. Be sure to discuss your work in academic terms with appropriate photographic terminology.

INFLUENCES

The Influences section in your proposal needs to identify and describe artistic influences that directly relate to your Proposed Thesis Project. You should identify at least three artists as influences and include the following:

- Who your artistic influences are
- What parts of their work inspired you
- How their art has influenced your work
- Examples of relevant work created by your influences

Though this section does not need to be long, you will want to be specific. Your influences do not all need to be photographers, as photography is often inspired by other mediums, such as painting or sculpture.

CAPTURE, PROCESS, AND PRINT SPECIFICATIONS

This section should identify the following:

- The camera and lenses used, or your alternative capture method if relevant
- The printer or professional lab you used (Please note: if you outsource your prints, you **MUST** use a high quality professional print lab where you are able to maintain creative control of the print process.)
- Your paper choice and any alternate papers you tested
- Details about your post-processing method(s) and workflow as appropriate
-

STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL GOALS

The Statement of Professional Goals should identify the following:

- Where you would like to be with your work upon graduation
- What you would like to be doing 5 years from now
- The ways in which the development of your Proposed Thesis Project will assist you in the realization of your professional goals

TIMELINE

The timeline must include the following:

- The courses that you have taken to date, broken down by semester, including the course number, title, and instructor
- The courses you **anticipate** taking after passing your Midpoint Review, broken down by semester, including course title, instructor or DS advisor for the remainder of your study at AAU
- Your anticipated graduation date (semester/year)
- Be sure your total units add up to 63 (27 studio units, 6 elective units, 12 academic study units, and 18 directed study units)

IMAGES

- Your Midpoint images must be included in your written proposal:
- Include all 12 - 16 images



- Include the specific dates (day, month, year) that each image was captured
- Images must be no more than 2 per page
- Images should be printed in high resolution on quality photo paper, but they do not have to be the same paper you used for your portfolio and mounted prints.
- Images should be resized prior to insertion into the PDF, to reduce the overall PDF file size

SECTION IV: MIDPOINT REVIEW PRINT/PRESENTATION GUIDE

PORTFOLIO PRESENTATION

For your review, you must send in 12 - 16 professional quality prints in a portfolio box (portfolio books with plastic sleeves are not allowed), along with a minimum of 6 appropriately mounted and/or matted prints.

Your portfolio of images:

- Must be a cohesive body of work that substantially supports the proposed Thesis concept
- Must have been made during your education at AAU
- Must exemplify your highest level of technical proficiency thus far
- Must exhibit substantial artistic explorations that involve a high level of critical thinking and problem solving
- Must be presented in a portfolio box. Loose prints are fine, but portfolio books with plastic sleeves are not allowed

NOTE:

- If multiple images are presented that are to part of the same piece of art (such as a diptych or a triptych), this will count as one piece
- A minimum of 6 of the photographs must be professionally mounted, matted or presented in a manner that is appropriate for the work. The mounting and matting of the work can be prepared by you or by a professional as long as the presentation is of professional, archival quality
- Framing is not necessary for the Midpoint Review unless it is an integral part of the work
- A Book presentation is allowed as an adjunct to professionally mounted prints, but cannot substitute for the prints. Book presentations for Final Reviews will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- You must identify the appropriate sequence of the imagery by numbering the backs of the mats
- If your work is abstract or non-representational, please identify which edge is "up"

Print Requirements:

Prints must be:

- Printed on professional quality paper (or other professional-quality material if using alternative methods) using archival methods
- Professionally presented in a manner that is appropriate for the work. In many cases this means professional quality window mats with backing boards, though some projects may lend themselves better to other styles of professional-quality presentation. Flush-mounted images are also acceptable
- Printed and mounted/matted the size you expect to present for your Final Review. If showing very large prints (i.e. 20" x 24" or larger), or using an alternative process, at least one of the 12-16 prints must be shown as you intend to print and present them for your Final Review. The rest must still be professionally presented, but can be done at a smaller size



If using a window mat, the mat must be:

- Archival
- Minimum 4-ply thickness
- Professionally cut corners
- The mat must match the work (white mats are generally recommended)

NOTE: Please Review the following links for Professional Presentation standards:

Materials: http://media.academyart.edu/howto/submit/submit_fm1.html

Matting: http://media.academyart.edu/howto/submit/submit_fm2.html

Framing: http://media.academyart.edu/howto/submit/submit_fm5.html

Float Mounting: http://media.academyart.edu/howto/submit/submit_fm4.html

Dry Mounting: http://media.academyart.edu/howto/submit/submit_fm3.html

SECTION V: MIDPOINT REVIEW ORAL PRESENTATION/POWERPOINT GUIDE

ORAL PRESENTATION

Be sure to follow these guidelines for your oral presentation.

- The oral presentation should last 15- 20 minutes.
- You should recap the content in your written document, *but do NOT read your document verbatim.*
- A PowerPoint presentation, accompanying your oral proposal, is required. If presenting Online, Cyber Campus will contact you prior to your review to show you how the online Review process works and how to use your PowerPoint during your oral presentation.
- You should refer to your images as appropriate in your presentation.
- You may use notes or prompts in your PowerPoint as cues to help you remember the information during your oral presentation. However, do *not* read your entire presentation from a script.
- Practice your oral presentation in advance to ensure your comfort level during the presentation.

Oral Presentation Guidelines:

- Introduction/Autobiography (approx. 1-2 minutes)
- Development of the project (approx. 3-4 minutes)
- Thesis Project Proposal and presentation of your work (approx. 10-12 minutes)
- Influences (approx. 3-4 minutes)
- Conclusion (less than 1 minute)

AAU has prepared a helpful tutorial and template for use in developing your PowerPoint presentation. You may use this template to build your presentation, or you may create your own presentation as long as it includes all relevant information.

Here is the link to a tutorial for how to develop a PowerPoint Presentation for your Midpoint Review:

<http://live4.academyart.edu/howto/>

From this link, navigate to the link to download the “PowerPoint Template for Photography”:

<http://media.academyart.edu/gradshowcase/ph.html>



PowerPoint Development Guidelines:

Though there is a degree of freedom in how you develop your PowerPoint presentation, there are some important PowerPoint development guidelines that you *must* follow for the online Web Conference:

- Use the Arial font (some fonts will not load correctly in the web conferencing format)
- Use a font size that is large enough to read (recommended sizes are 18 pt. for text, and 24 pt. for titles)
- Use a font color that is easy to read
- Make sure your images are large enough to be clearly seen
- References, copyright information, and technical notes should be included at the end of the presentation
- DO NOT include any of the following directly embedded in your PowerPoint presentation: Audio, Video, or Flash Content (transitions, etc.). If you want to present this type of material to the Midpoint Panel, you must submit these materials separately to Cyber Campus in advance of your Review.

PowerPoint Content Guidelines:

- Use bullet points instead of written paragraphs to relay text-based information
- When including your own photographs, list the dates (day, month, year) of when they were created
- When including photographs made by other photographers, be sure to put their names by their work, and the source where you obtained the image

POWERPOINT CHECKLIST:

- **Introduction Slide**
- **Background Slide(s)**
- **Thesis Project Slides**
- **Influences Slides**
- **Closing Slide**

Below is a Section-by-Section checklist of all of the necessary information to include in your PowerPoint.

INTRODUCTION SLIDE

The introduction/title slide must include the following items:

- Your name
- Your student ID
- Department name
- Project title
- Date of the presentation
- Area of emphasis (Fine Art, Art for Commerce, Photojournalism/Documentary)

BACKGROUND SLIDE(S)

There is flexibility as to what to feel is best to include in your background slide(s), though some general rules are:

- Only include background images that are relevant to describing how you have arrived at your current work
- Make sure the background information is not the dominant section of your presentation

THESIS PROJECT SLIDES

Include the following in your PowerPoint Presentation:

- Minimum of 4 of your project images
- Bullet points describing the important aspects of the project



INFLUENCES SLIDES

In your Influences slides, be sure to include:

- Names of your influences
- Images created by your influences

CLOSING SLIDE

This slide should clearly indicate that you are finished with your presentation. You may choose to include the following:

- Your Name
- Your Project Title

AFTER YOUR ORAL PRESENTATION

After you complete your 15-20 minute oral presentation, the Midpoint Review committee will spend approximately 20 minutes asking you questions about your proposed project. Following the question/answer session, you will be asked to log out of the audio conference (or asked to leave the room if presenting in person), and the committee will discuss your project. This generally lasts 10 minutes. You will then be asked to return to the conference, and you will be given the results of your Midpoint, along with specific recommendations of how to proceed with the project.

MIDPOINT REVIEW RESULTS

After the oral presentation and questions, the committee will recess in private to discuss the merits of your proposal. Upon reconvening, the committee will present you with one of the following outcomes:

APPROVED = Student passes, and can now proceed with Directed Study for the following semester.

NOT APPROVED = Student does **NOT** pass, and is **NOT** allowed to proceed with Directed Study until one of the following has been completed and the Midpoint Proposal is approved by the Midpoint Review Committee:

RESUBMIT: Following specific Midpoint Review Committee requirements, the student's project requires small changes that must be corrected and re-submitted within 3 weeks. If the re-submission meets the requirements, then the Midpoint Proposal is approved and the student can proceed with Directed Study the following semester.

RE-PRESENT: Following specific Midpoint Review Committee requirements, the student must complete additional studio work, rethink the Proposed Thesis Project, and/or sign up for a new Midpoint Review next semester.

Following the Midpoint Review, all graduate students are additionally provided with written feedback. Specific instructions will be provided to students who receive conditional approval, or non-acceptance of their proposal.



APPENDIX I: SHIPPING INFORMATION

SEND PHYSICAL MATERIALS TO:

Will Mosgrove, Director, MFA Photography
625 Sutter Street Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94102-1017

NOTE: Please be sure to obtain a tracking number or return receipt of delivery for your shipments.

TO SEND DIGITAL FILES:

1. Logon to: www.academyart.edu/upload
2. Enter "Your Contact Information"
3. Input MFAPhoto@academyart.edu as the "Recipient's Information" email address
4. In the "Subject" box please title with: Your Name and Midpoint Review (Sample: John Doe--Midpoint Review)

APPENDIX II: IMPORTANT LINKS

The Academy of Art University Graduate Students homepage is a helpful and informative resource that you should be familiar with. On this page you will find useful information for graduate students, including links to more information about Midpoint Reviews, Final Reviews, and Directed Study: <http://gradstudents.academyart.edu/>

The Graduate Students Midpoint Review Page has a link to the Midpoint Review Orientation, and links to the Midpoint Review Guidelines and Handbooks: http://gradstudents.academyart.edu/midpoint_review.html

Additionally, here are links to examples of Online Reviews:

- * **Sample Online Slide Presentation:** <http://live4.academyart.edu/samplerreview/>
- * **Overview of a Web Conference:** <http://live4.academyart.edu/reviewinterface/>

When you are ready to start building your PowerPoint presentation you can view a tutorial on how to work with PowerPoint and download AAU's template below:

- * **PowerPoint Tutorial:** <http://live4.academyart.edu/howto/>
- * **PowerPoint Template:** http://gradstudents.academyart.edu/assets/PowerPoint_Template.ppt

To participate in the web conference, you want to make sure that your computer has the latest versions of the Flash and Shockwave plugins and can run the web-casting software. To check this, please click on the links below:

- * **Flash Plug-in Check:** <http://www.adobe.com/software/flash/about/>
- * **Web-Casting Check:** http://www.adobe.com/products/breeze/productinfo/meeting/meeting_intro.html



APPENDIX III: ONLINE REVIEW INFORMATION/REQUIREMENTS

ONLINE MIDPOINT REVIEWS

In order to participate in an online Midpoint Review, graduate students are required to have access to a high-speed Internet connection (DSL or better) and a web camera. Prior to and during your Midpoint Review, you will have assistance from a support person at Cyber Campus to help you with any technical concerns about presenting online.

ONLINE MIDPOINT REVIEW TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Academy students who wish to conduct their Midpoint Reviews online must meet the following minimum technical requirements:

- **PC:** Operating System: Windows XP Service Pack 2 or later
Microsoft Internet Explorer IE 7 or higher on 32-bit Windows, IE 7.0 on 64-bit Windows or the latest version of Firefox
- **MAC:** Operating System: Mac OS X v10.5.8 or 10.7
Safari 4.0 or higher recommended or the latest version of Firefox

Software Requirements

- Flash Player, latest version is preferred.

To test if you have Flash installed go to: <http://www.adobe.com/software/flash/about/>

To test if your system is capable of hosting an Online Midpoint review, please go to:
http://www.adobe.com/products/breeze/productinfo/meeting/meeting_intro.html

Hardware Requirements

In addition to your personal computer, you need access to a webcam and a telephone. For web cameras the following all work well:

PC - built-in web cam; Logitech Quickcam Pro 5000 or 9000; Microsoft LifeCam VX-3000 or 5000

MAC - built-in web cam; Apple iSight; Logitech Quickcam Pro 4000

Audio

Audio during the Midpoint Review Presentation will take place over a standard telephone connection. Academy students are responsible for calling the panel, and the Academy recommends that International students purchase a calling card, with a minimum of 90 minutes of available calling time, prior to the presentation. The Academy also recommends the use of a headset during the presentation.