

Students interested in Architecture, Cities / Urban Design, Green Building

For students considering courses to take at St. Olaf, or in the summers before entrance to a graduate architectural school, consider the following. Students interested in learning more about Architecture might consider a mixture of design and history courses within the Art and Art History Department, augmented by courses at other locations.

A. Generally about the profession and graduate schools

1. A general liberal arts education is viewed by many architects as the best introduction to architecture school and for becoming a responsible professional architect. Architectural practice benefits from a wide background about culture, history, the physical and social sciences, mathematics and logical thinking, as well as the visual arts. Experiencing architectural places through study and travel is invaluable.
2. Most architecture schools respond to students who have an arts emphasis, because of architectural education being very arts based, and they require arts/activity portfolios.
3. However, an art and/or art history major is not necessary for architectural schools.

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

Many paths can be followed to professional architectural schools. St. Olaf does not offer a concentration or a prescribed set of pre-professional courses. Below, you will see a few usual or standard suggested preparatory courses that are typical of graduate architectural school. Requirements vary, so it is good to check with schools being considered (or a sample of situations). Visit schools. Talk and/or e-mail their admissions staff. Also, it is possible to design your own set of courses for approval via CILA.

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, or
3. Any major plus multiple 100 & 200 level art studio courses and art history courses
4. Mathematics (Math 120 / 126 - Calculus I, II) or (Math 122 / 128 - Analysis I, II)
5. Physics (Physics 124 / 125 - Principles), or Physics 126, 127 & 128 -Analytical)
6. You will need an arts oriented portfolio of 'work', 'activities', projects, etc.

D. St. Olaf generally helpful foundational courses for graduate architectural education

1. European, American, and Asian history and cultural courses and experiences
2. Environmental studies, sustainability issues courses
3. Urban related courses: economics, geography, sociology, or multi-disciplinary
4. Great Conversations and literature
5. Writing and presentation skill-building courses
6. Mathematics and computer science, digital graphics
7. Religion, philosophy and ethics

E. Resources to explore

1. The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSC) www.asca-arch.org The ACSC provide great information about architecture schools (150) 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"