

Art Therapy

Artists have been using creative self-expression as an outlet to express their feelings and emotions since the beginning of time. But you don't have to be a famous painter or sculptor to understand the basic premise behind the discipline of art therapy—expressing oneself can be an emotional, healing, and therapeutic process. Art therapy is a health profession that is built upon this fundamental principle that the creative process can enhance a person's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The *art therapist* serves as the facilitator in guiding a client through the process of resolving conflicts and problems, developing interpersonal skills, reducing stress, increasing self-esteem, and coming to a sense of self-understanding—by means of personal artistic expression. People who enter the field have a strong commitment to working with people in one-on-one situations. They believe in the nurturing and healing power of art and its importance in helping people resolve personal issues resulting from a variety of life challenges such as physical or mental illness, grief, or trauma. A master's degree in art therapy is required for professional certification in art therapy. Students entering master's programs may have undergraduate degrees in areas such as art, education, or psychology.

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Typical Courses:

- > Theories of Art Therapy, Counseling, and Psychotherapy
- > Ethics and Standards of Practice
- > Assessment and Evaluation
- > Individual, Group, and Family Techniques
- > Human and Creative Development
- > Research Methods
- > Drawing
- > Painting
- > Sculpting
- > Clinical Practice: Counseling Skills in Art Therapy Practice

Potential Employers:

- > Hospitals (medical and psychiatric)
- > Clinics
- > Public and community agencies
- > Wellness centers
- > Educational institutions
- > Businesses

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- > Private practices
- > Outpatient counseling clinics
- > Residential treatment facilities
- > Halfway houses
- > Prisons
- > Domestic violence and homeless shelters
- > Correctional facilities
- > Nursing homes
- > Hospice programs

Available At:

Nearly 30 colleges and universities in the United States are approved by the American Art Therapy Association (AATA). Here is just a small selection of approved schools. Visit the AATA's website, www.arttherapy.org/staep.html, for a complete list of approved schools, as well as other schools with programs.

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School of the Art Institute of Chicago (Chicago, IL)

312/899-7481

arttherapy@saic.edu

Degrees available: Master's degree

Emporia State University (Emporia, KS)

620/341-5317

www.emporia.edu/psyspe/arttherapy/athp.html

Degrees available: Master's degree

University of Louisville (Louisville, KY)

502/852-6884

etemail@louisville.edu

www.louisville.edu/edu/ecpy/et/ArtThx.htm

Degrees available: Master's degree

Marylhurst University (Marylhurst, OR)

800/634-9982, ext. 6244

studentinfo@marylhurst.edu

www.marylhurst.edu/arttherapy/index.php

Degrees available: Master's degree, advanced certificate

Marywood University (Scranton, PA)

570/348-6278

swise@marywood.edu

www.marywood.edu/departments/art/grad/grad.html#at

Degrees available: Master's degree

Mount Mary College (Milwaukee, WI)

414/258-4810, ext. 301

www.mtmary.edu/at.htm or

www.mtmary.edu/arttherapy.htm

Degrees available: Bachelor's degree (women students only),
master's degree (male/female students)

New York University (New York, NY)
212/998-5726
ia4@nyu.edu
<http://education.nyu.edu/depts/art/programs/5>
Degrees available: Master's degree

Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville
618/650-2000
jgausep@siue.edu
www.siue.edu/ART/areas/art_therapy
Degrees available: Master's degree, advanced certificate

Southwestern College (Santa Fe, NM)
877/471-5756
admissions@swc.edu
www.swc.edu/programs/MA_art_therapy.htm
Degrees available: Master's degree, advanced certificate

Ursuline College (Pepper Pike, OH)
888/URSULINE
gradsch@ursuline.edu
www.ursuline.edu/academics/graduate/atc
Degrees available: Master's degree, advanced certificate

For More Information:

American Art Therapy Association
888/290-0878
info@arttherapy.org
www.arttherapy.org

National Coalition of Arts Therapies Associations
www.nccata.org

Interview: Bruce Moon

Dr. Bruce Moon is the Graduate Program Director of the Art Therapy Department at Mount Mary College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He discussed his program and the education of art therapy students with the editors of *They Teach That in College!*

Q. Please provide a brief overview of your program.

A. Art therapy is a challenging and exciting career choice that allows individuals to combine skills in art making with the desire to help persons who are suffering with emotional, physical, or developmental challenges. At Mount Mary College the

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Did You Know?

Art therapists earn annual median salaries of approximately \$45,000, according to the American Art Therapy Association.

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art therapy program is housed in the Art and Design Division and is a vital and dynamic component of graduate education.

Our approach to art therapy education is uniquely art-based and experiential, and we endeavor to provide a creative integration of artistic, academic, and clinical education. In every way possible we attempt to live-out our program mission, “Art Therapy: Compassion in Action.”

The Graduate Art Therapy Program utilizes an art-based and experiential approach to graduate level art therapy education. The faculty and students strive to create a community of learners in which all members share a commitment to meaningful participation in graduate level academic, artistic, clinical, and intra- and inter-personal study.

Classes are offered at times designed to accommodate students’ needs. Students may choose from among daytime, evening, and weekend classes. The course of study combines disciplined artistic inquiry with intensive academic investigation of art therapy and counseling theories and techniques, and hands-on clinical practicums and supervision. These elements provide students with a thorough and rich educational experience.

In addition to our nationally known full-time faculty, part-time faculty members who are actively working in the field enrich the program. Each semester, guest lecturers—national leaders and innovators of the profession—contribute diversity to the program with exciting, current topics in art therapy that broaden and enrich the students’ perspectives. Small group, experiential, and art-based learning is a key strength of the program. Students have the opportunity to select from a wide range of practicums through which they develop their skills in real-life treatment settings.

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- Q.** What high school subjects should students focus on to be successful in this major?
- A.** It is important to note that art therapy is a master’s degree level of entry profession. High school students can begin to prepare for their undergraduate work and later graduate education by taking the maximum number of studio art classes and psychology/social science classes. It is also important to develop good writing skills and to become well versed in metaphoric lan-

guage. English composition and literature courses, in addition to art and psychology courses, help to prepare students for the rigors of undergraduate and graduate study.

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- Q.** What are the most important personal and professional qualities for art therapy (AT) majors?
- A.** I believe that the most important personal and professional qualities for art therapy students are twofold: 1) a genuine love of art making, and 2) a deep commitment to humanity and a longing to make the world a better place. Of course it is important also to have some measure of artistic skill, a capacity to articulate ideas in a coherent manner, and the discipline to succeed as an art therapy scholar and practitioner.
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- Q.** What advice would you offer AT majors as they graduate and look for jobs?
- A.** It is often important for art therapists to have an entrepreneurial spirit and to be willing to sell themselves to potential employers. Art therapy is a unique and potent treatment modality, but it is a little less well known than some other helping professions. It helps to be able to confidentially and clearly describe the profession to potential employers and to be able to make a strong case for why art therapy is needed in a particular setting. I also always advise graduates to not let the ideal be the enemy of the good. By that I mean there are few 'perfect' jobs out in the world, and sometimes it is important to just get your foot in the door so that they can prove their worth.
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- Q.** How will the field of art therapy change in the future?
- A.** I've been in the profession for more than 30 years now, and the field of art therapy has made many changes in that time. Many years ago the majority of art therapists worked in psychiatric hospitals. Today, however, the field has expanded to include art therapists in nursing homes, prisons, schools, community counseling agencies, hospice programs, rehabilitation hospitals, oncology units, and residential treatment facilities. I suspect that over the next 10 to 20 years ever more new applications of art therapy will emerge. Another significant change will come about as more states codify licensure procedures for art therapists, which will result in art therapists routinely receiving third party payment for their services. All things considered, this is an exciting time to consider entering the profession of art therapy.