

## **Blacksmithing Certificate**

### **Program Identification:**

Certificate in Blacksmithing  
Department of Art and Design  
Peck School of the Arts  
College of the Arts and Architecture

Proposed timeline: beginning Fall 2026

### **Rationale**

Blacksmithing has seen a significant resurgence in contemporary art, craft, and design practice, driven by renewed interest in material-based making, sustainable fabrication, and the preservation of historic trades. Students across the BA in Art, BFA in Studio Art, and BFA in Design and Visual Communication programs consistently express interest in integrating metalworking and sculptural fabrication into their creative practice. As a discipline that merges technical skill, creative problem-solving, and material experimentation, blacksmithing represents a critical area of hands-on studio practice that complements and expands existing curricular offerings.

The Department of Art and Design currently offers courses in metal fabrication, sculpture, and craft-based practices that introduce aspects of forging, forming, and toolmaking. The proposed Blacksmithing Certificate organizes these opportunities into coherent and progressive sequence, allowing students to focus their studio research on hot-metal processes, hand forging techniques, and functional or sculptural outcomes. This curricular structure supports students in developing technical proficiency, conceptual depth, and a cohesive portfolio of refined metalwork that demonstrates both traditional craftsmanship and contemporary design thinking.

The demand for skilled metalworkers extends beyond fine arts into fields such as architecture, industrial fabrication, set design, environmental design, historic preservation, industrial prototyping, and engineering. Contemporary practitioners increasingly bridge traditional forging methods with digital fabrication, sustainable material practices, and interdisciplinary craft approaches. This certificate responds directly to these professional trends by preparing students with a solid foundation in metalworking processes and creative design methodologies.

By formalizing a pathway for focused study in blacksmithing, the certificate strengthens the Department of Art and Design's ability to recruit and retain students seeking a craft-intensive studio experience. It supports emerging artists, designers, and makers who wish to integrate hand-forged metalwork into their creative portfolios, while contributing to the preservation and innovation of a historically significant craft tradition. It also strengthens the Department of Art and Design's relationship with the Windgate Foundation who has generously funded two previous grant proposals in the amount of \$162,500 and is currently considering a third proposal in the amount of \$162,750 to support phase III of our Contemporary Craft Initiative in the College of Arts and

Architecture. The current proposal would expand the scope of the blacksmithing curriculum and facilities as well as support recruitment and retention efforts through scholarship and fellowship opportunities for potential undergraduate and graduate students.

## **Institutional Context**

### **1. Relationship to Institutional Mission**

The proposed Certificate in Blacksmithing strengthens the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's mission as a major urban doctoral university by expanding high-quality undergraduate and continuing education opportunities in the applied arts. As contemporary craft practices experience renewed cultural and economic relevance, the certificate provides students with training in both traditional and contemporary metalworking, while positioning UWM as a regional leader in contemporary craft education.

Aligned with UWM's commitment to intellectual development, innovation, and leadership, the Blacksmithing Certificate cultivates technical mastery, material literacy, inventive problem-solving, and creative resilience. Students learn to design and fabricate functional and sculptural objects using forging, fabrication, and metalworking processes that inform contemporary practices in arts, architecture, design, and specialized industrial applications.

The certificate expands academic and professional opportunities for historically underrepresented populations, part-time students, and those with limited access to dedicated craft facilities by providing an inclusive entry point into this specialized field. Through studio coursework grounded in skill-building and artistic inquiry, students are prepared to pursue both artistic and entrepreneurial pathways.

Reflecting UWM's mission to foster productive relationships with public and private organizations at multiple levels, the certificate creates opportunities to connect students with regional craft centers, metalsmithing studios, community art organizations, and local industry partners. These collaborations support Wisconsin's cultural and economic vitality by training students in a profession that intersects art, design, fabrication, and cultural heritage.

By reinforcing UWM's role in addressing social, economic, and cultural needs of the state, the Blacksmithing Certificate helps preserve an essential craft tradition while supporting innovative applications of forging and metalwork in public art, cultural preservation, urban revitalization, and creative economies.

The proposed Certificate in Blacksmithing addresses the following points from the UWM Select Mission statement:

- To develop and maintain high-quality undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs appropriate to a major urban doctoral university
- To attract highly qualified students with potential for intellectual development, innovation, and community leadership

- To further academic and professional opportunities at all levels for women, minority, part-time, and financially or educationally disadvantaged students
- To promote public service and research efforts directed toward meeting the social, economic, and cultural needs of the state of Wisconsin and its metropolitan communities
- To provide educational leadership in meeting future social, cultural, and technological challenges

The proposed Certificate in Blacksmithing directly addresses the Peck School of the Arts (PSOA) mission by offering professional training in an essential craft tradition while promoting collaboration with artists, makers, and community organizations in Milwaukee and the region. As the only school of the arts in a major urban environment in Wisconsin, PSOA is uniquely positioned to support craft innovation and community-engaged making rooted in visual culture and industrial history.

*PSOA Mission statement:*

*The mission of the Peck School of the Arts is to provide the highest quality education and professional training in the arts at the baccalaureate and master's degree levels. The school is committed to recruiting faculty, staff, and students who reflect the richness and diversity of art-making in a variety of cultures. As the only school of the arts in Wisconsin in a major urban environment, the Peck School of the Arts encourages collaboration with community arts organizations and artists to provide professional experiences for its students.*

The proposed Certificate in Blacksmithing supports the Department of Art and Design mission by emphasizing traditional craftsmanship, material innovation, cross-disciplinary inquiry, and community engagement. The program enables students to explore blacksmithing within broader artistic practices including sculpture, design, public art, and community outreach, while developing professional skills applicable to a wide range of creative and industrial fields.

*Department of Art and Design Mission Statement:*

*Art & Design at UW-Milwaukee develops creative thinkers, artist professionals, and cultural leaders through a cross-disciplinary curriculum that balances innovation, traditional craftsmanship, critical thinking, and scholarly civic engagement. Committed to Milwaukee's diverse urban communities, our programs emphasize activism and thinking with the arts. Our faculty is comprised of active artists who promote collaborative, interdisciplinary, and entrepreneurial thinking and practice across the department, university, community, and beyond!*

## **2. Relationship to Academic Plan**

The Proposed Certificate in Blacksmithing functions as an optional add-on to the BA or BFA degrees within the Department of Art and Design. The curriculum is designed to integrate seamlessly within the 120-credit BA and 123-credit BFA programs, allowing students to satisfy certificate requirements through a combination of required and elective courses.

The certificate is structured to serve both majors and non-majors interested in developing metalworking skills. Art and Design students can complete the certificate without extending time to degree, and students in related disciplines such as Architecture and Engineering, or the broader College of Arts and Architecture may incorporate certificate coursework as electives in their major's program of study.

### **3. Relationship to/Impact on Other UWM Programs**

The Certificate in Blacksmithing is designed primarily for students within the Department of Art and Design and relies exclusively on existing Art and Design coursework and facilities. As such, it will have minimal direct impact on other UWM programs.

The certificate does have the potential to foster meaningful interdisciplinary connections from adjacent departments. Students from Architecture, Urban Planning, Theatre, Engineering and Anthropology may find the certificate complementary to their field of study.

#### **Need**

Students' interest in metalwork, fabrication, and craft-based studio practices has grown significantly in recent years, with demand for coursework that integrates traditional blacksmithing techniques with contemporary approaches to sculpture, public art, material research, and jewelry and metalsmithing. The proposed Blacksmithing Certificate addresses a demonstrated need in the Department of Art and Design for a structured track that supports students committed to metalworking as a focused area of study.

The certificate fills a curricular gap by offering sequential, skill-building coursework in forging, metal forming, fabrication, digifab, and design for functional and sculptural applications. While blacksmithing has historically been embedded within Digital Fabrication and Design, Metals, and Sculpture courses, the certificate formalizes this area of study, providing students with a coherent curriculum and professional preparation aligned with contemporary craft, fabrication industries, and community based art practices.

Regionally, Wisconsin and the greater Midwest maintain strong traditions in manufacturing, craft industries, historic preservation, and public art that depend on workers trained in metalworking and fabrication. Local and regional employers increasingly require graduates who possess hands-on material skills, an understanding of fabrication processes, and an ability to problem solve through making. The certificate supports these economic and cultural needs of the region by preparing students for careers in fabrication, metal trades, artisan crafts, and related creative industries.

The Certificate in Blacksmithing enhances recruitment and retention by appealing to students seeking applied, skill based learning experiences. It further strengthens the departments emphasis on material literacy and cross-disciplinary practice, supporting

UWM's broader commitment to innovation, civic engagement, and diverse opportunities within the arts.

## **Program Description and Evaluation Description**

### **1. Marketing Blurb:**

The Blacksmithing Certificate program provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the art and craft of blacksmithing. Students will become well versed in traditional blacksmithing techniques while examining contemporary processes, ideas, digital technologies, and design approaches, whether forging large scale sculptural or architectural ironwork, hand-held objects, utensils, or tools, students will develop their own style, refine their craftsmanship, and increase their ability to convey ideas through blending philosophy, artistic expression, and craft.

By completing this certificate, you'll be more than just an Artist Blacksmith—you will become an innovator that pushes the boundaries of tradition blacksmithing and contributes to the dialogue of contemporary craft practice and theory. You will become a blacksmith with the ability to transform your ideas into powerful works of art. The UWM Blacksmithing Certificate program will provide you with a strong foundation to pursue future research in blacksmithing, artists residencies, or setting up your own business.

### **2. Description:**

Students enrolling in the Blacksmithing Certificate program are required to complete a minimum of 18 credits. These credits are structured sequentially, with courses ranging from 200-level to 500-level. To earn the certificate, students must maintain a grade point average of 2.5 or above in all applicable courses.

Students must be aware of any course prerequisites. Students who do not meet the prerequisites for any course must submit evidence of competencies or academic equivalencies for permission to enroll and should contact the Peck Scholl of the Arts advising office to discuss submitting a portfolio or other materials for evaluation.

Credits earned at other institutions equivalent to courses in the certificate program may be accepted in partial fulfillment of the program requirements, subject to approval by the Certificate Program Committee.

A. The Certificate in Blacksmithing is a disciplinary concentration (Art and Design). Blacksmithing as a discipline is interdisciplinary, combining sculpture, traditional and non-traditional craft practices, design studies and digital fabrication. Blacksmithing encompasses a broad range of creative and technical approaches while encouraging the exploration of craftsmanship, innovation, and the development of a unique visual language. While the

certificate is discipline specific, the discipline itself is open ended and inclusive.

B. This certificate is not open to students who are not pursuing a degree.

C. Learning Outcomes

Students who complete a Certificate in Blacksmithing will be able to

- Demonstrate proficiency with blacksmithing techniques through the creation of functional or sculptural objects
- Demonstrate proficiency with the safe operation of blacksmithing tools and equipment
- Ability to research and analyze historical and contemporary blacksmithing practices
- Ability to develop original creative works by applying design thinking with blacksmithing techniques

D. All courses in the certificate are delivered face to face

E. The Certificate in Blacksmithing is an 18-credit program, with 6 courses. 5 of the 6 courses are required with the remaining course chosen from a list of approved electives. The specific requirements are included in the Certificate Program Requirements below.

F. There is no GPA requirement for admission to the certificate. Students must meet the course prerequisites of all certificate coursework or provide evidence of competency.

G. Students must achieve a 2.5 GPA in their certificate coursework for it to count towards the certificate. Should any student fall below that GPA, they would work with the Program Administration (see below) and their academic advisor to devise a plan to remedy/retake courses within their graduation target date. If a student elects to extend the certificate coursework beyond graduation, the certificate will need to be completed within 2 years of their graduation.

H. Credits earned at other institutions equivalent to courses in the certificate program may be accepted in partial fulfillment of the program requirements, subject to approval by the Certificate Program Committee.

### **3. Assessment:**

The program will be assessed using the Certificate students' blacksmithing related portfolios, student feedback, and instructor feedback from all certificate course work. The Certificate Program Committee will meet to assess the development of student work, discuss student/instructor feedback, and implement changes as needed.

### **Program Administration**

Coordinator of the program will be the chair of the Curriculum Committee of the Department of Art and Design. The committee responsible for curricular development will be the Curriculum Committee of the Department of Art and Design. This committee is appointed by the Chair and Associate Chair of the Department of Art and Design.

The current Chair of the Curriculum Committee is Lisa Moline

### **Participating Faculty**

Adam Hawk  
Yevgeniya Kaganovich  
Glenn Williams

### **Resources**

No additional resources are needed to implement the proposed Certificate in Blacksmithing

### **Program Information/Catalog Copy**

<b>UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN BLACKSMITHING</b>	<b>18 credits</b>
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<b>Blacksmithing Certificate</b>	<b>18 credits</b>
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<b>Required Core Courses</b>	<b>15 credits</b>
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ART 277 Intro to Digital Fabrication	3
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ART 373 Blacksmithing**	3
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ART 368 Sculptural Practices: *	3
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ART 371 Construction and Fabrication	3
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-or-

ART 470 Metal Forming	
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ART 573 Advanced Blacksmithing	3
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<b>Elective</b>	<b>3 credits</b>
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*Students choose one course (3 credits) not previously taken or change in topic*

ART 371 Construction and Fabrication

ART 373 Blacksmithing\*\*

ART 377 Intermediate Digital Fabrication

ART 378 Industrial Processes and Fabrication

ART 368 Sculptural Practices: \*

ART 468 Sculptural Practices: \*

ART 470 Metal Forming

ART 476 Making and Marketing

ART 573 Advanced Blacksmithing\*\*

*\*Art 368: Sculptural Practices' subtopics that satisfy the certificate: Welding and Metal Fabrication or Material as Meaning, Surface as Signifier.*

*\*\* Blacksmithing and Advanced Blacksmithing are retakable up to 6 credits*

## PROPOSED COURSE OF STUDY

### Freshman Year

#### Fall

No certificate courses

#### Spring

Art 277: Intro to Digital Fabrication

Prerequisite for Art 378: *Art 261: Intro to Sculpt -or- Art 271: Intro to Jewelry and Metals -or- Art 278: Intro to Making for Digital Fabrication*^

**Total credits toward certificate: 3**

## **Sophomore Year**

### Fall

Art 373: Blacksmithing

**Total credits toward certificate: 3**

### Spring

Art 573: Adv. Blacksmithing (rec) -or-

Art 368: Sculptural Practices\* -or-

Art 470: Metal Form (if not taken Art: 371)

**Total credits toward certificate: 3**

## **Junior Year**

### Fall

Art 371: Construction and Fabrication  
(if not taken Art: 470)

**Total credits toward certificate: 3**

### Spring (if not previously taken)

Art 368: Sculptural Practices\* -or-

Art 470: Metal Form (if not taken Art: 371)

-or-

Art 573: Adv Blacksmithing

**Total credits toward certificate: 3**

## **Senior Year**

### Fall

Studio Elective

**Total credits toward certificate: 3**

### Spring

^ Prerequisites do not count toward the certificate except for Art:277. Art:277 is a prerequisite for Art:278; prerequisites can be waived by consent of instructor.

\*Art 368: Sculptural Practices' subtopics that satisfy the certificate: Welding and Metal Fabrication or Material as Meaning, Surface as Signifier.

**1. Indicate more clearly the relationship between Windgate and the certificate, how it bolsters the certificate (what specifically is supported), or how the certificate was created with Windgate support in mind and the potential for future support as the program develops:**

Windgate has supported three blacksmithing-focused grant initiatives at UWM totaling \$337,250, which has strengthened the contemporary craft programming in the Department of Art and Design. These grants support improvements to the blacksmithing studio facilities and equipment, visiting artist programming, and student opportunities in sculpture and craft-based disciplines.

The most recent award, Phase III (\$174,750), includes support for blacksmithing studio upgrades, expanded instructional capacity, and student recruitment and retention through scholarships, fellowships, and dedicated travel funds for research and promotion of the blacksmithing program and new certificate.

The Blacksmithing Certificate was developed and presented as part of this Phase III initiative to provide formal curricular pathway for undergraduate students pursuing study in metalwork, sculpture, and contemporary craft practice. Establishing this certificate helps translate the Windgate-supported investments in facilities, programming, and student opportunities into sustainable academic structure within the curriculum. The certificate also creates opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration with Architecture through shared interests of material and fabrication processes.

In addition to the \$337,250 Windgate support at UWM, a previous Windgate grant of \$181,334 supported the development of a blacksmithing program at Memphis College of Art, which Adam Hawk co-led prior to joining UWM. This reflects the Windgate Foundation's continued support for blacksmithing initiatives that Hawk has developed and led, as well as its broader investment in contemporary craft education. Implementing the certificate helps ensure that the programmatic goals outlined in the funded initiative are fully realized and supports the continued development of the university's partnership with the Windgate Foundation.

**2. Supply all course numbers, course names, and enrollments (include enrollment and cap) for Blacksmithing since 2020 (previously had various course numbers: 373, 479?). Indicate clearly that the course has and will run regularly and, additionally, will fill (this is a required course in the certificate).**

Blacksmithing courses have been offered regularly within the Department of Art and Design and have demonstrated consistent student demand. The introductory blacksmithing course required for the certificate has been offered consistently since 2020 as part of the department's studio course rotation and has filled each time it has been

offered. The course will continue to run regularly (every fall) as part of the department's planned instructional schedule. In addition, one-week blacksmithing summer workshops have been offered through the department that consistently fill, enrolling both UWM students taking the course for credit and community participants. These workshops further demonstrate sustained interest in blacksmithing instruction and related programming.

The Blacksmithing Certificate primarily utilizes existing courses already offered within the department's teaching rotation. One additional course, Advanced Blacksmithing, will be introduced to support upper-level study within the certificate and will be taught by existing faculty (Adam Hawk) with the support of the College of Arts and Architecture and Department of Art and Design.

Course Enrollment (Introduction to Blacksmithing curriculum offered under different course numbers and titles over time):

Art 279/479; *Jewelry/Metalsmithing Workshop*, Summer 2019 (1 credit workshop)  
(enrollment 10 for credit UWM students)

Art 479/479G; *Jewelry/Metalsmithing Workshop*, Fall 2020 (cap 10) (enrollment 11)

Art 279/479; *Jewelry/Metalsmithing Workshop*, Summer 2021 (1 credit workshop)  
(enrollment 5 for credit UWM students + community member participants)

Art 479/479G; *Jewelry/Metalsmithing Workshop*, Fall 2021 (cap 12) (enrollment 13)

Art 279/479/479G; *Jewelry/Metalsmithing Workshop*, Summer 2022 (1 credit workshop)  
(enrollment 7 for credit UWM students + community member participants)

Art 279/479/479G; *Jewelry/Metalsmithing Workshop*, Summer 2023 (1 credit workshop)  
(enrollment 8 for credit UWM students + community member participants)

Art 373/373G; *Blacksmithing*, Fall 2023 (cap 10) (enrollment 13)

Art 373/373G; *Blacksmithing*, Fall 2025 (cap 10) (enrollment 10)