

Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

Department/Program: Studio Art in the Department of Art, Art History and Film Studies

May 2021

Update to comprehensive description of studio core curriculum in studio art by Profs Gallagher and Austen with focus on Painting 1

OVERVIEW:

The goal of the CORE studio art program is to provide students with a learning environment in which they will gain a greater understanding of the technical skills required to create works of art, gain knowledge of the aesthetic questions raised by works of art, and appreciate the historical contexts in which such works were created. Every studio arts core class is also designed to engage students in reflection, asking them to look carefully at the world around them and how they represent it and their place in it. We want our students to engage meaningfully with art through creative work and be able to articulate their understanding of art in oral and written expression.

A description of the Arts Core taken from the Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences Core Requirements document animates how the Core is taught in Studio Art:
<https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/undergraduate/core-curriculum/core-requirements.html>

The studio faculty strive to nurture creativity and innovation in our students, and to engage students critically in the practice of the arts through rigorous training anchored in experimentation and creative problem solving, and connectivity across traditional disciplinary boundaries.

1) Have formal learning outcomes for the department's Core courses been developed? What are they? (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect students completing its Core courses to have acquired?)

In all core studio art classes students are assessed on the above skills and habits of mind in the following ways:

- Following skill development and general knowledge through review of sketchbooks, collages, color studies etc.
- Observation of students painting in class and their participation in group critiques,
- Graded written assignments
- Presentation of final projects and final portfolio reviews.

A distinct feature of teaching and assessment in the Studio Art Department is that every student in a Core studio class reviews all of their work from the class in a one-on-one meeting with the instructor at the end of the semester. During this private meeting, students are asked to reflect on their skill development and experience of art-making during the semester. By reviewing and talking with the student about a set of paintings she completed in a semester, instructors get a fuller insight into student's growing proficiency and skill in using materials and use of visual language.

The use of one generalized assessment form and methods for core courses developed over the years is still inconsistent in our classes. In some classes, students are asked to respond to a questionnaire of 2-3 pages at the beginning of a semester. The same questions were re-asked in the final week of a semester. The multiple-choice questions reflect students' vocabulary and understanding of some of the basic visual principles rather than their actual painting abilities. Review, comparison and analysis of answers are up to the individual faculty in all of the different core classes. With the recent retirement of colleagues and new incoming faculty over the past few years, that system has continually evolved and is still evolving. We also assess elements of the core (at least general art knowledge) in the Issues and Approaches class which is taken by all majors and minors, after they have taken their Arts Core. This has been a helpful assessment tool for certain skills, but as stated above, there is no quiz that can address the haptic, technical and conceptual abilities of core studio art students.

Due to the very nature of studio art classes which emphasize learning through making, and individual insight over acquisition of book knowledge, as well as, vast differences in the previous art education of our incoming students, it is indeed difficult for us to develop a unified and meaningful questionnaire that uses written or multiple-choice questions/answers without a practical drawing or painting component. During a studio art faculty weekend retreat in Cornish, New Hampshire in fall 2019, studio faculty discussed expectations by the BC administration with regard to assessing our studio art program, and ideas how we might meet those expectation. While we have not yet been able to come up with a conclusive and administrative friendly method to translate our various class findings for our studio core courses into hard data, the following presents an updated snapshots into the Painting Core.

PAINTING CORE

Course Objectives:

The purpose of foundation painting studio courses is to build basic skill levels and confidence with oil and acrylic painting by introducing students to materials, tools, techniques and the history of painting. A painting core class will entail technical demonstrations and also include critique sessions, lectures and visits to exhibitions. Work is mostly based on inquiry of the visible world, experimentation with tools and materials, as well as, (self-)critical analysis of the process of painting and the artworks created. Students are expected to paint in the studio during class meetings and spend considerable time working independently to complete projects. Students work on between 5-10 projects in a semester and several quick studies or exercises. Critiques, slide lectures and museum visits are an integral part of this course and

includes a written systematic analysis of artwork of about 3 pages. The course is open to both art majors and non-majors and has no pre-requisites.

Learning Outcomes:

After completing this course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Create original work following the criteria of project outlines and professional standards
2. Use critique and analysis to develop and refine works of art
3. Utilize appropriate materials, tools and techniques and good project management in the creation and presentation of all projects
4. Present evidence of self-directed work development through sketches, research, collages and other appropriate means
5. Effectively evaluate own and other student's work in critique and discussion sessions within the historical and contemporary context of the discipline
6. Display personal, conceptual and creative confidence and growths

Assessment:

/critiques:

A major form of studio art assessment takes the form of group and individual critique. The purpose of critiques is to offer critical and constructive feedback and to encourage creativity and visual expression. Finished projects are discussed in individual and group critiques and consist of three stages: Description of work, interpretation and evaluation. Emphasis is on idea and concept development as well as how students carried that out in terms of the use of techniques, materials, and the use of representational and formal compositional skills. Students may rework a project within an appropriate time period to refine or revise their artwork after feedback.

/grading criteria:

1. Engagement in class, that is preparedness, effort given to work process and works and participation in discussions and critiques.
2. Critical Analysis through visual, written and oral expression). Use of correct terminology.
3. Translation of visual ideas that grow out of sketches, critiques and conversations into fully developed artworks.
4. Accurateness, completeness and revisions of projects on due dates as defined in project descriptions and verbally communicated by instructor
5. Originality, depth of research, problem solving ability, technical and creative reach
6. Studio conduct, that is attendance, clean up and safe handling of materials and respect for work of others

/grade weighting:

- 80% Painting projects including Final Summary Project
- 10% Supplemental Works (studies, sketches, collages, sketchbook)
- 10% Written Systematic Analysis of Work of Art after exhibition visit

2) Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific. (Where are the department's expected learning outcomes for its Core courses accessible: on the web, in the catalog, or in your department handouts?)

The learning outcomes are published in the course syllabus for each course that is available on Canvas. The syllabus is also kept on file in the Art, Art History and Film Department office.

An online overview of Art Core courses are published here:

<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/undergraduate/core-curriculum/core-requirements.html>

Department Website Information about the Arts Core can be obtained here:

<https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/art/programs/studio-art/arts-core.html>

3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether students have achieved the stated outcomes for the Core requirement? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes have been achieved more or less well?)

Faculty in the various core areas are in the process of developing a quiz or questionnaire that tests fundamental knowledge in each area. These quizzes and questionnaires are usually given during the first class and again during the last class of the semester. The answers from the beginning to the end can be compared to see what background knowledge is brought to the class and how much information is acquired and retained during the semester. That said, the quizzes on some level only reflect a student's ability to articulate certain drawing concepts, their command of terminology and their ability to recall important figures from art history, not their actual ability to draw, generate ideas or reflect on their experiences as creative makers. For this reason, perhaps the greatest evidence of whether positive learning outcomes have been achieved is the public display of artworks in the hallways during the semester. Many faculty mount class exhibitions of projects where the work of all of the students in a given core class is displayed and publicly critiqued.

4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

All Full-time faculty as well as some part-time faculty teach core classes, and each is responsible for end of the semester evaluations of the classes they teach and oversee. In addition, each faculty member teaching core assigns the same written project, a visual analysis of a work of art, which they are responsible for evaluating.

At the end of the academic year, full-time drawing and painting faculty discuss learning outcomes and make recommendations for curriculum adjustments if needed. In fall 2019, we

had our first studio art retreat in Cornish, NH during which we discussed our recommendations for best achieving our stated learning goals as well as adjustments to course subjects and schedule. A second studio art retreat is under consideration for fall 2021.

Evidence of outcomes and overall development of the program is also discussed with the faculty of other areas (Art History and Film) during full department meetings that occur frequently during the semester. Specific questions or issues are discussed between the area directors and the chair.

5) What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence? (What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?)

Over the past few years it has become apparent that most students bring a familiarity of very few artists or art movements to the core studio classes, and many students have not had a formal drawing or painting class since middle school. Consequently, many core studio classes are happening at what is essentially a remedial level to compensate for deficiencies in the US secondary school education. This is complicated by the increasing number of international students especially from Asian countries who often display better foundational level technical drawing skills than their American counterparts. While most students are able to name one or two Impressionists such as Vincent van Gogh and Claude Monet, and one or two 20th. c. American artists such as Andy Warhol and Georgia O'Keeffe, basic familiarity with periods and styles of art history and especially contemporary issues and approaches is very limited. To increase student knowledge of artists and periods we have increased the emphasis given in introductory slide lectures. As part of a broader reexamination of an often male and Western art-centric history, colleagues also have begun to learn and discuss how to better address issues of racial and environmental justice in introductory and advanced courses and highlight art from Asia and Native/Indigenous artists and crafts person.

6) Date of the most recent program review. (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

Core studio art courses were discussed in length by full-time studio faculty during the most recent department self-study that was completed in 2011. Since that time, a smaller group has continued to discuss and update Core learning goals, most recently at the studio art faculty retreat in fall 2019. A second retreat is in planning for fall 2021 to discuss revisions to class schedule, Core and future faculty needs in the studio art area.