

Undergraduate Art History Program

The art history faculty has determined the following goals for the core classes in our program:

Student learning Goals

- 1) General familiarity with the history of art in a broadly defined geographic area and time span.
- 2) Ability to identify the medium, chronological period, geographical origin, religious and cultural-historical context of works of art.
- 3) Ability to analyze the formal, technical, stylistic, compositional characteristics of works of art—the time periods when these were introduced—and the potential influences that contribute to a work's overall visual appearance or organization.
- 4) Ability to identify the subject matter of works of art, their potential meaning and significance, and the larger intellectual, historical, or political trends—and patronage practices—that impact their production.
- 5) Ability to connect works of art to cultural manifestations in other disciplines in the liberal arts (literature, theology, music, dance, philosophy) and to apply methods from the sciences (economics, psychology, physics, chemistry) to their study.
- 6) Ability to distill the above knowledge and adduce evidence in the construction of logical, clearly reasoned arguments.

Overall Methods of Assessment in the Art History program:

All of these skills are introduced from the introductory level art history survey and the art history workshop, and incrementally reinforced in upper-level courses, whose area requirements allow the students to cover as wide a chronological and geographical scope as possible, as well as to engage in more specialized research. A student's progress is monitored in the one-on-one mentoring and advising they receive, and measured in terms of the grades they obtain on their examinations and written assignments. The expectations become stricter as the students move from lower to upper-level courses, and become comparable to those of graduate school in upper-level seminars. The students whose academic performance is outstanding then receive departmental honors, while those that are truly exceptional receive special recognition with the Macomber and Martin departmental awards.

Specific Measurement Process

We have determined two primary areas for assessment of our students in our core classes:

1. Visual Analysis

- Is the student able to identify important stylistic elements?
- Does the student use field-specific vocabulary?
- Is the student able to see how style suggests a meaning?

2. Historical Context and Meanings

- Is the student able to identify and describe the basic meanings of the imagery and symbols in the work of art in its historical context?

We focus on our primary introductory classes, ARTH 1101 Art History: From Prehistoric Times to the Gothic Era and ARTH 1102: Art History from Renaissance to Modern. These are our largest core courses. We select a sampling of papers from these classes, and have a panel of faculty evaluate them according to the criteria on the following instrument:

Art History Assessment Instrument for Core Classes

ASSESSMENT

OF WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED BY AN UNDERGRADUATE IN FA 101 and FA 102
Rated on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest:

- 1) Has the student employed discipline specific terminology correctly? _____
- 2) Has student addressed issues of formal analysis, and how these issues pertain to the meaning of the objects under discussion? _____
- 3) Has the student demonstrated an awareness of the historical context and meanings of the work of art? _____
- 4) Has the student constructed a persuasive argument? _____
- 5) Has the student properly documented the paper where needed? (notes, bibliography, etc.) _____

The assessment results are then discussed among the several faculty who are involved in teaching the sequence and adjustments are made to the syllabus and to the relative emphasis in the courses as a result of these discussions.