

## Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

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

Update to comprehensive description of studio core curriculum in Drawing and Painting by Prof. Gallagher and Prof. Mulhern and description of current studio area assessment methods and challenges.

Submitted by Hartmut Austen, June 2019

After Professors Mulhern and Tavarelli's retirement and my appointment in Fall 2016, as well as, other faculty changes, colleagues continued to use various individualized assessment questionnaires that were developed over the years. Students are usually 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 actually painting ability. To my knowledge, faculty would individually review, compare and analyze answers from their own course handouts and develop data that would be submitted to the chair. Discussions to produce a unified questionnaire and assessment method have not been conclusive at this point.

Due to the very nature of studio art classes which emphasize *making over learning* and individual insight over unified acquisition of knowledge, as well as, vast differences in, or lack thereof, previous art education of our incoming students, it is indeed difficult for us to develop a meaningful and accurate questionnaire at the beginning that uses written or multiple-choice questions/answers as its sole method. A more precise way of testing and assessing skill and knowledge for studio art courses would include, in my mind, a practical drawing or painting assignment (for example, creating a simple contour-line drawing of a still-life from observation, or, for painting courses, a color mixing task in a 30 or 45-minute time period). So far, we have been unsuccessful in producing a meaningful and administrative friendly questionnaire and data analysis method to translate our class findings for our studio core courses.

### **Course Objectives in Painting Core:**

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. It offers technical demonstrations and includes critique sessions, lectures and one or two exhibition visits. Work is mostly based on inquiry of the visible world, experimentation with tools and materials, as well as, (self-)critical analysis of processes and results of painting. 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:**

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 this out, that is: the appropriateness and use of techniques and materials and accurateness. Students may rework a project within an appropriate time period in order to try to improve their grade for a project.

#### **/grading criteria:**

1. Engagement in class, that is preparedness, effort given to work process and works and participation in discussions and critiques (Visual, written and oral expression)
2. Accurateness, Completeness and revisions of projects on due dates as defined in project descriptions and verbally communicated by instructor
3. Originality, problem solving ability, technical and creative growths
4. Studio conduct, that is attendance, clean up and safe handling of materials and respect for work of others

#### **/grade weighting:**

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

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**(Edited version of previously submitted document by Prof. Gallagher that elaborate on the studio areas assessment methods)**

- 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?)

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 Core learning goals. Although learning objectives vary and are specific to each class (painting, drawing, design, etc.), the following drawn from the syllabus of a Drawing 1 Core class is presented as an example:

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:

*The need to make, experience, and comprehend art has been one of the essential, defining human activities since history began. The arts are thus integral to human experience and expression, the development of critical interpretive skills, an understanding of creative processes, and the fostering of imagination and empathy. The critically engaged practice of the arts, arrived at through rigorous training, uniquely nurtures creativity and innovation.*

*Anchored in experimentation and creative problem-solving, the arts challenge students to make connections across traditional disciplinary boundaries.*

In keeping with the goals of the Arts Core as described in the Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences description of Core classes,

*students will acquire a greater understanding of the technical skills required to create works of art; students will gain knowledge of the aesthetic questions raised by works of art; and students will understand the historical contexts in which such works were created. As a result, students will be able to engage meaningfully with art through creative work and/or to articulate their understanding of art in oral and written expression.*

**Assessment Methods:**

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

Review of sketchbooks, observation of students drawing in class and their participation in group critiques, graded written assignments, presentation of final projects and final portfolio reviews.

*It is important that 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. During this private meeting, students are asked to reflect on their skill development and experience of art-making during the semester.*

**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?)

Course objectives, specific measurement processes, and assessment goals are part of each core class syllabus, which is handed out at the beginning of the semester. Most can be downloaded on e-syllabus, and are on file in the Fine Arts Department office.

A general description of the goals of the Art Core can be found on [www.bc.edu/core](http://www.bc.edu/core).

Specific core learning outcomes in Studio Art are as of June 2018 not listed on the department website, but should be added this summer.

**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?)

Professors Gallagher, Austen and Chong oversee Drawing, and Professors Alston Conley and Austen oversee Painting; each have developed a quiz that tests fundamental knowledge in each area. These quizzes are 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 publically critiqued.

**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?)

There are many different part-time and full-time faculty members teaching introductory core classes in Studio Art. Full-time faculty Gallagher, Austen, Conley and Chong all 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

the near future, we are planning on having a meeting—perhaps a retreat at Cohasset- of all faculty (full and part-time) to discuss our recommendations for best achieving our stated learning goals.

**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, yet with little or no cultural familiarity with western art historical tradition. While most students are able to name one or two Impressionists such as Vincent van Gogh and Claude Monet, and one or two 20<sup>th</sup> c. American artists such as Andy Warhol and Georgia O’Keeffe, basic familiarity with periods and styles of art history as well 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 highlight materials from Asia and Native/Indigenous sources.

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

Self-Study and External Review completed in February 2011.