

Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM: STUDIO ART IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ART, ART HISTORY AND FILM STUDIES

May 2022

Update to comprehensive description of studio core curriculum in studio art by Profs. Chong and Austen with focus on the **Painting 1 Foundations course**.

OVERVIEW:

The goal of the CORE studio art program is to provide students with a learning environment in which students will gain a greater understanding of the technical skills required to create works of art and increase knowledge of the aesthetic questions raised by works of art and to understand the historical contexts in which such works were created. In Painting 1 Foundations courses specifically, students are introduced to formal elements such as color, value and composition and to learn to experience translating the observed situations (still lifes, landscape etc.) onto the two dimensional surface. Students also learn about painting as a process rather than a result. At the end of this one-semester course, students will be able to engage meaningfully with art through creative work and 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>

Studio full time and part-time faculty strives to nurture creativity and innovation in our students, and to critically engage them 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 manners: Review of supplemental materials (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. 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 completed set of

paintings that a student prepared in a semester, Instructors get a fuller insight into the student's growing proficiency and skill in using materials and use of visual language.

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 unified and meaningful questionnaire at the beginning that uses written or multiple-choice questions/answers without a practical drawing or painting component.

With several retired colleagues and new incoming faculty over the past few years, that system has continually evolved and is still evolving. Assessment Information from the individual studio core classes reaching the chair for submission to MCAS has been infrequent and rather anecdotal in nature.

The following are excerpts from the Core Painting 1 Foundations syllabus.

Course Objectives:

The purpose of foundation painting studio courses is to build basic skill levels and confidence in 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 6-10 projects in a semester as well as several quick studies and exercises. Critiques and slide lectures are an integral part of this course and include a written systematic analysis of observed artwork of about 3-5 pages.

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: 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 this out, that is: the appropriateness and use of techniques and materials and accuracy. 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 (critical analysis through visual, written and oral expression) and use of correct terminology.
2. Translation of visual ideas that grow out of sketches, critiques and conversations into fully developed artworks.
3. Accurateness, completeness and revisions of projects on due dates as defined in project descriptions and verbally communicated by instructor
4. Originality, depths of research, problem solving ability, technical and creative growth.
5. 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 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.

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?)

In addition to individual painting core faculty conducting their individual reviews, the painting area coordinator provides to his colleagues a questionnaire that they use to assess their courses and report back. The form, which is shared through Drive, contains 4 sections with 2-4 questions each. The sections cover final review, written analysis, studio work and process, as well as, general comments about class and the Core (a summary for spring 2022 is attached as a separate document). Answers from that questionnaire are rated from 1-5 with "5" being the highest rate. That said, this questionnaire is somewhat anecdotal in our judgment and provides only a very limited insight into the actual learning success of a student. In our opinion, the greatest evidence of whether positive learning outcomes have been achieved is the public display of artworks in the hallways during the semester and discussions between colleagues and students that arise in response to the displays. We regularly see students from other departments stopping by to check out the art on the walls. We encourage our faculty colleagues to mount class exhibitions of projects where the work of *all* of the students in a given core class.

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?)

At the end of the academic year, the full-time faculty responsible for their correspondent area (painting, drawing, photography, etc.) collect and review the evidence from their full and part-time colleagues in their discipline. They make adjustments within their areas and if needed they discuss particular issues during studio area faculty meetings. Evidence of outcomes and overall development of the program is frequently discussed with the faculty of other areas (Art History and Film Studies) during full department meetings that occur frequently during the semester. Specific questions or issues are discussed between the area directors and the chair who at times also participates in area meetings.

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. Also, the majority of our students display advanced verbal and written skills while at the same time their art related visual literacy and practical confidence often appears underdeveloped. 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 and confidence 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 to modern and contemporary art 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, gender, and environmental justice in introductory and advanced courses and highlight art from Asia and Native/Indigenous artists and craft-persons.

For specific assessments from three colleagues teaching four sections of the Core Painting 1 Foundations in Spring 2022, please see the attached survey document mentioned in question 3.

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. During

a second retreat in the fall 2021, we discussed revisions to class schedule and Core, as well as, future faculty needs in the studio art area.