

Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

Department/Program

Art, Art History and Film Studies Department

May 2024

Update to comprehensive description of studio core curriculum in studio art by Prof. Chong with focus on the Drawing Foundation 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 Drawing 1 Foundations courses specifically, students are introduced to formal elements such as line work, shading, tone, and composition and to learn to experience translating the observed world (still life objects, landscape, buildings, etc.) onto the two dimensional surface. Students also learn about drawing 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.

- 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 in the following manners: review of supplemental materials such as sketchbooks, observation of students' performance 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 with both the professor and peers on an ongoing basis

throughout the academic period. At the end of the semester, students meet one-on-one with their faculty members, and 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 body of work (for Drawing Foundations, this is the equivalent of 15 pieces), instructors get a fuller insight into the student's growing proficiency and skill in using materials and use of visual language.

Due to the varied nature of studio art classes which emphasize making, improving in technique, and creative thinking over unified acquisition of knowledge, it is indeed difficult for us, the studio art faculty, to develop a unified and meaningful questionnaire at the beginning that uses written or multiple-choice questions/answers without a practical drawing component.

For the 2024 Assessment purposes, these are the objectives from the Core Drawing 1 Foundations course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Drawing is thinking visually and communicating those visualizations to others. This is an introductory studio course with an emphasis on representation from direct observation. Drawing is fundamentally about learning to see, and to transport that vision onto paper through a variety of mark making techniques. Students will practice analysis and rendering of line, form, value, and texture through the use of various media. In addition, students will engage in comprehensive study of the elements and principles of design and composition. A progressive development of critical vocabulary is also covered as students will learn to talk intelligently about their projects.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To visually perceive, analyze, and interpret visual information through the act of drawing.
- To work with the visual elements of line, shape, form, space, value, and texture in the creation of drawings.
- Gain an understanding of figure and ground and their role in a drawing.
- Recognize and synthesize the representational and abstract considerations of drawing.
- Begin to develop an individual drawing language that allows you to express your own vision and ideas.

ASSIGNMENTS

There will be weekly assignments designed to strengthen the concepts and techniques covered in class. Students must be prepared to spend a minimum of 4-6 hours independently working on their projects in addition to attending class meetings. All assignments are expected to be complete and passed in on time. For each day the assignment is late, half of a letter grade will be deducted from the grade. All assignments are available on the course's canvas page.

Assignments and projects will be evaluated for their success in three areas of considerations:

- a. Drawing materials: your choice and use of these in each project.
- b. Composition and presentation: how you frame your response to each project and its technical effectiveness.

c. Quality: how you craft your work.

GRADING

- 10% Paper—A Systematic Analysis of a Work of Art
- 10% Mid Term Project
- 30% Work in class (includes sketchbook)
- 30% Work outside class (includes sketchbook)
- 20% Final project

Letter grades are defined and published in the University Bulletin. Grades are based on regular attendance and participation in class, critique sessions, technical demonstrations, as well as the successful completion and presentation of a final portfolio.

- 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 drawing core faculty conducting their individual reviews, the drawing area coordinator provides to his colleagues a questionnaire that they use to assess their courses and report back. These 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 are compared to see what background knowledge is brought to the class and how much information is acquired and retained during the semester.

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 encourage our faculty colleagues to mount class exhibitions where all students are represented.

- 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 to the core studio classes, and many students have not had a formal drawing 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 often appears underdeveloped. Consequently, many core studio classes (Drawing Foundations included) are happening at what is essentially a remedial level to compensate for deficiencies in the US secondary school education. For instance, while most students are able to name Vincent van Gogh and Picasso, basic familiarity with art history movements 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.

- 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 our latest (third) retreat in the fall 2023, we discussed revisions to class schedule and Core, as well as, future faculty needs in the studio art area.