

# 2017 Visual Arts Assessment Report

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## I. ANNUAL ASSESSMENT MEETINGS

1. Meeting, March 23, 1.25 hours. In attendance: H.R. Buechler, Richard Kegler, Katie Waugh  
*Topics:*
  - Addressed “Graphic Design” concern from 2016 Action Plan: Restructured required classes, and renamed program to “Visual Communications.” The new structure better accommodates student performance in minor, takes better advantage of our current course offerings, and better aligns with disciplinary expectations.
  - Outlined new curriculum requirements for Visual Arts major core: Paper Making is now one of the three core Book Arts classes through which students may satisfy a major requirement. Students concentrating in Book Arts will now have a stronger foundation in core skills (Bookbinding, Paper Making, and Letterpress). (Related Program Goals: #3: Professionalism; #5: Life-Long Learning)
2. Meeting: April 26, 1.5 hours. In attendance: H. R. Buechler, Nancy Demerdash-Fatemi, Richard Kegler, Katie Waugh  
*Topics:*
  - Reviewed end-of-year assessment procedures and goals for new colleagues
  - Reviewed progress on last year’s Action Plan topics and Program Changes
  - Began to outline Program Changes and Action Plan for upcoming year (addressed in further detail below).
3. Meeting: May 24, 1.75 hours. In attendance: H. R. Buechler, Nancy Demerdash-Fatemi (via Skype), Richard Kegler, Ted Lossowski, Katie Waugh  
*Topics:*
  - Reviewed available data on student outcomes
  - Defined most relevant forms of data for our discipline (please see “**V: Action Plan**”)
  - Established data collection procedures for 2017-2018 assessment work (please see “**V: Action Plan**”)

- Identified key student outcome category not outlined by program goal objectives, resulting in changes made to “Goal 3: Professionalism” (please see “*IV: Program Changes*”)
  - Discussed pedagogical methods related to Outcomes and Validations aligned with “Goal 4: Communication”
4. Follow-up activities, between May 24 - May 31, 2017:
- Written analysis of individual courses by Nancy Demerdash & H. R. Buechler.
  - Additional assessment meeting held by Ted Lossowski and Katie Waugh to discuss studio arts concentration assessment analysis.
  - Sharing of Assessment Report and Plan drafts by Katie Waugh

## II. CLOSING THE LOOP

During the period under review, the Visual Arts Program was fortunate to have significant portions of the curriculum taken on by several new colleagues: H.R. Buechler as the Victor Hammer Fellow in the Book Arts, Nancy Demerdash-Fatemi as a full-time art history visiting assistant professor, and part-time adjuncts Lorrie Frear and Rob LoMoscolo in the Book Arts. Given this, the program underwent multiple changes over the past year, both those anticipated in the 2016 Assessment Report as well as new classroom methodologies instituted by our new colleagues.

The 2016 Assessment Report did not identify specific data collection methods the department would use during 2017, and as a result some data is rather narrative in nature, although small class sizes allow for very accurate tracking of individual and collective learning outcomes. The 2016 Assessment Report and Plan clearly state key areas of student learning the program has been targeting, aligned with Program Goals and subsequent changes to be made in coursework and student learning outcomes during 2016-2017. Below is a summary of the results of *Program Changes* from the 2016-2017 year, as outlined in last year’s assessment work.

- **Redesigned facilities and Studio Policies in the Book Arts Center**

BAC Director Richard Kegler drastically redesigned the function of all Book Arts work-spaces in Morgan Hall during the Spring of 2016. During the academic year of 2016-2017, students’ greater access to the BAC’s facilities was further encouraged through H.R. Buechler’s institution of required Open Studio hours. Open Studio hours serve to extend the guided instruction in each of her courses, to align them with the widely-accepted practice of conducting 5-6 contact hours per week in studio disciplines. Participation was a required addition to students’ coursework, and tracked through a studio sign-in sheet.

No data was collected to objectively measure impacts of these policies, but anecdotal experience supports the positive outcome of these measures, particularly in providing students more guided mentorship on in-progress work. Future data may be collected on these areas, as in the updated 2017 Assessment Plan we have added program objectives that specifically address students’ development of sound and informed work habits. (*Goal 3: Professionalism*)

- **Course Revisions & Additions**

The 2016 Assessment Report cited new courses added to the curriculum in an attempt to provide greater clarity, breadth, or experience for students. No formal assessment is available to evaluate their impact, largely due to long course rotations. (These courses were not all taught a second time in the 2016-2017 academic year). However, their impact on student outcomes may be evaluated in the following examples:

- BKRT285: Tp: Intro to Papermaking (FA15): This course has been modified to assume a far more prominent role in the Visual Arts Program, and will assume a regular part of the course rotation. Beginning in Fall 2017, it will form the basis for a foundations curriculum in the Book Arts, as is practiced in other Book Arts programs. As such, it will be far more relevant to establish assessment procedures within this course.
- ART385: Tp: Stitched Fiber (SP16): This course is scheduled to be taught again in Spring 2018, and key outcomes will be evaluated according to the priorities outlined in *V: Action Plan*. Student learning outcomes related to Goal #2, Obj. 1 may be somewhat anecdotally validated by the fact that 4 of the 5 major students who took the course and were still currently enrolled in 2016-2017 continued to pursue key concepts and strategies introduced in this course in their other major or capstone work.
- ARTH385: Tp: Museums, Epistemologies, and the Shaping of Knowledge (SP17): Upon future iterations of this course, Prof. Demerdash-Fatemi plans to institute required visits to the Writing Center, as a large portion of student learning is demonstrated here through written coursework. Such work will again be tracked via items in *V: Action Plan*.

- **Restructured Procedures for VART: Art History Senior Thesis**

2016-2-17 marks the first iteration of a newly restructured course sequence and expectations for the capstone work executed by students concentrating in Art History. This new structure moves the thesis from a single-semester, 4-credit course (VART402: Art History) encapsulating the entire experience, to a 2-semester sequence of 2-credit courses (ARTH401 & 402). This change came about based on faculty identification of students' developmental needs, and on feedback from current and former VART: Art History majors.

Key Learning outcomes and validations that were evaluated this year are necessarily broad, given that we are evaluating the efficacy of a newly implemented capstone curriculum. Four key outcomes define this, and are listed below. Rubrics used to evaluate coursework are included at the end of this document.

GOAL #2: CRITIQUE & INFORMED DECISION MAKING					
Objective	Outcome	How Measured	Measurement Tool	Success Criteria	Data Location
#1 Connect the history of art and study of visual culture with contemporary practice by relating students' individual practices (methods, media, techniques and subject matter) to those of the past.	#2 Students in the Art History concentration will begin to use critical approaches.	Senior Thesis; research papers in 300-level classes; formal oral report; response papers	Locally Developed Rubric, Confirmation of Seminar Participants	All AH majors write and acceptable thesis demonstrating understanding and application of at least one critical approach	Thesis Archives

Student outcomes: While all students passed their thesis work (C and above), 2 out of 3 students were successful at implementing critical approaches and methodologies to art historical interpretation. One student was particularly obstinate to revise their writing based on added research from suggested primary/secondary resources and written feedback.

Interpretation: This was evaluated over the course of both semesters, based on the students' completion of an annotated bibliography and prospectus in the first semester, as well as drafts written in the second semester. In future iterations of the fall semester ARTH 401, tutorials on methodologies (a condensed refresher of VART 300) will be implemented so as to reacquaint students with the critical approaches of art historical interpretation.

GOAL #3: PROFESSIONALISM					
Objective	Outcome	How Measured	Measurement Tool	Success Criteria	Data Location
#2 Capstone completion of a thesis research project.	#1 Students in the Art History concentration will write a 25-page thesis.	Senior Thesis	Locally Developed Rubric; Thesis Guidelines	All AH majors must successfully present a completed thesis.	Thesis Archives
	#2 Students in the Art History concentration will make a public presentation regarding the capstone thesis.	Senior Thesis Presentation	Locally Developed Rubric; Confirmation by presentation audience	All AH majors must successfully present and defend their work in a public forum.	Faculty files

Student outcomes: All students completed their thesis requirements (at the level of C or above)

Interpretation: This final evaluation was based in part on the quality of their public oral presentations and on the improvements exhibited (or absent) in the students' final thesis drafts. In future iterations of ARTH 402, students will participate in peer review workshops so as to improve the quality of early drafts, and they will also be

expected to visit the Writing Center multiple times over the course of the semester, as a part of their final grade.

GOAL #6: RESEARCH					
Objective	Outcome	How Measured	Measurement Tool	Success Criteria	Data Location
#2 Develop the ability to define and follow through on research questions, whether related to art historical analysis or studio projects.	Students will demonstrate ability to define research goals, identify lines of enquiry, and synthesize findings into a cohesive argument or creative response.	Written Assignments, Research Papers, Studio Project Proposals, Evidence of Artistic Research	Locally Developed Rubric;	90% of students to perform at or above D level; 65% at or above B level; 20% at or above A level	Faculty files

Student outcomes: All students met this goal of learning how to conduct research.

Interpretation: ARTH 401 featured lessons on primary vs. secondary sources, but a stronger system of tutorials needs to be put in place, in which students apply the concepts in class through various exercises. These tutorials on various topics will be future iterations of ARTH 401 and 402.

GOAL #4: COMMUNICATION					
Objective	Outcome	How Measured	Measurement Tool	Success Criteria	Data Location
#2 Develop strong, accurate and convincing writing styles.	#2 Students will demonstrate more complete analytical skills in translating between the visual to the verbal, by conducting effective, appropriate, and creatively generative research.	Research paper, Evidence of Artistic Research	Locally Developed Rubric	90% of students to perform at or above D level; 65% at or above B level; 20% at or above A level	Faculty files

Student outcomes: All students met this goal of developing effective communication skills.

We will continue evaluating these Learning Outcomes, as a single year of only 3 students does not constitute enough data to support lasting conclusions. However, several immediate changes will be instituted in response to students' performance related to these Learning Outcomes, as outlined below in "*IV: Program Changes*". The performance of these students, in part, also supported the program's adoption of new Student Learning Objectives in "Goal 3: Professionalism."

- **Continued Evolution of VART: Studio Art Thesis**

The 2016 Assessment Report identified particular preemptive concern about the performance of the class of 2017, based on evaluation of key areas in previous coursework (particularly ART350; the class shared a particularly low degree of competence in this prerequisite course, as indicated by culminating course grades and review of feedback for individual projects).

Key learning outcomes and validations evaluated this year revolved around establishing more sustainable and thoughtful development of thesis work, and increased critical self-awareness as demonstrated through written and verbal communication. As suggested above, our goals this year centered on raising these specific students' abilities in these areas to acceptable levels, rather than instating an increased focus or greater expectation for program growth in these areas.

GOAL #2: CRITIQUE & INFORMED DECISION MAKING					
Objective	Outcome	How Measured	Measurement Tool	Success Criteria	Data Location
#1 Connect the history of art and study of visual culture with contemporary practice by relating students' individual practices (methods, media, techniques and subject matter) to those of the past.	#4 Students in the Studio & Book Arts concentrations will apply informed conceptual frameworks in their own expressions.	Senior critiques; special projects; exhibitions; Senior Thesis Exhibition	Locally Developed Rubric; Confirmation by extra-institutional critique committee members	All Studio majors can effectively apply artistic techniques, media expressions or conceptual underpinnings in their senior work.	Documentation of artworks and installations

Student outcomes: 2/3 met criteria

Interpretation: Each student struggled profoundly in this area at various times as made most evident in weekly senior critiques, but was at least moderately aware of their context to some degree. One student saw remarkable growth in this area, and devoted a significant amount of energy throughout the two-course sequence to self-reflection and exploration through a variety of conceptual frameworks through which she might contextualize her work, and while the final work still required additional re-evaluation in this regard, the journey demonstrated evidence of this competency. Another student, however, struggled to gain the self-awareness needed to truly gain full creative control of the processes and visual strategies implemented in the thesis work. This student's interests and methods did contain within them significant and rigorous conceptual possibilities, but for reasons largely centering on the student's personal issues, these possibilities were not fully explored nor expressed.

GOAL #3: PROFESSIONALISM					
Objective	Outcome	How Measured	Measurement Tool	Success Criteria	Data Location
#1 Capstone production of a portfolio with advanced-level artwork that is stylistically and thematically cohesive.	#2 Students in the Studio & Book Arts concentrations will explain their work, verbally and in writing, emphasizing professional and public speaking skills.	Junior (Creative Art Projects) Group Critiques and Research Statements, Senior Seminar Critiques, Thesis and Artist statements; Senior Oral review	Locally Developed Rubric; Senior validations are Confirmation by extra-institutional critique committee members	All Studio majors must present an acceptable statement regarding their work.	Thesis Archives

Student outcomes: 2/3 students met criteria

Interpretation: Two students presented reasonably acceptable written support materials, characterized by moderate self-awareness of context and motivations, as presented through reasonable writing technique. Both students worked throughout the two semesters to drastically change and re-work their statements, although last-minute stresses brought on by thesis installation seem to have prevented final updates to their written work that would have fully reflected the critical positions within which their finished work operated. One student failed to demonstrate acceptable levels of self-awareness, particularly in written support materials and in the Senior Oral Defense, although was occasionally more proficient in these areas during individual critique conversations and in-progress drafts of written work. This points to inconsistency in work effort and stress-management issues, rather than complete lack of ability.

Additionally: New coursework in VART401 & 402 was implemented during 2016-2017 to increase accountability. Although it was not included in the 2016 Assessment Plan, it was described in the "Program Changes" section of the Assessment Report. During this year, Senior Studio Art students were asked to commit weekly self-evaluations and goal setting to writing, posted on Moodle. All students complied and used this procedure to help define goals and direct their own development. However, only one did so consistently. We will continue evaluating these Learning Outcomes next year, as these are perpetual areas that form a key component of the major's capstone work. Additionally, they fit in with the Visual Arts Program's Action Plan for 2017-2018, along with the addition of a revised Program Goal #3. With the areas identified in our Action Plan, it is our hope that we may be able to address some issues found at the Senior level earlier in our course sequences.

### III. EXAMINATION OF ASSESSMENT DATA

The 2016 Assessment Report Action Plan focused on several general goals, but those related specifically to student learning outcomes centered on evaluation of the changes made to coursework and procedures in the capstone work for both Studio Art and Art History. As a result, assessment data is largely reported above in *"II. Closing the Loop."*

Remaining learning outcomes related to last year's Action Plan are as follows:

GOAL #3: PROFESSIONALISM					
Objective	Outcome	How Measured	Measurement Tool	Success Criteria	Data Location
#1 Capstone production of a portfolio with advanced-level artwork that is stylistically and thematically cohesive.	#1 Students in the Studio & Book Arts concentrations will develop a Senior Thesis Exhibition comprised of mature artwork that is both stylistically and thematically connected and supports a conceptual goal.	Senior critiques; Creative Arts Projects Critiques; ; Oral Review; Artist statements	Locally Developed Rubric; Senior Validations Confirmed by extra-institutional critique committee members	All Studio majors must successfully execute and exhibit a considered body of work	Documentation of artworks and installations
	#2 Students in the Studio & Book Arts concentrations will explain their work, verbally and in writing, emphasizing professional and public speaking skills.	Junior (Creative Art Projects) Group Critiques and Research Statements, Senior Seminar Critiques, Thesis and Artist statements; Senior Oral review	Locally Developed Rubric; Senior validations are Confirmation by extra-institutional critique committee members	All Studio majors must present an acceptable statement regarding their work.	Thesis Archives

Data (Outcome #1): 3/3 students met defined Success Criteria.

Interpretation (Outcome #1): Students were uniformly successful in executing long-term bodies of work that are "stylistically and thematically cohesive," as they are quite familiar with and generally excited about creating self-defined artwork that speaks to their own individual purposes. No students even struggled to achieve a sense of cohesion in their work. The maturity of that work, and its effective relationship to a conceptual goal, however, does need strengthening for each of these students. These qualities were present, and therefore meet the success criteria, but their quality varied significantly. We hope to address this via methods outlined below in *IV: Program Changes*.

(Data and interpretation related to Outcome 2 have been included above in *II: Closing the Loop*

Throughout the 2016 Assessment Report, while not specifically cited in the Action Plan, was a pervasive focus on Goal 5: Life-Long Learning. Available data regarding related learning outcomes follows:

<b>GOAL #5: LIFE-LONG LEARNING</b>					
Objective	Outcome	How Measured	Measurement Tool	Success Criteria	Data Location
#1 Achieve self-awareness of individual proclivities, talents and attractions to visual solutions.	#1 Students in the Studio & Book Arts concentrations will develop their own studio practice based on recognizing individual strengths and interests in various concepts and media.	Evidence of Artistic Research; culminating term project; portfolio,	Locally Developed Rubric; Confirmation in class critiques	90% of students to perform at or above D level; 65% at or above B level; 20% at or above A level	Faculty files; sketchbooks kept by students
	#2 Students in the Studio & Book Arts concentrations will foster the continued development of their own idiomatic sensibilities and conceptual trajectories while incorporating authoritative writings by others.	Culminating term project; written assignments ; Reading Assignments and response papers; exhibition critiques	Locally Developed Rubric; Confirmation in class critiques	90% of students to score at or above D level; 65% at or above B level; 20% at or above A level	Faculty files; Documentation of artworks and installations

Outcome #1, Validation: Evidence of Artistic Research: (from ART350 & VART402)

	AVG	% Above D	% Above B	% above A
ART350	54%	25%	25%	25%
VART401	61%	67%	67%	67%

Interpretation:

This validation consists of what may traditionally be called a “sketchbook”; its intention is to track students’ intellectual engagement and process of discovery in their studio practice. The guidelines for this work are quite broad, but may consist of material studies, sketches, mock-ups, written responses, or reflections on influential artists or ideas. When students “fail” at this, it’s usually due to their not fully participating; they are graded on accurate completion. The fact that they do not fully comply is concerning, and may be understood as indicative of the following:

1. ART350 is taught via individual meetings with instructors, and as a result a very close mentorship instructional model means much of the interpretive or discursive elements that should be tracked in “artists’ research” are also executed in a less formal, conversational manner. Indeed, specific artists, methods, and ideas return during these conversations repeatedly. A majority of the individual students in this junior cohort routinely struggle with compliance

and work ethic in other courses, so while the objective may have been partially met, the validation was not always present. It most likely “felt like,” to students, that they had met this requirement, although their own maintenance of intellectual record-keeping was not necessarily met.

2. A few students in this cohort (junior and senior studio art majors) continuously struggled to acknowledge the primacy of *process* in their work, instead focusing entirely on preconceived end goals. As a result, this coursework always assumed last priority for them. And, as always, with very low class sizes a few students’ non-compliance can drastically impact percentages.

Given that this is a particularly low level of participation this year, we will watch next year’s senior class closely to ensure they do not repeat this non-compliance from ART350. In all cases, students exhibited various strengths in their other, primary, coursework. Changes to coursework and instructional methods in ART350, VART401, and VART402 are discussed below in *IV: Program Changes*.

Data: GOAL 5, Outcome #2, Validation: Reading Responses: (from ART119, 121, 223, 261)

	AVG	% Above D	% Above B	% above A
ART119	65%	75%	50%	25%
ART121	81%	70%	70%	60%
ART261	86%	100%	85%	46%
ART223	78%	67%	67%	50%

Interpretation:

Early integration of theoretical texts is crucial in college-level studio art education, and are a component of most studio art courses. ART119 is a fundamental foundations course and as such had the highest percentage of first-semester college students, who struggled at times with college-level reading. In all classes but ART261, the lowest scores reflect student non-compliance (not turning in some reading responses), rather than a preponderance of students not fully engaging with the reading material. With small class sizes, even a few students who miss several assignments will result in dramatically impacting these percentages. However, it’s necessary that all students recognize the importance of reading for the development of an informed studio art practice, so these low scores are concerning. New emphasis on process and sustained work ethic as described in our newly-revised Program Goal 3 may be used to shape a response to this issue, as will greater variation in reading-response methods.

*Relevant rubrics and assessment tools are included at the end of this document.*

## IV. PROGRAM CHANGES

### Changes to Program Objectives

The faculty determined an area of emphasis that was missing from our Program Goal Objectives, specifically having to do with students' development of a personal sense of responsibility to their work and ideas, and consequent development of rigorous work habits and realistic project management skills. While each of us has methods for emphasizing this in our classes, we realized that there was no specific focus on the development of these aptitudes in our previous assessment plans, and therefore no formal method of analysis for it. As a result, we have re-worked objectives that serve Goal 3: Professionalism to better delineate our expectations. We now have the tools to evaluate this collectively across the Program, as described below in our "Action Plan"

### Program-Wide Instructional Changes

In an effort to build greater program-wide continuity, the faculty have agreed that several strategies will be adopted in coursework across the curriculum:

1. Far greater reliance on the Writing Center: Students enrolled in Book Arts, Art History, and Studio Art courses will all be at times required to use Writing Center resources. This emphasis on writing across the curriculum is hoped to better demonstrate the inextricable necessity of writing as part of a sound creative practice, while also practically preparing students for greater success in capstone work. In addition, classroom workshops and greater focus on writing-for-art will be introduced. This policy will be assessed according to methods outlined below in *V. Action Plan*.
2. Need for greater emphasis on the crucial role of iteration, preparation, and failure as key components of a well-formed academic and creative process. To illustrate the need for this, faculty identified in the class of 2017 studio art students a tendency towards self-imposed restrictions and detrimentally "safe" decision making. Our intended new focus has far-reaching implications for all components of the Visual Arts Program, and will be practically addressed using developmentally appropriate methods throughout the 100-400 level courses. New Program Goal (#3) above is intended to help assess these changes. Examples of such methods will include the following:

#### ART350

- Coursework intended to help students accept, understand, and process "failure" as a necessary and useful element in artistic development may help students arrive at greater self awareness and more rigorous or challenging work in VART401 & 402. In Fall 2017, students will be assigned one project alongside their regular coursework that will be subject to long-term reworking and revision throughout the semester. It is our hope that this will encourage students to better understand the value of self-evaluation and rigorous reiteration in the development of a mature studio practice. (Goal #2: Obj.#4; Goal #5: Obj. 1)

### Book Arts

- H.R. Buechler's on-going use of critique to introduce failure as part of a process, with emphasis on encouraging students to talk themselves through problem solving. Again, this will be evaluated using new Program Goal 3 definitions.

### Sources:

Faculty are compiling a reading list to support this emphasis in the curriculum. Course readings may include selections from the following, among others:

- Selected by H.R. Buechler:
  - Liz Lerman's *Critical Response Process*
  - Anne West and Katarina Weslien's *Mapping the Intelligence of Artistic Work*
  - Readings from the NEA on *Failure* as part of the art experience
- Selected by Katie Waugh:
  - Lisa Le Feuvre's *Documents of Contemporary Art: Failure*
  - Glenn Adamson & Julia Bryan Wilson's *Art in the Making: Artists and the Materials*
  - Maarten Simons & Jan Masschelein, *School — A Matter of Form*

### **Changes to Coursework and Instructional Methods:**

- ARTH401 & 402:
  - Offering thematic tutorials in writing techniques, e.g. constructing an argument, the Chicago Manual of Style method of citation, formal & historical analysis, etc. (**Goal #4: Obj. 2**)
  - Instituting a system of peer review workshops among students to ensure accountability, quality control, and broader engagement with aspects of the art historical writing process (e.g. identifying a thesis statement, primary vs. secondary source material, visual analysis that supports the overall argument, etc). (**Goal #4: Obj. 2, Goal #6: Obj. 2**)
  - Creating firmer in-progress benchmarks and graded in-progress work (e.g. prospectus drafts, chapter drafts), with more rigorous system of accountability instated throughout the ARTH401/402 sequence. (**Goal #6: Obj. 2 — in addition, this will be reflected in future work with newly structured Goal #3: Obj. 2 in 2017 Plan**)
- VART401, 402:
  - Weekly Moodle Journals: Greater emphasis during class meetings and more structured thematic, weekly prompts will be introduced next year to encourage more regular engagement. (new **Goal #3: Obj. 2 ; Goal #5, Obj. 1**)
  - Continued emphasis on developing quality of writing, through establishment of mandatory consultation with the Writing Center, in addition to clearer

instruction in syllabi regarding final grade weight distribution of grades on all written coursework. (*Goal 4, Obj. 2*)

- Coursework specifically intended to develop skills in new objectives in Program Goal, #3: Far greater detail, depth, and rigor will be assigned for the VART401 Thesis Proposal.
- VART315:
  - In the next iteration of this course, we will instate collaboration with Studio faculty to support instruction in applied techniques and topics related to visual arts practitioners. (*Goal #5, Obj.1, Outcome 3*)

## V. ACTION PLAN

### **Objectives under review for 2017-2018:**

During assessment conversations in the Spring of 2017, the faculty identified three general areas of student performance we feel are crucial to evaluate in the coming year:

1. Students' accountability, purposeful risk-taking, and personal integrity towards their work
2. Students' writing skills across the curriculum.
3. Students' contextual self-awareness and abilities to self-evaluate

These areas touch on multiple learning outcomes and course work, and do continue themes we have evaluated in *Section II: Closing the Loop*. In addition to those areas identified as continued assessment targets in that section, we wish to establish a renewed and more targeted focus on the objectives listed below. They will be evaluated as they appear throughout the Visual Arts curriculum, rather than solely at the capstone level:

- Goal 2: CRITIQUE AND INFORMED DECISION MAKING  
Objective 1: Connect the history of art and study of visual culture with contemporary practice by relating students' individual practices (methods, media, techniques, and subject matter) to those of the past.
- Goal 3: PROFESSIONALISM  
Objective 2: Establish responsible work habits through development of project and time management skills.
- Goal 4: COMMUNICATION  
Objective 2: Develop strong, accurate, and convincing writing styles
- Goal 5: LIFELONG LEARNING  
Objective 2: Reach self-awareness of one's own powers of observation, analysis, writing style, and creative vision.

### **Data Collection:**

The faculty have determined that the content of our rubric scores and written and verbal feedback constitute the most accurate form of data for evaluating student performance. Faculty teaching courses that include the above Objectives will tabulate the content and frequency of themes in specific coursework feedback pertaining to these learning validations

for each course, thus providing an accurate view of exactly how students are performing. Such feedback is guided by rubrics, and is additionally expanded on in verbal and written form. It is our hope that in this way we can identify any consistencies throughout the program's student outcomes. Such feedback data may take the following forms:

- Rates at which which students earn successful scores in relevant aspects of local rubrics. (e.g. for a research paper: scores for "Use of Evidence," to evaluate Goal 4, Obj. 2, Outcome 2).
- Percentage of students requiring feedback or correction on a specific element of an assignment (e.g. multiple students in a class demonstrating a similar error or misunderstanding in comprehension of skills, information, methodologies, etc, that relate to any of the above Learning Outcomes).

**Timeline:**

Faculty will gather data pertaining to their own courses at the end of each semester, and share this data digitally with the program Assessment Point-Person (Katie Waugh). Program assessment meetings will take place during January and May, and additionally as needed.

## GRADING RUBRICS

The following rubrics serve as a general outline for student assessment; locally-developed rubrics and considerations further refine feedback.

### A: Studio Arts Courses General Rubric:

Grade	
A	<p><b>Class Work:</b> Student demonstrates outstanding skill, discernment and understanding of visual principles in accomplishing her or his work. The quality of work is excellent, and it is integrated with exceptional creativity.</p> <p><b>Class Participation:</b> Student demonstrates through discussion, critique, and studio interaction outstanding ability to discuss and assess work, communicating how visual elements and strategies are used. The student demonstrates extensive use and understanding of concepts and terminology used in the discipline.</p> <p><b>Homework Projects:</b> In the case of studio assigned homework (activity) the student completes the assignment in all aspects and creatively exploits possibilities within open-ended assignments. The work demonstrates skill, good judgment, and application of principles. In the case of written assignments, oral presentations, and research, the work/presentations/document, presents sound research and is well written and well presented.</p>
B	<p><b>Class Work:</b> Student demonstrates moderate skill, discernment and understanding of visual principles in accomplishing her or his work. The quality of work is good, and it is integrated with some creativity.</p> <p><b>Class Participation:</b> Student demonstrates through discussion, critique, and studio interaction a solid ability to discuss and assess work; communicating how visual elements and strategies are used. The student demonstrates competent use and understanding of concepts and terminology used in the discipline.</p> <p><b>Homework Projects:</b> In the case of studio assigned homework (activity) the student completes the assignment and fulfills more than minimal requirements. The work demonstrates some skill, judgment, and application of principles. In the case of written assignments, oral presentations, and research, the work/presentation/document, presents research and is reasonably well written and suitably presented.</p>
C	<p><b>Class Work:</b> Student demonstrates average skill, discernment, and understanding of visual principles in accomplishing her or his work. The quality of work is modest, and is moderately integrated.</p> <p><b>Class Participation:</b> Student demonstrates through discussion, critique, and studio interaction and average ability to discuss and assess work, communicating how visual elements and strategies are used. Though the discussion and assessment of work is substantially complete, the communication of some visual elements and strategies is incomplete or missing. The student demonstrates a superficial rather than thorough understanding of concepts and terminology used in the discipline.</p> <p><b>Homework Projects:</b> In the case of studio assigned homework (activity) the student completes most of the assignment and fulfills the minimum requirements. The work demonstrates modest skill, some judgment, and in parts, application of principles. In the case of written assignments, oral presentations, and research, the student makes a modest effort as evidenced by a satisfactory presentation/document. Research may be incomplete, or lacking in organization.</p>

D	<p>Class Work: Student demonstrates lack of skill, discernment and understanding of visual principles in accomplishing her or his work. The quality of work submitted is less than acceptable, and is poorly integrated.</p> <p>Class Participation: Student demonstrates through discussion, critique, and studio interaction a limited ability to discuss and assess work, while communicating at a minimal or perfunctory level how the visual elements and strategies are used. Poor effort is made to relate an understanding of the art concepts and terminology used in the discipline.</p> <p>Homework Projects: In the case of studio assigned homework (activity) the student does not complete the assignment and fulfills only minimal requirements or submits work late. The work demonstrates lack of skill, weak judgment, and little application of principles. In the case of written assignments, oral presentations, and research, the work/presentation/document, presents faulty or negligible research and is not well written and or presented.</p>
F	<p>Class Work: Student fails to demonstrate skill or understanding of the issues involved. Quality of work submitted is insufficient, and poorly integrated.</p> <p>Class Participation: In discussion, critique, and studio interaction, the student states an opinion vaguely or does not assess the work and shows little or no evidence of an understanding of how visual elements and strategies are used in the discipline.</p> <p>Homework Projects: In the case of studio assigned homework (activity) the student does not complete the assignments and does not fulfill requirements. In the case of written assignments, oral presentations, and research, the work/presentation document, presents faulty or negligible research and is not well written or presented.</p>

**B: General Rubric for Papers, Theses and Statements**

Grade	(adapted from rubric written at PA State U. by Dr. Sophia McClennen)
A	<p>Thesis: Easily identifiable, plausible, novel, sophisticated, insightful, crystal clear. Connects well with paper title.</p> <p>Structure: Evident, understandable, appropriate for thesis. Excellent transitions from point to point. Paragraphs support solid topic sentences.</p> <p>Use of evidence: Primary source information used to buttress every point with at least one example. Examples support mini-thesis and fit within paragraph. Excellent integration of quoted material into sentences. Demonstrates an in depth understanding of the ideas in the assigned reading and critically evaluates/responds to those ideas in an analytical, persuasive manner.</p> <p>Analysis: Author clearly relates evidence to "mini-thesis" (topic sentence); analysis is fresh and exciting, posing new ways to think of the material. Work displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.</p> <p>Logic and argumentation: All ideas in the paper flow logically; the argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Author anticipates and successfully defuses counter-arguments; makes novel connections to outside material (from other parts of the class, or other classes), which illuminate thesis. Creates appropriate college level, academic tone.</p> <p>Mechanics: Sentence structure, grammar, and diction excellent; correct use of punctuation and citation style; minimal to no spelling errors; absolutely no run-on sentences or comma splices. Conforms in every way to format requirements.</p>

B	<p>Thesis: Promising, but may be slightly unclear, or lacking in insight or originality. Paper title does not connect as well with thesis or is not as interesting.</p> <p>Structure: Generally clear and appropriate, though may wander occasionally. May have a few unclear transitions, or a few paragraphs without strong topic sentences.</p> <p>Use of evidence: Examples used to support most points. Some evidence does not support point, or may appear where inappropriate. Quotes well integrated into sentences. Demonstrates a solid understanding of the ideas in the assigned reading and critically evaluates/responds to those ideas in an analytical, persuasive manner.</p> <p>Analysis: Evidence often related to mini-thesis, though links perhaps not very clear. Some description, but more critical thinking.</p> <p>Logic and argumentation: Argument of paper is clear, usually flows logically and makes sense. Some evidence that counter-arguments acknowledged, though perhaps not addressed. Occasional insightful connections to outside material made. Mostly creates appropriate college level, academic tone.</p> <p>Mechanics: Sentence structure, grammar, and diction strong despite occasional lapses; punctuation and citation style often used correctly. Some (minor) spelling errors; may have one run-on sentence or comma splice. Conforms in every way to format requirements.</p>
C	<p>Thesis: May be unclear (contain many vague terms), appear unoriginal, or offer relatively little that is new; provides little around which to structure the paper. Paper title and thesis do not connect well or title is unimaginative.</p> <p>Structure: Generally unclear, often wanders or jumps around. Few or weak transitions, many paragraphs without topic sentences.</p> <p>Use of evidence: Examples used to support some points. Points often lack supporting evidence, or evidence used where inappropriate (often because there may be no clear point). Quotes may be poorly integrated into sentences. Demonstrates a general understanding of the ideas in the assigned reading and only occasionally critically evaluates/responds to those ideas in an analytical, persuasive manner.</p> <p>Analysis: Quotes appear often without analysis relating them to mini-thesis (or there is a weak mini-thesis to support), or analysis offers nothing beyond the quote. Even balance between critical thinking and description.</p> <p>Logic and argumentation: Logic may often fail, or argument may often be unclear. May not address counter-arguments or make any outside connections. Occasionally creates appropriate college level, academic tone, but has some informal language or inappropriate slang.</p> <p>Mechanics: Problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction (usually not major). Some errors in punctuation, citation style, and spelling. May have some run-on sentences or comma splices. Conforms in almost every way to format requirements.</p>

D	<p>Thesis: Difficult to identify at all, may be bland restatement of obvious point.</p> <p>Structure: Unclear, often because thesis is weak or non-existent. Transitions confusing and unclear. Few topic sentences.</p> <p>Use of evidence: Very few or very weak examples. General failure to support statements, or evidence seems to support no statement. Quotes not integrated into sentences; "plopped in" in improper manner. Demonstrates a little understanding of (or occasionally misreads) the ideas in the assigned reading and does not critically evaluate/responds to those ideas in an analytical, persuasive manner.</p> <p>Analysis: Very little or very weak attempt to relate evidence to argument; may be no identifiable argument, or no evidence to relate it to. More description than critical thinking.</p> <p>Logic and argumentation: Ideas do not flow at all, usually because there is no argument to support. Simplistic view of topic; no effort to grasp possible alternative views. Does not create appropriate college level, academic tone, and has informal language or inappropriate slang.</p> <p>Mechanics: Big problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction. Frequent major errors in citation style, punctuation, and spelling. May have many run-on sentences and comma splices. Does not conform to format requirements.</p>
F	<p>Shows obviously minimal lack of effort or comprehension of the assignment. Very difficult to understand owing to major problems with mechanics, structure, and analysis. Has no identifiable thesis, or utterly incompetent thesis. Does not follow paper guidelines for length and format. Plagiarized work is submitted.</p>

Formal Analysis Writing Rubric

Task	Poor (1)	Average (2)	Good (3)	Excellent (4)
<b>Organization</b>	unorganized list of points; lacks a defined intro or conclusion	has clear intro, may be a restatement of assigned question; identifies some main points but lacks a sense of their relative importance; may not distinguish between major points and supporting details; includes much repetition or restatement, without development	clear introduction and summary at end; generally clear structure but may lack direction or progression; some points may not contribute to meaning or goal of paper; conclusion is merely a summary of points made or a repetition of intro.	organization shows reader how to understand topic; introduction contains an idea, not just restatement of question; main points well supported by details; examples well chosen; strong conclusion that attempts to bring ideas together.
<b>Description</b>	The artwork is not identified; vocabulary is incorrect or ineffectively used to describe the artwork	The artwork is identified, but vocabulary is incorrect or ineffectively used to describe the artwork	The artwork is identified; vocabulary is mostly correct and used to describe the artwork somewhat effectively	The artwork is identified; vocabulary is used correctly to describe the artwork effectively and clearly
<b>Analysis</b>	The relationship of different formal elements are ignored or incorrectly explained.	Focus given to specific formal element(s) without considering relationships between different components; mentions multiple formal elements but lacks developed discussion or analysis	Focus give to one or two formal elements with some consideration of relationships; includes some discussion of how elements aid viewer understanding	Focus two or more formal elements; clear explanation of relationship of different elements and how they contribute to viewer understanding
<b>Interpretation and articulation of own ideas</b>	merely restates course or reading assignment information	some attempt to convey own ideas but includes errors of fact, does not support ideas with concrete examples	some informed interpretation of the art or historical contexts but may include errors and lack visual or documentary support.	balanced treatment of observation and documentary evidence, leading to student's own, informed interpretation of materials and concepts.
<b>Writing Skills</b>	lacks verbal competence	writing is basically correct; paper may contain several errors of spelling, punctuation, grammar; there is little variety in sentence structure.	generally clear writing with no serious errors or sloppy syntax; avoids excessive passive voice or convoluted sentence structure.	vigorous style, correct grammar and vocabulary; integrates visual description into discussion effectively; avoids over-use of jargon; presents an individual voice

## OBJECTIVES

In this course, students are expected to be largely self-motivated and self-directed. The student bears the responsibility for locating the necessary bibliographic sources, analyzing them, and assimilating them into the thesis. The student is responsible for setting up a regular schedule for writing the thesis in accordance with the agreement established between the student and the advisor. Students will meet with the advisor at assigned intervals to discuss issues, any problems, and progress. Assigned readings will address art historical methodology in general and are intended to allow students to begin to engage with specific discourses in Art History.

The advisor will look for the student's ability to think beyond what is presented in readings and to incorporate concepts and data from the readings into discussions and the thesis.

## EXPECTED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. *Demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills in written and spoken form.*

[Methods for assessing this expected learning outcome: readings, précis, and research for the Senior Thesis as required by the advisor.]

2. *Demonstrate research, writing, and self-editing skills and gain confidence in art-historical writing.* [Methods for assessing this expected learning outcome: bibliography and a series of drafts and revisions of the Senior Thesis based on advisor feedback.]

3. *Speak clearly and confidently about a given topic, and be able to answer questions on research in front of a public audience with poise.* [Methods for assessing this expected learning outcome: public presentation of the Senior Thesis to the College.]

4. *Acquire technology skills in Photoshop and Power Point.* [Methods for assessing this expected learning outcome: public presentation of the Senior Thesis at the public presentation to the College.]

## REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SENIOR THESIS

- The length of the thesis should be negotiated with the supervising professor (advisor). Normally it should be between 20 - 25 pages *excluding* bibliography, illustrations, notes, appendices, etc.

- The thesis must formulate and argue a thesis or proposition.
- It must include original critical synthesis of existing sources.
- It may contribute to knowledge through an original analysis of a body of material.
- It may advance a theoretical perspective related to art.
- Students must complete one or more preliminary drafts of the thesis by the deadline(s) required by the advisor.
- Students must use correctly the citation and bibliographic formats determined by the advisor.
- Students will make a 15-20 minute public presentation of the thesis to the Department and College.

Department of Visual Arts, Wells College

SPRING 2017

### GRADE BREAKDOWN

Assessment of learning outcomes:

(1) Senior Thesis (final paper, including bibliography, drafts, or other assignments)...70%

(2) Public Presentation of the Senior Thesis.....30%

#### (1) *The written thesis (70%)*

Any plagiarism will automatically earn the grade of “F”. Plagiarism exists if a writer uses three or more consecutive words from another author without proper citation, or if a writer follows the structure of ideas and arguments of another writer without citation. Obviously, a student who turns in the work of another as his or her own commits plagiarism and fails the course.

The “**A**” **senior thesis** will be rich in content, including both that gleaned from source materials and that extrapolated through analysis and application of theoretical lenses. The reader of the thesis will gain knowledge of and appreciation for the subject. The writer will use examples that clearly illustrate points, will use appropriate terminology, will consult essential sources, and will present the material in a clear, well-organized, compelling manner, free from errors of grammar or spelling. The paper adheres to all specific instructions provided with the assignment. The paper will be submitted on time and will meet any preliminary deadlines.

The “**B**” **senior thesis** delivers substantial information about the subject. The factual information will be correct and terms will be used properly. The “B” thesis may not be as compelling in its arguments, examples, or language as the “A” thesis, but it demonstrates a firm awareness of appropriate sources, good organization, and nearly perfect presentation in terms of grammar, spelling, bibliography, notes, illustrations, and other apparatus. The paper may lack a minor component of the specifically required elements of the assignment. The paper will be submitted on time and will meet any preliminary deadlines.

The “**C**” **senior thesis** competently presents the subject. Its organization is clear enough to be readily understood. Generally, essays evaluated as “C” do not demonstrate as much thought about the material as the “A” or “B” thesis and may leave the reader with questions about the material or arguments. Errors of fact, grammar, spelling, punctuation, lack of appropriate research sources and other such factors will result in the determination of the “C” grade. The paper may lack a component of the specifically required elements of the assignment. The paper will be submitted on time and will meet any preliminary deadlines.

The “**D**” **grade** is applied when the student successfully presents information about part of the subject, but includes numerous errors of fact, grammar, terminology, spelling, punctuation, chooses poor examples, fails to complete part of the assignment, does not locate and analyze appropriate sources and/or has not adequately followed specific instructions provided with the assignment. Tardiness in submission will likely earn the

grade of “D”. When a student has not given significant thought and effort to the assignment, the grade of “D” will usually be administered.

The **grade of “F”** will be assigned if the student fails to submit the thesis on time at scheduled intervals, or does not address the topic or assignment, or if the paper demonstrates misunderstandings of basic concepts. Shortcomings that earn the grade of “F” include lack of thesis statement, organization, and essential parts of the paper.

*(2) The public presentation (30%)*

Art History majors are required to make a public presentation of their research, which will constitute 30% of the overall grade for the thesis. The presentation will take place in Morgan and will be open to the College.

During the presentation, the student will be judged on:

- (A) Clarity of argument and logical development of ideas;
- (B) Use of research sources as evidence for argument;
- (C) Originality / creativity of the paper;
- (D) Effective oral communication;
- (E) Quality of visual aids / Effective use of technology in conjunction with text and argument (eg. Powerpoint);
- (F) Ability to answer questions during the question-and-answer period.

The student’s thesis advisor will provide feedback on his/her performance after the presentation. The grade for the presentation will be determined by the advisor alone, who may take the faculty members’ comments into consideration.

## Standard Reading Response Rubric: 100-200 level Studio Art Courses

Katie Waugh

Standard Reading Response Rubric: 100-200 level Studio Art Courses	
<b>5 points</b>	Fully Read & Responded to entire reading assignment; reflection demonstrates engagement with main ideas and any assigned questions/topics
<b>3 points</b>	Partially read assignment; full engagement is notably missing (does not consider all main topics in reading, and/or does not respond to all assigned questions/topics), but some response is present/demonstrates interaction with text.
<b>0 points</b>	Little to no evidence of having read the assignment.

### **Note:**

This rubric is used to encourage participation and develop intrinsic interest toward materials. Accuracy and interpretation of information are tracked via specific questions and instructions, but good-faith effort towards engaging with sometimes challenging material is rewarded, even when students may struggle with comprehension. In-Class discussions and written feedback accompany these responses. Rubrics may change slightly to accommodate specific objectives or course content.

(Moodle translates these point scores into percentages)