

Wells Book Arts Center

Goals, Objectives, Measurable Outcomes and Rubrics for Book Arts Courses

Mission Statement

Inspired by Victor Hammer, founder of the Wells College Press and internationally-renowned calligrapher, painter, printer and type designer, the Wells Book Arts Center was established in 1993 to instruct in all areas of the book arts and technologies. Students in Wells book arts classes learn the history and philosophy of their craft as they develop hand skills and cultivate aesthetic awareness in the fabrication of books. In addition, they learn experientially through internships at museums, conservation labs, letterfoundries, and similar book arts institutions. The Center embraces historical arts and technologies while actively investigating and incorporating innovations of our digital age. The Wells Book Arts Center supports the mission of the College by revealing the essential role of the book in Western culture and the liberal arts.

This is the introduction to the Book Arts Center that appears first page of the Book Arts Center section of the College's website. It outlines

- a) our Goals: to instruct in all areas of the book arts and technologies
- b) our general Course Objectives: students learn the history and philosophy of their craft as they develop hand skills and cultivate aesthetic awareness in the fabrication of books; students learn experientially through internships at museums, conservation labs, letterfoundries, and similar book arts institutions
- c) our contribution to the Mission of the College: teaching historical arts and technologies while actively investigating and incorporating innovations of our digital age; and revealing the essential role of the book in Western culture and the liberal arts.

Section 1. Courses Required in the Minor

BKRT 115 Hand Bookbinding I, offered every semester

- A. *Goals* The principle goals of this course are to learn several non-adhesive bookbinding structures and simple case bindings.
- B. *Course Objectives* Students will develop the hand skills required to produce one-page books, pamphlet structures, accordion bindings, the Ethiopian or Coptic binding, and the long or link stitch as well as learn some paste paper techniques.

Although the thrust of the course is craftsmanship, students will create some books of their own design that are content-driven. In addition, students will learn to use the vocabulary and tools of binding, as well as some history of the book and history of binding.

C. *Measurable Outcomes and Means of Measurement*

1. Basics.

a) *Measurable outcomes*: Students will learn how to discern the grain of paper and how to cut and/or fold paper for various structures, as well as glue down techniques, simple sewing stitches, and paste paper techniques.

b) *Means of measurement*: Students' understanding and application of vocabulary and hand skills will be evident as the teacher observes them in class and when the students' projects are completed and handed in for evaluation.

2. Binding skills and craftsmanship

a) *Measurable learning outcomes*: Students will produce binding projects that meet the requirements of the assignment and that often build on previously learned skills. Depending on the structure being learned, completed student projects should be free of glue spots; have straight, square corners; have even, straight sewing; have a firm, squared text block; have clean, straight glue downs; have all of the structural detail required in the assignment.

b) *Means of measurement*: As students plan and complete their projects, the professor will observe and note that students have mastered the skills and techniques necessary to that project. The professor will use a checklist to verify the details listed above.

3. Aesthetics & design

a) *Measurable learning outcomes*: Students will be looking at good-quality example bindings and then designing their own. Although to a great extent the aesthetics of design, color, texture, size, and proportions are subjective, students are expected to demonstrate some sense of aesthetics in choice of materials and design.

b) *Means of measurement*: As students plan and complete their projects, the professor will see if they have learned and are applying the basics of design.

D. *Grade* As per the syllabus, the student's grade will be determined by class participation and the craftsmanship of their various binding models. In addition, the completed content-driven assignments, including the final projects, should demonstrate a well-thought-out relationship between content, structure and materials.

E. *How Assessment Data Will Be Utilized*

1. The checklists for each project will serve to inform the teacher whether individual students or the class as a whole have mastered the skill set of that assignment. This will be vital feedback for the teacher to gauge his or her success in relaying the material in the course.

2. The course grades will be used to indicate the level of mastery that students have achieved in producing a variety of bound pieces. In addition, course grades will help to determine whether students are ready to continue at the next level of binding.
3. The data will also be used to see how the course itself fits into the Book Arts Minor. Is it fulfilling its course goals, do those goals contribute to the goals of the Minor?

BKRT 120 Letterpress Printing, offered every semester

- A. *Goals* The principle goals of this course are to learn to set metal type and print from it on a Vandercook proofing press.
- B. *Course Objectives* Students will learn the lay of the case, how to set metal type by hand, impose it in the bed of the press, and print from it. They will learn some history of printing and history of the book, be able to discern what good printing is, and develop an aesthetic eye for design.
- C. *Measurable Outcomes and Means of Measurement*
1. Basics
 - a) *Measurable learning outcomes*: Students will learn the lay of the case by setting type for projects and distributing it back into the case afterwards; learn and use letterpress terms and tools; learn and use proofreader's marks; learn to tie up their forma for safe storage.
 - b) *Means of measurement*: Students will demonstrate during class that they can either set or distribute type quickly and correctly; appropriately use the various tools letterpress printing; and use the correct terminology in their discussions with the teacher about the layout, design and actual printing of their projects.
 2. Printing
 - a) *Measurable learning outcomes*: Students will learn how to impose their forms in the bed of the press, safely and correctly operate the Vandercook proofing presses in the typographic lab (roller height, inking, use of side guide & paper grippers, impression and cylinder packing, printing, and cleaning).
 - b) *Means of measurement*: Students will demonstrate while working on their printing projects that they can print safely, efficiently and correctly.
 3. Typefaces
 - a) *Measurable learning outcomes*: Students will learn to distinguish and compare the elements of a type's design (component parts, ascenders & descenders, proportion, weight and structure of stems & serifs), especially of the five main faces used in the Book Arts Center: Centaur, Arrighi, Dante, Perpetua, Gill Sans.
 - b) *Means of measurement*: On quizzes and in discussion with the professor on the design of their projects, students will demonstrate their understanding of typeface design and their knowledge of the parts pieces of type and their relationship to each other.
 4. Paper
 - a) *Measurable learning outcomes*: Students will learn how to discern grain direction, a paper's wire and felt sides, the difference between wove and laid paper; they will learn to cut and/or trim paper to size on the guillotine and/or board shear.
 - b) *Means of measurement*: In class students will use the vocabulary of paper correctly and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding by printing on the correct side and by printing and cutting on the grain.

5. Aesthetics and design

a) *Measurable learning outcomes:* Students will learn traditional basic book design, good typography, optical vs mechanical centering, letter spacing of caps, use of ornaments or illustrations, choice of typeface appropriate to the content, where/when to use roman, italic or bold, etc.

b) *Means of measurement:* As students plan and complete their projects, the professor will see if they have learned and are applying the basics of design and typography.

6. Quality

a) *Measurable learning outcomes:* Students will produce printed pieces that meet the requirements of the assignment.

b) *Means of measurement:* As students plan and complete their projects, the professor will verify that all words are spelled correctly, right side up, in the correct typeface and point size; that the inking is even; that there is no slurring or offprinting. These details are recorded on a checklist for each project (see attached).

D. *Grade* As per the syllabus, the student's grade will be determined by the quality of the various printed pieces, several short exams and a final exam. A student's attitude and initiative are considered when he or she has trouble with the manual aspects of printing.

E. *How Assessment Data Will Be Utilized*

1. The checklists for each project will serve to inform the teacher whether individual students or the class as a whole have mastered the skill set of that assignment. This will be vital feedback for the teacher to gauge his or her success in relaying the material in the course.
2. The course grades will be used to indicate the level of mastery that students have achieved in both producing printed work and in using the Vandercooks. In addition, course grades will help to determine whether students are ready to continue at the next level of printing.

Section 2. Electives in the Minor

BKRT 105 Letter Arts I: Introduction to Calligraphy, offered every semester

- A. *Goals* The principle goal of this course is to learn three foundational hands: Italic, Humanistic Miniscules, and Roman Capitals.
- B. *Course Objectives* Students will learn to write these hands using a broad-edged metal nib with gouache. They will design and execute broadsides or manuscript pages in each of the hands. In addition, they will be introduced to the history of western letterforms and the place of calligraphy in modern art and design.
- C. *Measurable Outcomes and Means of Measurement*
 - 1. Basics
 - a) *Measurable outcomes*: Students will learn the vocabulary of calligraphy and letterforms and create a portfolio of weekly practice sheets of each hand completed outside class, as well as practice sheets completed in class as new letterforms are introduced.
 - b) *Means of measurement*: Students will use correct terminology in their discussions and class critiques. The professor will compare the students' work to examples of the hand being learned to discern the students' proficiency.
 - 2. Other Skills
 - a) *Measurable outcomes*: Students will learn letter spacing and the design of the page first by observing the demonstrations and examples given in class, and then by practicing in and outside class and producing weekly and final projects.
 - b) *Means of measurement*: The professor will discern whether the students have understood the demonstrations and examples in class by evaluating the practice sheets and final projects in each hand.
 - 3. Aesthetics and design
 - a) *Measurable outcomes*: Students will look at good design examples as they plan and execute their weekly and final projects.
 - b) *Means of measurement*: The professor will evaluate the success of the students' final designs, looking at the quality of the letterforms themselves, spacing and overall design, and verify that the project meets the assignment requirements.
 - 4. Quality of craftsmanship
 - a) *Measurable learning outcomes*: Completed student projects should demonstrate proficiency with letterforms and skill with composition, free of misspellings and visible corrections.
 - b) *Means of measurement*: The professor will use a checklist to verify the details listed above as well as whether the requirements of the assignment have been met.

D. *Grade* As per the syllabus, the student's grade will be determined by in- and outside class work and practice sheets, the quality of the various weekly and major projects, and several short quizzes.

E. *How Assessment Data Will Be Utilized*

1. The checklists for each project will serve to inform the teacher whether individual students or the class as a whole have mastered the skill set of that assignment. This will be vital feedback for the teacher to gauge his or her success in relaying the material in the course.

2. The course grades will be used to indicate the level of mastery that students have achieved in writing in the various hands studied. In addition, course grades will help to determine whether students are ready to continue at the next level of calligraphy.

BKRT 220 The Digital Book & Graphic Design, offered every fall

- A. *Goals* Students will explore classical design principles and their continued relevance through the digital medium of Adobe InDesign.
- B. *Course Objectives* Students will learn to design and digitally print projects such as a poster, a brochure, sample title and text pages, and a short, digitally produced hand-bound book, while learning and using the design software programs InDesign, and to a lesser extent Photoshop. In addition, students will briefly study the history of type design, printing and design.
- C. *Measurable Outcomes and Means of Measurement*
1. Basics.
 - a) *Measurable outcomes*: Students will learn the vocabulary of design, of InDesign in particular, and of printing in general. Their expertise in InDesign will increase over the semester.
 - b) *Means of measurement*: Students' understanding and application of terminology and computer skills will be evident both as the professor observes them in class and when the students' projects are completed and handed in for evaluation.
 2. Aesthetics and design
 - a) *Measurable learning outcomes*: Students will learn traditional basic title and text pages, pamphlet and book design; good typography; optical vs mechanical centering, letter spacing of caps; use of ornaments or illustrations; choice of typeface appropriate to the content; where/when to use roman, italic or bold; etc.
 - b) *Means of measurement*: As students plan and complete their projects, the professor will see if they have learned and are applying the basics of design and typography.
 3. Quality
 - a) *Measurable learning outcomes*: Students will produce printed pieces that meet the requirements of the assignment.
 - b) *Means of measurement*: As students plan and complete their projects, the professor will verify that the assignment requirements have been met as well as details of good typography (centering, letter spacing for caps, discreet use of bold & italics, etc.). All these details are recorded on a checklist for each project.
- D. *Grade* As per the syllabus, the student's grade will be determined by class participation; the quality of the various digitally printed exercises, projects and final project based on the students' knowledge and application of good design principles and use of InDesign.

E. How Assessment Data Will Be Utilized

1. The checklists for each project will serve to inform the teacher whether individual students or the class as a whole have mastered the skill set of that assignment. This will be vital feedback for the teacher to gauge his or her success in relaying the material in the course.
2. The course grades will be used to indicate the level of mastery that students have achieved in both designing and digitally producing printed projects.

Section 3. How Assessment Data Will Be Utilized

As stated in the two previous sections, assessment data will be used to evaluate the success of our students and to see if our courses are doing what we say they should. This second element is very important as Book Arts looks to join the Visual Arts Major as a third concentration in Fall 2009. We will be assessing our course offerings only as they have served us in the Minor, but also as they will correspond to and complement the course offerings and philosophy of the Visual Arts Major.

Section 4. Our Future

Although in our Mission Statement we say that we were “established... to instruct in all areas of the book arts,” we do not yet teach papermaking, the only area in the book arts in which we offer no courses. With the addition of papermaking, we will be able to say that we do indeed instruct in all areas of the book arts. As a concentration, we will also need to develop and teach second level courses in printing and binding on a regular basis.

Our courses meet the standards and goals we have set for ourselves based in part on book arts courses on other campuses. We have earned praise from faculty at the University of Alabama Masters in Book Arts Program, Wellesley College, University of Iowa Center for the Book, and Oregon College of Arts and Crafts. They and our colleagues in the larger Book Arts world are impressed with and envious of the quantity and quality of printing equipment, type and ornaments; binding equipment, tools and supplies; and scriptorium, digital classroom and other studio space that we enjoy.

By joining the Visual Arts Major, as mentioned in the Ten Year Plan and instigated in 2007-08 by Nancy Gil and William Ganis (current chair of the Visual Arts Major), the Book Arts Concentration will add to the richness and diversity of the majors at Wells while continuing to keep Wells unique among small liberal arts colleges.