



THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

FINE ARTS

Assessment of Student Learning

Spring 2007

1.

THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Program Overview and Description

Purpose: to provide a context for the assessment materials contained in this binder through a brief description of the program.

Name: Department of Fine Arts

Level: baccalaureate

Degrees: BA, MA

Majors: Fine Arts, Art History, Architectural History, Music History and Cultures

Minors: same

Catalog Description: The Department of Fine Arts, housed in Syracuse University's historic Bowne Hall, was one of the first in the country dedicated to the study of the history of the arts in an interdisciplinary setting. The department was established in 1945 by the cultural historian William Fleming. Professor Fleming's book *Arts and Ideas* (9th edition, 1995), currently used in over 1000 colleges and universities throughout the United States, serves as a model for the department's approach to the arts in relation to their cultural, social, economic, and political contexts.

The Department offers courses from introductory through M.A. levels. In view of its interdisciplinary disposition, the Department encourages students to work in a broad range of courses, some in other divisions of the University (including College of Visual and Performing Arts, School of Architecture, Newhouse School of Public Communications, School of Information Studies). The Department offers undergraduate opportunities for a major, a minor, or a combined major with another discipline. Undergraduate students are encouraged to take part in the Syracuse Semester Abroad program, expanding their arts studies into the international community.

Department of Fine Arts
Current Assessment Plan

Background: The Department of Fine Arts currently offers three principal majors: Fine Arts, Art History, and Music History and Cultures. (We also offer a major in the History of Architecture but that is “run” in conjunction with the Architecture School so it will not be discussed here.) The latter two majors were only added comparatively recently (2003 and 2004, respectively). . Hitherto, the department only offered a B.A. in Fine Arts, a major which allowed students to enroll in any combination of 10 advanced courses in the fields of art history and music history. Students in this major could also substitute up to 4 courses in art studio and/or music performance within the College of Visual and Performing Arts. We firmly believed that this traditional, Fine Arts major—which had been offered for some 40 years— was just too superficial and simplistic. In light of the department's outstanding faculty, its ample resources, and the significant numbers of students who enroll in its music and art-history courses, it was decided to formalize majors in its two constituent disciplines. (The B.A. in Fine Arts was retained for the small number of students who wanted to enroll in our traditional major consisting of a combination of art and music history courses.) Since their implementation, the goal or mission of these majors has been to amplify our students' pedagogical and practical experiences within the fields that they represent.

Implementation: For purposes of this report, the traditional Fine Arts major, in which only a handful of students are enrolled, will not be further considered. Beyond the typical university-wide learning objectives (e.g., honing writing and speaking skills, critical thinking, etc...) the program-level learning objectives for the Art History and Music History and Cultures majors principally center on our desire to instill in students a more detailed knowledge of various subfields within art history and music history. An additional objective for both majors is to familiarize students with the practical aspects of the disciplines of art history and music history and potential careers within them. Program-level learning objectives were therefore included in each of the major's curricula by adding the following detailed degree requirements to them:

A. The Major in Art History

The Major in Art History also requires 30 credits numbered above 299. However, all courses above 299 must be art-history courses. Students in this more specialized major may include only 6 credits of art studio work, taken in the College of Visual and Performing Arts, in the required 30 credits. Students may also petition to have up to 9 credits of appropriate courses in art history taken outside the department (non-FIA courses) “count” toward the art history major. There are also three additional requirements for Art History majors:

1. Distribution Requirement: Course offerings in art history are divided into five broad categories: ancient/medieval; Northern/Italian Renaissance; Baroque/18th-century European; modern/American; and non-Western. Art history majors are required to take at least one course in four of these five categories. This requirement therefore exposes students to a wide variety of art

from a diversity of cultures. Without this requirement, student learning would likely be much more narrowly confined to particular fields within art history that are of most interest to them (e.g., Italian Renaissance art).

2. 500-level Course Requirement: 500-level courses are customarily open to advanced undergraduate majors as well as graduate students in our M.A. Program in Art History. Such courses offer more detailed study of particular fields within art history than those numbered at the 300 and 400 levels. Moreover, they feature a more intense work load and exposure to the scholarly literature of particular fields that is not normally included in courses at a lower level. Art history majors are now required to take at least one course at the 500 level. This requirement deepens student knowledge of particular fields in art history while simultaneously intensifying their reading and writing skills as well as their capacity to think critically. Furthermore, it enhances their classroom experiences as they relate to participatory discussions.

3. Senior Seminar Requirement: During their senior year, art-history majors are required to take a senior seminar for 1 credit. This course is meant to explore the practical aspects of the discipline, paying particular attention to potential careers within it. Thus far, it has taken the form of a 3-4 day trip to New York City (largely paid for by a benefactor) in which students meet officials of various institutions (e.g., museums, historic preservation offices, art galleries and so forth) associated with the visual arts.

B. The Major in Music History and Cultures

The Major in Music History and Cultures is designed for students who wish to study music in its historical, social, and cultural contexts and in relation to other arts. Although students enrolled in this major are encouraged to develop performance skills, the focus of the degree is the study of musical cultures and styles in a liberal arts environment. Students explore the music of many different periods and cultural traditions, choosing a particular concentration for the topic of their Senior Project. At the lower division level, students acquire basic musical skills (0-6 credits); as well as a foundation in music history (6 credits chosen from FIA 165, 166, 195, 266, 267, 268, 285). Students at the upper division level must take at least 8 additional FIA courses numbered 299 or above: of these 8 courses at least one must be from the following fields: European art music; American music; World music; and Interdisciplinary approaches. As part of the 8 required courses, students also take FIA.396, "Critical Thinking in Music," a junior seminar designed to stimulate critical thought about music and to hone research and writing skills. The degree culminates in the senior project, in which students complete a large-scale project in some aspect of music history or culture.

Principal Tools for Assessing Student Learning: Assessment of student learning in our majors is largely accomplished along traditional lines: by classroom discussion, testing, reading assignments and related reports, and by research papers. Further insights are also gleaned from student evaluation forms for every course taught by the faculty and even from annual curriculum vitae update forms for faculty members (which list, for example, independent studies administered by the faculty member in question).

Future Plans for Assessing Student Learning: The department recognizes that the tools mentioned above for assessing student learning need to be supplemented by additional ones. To this end we will continue working on the following initiatives:

1. Revamping our current course evaluation form to focus more closely upon what students have learned in particular course in question.
2. Establishing “exit interviews” for graduating majors. These exit interviews will enable us to gauge in a very direct manner the comparative success of our degree programs in educating students.
3. The development of degrees with distinction in the art history and music history and cultures majors. Participation in a degree with distinction option with its additional requirements clearly deepen a student’s knowledge of the particular subfield in which he or she is engaged and would sharpen their skills on many levels.

2.

Department of Fine Arts
Student Learning Outcomes

List of Program Student Learning Outcomes:

Art History

1. to understand and explain works of art within a broad interdisciplinary context
2. to gain an understanding of major concepts within the particular field
3. to identify central issues of scholarship in the particular field
4. to develop the ability to think critically
5. to develop the ability to express ideas clearly in discussion
6. to develop the ability to express ideas clearly through writing

Music History and Cultures

1. to understand the diverse functions and cultural meanings that music has had in both Western and non-Western societies.
2. to recognize and explain stylistic differences among music of different eras and from different cultures.
3. to develop the ability to think critically about music and the social/aesthetic issues with which it is connected.
4. to gain an understanding of the major theoretical issues within the field
5. to develop the ability to express ideas clearly through writing
6. to develop the ability to express ideas clearly in discussion

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Program Learning Outcomes/Course Matrix

Purpose: to gather information from each faculty member and instructor about which of the program learning outcomes listed are addressed and are (OR WILL BE) assessed in their courses. Star rating: * = somewhat minor or elementary learning outcome; ** = expected learning outcome; *** = fully realized outcome

	Course # 105	Course #106	Course #115	Course #301	Course #306	Course #317	Course #318	Course #321	Course #323	Course #328	Course #341
Program Outcome AH 1	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Program Outcome AH2	*	*	*	*	**	**	**	**	*	**	**
Program Outcome AH3	*	*	*	*	**	**	**	**	*	**	**
Program Outcome AH4	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Program Outcome AH5-6	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**

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	Course #346	Course #347	Course #395	Course #415	Course #416	Course #421	Course #423	Course #425	Course #426	Course #427	Course #428
Program Outcome AH1	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Program Outcome AH2	**	**	**	**	**	*	**	**	**	**	**
Program Outcome AH3	***	***	***	***	***	*	***	***	***	***	***
Program Outcome AH4	***	***	***	***	***	**	***	***	***	***	***
Program Outcome AH5-6	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

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	Course #432	Course #433	Course #435	Course #436	Course #437	Course # 441	Course #442	Course #445	Course #446	Course #447	Course #448
Program Outcome AH1	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Program Outcome AH2	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Program Outcome AH3	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Program Outcome AH4	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Program Outcome AH5-6	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

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	Course #449	Course #463	Course #508	Course #534	Course #546	Course #550	Course #594	Course #597	Course #598	Course #	Course #
Program Outcome AH1	**	**	***	***	***	***	***	***	***		
Program Outcome AH2	**	**	***	***	***	***	***	***	***		
Program Outcome AH3	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***		
Program Outcome AH4	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***		
Program Outcome AH5-6	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***		

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	Course #393	Course #396	Course #482	Course #496	Course #497	Course #560	Course #573
Program Outcome MHC 1 **	***	**	***	**	**	**	**
Program Outcome MHC 2 **	*	**	*	*	**	**	**
Program Outcome MHC 3 **	***	**	***	***	**	**	**
Program Outcome MHC 4 **	***	**	***	***	**	**	**
Program Outcome MHC 5-6 ***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

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	Course #371	Course #375	Course #377	Course #378	Course #381	Course #382	Course #383	Course #384	Course #385	Course #391	Course #392
Program Outcome MHC 1	**	**	**	**	***	***	***	***	***	**	**
Program Outcome MHC 2	*	**	***	***	**	**	*	**	**	*	*
Program Outcome MHC 3	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Program Outcome MHC 4	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Program Outcome MHC 5-6	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***

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	Course #125/126	Course #165/166	Course #195	Course #266	Course #267	Course #268	Course #285	Course #361	Course #362	Course #363	Course #368
Program Outcome AH1	**	**	***	***	***	***	***	***	***		
Program Outcome AH2	**	**	***	***	***	***	***	***	***		
Program Outcome AH3	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***		
Program Outcome AH4	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***		
Program Outcome AH5-6	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***		

Department of Fine Arts
Student Learning Outcomes

3.

List of Indirect and Direct Core Assessments Used to Measure Program Outcomes

I. Art History

A. Indirect Core Assessments

1. course evaluations
2. class attendance
3. participation in voluntary assignments/events (e.g., travel to an art exhibition)

B. Direct Core Assessments

1. exams
2. research papers
3. required readings, accompanied by a critical essay on what has been read
4. classroom discussions
5. group projects and reports

II. Music History and Cultures

C. Indirect Core Assessments

1. course evaluations
2. class attendance
3. participation in voluntary assignments/events (e.g., attendance at a performance)

D. Direct Core Assessments

1. exams
2. research papers

3. required readings, accompanied by a critical essay on what has been read
4. classroom discussions
5. group projects and reports

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Program Assessment Measures and Outcomes

Purpose: to gather information from faculty about how the assessments (*direct and indirect* measures of student learning) map to the program student learning outcomes.

PROGRAM OUTCOME →	(a) understand and explain works of art within a broad interdisciplinary context	(b) gain an understanding of major concepts within a particular field	(c) identify central issues of scholarship in a particular field	(d) develop the ability to think critically	(e) develop the ability to express ideas clearly in discussion	(f) develop the ability to express ideas clearly through writing
ASSESSMENT MEASURE ↓ Art History: Direct Core						
(i) exams	x	x				x
(ii) research papers	x	x	x	x		x
(iii) required readings	x	x	x	x		
(iv) classroom discussions	x	x	x	x	x	
(v) group projects and reports	x	x			x	x
(vi)						
(vii)						
(viii)						

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Program Assessment Measures and Outcomes

Purpose: to gather information from faculty about how the assessments (*direct* and *indirect* measures of student learning) map to the program student learning outcomes.

PROGRAM OUTCOME →	understand the diverse functions and cultural meanings of music	recognize and explain stylistic differences	develop the ability to think critically about music	gain an understanding of the major theoretical issues within the field	develop the ability to express ideas clearly through writing	develop the ability to express ideas clearly in discussion
ASSESSMENT MEASURE ↓ Music History and Cultures: Direct Core	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
(i) exams	x	x	x			
(ii) research papers	x		x	x	x	
(iii) required readings	x		x	x		
(iv) classroom discussions	x	x	x	x		x
(v) group projects and reports	x		x	x	x	x
(vi) listening assignments		x		x		
(vii)						
(viii)						

Department of Fine Arts
Student Learning Outcomes

Assessment Plan

The chair of the Department of Fine Arts is responsible for the overall assessment plan. However, in the name of academic freedom, the chair will not impose specific direct assessment measures upon faculty for each course, since individual faculty members know what works best in their courses. Therefore, the assessment plan focuses largely upon indirect core assessment measures. The principal assessment tool of this type is undoubtedly course evaluations. Toward the end of each semester, the chair send out an email to the faculty reminding them of the need to have students fill out evaluation forms for all of the courses that they teach. After the semester has ended, the chair reads these evaluation forms. If problems arise, the chair engages in discussions with the faculty member in question. Once faculty members have filed their grades, however, they too have access to these course evaluations.

A second, indirect assessment tool involves course attendance. During the first few weeks of every semester the chair carefully monitors the class lists for each course that is offered, checking in particular for any unusual amount of “adds” and especially “drops.” The latter category is one that is usually quite telling in this entire process. If problems arise, the chair engages in discussions with the faculty member in question.

4. Gathering, Analyzing, and Reporting Information on Student Learning

Once again, the chair of the Department of Fine Arts is responsible for analyzing and summarizing collected information on student learning. Each faculty member is responsible for his or her individual course outcomes. Materials germane to this responsibility are then sent to the chair who reviews them. Meetings are then scheduled with individual faculty members to discuss the findings. Once this has been accomplished, the faculty will gather as a whole to analyze and discuss student learning outcomes as they pertain to each program (art history and music history and cultures) in their entirety.

5. Closing the Loop. . .

This section seems to repeat the desiderata of section 4 (Gathering, Analyzing, etc...); see above

6. Communications Plan

I. List of Ways Program Learning Outcomes are Communicated:

1. on course syllabi
2. on the departmental website
3. in the relevant sections of the undergraduate bulletin
4. in departmental brochures and other pertinent publications distributed by the College's Visitor's Center
5. communicated to students and prospective students during their meetings/visits with faculty

II. List of Ways Assessment Results and Subsequent Changes are Communicated

1. in memoranda distributed to the faculty
2. verbally at faculty meetings
3. by "rewriting" the items listed in Part I above