

Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

Department/Program: Art, Art History and Film Department

- 1) Have formal learning outcomes for the department's Core courses been developed? What are they? (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect students completing its Core courses to have acquired?)

A description of the [Arts Core](#) taken from the Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences Core Requirements document animates how the Core is taught in Studio Art:

The need to make, experience, and comprehend art has been one of the essential, defining human activities since history began. The arts are thus integral to human experience and expression, the development of critical interpretive skills, an understanding of creative processes, and the fostering of imagination and empathy. The critically engaged practice of the arts, arrived at through rigorous training, uniquely nurtures creativity and innovation. Anchored in experimentation and creative problem-solving, the arts challenge students to make connections across traditional disciplinary boundaries.

Core classes are offered in several different media including drawing, painting, photography, and digital art, and formal learning outcomes have been developed in those areas. While learning objectives vary and are specific to each core class and media, several overarching goals unite our pedagogical approach to core classes in Studio Art.

These include helping our students:

- to acquire the basic technical and conceptual skills required to create works of art
- to gain self- knowledge of themselves as creative agents
- to increase their powers of visual observation
- to grow in appreciation of visual art as an essential, defining human activity and method of communication
- to understand the relationship between the tradition of art making and human history and the roles that art and artist play in society today
- to engage meaningfully with art through creative work and/or to articulate their understanding of art in oral and written expression.

In 2016-2019 core assessments we looked the core through the lens of an Introduction to Drawing course. This year's report draws from the syllabus of an Introduction to Digital Art Core class taught by Asst. Professor Jane Cassidy. This class was designed in Fall 2018 and first taught in Spring 2019.

The goal of the course is to explore, critique and produce 2D digital media projects. Students develop critical interpretive skills, an understanding of creative processes, and foster imagination and empathy. Through a variety of projects students experiment and creatively problem-solve to make connections across traditional disciplinary boundaries. Through lectures and research students gain knowledge of the aesthetic questions raised by works of art and understand the historical contexts in which works were created. Through class critique students become conversant with and able to discuss intelligently questions and issues that are fundamental to human inquiry and that have shaped the traditions from which the university has emerged.

Course objectives in Introduction to Digital Art Core:

To gain proficiency in Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator.

To learn concepts and theory surrounding digital imaging and design as it applies to 2-dimensional graphics.

To demonstrate critical and analytical approaches to understanding artwork, its processes, and formation in class conversations and written work.

To create studies in preparation for a larger work.

To revise, refine and complete a large work.

To prepare work for print and complete prints.

To become familiar with a broad artistic vocabulary and learn how to utilize it in critique.

To gain the ability to evaluate the works of contemporary artists and to explore the historical contexts in which they were created.

To offer critical and constructive feedback to each other both within small private groups as well as final critique.

To encourage creativity and expression to become fluid and consistent.

Specific Measurement Process:

Critiques

Each assignment is approached through a series of homework assignments to familiarize students with research and inquiry, aesthetics, technical tools, concepts, and production. Larger assignments are worked on over several weeks, with drafts reviewed one-on-one with the instructor and in small class groups in the lead up to a critique.

During a critique, students present their work, followed by critique and discussion by fellow students and the instructor. Written feedback is sent individually to each student on Canvas by the instructor. Students have one week to rework their assignments after a critique before a final grade is submitted.

Grading Criteria:

Visual and Conceptual Strength - communication of original ideas, the realization of intention and an inventive approach to the assignments.

Aesthetic Strength - Evident commitment to deliberate composition, character, and expression.

Technical Strength - Demonstration of skill with the material including attention to detail with a level of overall craftsmanship.

Time and Effort - Evident consideration of project parameters and concepts, drafting, development, effective use of studio time.

Class Participation - presentation of projects, ability to articulate individual decisions and conclusions as well as discuss the work of others.

Research - upkeep of research accounts in relation to each assignment as well as a consistently updated folder of research, interests, inspirations, and collections.

Visual Analysis Paper

Students are required to visit a local art museum or gallery and to prepare a paper that analyses several contemporary artworks and addresses context, aesthetics, and process.

2) Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific. (Where are the department's expected learning outcomes for its Core courses accessible: on the web, in the catalog, or in your department handouts?)

The learning outcomes are published in the course syllabus that is available on Canvas. The syllabus is also kept on file in the Art, Art History and Film Department office.

Information on the Art, Art History and Film Core classes are listed [here](#).

As yet there is no specific information on the learning outcomes for the Core classes. The website will be updated in Summer 2020 and this information will be included.

Departmental learning outcomes are published [here](#).

3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether students have achieved the stated outcomes for the Core requirement? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes have been achieved more or less well?)

At the end of the Spring semester, students were issued a questionnaire.

1. Do you feel you have acquired a greater understanding of the technical skills required to create works of digital art?

Definitely: 100%

Somewhat:

Not at all:

2. Do you feel competent in working with Photoshop and Illustrator and bringing a project to completion?

Definitely: 72.7%

Somewhat: 27.3%

Not at all:

3. Do you think that you have a greater understanding of the historical contexts in which art was created?

Definitely: 18.2%

Somewhat: 54.5

Not at all: 27.3%

4. Do you feel this course has aided your ability to discuss works of art?

Definitely: 63.6%

Somewhat: 36.4%

Not at all:

5. Do you feel this course has aided your understanding of art in written expression?

Definitely: 54.5%

Somewhat: 45.5%

Not at all:

6. Were you introduced to new concepts and methods of artistic expression through this class?

Definitely: 100%
Somewhat:
Not at all:

7. Are you more likely to create art now than before you took this class?

Definitely: 81.8%
Somewhat: 18.2%
Not at all:

8. Do you feel you have gained new skills that help you creatively solve problems?

Definitely: 100%
Somewhat:
Not at all:

9. Would you have taken this course if it did not fulfill the Core requirement?

Yes: 72.7%
Maybe: 9.1%
No: 18.2%

10. How do you feel about what you have learned in this course?

Satisfied: 100%
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied:
Unsatisfied:

11. If found any connection between the Introduction to Digital Art Core courses and other disciplines on campus, please state:

- Learning how to critically analyze works of digital art was useful and similar in learning to critically analyze literature and scientific articles
- This course was very unique and enjoyable. I've taken art all through high school and I love the presentation and critique methodology
- I feel like I will apply this to any job I work in the future as well as for personal use.
- Marketing?
- I found that Intro to digital art taught me many useful skills that could be applied in other disciplines.
- I feel like I will apply this to any job I work in the future as well as for personal use.
- I think this class teaching adobe photoshop and illustrator will really help in marketing.

The Questionnaire gives a useful overview to how students responded to the class and how we can develop it in the future.

To improve presentation skills, as well as bringing a work to completion, each semester faculty mount temporary class exhibitions of student work on the 4th floor of Devlin Hall. Additionally, one assignment that is made with research assistance from Burns' Library is mounted in the O'Neill Library Reading Room on the 1st floor. In Spring 2020, several contributions from each class member of the Introduction to Digital Art classes were mounted in the public exhibition *Digital Gulp* that was organized by the Digital Art faculty in the Carney Gallery. We find that by consistently presenting student work, students put in a lot of extra effort knowing their work will go on public display.

4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

The Questionnaire was sent to students at the end of the Spring semester. Assistant Professor Jane Cassidy compiled the results. Any changes made to the syllabus are made in collaboration with the several professors who teach Introduction to Digital Art. Syllabi changes are made at the end of the semester.

5) What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence? (What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?)

The results show that we can continually expand on our art historical discussions and presentations and to further contextualize works of art for students.

In Spring 2020 classes went online mid-semester. The format of the written analysis paper had to be changed since it was not possible for students to attend galleries or museums in person. Instead students were required to visit online galleries to choose artists to write about. Interestingly, many of the visual analysis papers were of a higher quality than in other semesters. By selecting artists that were represented by major galleries, students more readily found written material about the artists. We are taking this into account in our syllabi and will update the syllabus in accordance with online or on-campus classes.

6) Date of the most recent program review. (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

Core studio art courses were discussed at length by full-time studio faculty during the most recent department external review and self-study that was completed in 2011. Since that time, a smaller group has periodically met to discuss Core learning goals. In fall of 2019, the studio art department took a weekend retreat – an informal self-imposed self-study. We continue to discuss the learning objectives of the core and how we can best address our students' learning needs.

Submitted by Associate Prof Sheila Gallagher, DUS, Studio Art
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