

Annual Assessment Report

Department: Art
Academic Year: 2020-2021
Date of Submission: 9-15-21
Department Chair: Nathan Huff

I. Response to the previous year PRC’s recommendations

Item: rubrics for art history assessment	Response: art history rubrics have been developed for this year’s assessment.
Item:	Response
<p>Notes: The PRC had a number of other questions for us, many of which we could directly address. We sent an updated report 11/4/20 which included our benchmarks, added information on the sample sizes for the assessments and explanatory comments on the sample size for the art history assessment.</p>	

II A. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment

If your department participated in the ILO assessment you may use this section to report on your student learning in relation to the assessed ILO. The assessment data can be requested from the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.

Program Learning Outcome	<p>Program Learning Outcome #2: Graduates will be able to contextualize their practice. <i>Factors relevant to achieving this goal include the ability to place their work and that of others in conversation with historic and contemporary artists, theories of art, and functions for art.</i></p>	
Who is in Charge /Involved?	All full-time faculty	
<u>Direct Assessment Methods</u>	<p>Lower division assessments: Synthetic essays in Art 21/22/23</p>	<p>Upper division assessments: Relevant assignments in Art 124, 134, and 128 (art history) And Art 162 and 195 (studio; 195 is our capstone studio class)</p>

<u>Indirect Assessment Methods</u>	None
Major Findings	Studio and AH students alike did well with historical contextualization, meeting or exceeding our 75% benchmark. Studio students fell met the 75% benchmark for contextualizing their interests in the contemporary field in Art 128, but fell well short in Art 195. In discussion, the department recognized the ways in which that kind of personal contextualization is a steeper challenge for undergraduate studio majors. We debated changing the PLO. In the end, we decided to keep it, but chose what we think is a more reasonable benchmark for an objective that perhaps best serves the interests of students headed into MFA programs.
Closing the Loop Activities	We lowered the benchmark for our “contextualizing” PLO for studio students in Art 195 to 50%
Collaboration and Communication The department developed and vetted the rubric in early Fall 2020. We used it for relevant fall 2020 and spring 2021 studio classes. Professor DeBoer reached back to earlier years for relevant art history classes due to the small number of art history majors. The department discussed the results at our 9/21/21 department meeting.	

V. Adjustments to the Multi-year Assessment Plan (optional)

Proposed adjustment	Rationale	Timing

VI. Appendices

- A. Overview, assignments, data and discussion
- B. Rubrics used to evaluate the data

**ART DEPARTMENT
2021 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT**

Program Learning Outcome #2: Graduates will be able to contextualize their practice.

Students who achieve this goal can place their work and that of others in conversation with historic and contemporary artists, theories of art, and functions for art.

I. INTRODUCTION

We undertook direct assessment in 8 courses during the 2020-2021 school year. On occasion, results were supplemented with data from the previous year, where available. The assessments targeted specific assignments that align with PLO #2: Contextualization.

- In studio classes, the rubric targeted how effectively students could place their interests and processes in the context of the art world.
- In art history classes, the rubric targeted how well students could analyze works of art in their various historical and cultural contexts as well as the extent to which they could see their interpretations as part of a larger interpretive (methodological) framework.

Because studio majors take art history classes as part of their major we were able to assess both studio majors and AH majors' growth in art historical contextualization.

The following chart displays which classes were used, and how.

	Studio I/D	Studio M	Art History I/D	Art History M
Lower Division	Art 21,22,23		Art 21, 22, 23	
Upper Division	Art 162	Art 128, 195		Art 124, 128, 134

I = Introduce, D = Develop, M = Master

II. ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Art 21: Prehistoric-Gothic/Art 22: Renaissance-Modern/Art 23: Survey of World Art
Art history students take at least two of these three classes. **Studio** students take at least one.

Synthetic Essay Assignment: Versions of this assignment are used as a cumulative take-home final exam question in **all three lower division surveys**. The essay asks students to choose a theme and trace its transformation throughout time via judiciously selected images that encompass the scope of each class. The results show very quickly how well a student grasps the interplay of image and **context**.

In addition to the Synthetic Essay, in Art 23, the final essay question on the exam tests students' grasp of different disciplinary and methodological frameworks, in this case, the **methods** of art history compared to those of anthropology.

Art 128: Modern & Contemporary Art

This class is required for **studio** majors. **Art history** students take it as an upper division elective.

The Past/Present Portfolio: This semester project unfolds over the course of the term in five short essays which require students to situate their interests in the field of contemporary art and then assess the degree to which, and the ways in which, their practice as artists or art historians is indebted (or not) to art's history. Essays 3-5 are relevant for assessing students' ability to see their **work (studio or art historical) and their interests in context** of art's 20th and 21st century history.

Art 124: Italian Renaissance Art

Most **art history** majors take this class.

The Renaissance Portfolio Project: Because art history developed most of its methods around the study of Italian renaissance art, this field is key to understanding the historiography of the discipline as a whole. The Renaissance Portfolio project requires students to analyze the visual argument *about* Italian Renaissance art made by two 16-image "Renaissance Portfolios" which function as visual introductions to different editions of our text book (1969 and 2003). After analyzing these two portfolios, students propose and justify their own 16-image portfolio as a critique of the two portfolios from our textbook editions. The assignment unfolds over the course of five short essays which examine the **methods and historiography** of the discipline, and make a positive case for an alternative view.

Art 134: Land into Landscape

This course was developed to serve both the art history program and the environmental studies minor. Fall 2020 was its first iteration; all students were **art history majors or minors**.

Weekly Reading Responses: Every week, in addition to our main text, we read two or three additional essays which focus on the **contextual interpretation of landscape**, and demonstrate the **historiography** of thinking about "landscape" in the West by exploring different **methods** by which to analyze it. Students write short essays every week, synthesizing the main points of the readings and analyzing them with respect to a set of landscape images personally relevant to them. The exercise helps students understand both the discipline and their own interactions with "landscape."

Art 162: Screen Printing

This is an upper division studio elective. Many **studio** majors take this class.

The **Social Movements assignment** asks students to explore the role serigraphy has played in public life via social movements, and in turn experiment with creating a "social movement" piece based on what they've learned.

Art 193/195 is Senior Project and Senior Seminar

All studio majors take the Art 193/195 sequence during their senior year.

Students propose and begin their senior projects in the fall, and finish and exhibit them in the spring. They also write an artist statement and a process statement. In addition to the professor teaching Art 195, each student has an additional art-advisor drawn from the other faculty in the art department. All art faculty participate in grading senior projects.

III. RESULTS

STUDIO RESULTS

CONTEXTUALIZING CONCEPTS

	#students	HD	D	E	NP
Art 162 (I/D)	8		40%	40%	
Art 195 (M)	13	8%	38%	38%	15%
Art 128 (M)	19	47%	37%	16%	

CONTEXTUALIZING PROCESS

	#students	HD	D	E	NP
Art 162 (I/D)	8		30%	50%	
Art 195 (M)	13	8%	38%	38%	15%
Art 128 (M)	19	47%	37%	16%	

We notice that, as expected, student achievement was higher in Art 195, our capstone class than it was in the medium-specific course, Art 162. Students achieving either “highly developed” or “developed” rose from 40% for conceptual contextualization and 30% for conceptualization of process to **46% in both categories**. We note that regardless of improvement, we are still well **below our benchmark of 75%** achievement.

In Art 128, the past/present portfolio asks students to investigate 5 contemporary artists with interests or processes like their own, and situate those artists in art’s history, or demonstrate the ways in which they operate independently of art’s history. This project is less about historical contextualization, than about contextualization in the current art world. **84% of our studio majors scored in the “highly developed” or “developed” category**. This result, for a more “distanced” and less personal investigation of context **exceeds our 75% benchmark** for upper division work. See the discussion below for some thoughts on why the results from Art 128 and Art 195 are different.

ART HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION FOR STUDIO MAJORS LOWER DIVISION (ART 21,22,23)

# students	HD	D	E	NP	
21	28.6%	38.1%	23.8%	9.5%	% studio
48	12.5%	29.2%	31.3%	27.1%	%non-art department

UPPER DIVISION (Art 128)

	#students	HD	D	E	NP
Art 128 (M)	19	47%	37%	16%	

In lower division art history surveys, studio majors are introduced to the task of contextualization. In Art 21 and Art 22, the focus is on historical contextualization. At this introductory level, 67% of studio students achieve results in the “highly developed” or “developed” category. The results for non-art department students is 42%.

As noted above, in Art 128, the upper division art history class all studio majors take, 84% of studio majors achieved “highly developed” or “developed” skills in analyzing artists that shared their interests or processes in the context of art’s recent history (20th and 21st century).

ART HISTORY RESULTS**CONSOLIDATED LOWER DIVISION RESULTS****Context**

# students	HD	D	E	NP	
9	44.4%	22.2%	22.2%	11.1%	% of AH majors
48	12.5%	29.2%	31.3%	27.1%	% of non departmental students

Method

#students	HD	D	E	NP	
0					% of AH majors
14	28.6%	42.9%	7.1%	14.3%	% of non departmental students

In lower division art history surveys, art history majors are introduced to the task of contextualization. In Art 21 and Art 22, the focus is on historical contextualization. In Art 23 the focus is on cultural contextualization but there is also a major focus on art historical methods. At this level, 67% art history majors achieved results in the “highly developed” or “developed” category for historical contextualization. The results for non-art department students is 42%. Unfortunately, spring 2021, no art history students took Art 23 so we have no lower division scores for art history majors in this category.

CONSOLIDATED UPPER DIVISION ART HISTORY DATA

# students	HD	D	E	NP
Context 14	36%	43%	21%	
Method 11	45%	27%	27%	

Art History majors were assessed in four upper division classes, Art 124, Art 134, and in two sections of Art 128. Not all classes assessed both categories, which is why the number of students is different. **79% of art history majors scored “highly developed” or “developed” in analyzing the historical context of art works. 72% scored in those categories for having a grasp of the historical context for art historical methods.** These numbers exceed or are near our benchmarks of 75%.

IV. DISCUSSION

Last year, the Program Review Committee asked us to set benchmarks for our PLOs. We fairly arbitrarily set all of them at 75%. In past discussions we've noted a $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ dynamic in the department of students who really step up, and those who, for various reasons, don't. Based on experience, we thought if we could get three quarters of our students into the "highly developed" or "developed" category for each objective, we'd be very pleased.

The results of this year's assessment indicates that **all our majors do well with historical contextualization**—the kind we do in our art history classes. Both studio and art history majors met the 75% benchmark. This makes sense to us. Historical contextualization is a skill supported in many other places on campus: in the Common Context HIS 10 class, in the RS GE classes, and explicitly in the in "thinking historically" classes.

Placing one's own artistic interests and questions in the context of the contemporary art world, however, or contextualizing one's engagement with a particular media or process—these skills operate at higher level of complexity altogether. **In Art 195, studio majors scored 46% in these skills.** This result is consistent with earlier assessments that underscored the challenge of helping our majors, who are busy acquiring basic skills and repertoires, to seriously engage with the contemporary art world around them. We singled this out in our 2011 six-year report, and again in our 2017 six-year report. Additionally, COVID eliminated three semesters' worth of trips to LA, one of the major tools we use to help students think of their work in the context of contemporary art.

It's noteworthy that "**from a distance,**" so to speak, studio majors *are* able to identify contemporary artists whose interests, or questions, or media or processes they share, and analyze them. In Art 128, the required modern and contemporary art history class, **84% of our studio majors did satisfactory work toward these goals.** Students don't, apparently, build on what they learn in Art 128 when thinking about their senior projects. This may be because a number of majors take Art 128 in the spring of their senior year, *after* they propose and begin work on their senior projects.

The particular studio majors who we placed in the "highly developed" category for contextualizing their work in Art 195 are the kind of students well suited for an MFA. Most of our studio majors are not interested in graduate study and the meta-level thinking it demands. In fact, our 2017 alumni survey contained some critiques from students who thought our program was too weighted toward these more complex skills. While we disagree with that view, we do acknowledge **this PLO contains a higher level of challenge for our studio majors than for our art history majors.** And it's certainly more challenging than the "Making" PLO that we assessed 2019-2020.

Last year, we discussed (again) the challenge of helping our upper-division studio students connect their questions, interests, media and processes to the art world around them. We instituted an "artist family tree" exercise in Art 10. We also refined existing assignments in Senior Seminar that will support this PLO (the sophomore/senior project comparison; the research exercises; the prompts for the process statement). Before drastically altering this PLO, we'd like to let these changes take effect, and see what results look like next time around. In view of these considerations we've decided to retain this PLO, but aim for a 50% benchmark in Art 195. We believe this still challenges our most apt students, but is more realistic and more appropriate for our program overall.

Class: _____
 Student: _____

CONTEXTUALIZING RUBRIC

Evaluation chart for PLO #2: Graduates will be able to contextualize their practice.

Studio	Highly developed	Developed	Emerging	Not Present
The student can place their conceptual interests in conversation with other artists, historical and contemporary	The student evidences consistent and sustained dialogue with other artists	The student has a clear sense for other artists who share questions or interests.	The student makes occasional gestures to other artists, though they tend to be very conventional.	The student makes no connections to other artists
The student can place their process in conversation with other artists, historical or contemporary	The student evidences consistent and sustained dialogue with other artists	The student has a clear sense for other artists working with this medium or process	The student makes occasional gestures to other artists, though they tend to be very conventional.	The student makes no connections to other artists
Art History	Highly developed	Developed	Emerging	Not Present
The student can interpret works within the appropriate historical context	The student is able to contextualize an object and draw appropriate comparisons to other objects.	The student is able to develop a contextualized interpretation	The student is aware that context matters for interpretation, but doesn't adequately develop it.	The student makes no connection to historical context.
The student can place their interpretation in conversation with other art historians or theorists	The student is able to situate their analysis within a historiographic or methodical context.	The student can integrate their interpretation with prior interpretations	The student is aware of prior interpretations, but can't apply or integrate them	The student makes no connections to prior interpretations