

Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Department of Art – School of Arts and Sciences
B.A. Program in Art – Studio
B.A. Program in Art – Art History
AY 2014 -2015
(Completed February 2016)

In the Department of Art, there are three different means for measuring our majors' comprehensive knowledge of art history, theory, and praxis in their senior year. The type of senior comprehensive examination applied depends upon whether the student is an Art History major; a major in Studio Art (or Studio Art for Education); in rare instances, an exceptionally high-achieving Art History major who has qualified to write an Art History Honor's Thesis.

In the AY 2014-2015, we had two senior studio art majors and two senior art history majors. The two senior studio art candidates completed their Senior Studio Art Comprehensives for their B.A. in studio art with passing grades in spring 2014. The two candidates for the B.A. in art history both completed their comprehensive examination with high passing grades, one in fall 2014 and one in spring 2015 (see Table I below). The distinct assessment requirements, rubrics applied, and key findings for 2014-15 in this sub-concentration are discussed below.

Table I *Undergraduate Comprehensive Assessment Results for Art Majors in 2014 - 2015*

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/ Honors (Art History)		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Art History	0	0.00%		00%	2	100.00%	0	.00%	2
Studio Art	0	0.00%	2	100.00%	0	00.00%	0	0.00%	2

I. ART HISTORY - Evaluation, Rubric, and Findings

Most Art History Seniors (unless they qualify for, and elect to complete a "Senior Honors thesis", described below) take a three-part comprehensive essay examination that is given over two or three days. While the basic format of the examination has remained relatively stable over the past decade, the number and substance of the questions in each part has varied over time. In the past nine years, each candidate has been asked to write three essays from a selection of five or more essay questions for each of the three parts of their comprehensive exam.

Part I of the Art History Comprehensive Examination tests the candidate's knowledge of Ancient, Early Christian, Byzantine, and Medieval Art and Architecture; part II covers Renaissance and Baroque Art and Architecture; and part III assesses the candidate's knowledge of Critical Theory and the Art and Architecture of the Modern and Contemporary world. The three parts of each candidate's examination are graded by at least two individuals (either art historians or artists affiliated with the Art Department's faculty). Whenever possible, at least one of the graders for each part of the examination is an expert in the art historical subject area at hand. The final grade for each candidate's Senior Art History Comprehensive consists of an average of the aggregate grades assigned to each of their essays in all three parts of the examination as scored by the year's panel of instructors and/or professors (See Table III). In the spring of 2015, Dr. Nora Heimann was on sabbatical leave, so the comprehensive examination of the candidate who took the exam in February was graded by five visiting instructors and the acting department chair according to the following criteria: clarity and organization of ideas, accurate use of suitable specific examples, and quality of argumentation in answering each essay question. This same criteria was employed the prior semester by Dr. Heimann and three visiting instructors in grading the comprehensive examination of the candidate who completed the examination in December 2014. Both of our art history candidates passed their comprehensive senior art history examinations and earned a high pass.

Art History Assessment Improvements

New rubrics for grading the Senior Art History Comprehensive Examination were developed in the fall of 2009; they were revised in the fall of 2012, and applied in the spring of 2015 (Table II).

Table II Rubrics for the Senior Art History Comprehensive Examination, Fall 2014 and Spring 2015

Trait	Level		
	Exceeding Expectations A+ =100-97; A =96-93; A- =92-90 <i>(Outstanding work)</i> B+ =89-87; B =86-83; B- =82-80 <i>(Above average grasp of the material)</i>	Meeting Expectations C+ =79-77; C =76-73; C- =72-70 <i>(Average in quality)</i>	Below Expectations D=69-60 (<i>Unsatisfactory, incomplete, incorrect</i>) F = 59-0% <i>(FAILING - unacceptable as college-level work)</i>
1) <i>Knowledge and understanding of historical & social circumstances, critical theories & methodologies</i> [35%]	thorough and precise knowledge and understanding	adequate knowledge and understanding	insufficient knowledge and understanding
2) <i>Selection of examples, level of detail, range of evidence, quality of documentation.</i> [35%]	excellent selection of specific supporting examples and references that meets or exceeds the specific quantity requested (if applicable); answers display an accurate, specific, fully detailed grasp of material	adequately detailed and supported by relevant references of adequate quality that meets the specific quantity requested (if applicable)	insufficiently detailed; not fully supported by relevant examples and references; sources are poor in quality
3) <i>Presentation and organization, coherent and relevant introduction and conclusion</i> [15%]	Answers question with logical structure; clearly focused, well-developed, and persuasive presentation	adequate structure; generally focused, clear, coherent, and convincing in answering question	little or no evidence of a structured response; generally incoherent and unfocused
4) <i>Proper and effective use of English; proper and effective use of art historical terminology</i> [15%]	accurate, clear, varied, precise, concise, and appropriate use of language and art historical terminology; no significant lapses in grammar and expression; correct spelling and punctuation	generally accurate, clear, and coherent use of language and art historical terminology; only a few lapses in grammar and expression; few errors in spelling and punctuation	not fully comprehensible; many lapses in grammar and expression; lacking appropriate art historical terminology; often inappropriate and limited use of vocabulary; many errors in spelling and punctuation

The candidates' performances in 2012 (the last time we administered a written examination) indicated that our rubrics needed further refinement. As decided by the faculty in fall 2014, the examinations in fall 2014 and spring 2015 were graded using the following weights: traits three and four were both weighted 15%, and traits one and two were both weighted 35%, placing a greater emphasis on art historical knowledge of art works, movements, historical and social circumstances, theories, and methodologies. (In 2012, traits one and two were weighted 30% and traits three and four were weighted 20%; prior to this year, all four of the traits were worth the same 25%).

All four traits were also individually clarified. Credit for knowledge of scholarly literature and methodologies was limited to evaluation under trait one, distinguishing it separately from the student's range of evidence; and evaluation of the student's "selection of examples" was solely confined to trait two. Students in 2014-15 were held accountable for an opening and closing paragraph; credit for these necessary organizational items, was added to trait three, "presentation and organization." We also added proper use of art historical terminology, in addition to "proper and effective use of English" to trait four.

Table III *Individualized Table of Results for Senior Comprehensive Examination, according to Examination Parts BA in Art History 2014- 2015*

	Part I	Part II	Part III	Overall	Pass/Fail
Average Results (Students I-IV)	60.19	69.21	74.36	67.92	Pass

Table III.A *Individualized Table of Results for Senior Comprehensive Examination, according to Rubric Traits BA in Art History 2014- 2015*

	Trait I (30%)	Trait II (30%)	Trait III (20%)	Trait IV (20%)	Pass/Fail
Average Results (Students I-IV)	65.28	62.55	71.63	76.05	Pass

Table IV *Table of Results for Senior Comprehensive Examination, BA in Art History 2014-15*

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) knowledge and understanding of major art works and movements, historical and social circumstances, critical theories and methodologies	1	25%	3	75%	0	0%	2.25	0.50	4
2) level of detail, range of evidence, quality of documentation	1	25%	3	75%	0	0%	2.25	0.50	4
3) presentation and organization	1	25%	3	75%	0	0%	2.25	0.50	4
4) proper and effective use of English	1	25%	3	75%	0	0%	2.25	0.50	4

Note:

- 1) The "N" represents the number of students at each level of performance for each trait.
- 2) The "%" represents the percentage of the number of students falling at the level performance for each trait against the total number of students.
- 3) The mean is the average of all scores across the levels within the trait.
- 4) The standard deviation (SD) is the measure of the variability of the data set, indicating how "spread out" these data are from the mean value.

Art History Curricular Improvements as Indicated by Professional and Graduate Placement

AS has already been noted above, we had two art history candidates in AY 2014-5. One graduated in December 2014, the other in May 2015. One is working two jobs in an effort to save for graduate school – this student's time is split between working as an administrative professional for a large management and technology consulting service and serving as an arts administrative professional for a private collector. The other candidate is now pursuing a graduate degree in management at Catholic University and while also working at our university as an assistant director in an administrative office.

Data in the form of follow-up interviews with our graduates (last year's candidates in addition to alumni who have graduated in the last decade) indicates that many of our recent alumni have sought (or actively are seeking) graduate study in the field of art history, art conservation, museum studies or arts administration. Knowing that graduate work is the goal of many of our art history majors, we have endeavored to prepare our candidates for advanced study with the addition of a Junior Seminar open only to Art History majors and one

more required Art History elective. These new courses are designed to train our majors in critical methodology and in advanced research and writing skills.¹ The results of these additions to the major (made in AY 2011-12) has been strongly positive.

Many of our recent alumni have strongly urged us to add to these course offerings the opportunity for our majors to obtain curatorial training in researching and writing didactic/narrative wall label texts. (We first introduced these elements to our Senior Seminar in 2010; and we required them annually of all of our art history candidates up through fall 2014). This fall 2015, we allowed this curatorial requirement to lapse for financial reasons, since severe budget reductions limited our ability to fund student curated exhibitions; we hoped that in removing this very worthy element we might at least have the benefit of limiting the number and type of capstone requirements we placed before our candidates.²

Having discerned that the curatorial experience gives our candidates a significant advantage in seeking gainful employment in art museums and art galleries after graduation (as well as in obtaining internships before graduation), we are now seeking meaningful yet manageable ways to integrate this experience into our art history students' curriculum. This semester (spring 2016), we are experimenting by requiring our juniors to draft wall-label texts related to their Junior Thesis in the course of completing ART 316, Junior Art History Seminar. In our next annual evaluation of the capstone experience we will endeavor to report on how well this new Junior Seminar requirement worked in practice.

As in past years, our alumni interviews this year indicate that majors who completed summer and/or term-time professional internships during their undergraduate career significantly enhanced their likelihood of finding work in the field after graduation. The Art Department has a strong commitment to assisting interested majors in identifying and attaining museum and gallery internships. We continue to seek student opportunities for attaining internship positions both through extensive advisement, and by seeking to hire experienced part-time instructors who hold concomitant professional positions as curators, educators, or administrators at area museums. (This important goal has genuine benefits for our students for it has directly paid off in our candidates obtaining valuable internships at leading area arts institutions, including the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and the Kreeger Museum. These experiences in turn have helped our students to find work at a variety of art museums and galleries after graduation). Meeting the goal of hiring highly trained museum professionals to teach in the department has been extremely difficult in the last two years due to a 19% reduction in our adjunct/visiting instructor budget. Specifically, all three of the new courses that we introduced in recent years to provide our students with the opportunity for professional hands-on experience in researching, designing, curating, and reviewing actual exhibitions (ART 351 Museum Studies, ART 351A Gallery Practice, ART 352 Art & Culture Reporting) have not been able to be offered; and we do not anticipate being able to afford to offer them again in the coming academic year.

Finally, an increasing number of art history majors have expressed the desire to have more classes in digital design in preparation for post-graduate work in the arts in both commercial and not-for-profit sectors. Cognizant that hiring is often made preferentially for students with essential digital design skills (such as web design, print design, digital photography and video, Photoshop, and Illustrator), many of our art history students planning for their futures and recent alumni seeking employment have indicated the desire to attain the professional and entrepreneurial advantages provided by the ability to integrate technical prowess and dynamic design in expressive digital communication. Unfortunately, the current undergraduate curriculum in the School of Arts and Sciences, which now limits students to taking no more than 14 courses in their major, effectively prohibits our art history candidates from graduating with more than one or two courses in digital art and design. Allowing our art history majors to use their six free electives to take additional courses in digital studio art would help ameliorate this problem. Alternatively, if the Art Department could be allowed to restructure its program in a way that wholly separated our studio art and art history courses with distinctly different prefixes (such as ARTH for all of our Art History courses, and ARTS for all of our studio art courses), and if our students could then be permitted to treat studio art and art history as wholly separate disciplines, as in fact they are (much as CUA's modern language majors are allowed to double major or

¹ The rationale for these course additions is articulated in our AY 2011-2012 Capstone Assessment Report.

² Simply put, between 2010 and 2014, we worried about demanding too much of our seniors in requiring them to research and write didactic wall label texts in addition to both researching and writing a Senior thesis, and reading and writing critical summaries of major methodological texts in one semester; followed the next semester by the requirement that our candidates take a three-part written comprehensive examination external to a full course load. It was with this concern in mind that we experimented with dropping the written comprehensive examination in AY 2012-13. That year we allowed our one art history candidate to curate an exhibition of Pop Art prints, posters, book illustrations, and related archival materials in the May Gallery of Mullen Library and begin the process of writing a senior thesis in the fall of the student's senior year; the student completed the senior thesis in the spring semester (in lieu of taking a three-part comprehensive examination in fulfillment of the usual senior capstone assessment). The candidate and the art faculty were both dissatisfied with this experiment, in large part because the candidate found it difficult to retain focus in the extended process of completing the senior thesis over the course of the candidate's last semester in college.

minor more than one modern language – for example, CU Spanish majors are permitted to minor in French), this could also serve to allow our art history majors to complete the 13 art history courses needed to complete their undergraduate major in art history while also allowing those who are interested in taking additional credit-bearing studio art courses in digital design and communication to do so.

II. ART HISTORY HONORS - Evaluation, Rubric, and Findings

On rare occasions, exceptionally high-achieving art history majors are granted special permission to write an Art History Honor's Thesis in addition to taking the two-day senior art history comprehensive examination that is required of all art history majors (detailed above). The Senior Art History Honor's Thesis consists of a 15-20 page research paper that is begun at the end of the junior year and completed in the senior year. This paper is assessed by a minimum of two graders -- the major thesis advisor and one or more additional reader. No student enrolled in this demanding course in 2014-15. If a student had elected to do so, rubrics for this capstone requirement [Table IV] would have been applied.

Table V *Rubric for SENIOR COMPREHENSIVE HONORS THESIS in the History of Art*

Trait	Level		
	Exceeding Expectations (100-80%) [A-B-]	Meeting Expectations (79-60%) [C+-D]	Below Expectations (59-0%) [F]
1) <i>Quality and clarity of thesis topic</i>	Thesis topic is clearly and articulately stated; based on sound logic and good research	Thesis topic is adequately stated; and essentially sound in its approach	Thesis topic is unclear, and/or unfounded in its premise.
2) <i>knowledge and understanding of subject</i>	thorough and precise knowledge and understanding	adequate knowledge and understanding	insufficient knowledge and understanding
2) <i>quality of research, range of evidence and documentation</i>	thorough and wide range of evidence, richly detailed documentation	adequately detailed and supported by relevant references	insufficiently detailed, inadequately supported by relevant references
3) <i>presentation and organization</i>	clear, effective, and logical structure; clearly focused, well-developed and persuasive presentation	adequately clear and coherent structure; generally focused, coherent, and convincing organization of ideas	little or no evidence of a structured narrative; unfocused; generally incoherent in presentation of ideas
4) <i>argumentation, critical acumen</i>	sophisticated analysis; convincingly interpreted; fully supported by precise references to well-chosen original and secondary sources	generally valid and adequate interpretation; argument is adequately supported by precise references to adequate original and secondary sources	meager or simplistic interpretation; inadequately supported by references to original & secondary sources; illogical in argument and/or does not distinguish between fact, conjecture, & opinion
5) <i>originality</i>	arguments are original to the student or effectively develop published interpretations	not necessarily original but competent, perceptive, and insightful	entirely unoriginal and derivative
6) <i>proper and effective use of language (English and foreign, when employed), appropriate use of academic conventions specific to the discipline</i>	accurate, clear, varied, precise, concise, and appropriate use of language; no significant lapses in grammar and expression; correct spelling and punctuation ; proper use of academic conventions specific to the discipline	generally accurate, clear, and coherent use of language; only a few lapses in grammar and expression; few errors in spelling and punctuation; adequate use of academic conventions specific to the discipline	not readily comprehensible; many lapses in grammar and expression; often inappropriate and limited use of vocabulary; many errors in spelling and punctuation; incorrect or inconsistent use of academic conventions specific to the discipline

III. STUDIO ART - Evaluation, Rubric, and Findings

The Studio Art Senior Project measures the sum of each studio student's academic experience in mastering the technical skills needed for the production of art in each student's chosen media -- painting, sculpture, or digital design. It also demonstrates each studio student's essential understanding of critical thinking and art history. Since the creative process consists of the application of all these learned elements, the senior project assesses the student's technical proficiency, his or her ability to function as a productive visual artist, and his or her basic comprehension of his or her major undergraduate curriculum. In 2011-12, there were two senior studio art candidates for graduation. The assessment process that was applied in 2011-12 is described below.

Table VI *Table of Results for Senior Comprehensive Evaluation, BA in Studio Art 2014-15*

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Technical Proficiency	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2
2) Formal Analysis	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2
3) Project Concept and Originality	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2
4) Progress from Inception of Idea to Completion	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2
5) Research	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2
6) Overall Presentation	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00	2

Note: 1) The "N" represents the number of students at each level of performance for each trait.

2) The "%" represents the percentage of the number of students falling at the level performance for each trait against the total number of students.

3) The mean is the average of all scores across the levels within the trait.

4) The standard deviation (SD) is the measure of the variability of the data set, indicating how "spread out" these data are from the mean value.

The evaluation of each studio major's progress in completing his or her Senior Project is an elaborate multi-step process that begins at the end of the student's junior year with the student's submission of a Studio Art project plan that is subject to approval by the student's Academic Advisor, the Department of Art's Senior Project Assistant Coordinator (who assists the department chair by coordinating the evaluation and completion of all Studio Art projects), and two Senior Project Advisors (selected by each student from the department's faculty; these advisors may be the same as the candidate's Academic Advisor and/or the Project Coordinator). The evaluation process continues throughout the student's senior year with monthly (or when necessary bi-weekly or weekly) meetings between the senior and his or her two Senior Project Advisors. During these meetings, the candidate's progress in completing his or her capstone project is graded by both advisors. The official process also includes evaluations held approximately every five weeks from the start of the fall semester of senior year through the end of the spring semester in which all studio candidates formally present their Senior Projects before an assembled panel of faculty members. During these Senior Critiques, each student's progress in completing his or her project is graded by the assembled Art History and Studio Art faculty (See Table VII) according to a detailed set of rubrics that measures each Senior Project's conceptual development, formal analysis, overall presentation, general progress, and quality of research (See Table VIII). The assessment of each studio major's Senior Project at these Senior Critiques includes an evaluation of each project's formal quality, the quality and clarity of each senior's oral presentation, and the quality and clarity of each student's written statements describing the scope and meaning of their Senior Projects.

Table VII *Aggregate Table of Results for Senior Comprehensive Evaluation, organized according to critique and traits, BA in Studio Art 2014-15*

Trait	Averaged Student Grades							Final Assessment
	Critique 1 (12.5%)	Critique 2 (12.5%)	Critique 3 (12.5%)	Critique 4 (12.5%)	Critique 5 (12.5%)	Critique 6 (12.5%)	Critique 7 (25%)	
1) Technical Proficiency (16.7%)	2.3	2.1	2	1.9	2.1	2.7	3	2.5
2) Formal Analysis (16.7%)	2.1	2.5	1.7	1.6	2.2	2.7	3	2.3
3) Project Concept and Originality (16.7%)	2.3	2.4	2.2	1.3	2.4	2.7	3	2.3
4) Progress from Inception of Idea to Completion (16.7%)	N/A	2.6	1.75	1.5	.25	2.5	3	2.3
5) Research (16.7%)	2.5	2.25	3	1.4	2	2.1	3	2.4
6) Overall Presentation (16.7%)	2.4	2.75	1.8	1.3	2.25	2.6	3	2.4
Total Critique Grade	2.	2.7	2.0	1.5	2.2	2.7	3	2.4
Final Result:								2.4

Note:

- 1) Every student's Senior Studio Art Project is individually graded by a group of faculty at every critique
- 2) There are 7 critiques over the course of two semesters (fall and spring)
- 3) The first 6 critiques are each weighted 12.5% and the final critique 25%
- 4) The Final Assessment is the senior's final grade for each trait, ending in an overall grade

Between 2004 and 2009, studio art Senior Projects were graded by a panel of studio art and art history faculty according to a three point scale as follows: Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, and Below Expectations. The grade assigned to each student's senior project at bi-monthly Senior Critiques was formed by an arithmetic compilation of points assigned to each student's project according to the following three trait assessment: Project Concept and Research, Formal Analysis, Overall Presentation, and General Progress. In this process, each trait was rated on a scale ranging from "Satisfactory/Meets Expectations" [one point], "Below Expectations" [½ point] or "Failing/Unsatisfactory" [no points]. At each critique, a student's senior project could earn up to an average of four points by being judged "Satisfactory" in all four traits by all, or the majority, of faculty assessors. The aggregate score of all monthly advisor evaluations and all bi-monthly Senior Critique grades determined whether or not each student's Senior Project would be granted a High Pass, Pass, or Failing grade. Rubrics of the detailed descriptions of the traits will be applied in future academic years. We have found that the rubrics as redesigned in 2009 provide a clean and coherent means of assessing the candidates' progress throughout the seven critiques and in assessing their final projects.

Table VIII Rubric for the Senior Comprehensive Evaluation, BA in Studio Art 2014-15

Trait	Level		
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)	Meeting Expectations (2pts)	Below Expectations (1pt)
1) Technical Proficiency	Exhibits excellent technical skill in the selected medium. Shows a technical proficiency that enhances the appearance and legibility of the artwork.	Exhibits adequate technical skills and abilities. Show room for improvement in basic technical skills.	Show a lack of technical skill and abilities. Significant improvement needed. Skills are inadequate for artistic expression.
2) Formal Analysis	Shows outstanding understanding of all of the elements of form (color, line, shape, space, texture value, harmony, contrast) and utilizes these elements to good effect within the artwork. The use of form is utilized to enhance communicative qualities of the artwork.	Shows adequate understanding of all of the elements of form. Use of these elements is sometimes unclear relative to the artwork. Improvements could be made to increase the communicative qualities of the artwork.	Use of the elements of form is unclear, unfocused and seems random. No understanding of how to utilize form within the artwork.
3) Project Concept and Originality	Project shows exceptional originality, focus and creativity. Project exudes a comprehension of contemporary art issues and art history. Shows an original, focused, personal, point of view within the concept. Concept is well thought out and planned.	Project shows adequate originality, focus, and creativity. Shows some comprehension of contemporary art issues and art history. Concept is somewhat thought out and planned, though parts lack focus and clarity.	Project lacks any sense of originality or creativity. Little to no understanding of contemporary art issues or art history. Unfocused, ill-conceived concept, poor planning.
4) Progress from Inception of Idea to Completion	Shows outstanding ability to develop an artistic creation from conceptualized idea to finished works of art within a body of cohesive, intelligent artwork. Uses critical thinking skills and on-going problem solving to progress with the development of their artworks. An obvious amount of work completed between critiques that shows the development of a conceptualized body of cohesive work.	Shows average ability to develop an artistic creation from conceptualized idea to finished body of work. Adequate critical thinking and problem solving. Adequate amount of work done between critiques.	Show very development in the works presented. No progress of consequence. Little to no work done between critiques.
5) Research	Demonstrates an exceptional understanding of his/her work and its relationship to culture, the history of art and contemporary art. Has the ability to cite artists whose work share a similar sensibility and be able to distinguish from those whose work does not. Has the ability to articulate a response to their own artwork and others.	Shows an adequate understanding of his/her own work and its relationship to culture, the history of art and contemporary art making. Is no always clear regarding how these influences pertain to their artwork.	Shows little to no understanding of his/ her own work and its relationship to culture, the history of art or contemporary art making. Is unable to reference the work of other artists regarding their own work.
6) Overall Presentation	Artworks at critiques are presented in a serious, thoughtful, professional manner. Ideas pertinent to the student's work are discussed intelligently. Written statements and oral presentation during the given critique is of high quality. Questions during critique are answered in a knowledgeable fashion.	Artworks are presented adequately. Has adequate ability to discuss their artworks, but lacks clarity at times.	Sloppy, uncaring presentation of artwork. Incapable of discussing various aspects of the artwork. Lacks focus and clarity.

Studio Art Curricular Improvements as Indicated by Professional and Graduate Placement

Regrettably, most of our Studio Art majors do not continue in the field. Recent candidates for the B.A. in Studio Art are currently working a variety of capacities including catering and retail; the few who are working in a related field are doing so in

web production, museum design consultancy, and teaching art to public school students. Three notable factors contributing to their difficulty in advancing in the field after graduation are the following: (1) lack of faculty and facilities to attract students of talent and skill; (2) lack of faculty and facilities to sustain the limited number of students we are able to attract; and (3) limitations in the students' undergraduate curriculum that prevents our students from being able to advance their abilities by taking more than 11 courses in studio art.

Our Efforts to Augment our Full-Time Faculty

After years of researching and writing a series of inter-related reports supporting the department's request for a new tenure-track faculty line in Digital Arts / New Media / Photography / Filmmaking, the request for a tenure-track hire in this area was granted by the Provost in November 2012. After a six month search, we hired our first new tenure track professor in the Department of Art in over 15 years. Our new hire, Jonathan Monaghan, has expertise in computer animation and computer graphics. His addition has allowed us to expand our course offerings in the Digital Arts; and it has expanded the number of students who now major and minor in digital art and design. We continue to hope, pray, and strive as best we can for more faculty for the sake of our students.

Our Efforts to Advocate for Remedies to our Curricular Limitations

Our studio art students are currently required to take 9 studio classes, 2 capstone seminars, and 3 art history courses. (The art history courses are required to help the studio students contextualize their artistic practice, and to enable them to speak and write about their work with greater verbal and visual literacy). As has already been noted above, the current undergraduate curriculum in the School of Arts and Sciences limits students to no more than 14 courses in their major. These curriculum limitations inhibit our students' ability to develop their art-making proficiency appropriately. Studio art is a highly skill-based field of study; more courses in the major would significantly enhance the development of our candidates' aptitude and dexterity as fledgling artists. Simply put, permitting our studio art majors to use at least some of their six "free electives" to take additional upper-level courses would allow our candidates to improve their skills as artists, which would directly improve both their ability to succeed in completing their capstone evaluation and in their professional careers post-graduation. (Allowing studio students to take more than 14 courses in their major could also allow our more traditional students of painting and sculpture the opportunity to gain basic facility in digital design and communication technology, skills that are increasingly crucial to most 21st century professional artists and arts organizations).

Our Efforts to Improve our Foundational Instruction and Capstone Evaluation

In analyzing the rubrics overtime, we have identified weaknesses in our candidates' Formal Analysis (See above, Trait 2, Table VIII). To address this problem, our visiting professors have been instructed to place special focus on formal analysis skills in the following foundational courses: ART 101, ART 102, ART 201, ART 202. To further improve art studio majors success one of the improvements implemented by the department was the creation of ART 207 and ART 208 Drawing for Studio Art Majors. These two courses feature a higher level of expectations and additional assignments beyond those required for ART 201 and 202.

During the AY 2013-2014, the Department of Art received approval and initiated a Digital Arts & Design Certificate open to undergraduate students. The Digital Art & Design Certificate gives students from all disciplines a unique, competitive edge by supplementing their major area of study with a series of specific digital communication and design skills, including web design, print design, digital photography, Photoshop, Illustrator, video production and 3D animation. The Digital Art & Design Certificate will arm students with a foundation in the essential design skills and integral technical prowess needed for creating engaging forms of expressive communication necessary to insure an advantage in today's highly competitive job market. This certificate is guided by the conviction that today's most powerful and dynamic tools belong in the hands of CUA's students, helping them to become more powerful and dynamic members of the new economy.

Dozens of students every semester enroll in digital art courses in the Salve Regina Digital Art Lab. The students need time outside of class to finish projects. We still have no permanent lab monitor to facilitate this great need. Currently we use Graduate Work Study funds to hire a part-time lab monitor; however this requires us to put out an open call every semester and we are unable to get a monitor with sufficient skills to help the students and effectively manage the lab. The 19-hour a week restriction also minimizes the time the lab is open. A clinical position with an individual versed in digital design skills will be a great asset to the department and its students. It would also go a long way to keeping the university's over 250K investment in our new digital lab more secure.

Table IX Student Self-Evaluation: Studio Art Comprehensive Evaluation

Student Self-Evaluation Studio Art Comprehensives Please be prepared to hand in completed evaluation at the beginning of the critique.						
Student Name:						
Dates of the Weeks Logged:						
Senior Critique Number and Date:						
Research: Please write in all research completed since the last evaluation						
Movies and Music:						
Books, Magazines and News Articles:						
Museums:						
Websites and Blogs:						
Other:						
Meetings with Advisor: Please write in the date and time of each meeting						
Advisor Name:						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat/Sun
Week I						
Week II						
Week III						
Week IV						
Week V						
Work Times: Please log each day and amount of time you worked on you senior project Total Hours:						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat/Sun
Week I						
Week II						
Week III						
Week IV						
Week V						
Artist's Statement: Please attach a revised artist statement with each self-evaluation						