

**Major Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements**  
**Department of Drama**  
**Undergraduate Program**  
**AY2008-9 through AY2012-13**

**Assessment Measures**

The Department of Drama uses the following measures to assess departmental learning outcomes:

Direct measures:

- DR 451, Senior Seminar, a research-based class
- Comprehensive exams, combining a take-home essays and an oral presentation
- Grades in all core courses

Indirect measures:

- Grades in all courses
- Student evaluations of all courses
- Student participation in production work
- Alumni feedback
- On-going faculty review of individual student's degree progress
- On-going faculty review of comparable programs

**Assessment Findings**

***Senior Seminar Discussion*** (Attachment 1):

The Department of Drama analyzed course grade, evaluation, and enrollment data in DR 451 Senior Seminar for a five-year period (Fall 2008 through Fall 2012).

The grades for students in DR 451 are in general high (A's and B's). The course has been a capstone of the undergraduate curriculum for many years, and it has had a similar set of assignments and schedule since 2002. The students conduct research alone and in small groups to prepare in-class presentations and write a final paper. Some students have struggled with the course's heavy writing component, and, during the period between 2008 and 2012, the faculty members who have taught the course offered guidance to help students with their research and writing. They also sent students to the writing lab when appropriate. The department's core courses, especially DR 201/202 and 305 also help prepare the students for the research and writing required in DR 451. Though the assignments and syllabus have not changed significantly since 2002, the final grades have varied from 2008 to 2012. One explanation for this variation may be that four different faculty members taught the course during this period. The following list identifies who taught the course over the last five years.

Fall 2008 Sybil Roberts  
Fall 2009 Sybil Roberts  
Fall 2010 Ann Marie Saunders  
Fall 2011 Patrick B. Tuite  
Fall 2012 Brent Stansell

Patrick B. Tuite is a full-time faculty member, and he modified the course's readings and assignments when he joined the department in 2002. Dr. Tuite is the only full-time faculty member whose tenure and promotion depends upon the publication of scholarly research. The other full-time faculty in the department have an expertise in acting, directing, playwriting, and design. As a result, Dr. Tuite normally teaches DR 451, and the department hires lecturers while he is on sabbatical or participating in a fellowship. During the period included in this assessment, the lecturers did not participate in regular faculty meetings or join the end-of-semester reviews. In addition, some of the lecturers had more experience teaching research and writing than others. The lack of communication among the faculty concerning the progress of the students and the different teaching styles and levels of experience among the lecturers impacted the course's instruction and may account for the variation of the students' grades. After reviewing the grades, the department agrees that only full-time faculty should teach the course. The department also agrees that hiring another full-time faculty member whose area of expertise includes research and writing would help strengthen all of the writing intensive courses in the undergraduate curriculum.

In general the students give this course very high evaluations. They speak of being expected to push their skills farther than they have in the past, and being challenged to think of the material in new ways. We have through later interviews with students that they are happy that the course helps prepare them for their comprehensive exams.

Enrollment in DR 451 declined in 2009, but enrollment for the course was more consistent between 2010 and 2012. The advisors monitor each student's degree progress carefully, and the entire faculty review the academic progress of each student in the department during the end-of-semester meetings. The Associate Chair and Administrative Assistant also make sure that no student takes DR 451 until he or she has completed the core requirements for drama majors. The faculty and staff inform the students that DR 451 is the culmination of their academic coursework in the department and prepares them for the comprehensive exams.

### ***Comprehensive examination Discussion*** (Attachment 2)

The Department of Drama analyzed the data from the comprehensive examination results, and determined that the majority of our students are successfully prepared for this exam. We place an academic hold on all student registration every semester until they have met with their advisors, at which point the hold is removed. The students are advised to take courses in a specific order, and we have reinforced the order with advisors. Maintaining a strict tract of sequentially ordered courses has become more difficult in the last five years. Between 2008 and 2013, a larger number of undergraduate students took advantage of study abroad programs. Many of these students spent a semester abroad during their junior year. The consequence is that many students now take DR 305 in their senior year. This means that they do not take the reading and writing intensive seminar before they take DR 451, senior seminar. We have adjusted the sequence of courses by making DR 451 available by permission

only in the future. This change allows students to study abroad in an approved program and take DR 305 and DR 451 in the same year if the student's advisor feels they are ready to take the courses at the same time. The rate at which students pass the comprehensive exams indicates that this solution works.

The department continues to use rubrics approved by the University to evaluate the work of each undergraduate student. The students complete two essays and one oral presentation. Three faculty complete a rubric for each essay and the oral presentation. The rubrics identify different traits and provide a boxes with a description and corresponding numeric value. The numbers indicate if the student's work is: 1. Below Expectations 2. Meets Expectations 3. Exceeds Expectations.

The faculty in the department would like to develop rubrics that include more traits and use a more complex and nuanced numeric system to evaluate the work of the students. We feel restricted by the current format. It is too easy for students to pass the comprehensive exams with essays that meet only the basic description of our current traits. We will continue use the current numbering system, refine the written descriptions for each trait within each rubric, and advocate for more complex numeric values overall.

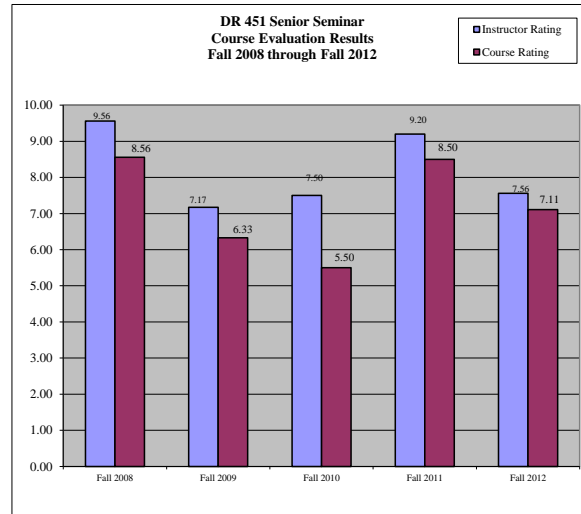
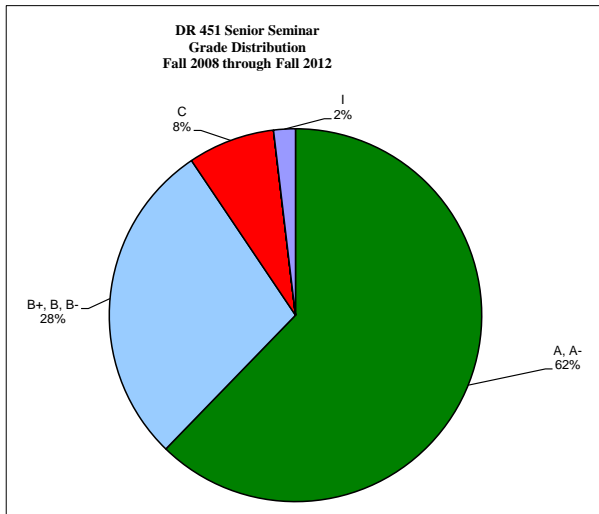
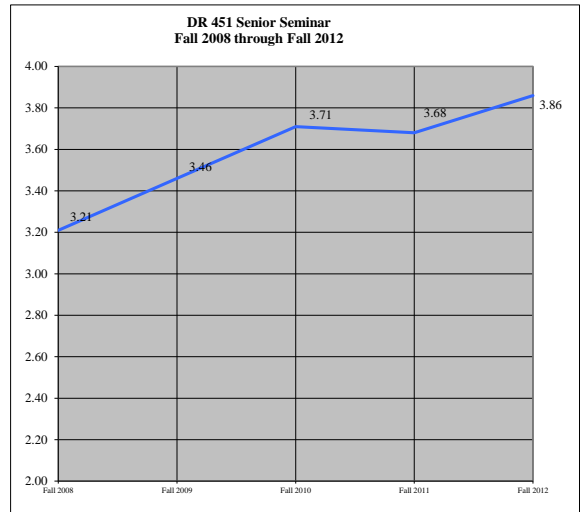
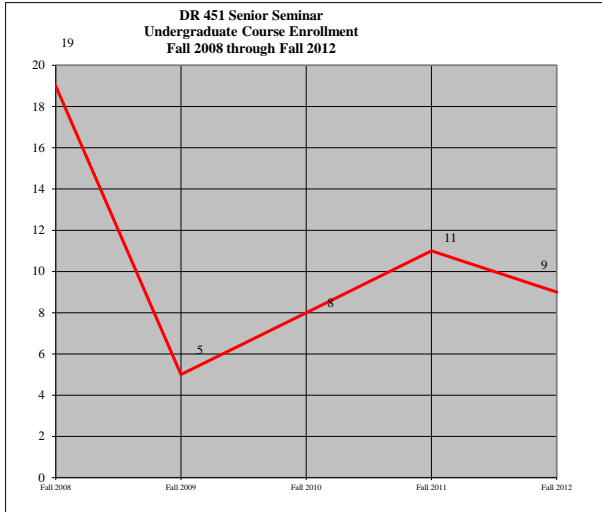
In general, Drama students characterize their Drama education as teaching them to think creatively to solve problems, bring together information from a variety of sources, and work collaboratively on a project or paper. The data also shows an emphasis on papers under 20 pages, which reflect the type of written work common in this discipline. The greatest deviation from peer data was in the area of diversity education. We continue to discuss ways to increase cultural and racial diversity within the class materials, although our student body remains very homogeneous. Recent topics for DR 201 & 202 have emphasized cultural diversity (e.g. Asian Theatre, Theatre for Social Justice, African Theatre) and reflect a conscious effort to address this issue.

### **Curricular Improvements**

Our program continues to compare favorably to BA programs in Drama across the country. We have the ability in the topics classes to address specific areas of interest or concern on a per semester basis. Because the core courses introduce students to a range of disciplines within theatre and dramatic literature, and because we teach them in an order designed to build upon each other, we find they continue to prepare the students in an effective manner. Using more indirect measures, such as alumni input, post-production evaluations from guest artists and lecturers, and feedback from theatre professionals working in the Washington, D.C. area, we have determined that the enrichment of production work, professional guest workshops, and extra-curricular internships continue to help prepare the students for professional work in the theatre.

**COURSE SUMMARY DATA: DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA  
DR 451 Senior Seminar**

Term	Undergraduate Course Enrollment	Course Grade		Course Grades							Course Evaluation Results						
		Avg.	StDev.	Grade Distribution							Course Eval.		Instructor Rating		Course Rating		
				A, A-	B+, B, B-	C	D	F	W	I	#	%	Avg.	StDev.	Avg.	StDev.	
Fall 2008	19	3.21	0.71	7	9	3						18	94.74%	9.56	0.86	8.56	1.29
Fall 2009	5	3.46	0.71	3	1	1					1	120.00%	7.17	2.64	6.33	2.25	
Fall 2010	8	3.71	0.38	6	2						8	100.00%	7.50	1.41	5.50	2.45	
Fall 2011	11	3.68	0.37	9	2						10	90.91%	9.20	0.79	8.50	0.71	
Fall 2012	9	3.86	0.34	8	1						9	100.00%	7.56	1.24	7.11	1.45	



**UNDERGRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESULTS**  
**SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA**  
**AY2008-2009 to AY2012-2013**

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2008-2009		0.00%	18	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	<b>18</b>
AY2009-2010		0.00%	5	83.33%	1	17.00%		0.00%	<b>6</b>
AY2010-2011		0.00%	5	62.50%	3	38.00%		0.00%	<b>8</b>
AY2011-2012		0.00%	6	66.67%	3	33.00%		0.00%	<b>9</b>
AY2012-2013		0.00%	5	55.56%	4	44.00%		0.00%	<b>9</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>78.00%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>22.00%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>50</b>

Note:

- 1) Milestone outcomes were included in the categories High Pass and Pass with Honors if these designations were explicitly indicated in the students' milestone record.
- 2) Category "High Pass" includes both "High Pass" and "Pass with distinction".
- 3) The count in this table is based on the exam outcomes of all attempts in an academic year.