

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program Name (no acronyms): Art History

Department: Fine and Performing Arts

Degree or Certificate Level: BA

College/School: College of Arts and Sciences

Date (Month/Year): 09/2023

Assessment Contact: Bradley Bailey

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2022-2023

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2021

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle? (Please list the full, complete learning outcome statements and not just numbers, e.g., Outcomes 1 and 2.)

In the fall 2022 semester the program offered ARTH 4900 Research Methods, which is the course that is used to assess Student Learning Outcome 3: Graduates will be able to apply the principal methodologies of art history to analyze a work of art, and artist, a patron, a place, or a text (also see the Program-Level Assessment Plan). ARTH 4900 is one of only three courses required for all art history majors, and effectively acts a capstone course in which students in either their junior or senior years engage in a semester-long research project that is largely determined by the student's own interest, or in a special topic identified by the instructor.

2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please describe and identify the course(s) in which these artifacts were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

In ARTH 4900 Research Methods, students are assigned to write a 5,000-6,000 word research paper in which they use one or more the methodological approaches covered in the course. In the fall 2022 semester, the course was offered at both the St. Louis and Madrid campuses. All of these papers have been collected and will be archived. The instructor in Madrid has been on leave and is just now returning to work. Some but not all of the work produced by the students in that class has been reviewed, but we will add that material to the report following review.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and **include them in/with this report document** (do not just refer to the assessment plan).

The art history department developed a rubric to evaluate the research methods papers (see the rubric). Methodology papers are also reviewed as a group by members of the art history faculty.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

After review, it was determined that of the eight research methods papers turned in, five were deemed to have achieved a score of excellent in all categories (format, sources/citations, and content), one was satisfactory in format and unsatisfactory in sources/citations and content and, and two were considered to be largely unsatisfactory in all categories. The course was completed in-person on the St Louis campus and students were allowed discretion in choosing their projects, so the teaching modality should not be considered a significant factor in this assessment result. Moreover, all students were required to meet regularly with the instructor outside of class hours, so the meetings in which the students' own projects were discussed were no different from each other, regardless of the modality. Students were required to submit drafts and give a presentation of work in progress, receiving feedback for both.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

Two observations came out of this assessment: two of the students who attained unsatisfactory results suffered from issues of time management and a lack of motivation to do the tasks needed to complete the project. Rather than progress throughout the semester, they left the majority of their projects incomplete until the last-minute resulting in insufficient time to complete the assignment at a satisfactory level in all categories.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

The art faculty review the Research Methods papers when the finalists are selected for the annual art history research symposium at the end of April, which in 2023 was held for the third time in collaboration with the art history program in Madrid. This was also an opportunity for both campuses to share student work with the other (Madrid students have presented at the research symposium in the past before it was held as a joint event). The student work that was determined to have been unsatisfactory in achieving the intended objectives and the possible reasons for this result were discussed among the faculty.

B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites

- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process

- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

As the problem was not deemed to be a result of the curriculum, no curricular changes will be made. However, pedagogically students would benefit from in-class exercises that elaborate on the components and specific skillsets meant to be developed and evaluated in the class, i.e. thesis writing, etc. For students who have not taken the seminar or have not previously taken upper-level art history courses with SLU faculty, it may in certain

instances be necessary to be more actively involved in directing students toward research topics and methodological approaches, and/or requiring students to act more demonstrably upon critiques rather than taking them as suggestions.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

As indicated in the 2021 Art History assessment report, the program underwent a substantial change in 1000-level course offerings for multiple reasons: 1) to move away from survey courses that focus largely on the art of Europe and post-colonial North America and, as noted in the 2022 Art History assessment report 2) to acknowledge that many of our majors do not take the 1000-level courses at the beginning of their matriculation through the art history program, as many come to decide to major in art history after taking a number of 2000 and even 3000 level courses before officially declaring. Therefore, rather than viewing courses like ARTH 1010 Art and Its Histories (one of three courses that all majors must take to graduate with the major) and ARTH 1090 Global Masterpieces in Art (which many students take as their Global Art requirement for the major) as “introductory” courses, these core-supporting courses (both satisfy the core attribute for Global Interdependence under the Equity and Global Identities Core component) are a vital part of our program’s concern with our students’ ability to recognize that art is produced in the context of time and place. Therefore, we will be reviewing where and how we assess our SLO #1: Graduates will be able to contextualize an artwork. Currently, the parameters under which this SLO is assessed are very broad, and do not adequately reflect the need that we as a program felt to modify our course offerings at the 1000-level the way that we did. Our next action will be to more thoroughly and specifically identify what a student should be expected to demonstrate from having taken ARTH 1010, as that learning outcome still reflects the more generic expectations of the 1000-level course that ARTH 1010 replaced.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

As this is a plan to amend an SLO and its assessment, the change has not yet been assessed.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

This plan not yet been assessed—see B above.

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

Past assessments of SLO #1 did not reflect the wider range and diversity of cultures and their interconnectedness (which will likewise be assessed by the University Core) that the new 1000-level course offers. From earlier assessments, we established that students were able to contextualize works of art, but the possible contexts were broad enough that they did not reflect the importance of the curricular changes that were made. Therefore, the SLO will be revised so that we are assessing whether the change in our curriculum is reflected in how our majors demonstrate their ability to contextualize a work of art as a product of a global society.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools (e.g., rubrics) with this report as separate attachments or copied and pasted into this Word document. Please do not just refer to the assessment plan; the report should serve as a stand-alone document.

Dr. Bukky Gbadegesin – ARTH 4900 Research Methods – Fall 2022 – Number of students: 8

Format

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Did the student use the font(s), spacing, and margins specified by the instructor?	Nearly always or more – 8 On the whole students followed the guidelines.	Usually	Infrequently or less
Are the works of art and other relevant images and tables discussed illustrated in the text or as an appendix?	Nearly always or more – 6 Most students included images either within the text or as an appendix.	Usually	Infrequently or less-2 Two students omitted any images from the paper. I will provide students with a digital/hardcopy checklist that must be submitted with the paper.
Are the works of art and other relevant images and tables discussed illustrated with captions as specified by the instructor?	Nearly always or more-3 Two students identified images with the appropriate captions.	Usually	Infrequently or less – 5 Most of the students either did not use captions or used an incomplete format.
Are the reproductions legible and do they successfully illustrate the point for which they are included?	Nearly always or more – 7 All images that were included were good quality and illustrated the points for which they were included. Although one student only included the primary image in their paper.	Usually	Infrequently or less – 2 Two students omitted images from the paper so this question in not applicable for them.
Are the works of art discussed properly italicized in the text with dates and locations included when appropriate?	Nearly always or more - 4	Usually – 2 I will continue to call attention to this issue in their drafts, and make sure the requirement is clearly explained in the guidelines.	Infrequently or less – 2 Two students omitted images from the paper so this question in not applicable for them.
Is the paper legibly printed and properly bound or, if submitted electronically, is the electronic file accessible and properly organized?	Yes -8	Somewhat	No

Final comments: The main issue was with omitted images and captions (especially, formatting). I will re-write the guidelines to clarify these requirements with illustrative examples of captions and give students with a digital/hardcopy checklist of the paper components of what must be submitted.

Sources and Citations

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Are the sources used for the paper properly cited according to the specifications of the instructor?	Nearly always or more – 6	Usually – 1 One student incorrectly cited a few sources (Chicago Manual, vs MLA).	Infrequently or less – 1 One paper had no bibliography. In the future, I will provide students with a digital/hardcopy checklist of what must be submitted.
Are the sources used in the paper of an appropriate level of academic rigor? (With the understanding that certain themes and methodological approaches may also utilize non-academic resources)	Nearly always or more – 4	Usually – 2 Sometimes they over-relied on web-based information or 1-2 sources for a significant amount of content. I will dedicate more time to check-in with students individually about how to gather appropriate sources and use them effectively.	Infrequently or less – 2 A few papers listed sources that were not rigorous or not fully accounted for in the final draft.
Is the number of sources used appropriate to the theme and scope of the paper and/or the specifications of the instructor?	Yes – 4	Somewhat – 1 One student consistently complained of difficulty finding sources but did not follow-up with viable options.	No – 3 A few students have fewer than 10 sources but did not do the work to address this issue.
Is the number of non-English language sources used appropriate to the theme and scope of the paper and/or the specifications of the instructor?	Yes N/A	Somewhat	No
Were footnotes/endnotes used to provide supplemental information or references to other source materials as	Nearly always or more - 5	Usually – 2 Two students did not use footnotes to their best advantage, with either too few or without relevant info.	Infrequently or less – 1 One student did not use any footnotes.

specified by the instructor?			
Were the research materials derived from a broad variety of sources (books, journal articles, newspapers, exhibition catalogues, etc.) as dictated by the scope of the paper and/or the specifications of the instructor?	Nearly always or more – 7	Usually	Infrequently or less – 1 A single student omitted her bibliography
Final comments: For various reasons (late start, motivation), a few students struggled with gathering an adequate number of rigorous sources. I will dedicate more time to check-in with students individually about how to gather appropriate sources and use them effectively. A majority of students understood how and to what effect to use footnotes. One omitted bibliography is a reminder to offer students a digital/hardcopy checklist of what they should submit.			

Content

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Did the student successfully implement one or more of the approved research methodologies of the discipline?	Successfully - 6	Somewhat successfully – 1 One student produced a thesis that used only one research method.	Unsuccessfully – 1 One student deviated from previous drafts and did not use any of the possible (previously discussed) methods.
Is the paper the appropriate length to address the scope of the thesis and/or as specified by the instructor?	Yes – 5	Somewhat – 1	No – 2 Two students made it clear that they rushed to complete the paper and did not meet the page requirements.
Did the student utilize proper grammar and spelling consistently throughout the paper? (This includes typographical errors, run-on sentences, paragraph	Nearly always or more – 8	Usually	Infrequently or less

indentations, and other typical proofreading issues)			
Did the student use the terminology of the discipline when appropriate?	Nearly always or more – 5	Usually – 1 While one paper described particular ideas but did not articulate the proper terminology.	Infrequently or less – 2 A few papers did not use any terminology we'd discussed in the course at all, or consistently in their papers.
Was the student successful in developing and stating a cogent thesis?	Very successful – 5	Somewhat successful – 1 One paper had a poorly constructed thesis that was a bit too broad.	Less or unsuccessful – 2 A few papers lacked an argument but rather used a descriptive/informative approach. In the future, I will incorporate an exercise on how to develop strong thesis statements and use them effectively in papers.
Is the thesis an original contribution to the field of art history or another discipline?	Yes – 5	Somewhat – 1 In one paper, the questions posed in the thesis were familiar ones, however the mix of methods being applied were notable.	No – 2 A few papers were almost biographical accounts without an original <i>argument</i> offered.
Was the student successful in developing a thesis that is appropriate to the scope of the assignment?	Very successful – 5	Somewhat successful – 1 One paper had an underdeveloped thesis that would've benefited from an earlier start with the assignment.	Less of unsuccessful – 2 Two papers had theses that could have been more rigorous or attentive to the broader implications of their chosen work.
Was the student successful in defending the thesis clearly and effectively?	Very successful – 5	Somewhat successful – 1 One paper did not defend its thesis clearly and effectively because it lacked a convincing grasp of the socio-cultural issues at play	Less or unsuccessful – 2 Two students with poorly developed theses had difficulty defending them effectively.
Was the student successful in organizing the paper so the progression of ideas flows in a coherent manner?	Very successful – 5	Somewhat successful – 1 One paper was organized but uneven/stilted in writing.	Less or unsuccessful – 2 Two students had consistently poorly developed papers—they both indicated to me that they were not strong writers and had challenges with motivation.

Final comments: Overall, a few students struggled with motivation and time-management, which led to the under-developed papers. Part of this may be beyond the scope of curricular changes, however, there are a few changes to be made:

1. Do more research paper writing exercises together in -class (i. e. thesis writing, organization, sources and citations, writing time management, etc.),
2. Use checklists that delineate all the required parts of the final submission, and
3. Consult Reinert Center to develop mechanisms for breaking the paper into smaller, building modules.

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