

## 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): 08/2021

Assessment Contact: Bradley Bailey

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2020-2021

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 2020 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. Due to the pandemic, the course was taught as a hybrid course with one student participating remotely, but there is traditionally not an online option for this course. In the past, art history majors at the Madrid campus have taken the course remotely. However, in the fall 2020 semester, it was determined that the high number of art history majors enrolled in Madrid was sufficient to offer the course both in Madrid and in St. Louis, therefore there were two separate sections of the course that semester, each taught by a separate instructor at each respective campus. All of these papers have been collected and will be archived.

### 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 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 seven 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 one was considered to be largely unsatisfactory in all categories. The students whose paper was unsatisfactory in sources/citations and content was attending the class remotely throughout the semester. However, given the nature of the course and—as a capstone course—the freedom that the students were given to construct their own projects, 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, all of which took place over Zoom, so the meetings in which the students' own projects were discussed were no different from each other, regardless of the modality. Results from the Madrid campus are pending.

## 5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

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

Two observations came out of this assessment: both of the students who attained unsatisfactory results suffered from indecision about making a final selection of a methodological approach. Rather than making a firm determination regarding what direction they intended to go with their research, they changed numerous times well into the semester, resulting in insufficient time to complete the assignment at a satisfactory level in all categories. Part of the indecisiveness can be attributed to the students not always taking advice or following instruction. However, the instructor may not always have been as direct or as urgent as needed in guiding the students toward a better approach. These results indicate that 1) the deadline for students to be firm about a thesis that has the approval of the instructor may need to be earlier in the semester, and 2) some students may require a more direct approach regarding what they need to do in order to craft a topic that has the utmost chance of success. This latter observation suggests that the instructor may need to be more forthright about the problems and possible solutions to those problems rather than allowing the students to discover and solve the problems for themselves. More time to focus on defending an approved topic and a more active critique of student research that is demonstrating less than satisfactory results could be key to improving the performance of students who are having more difficulty choosing and/or developing what they intend to focus on in their research.

## 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 2021 was held for the first time in collaboration with the art history program in Madrid (for over a decade the symposium was shared with the art history program at UMSL). 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). 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. The program has already inserted a third required course, a one-credit seminar intended to be taken in the first or second year, that majors will take ideally before they take Research Methods that will give them an introduction to the methodologies that they will be using in the capstone course (the students with unsatisfactory results, both transfers, had not had the advantage of taking the seminar). However, 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?

In assessing our Student Learning Outcome 1 (Graduates will be able to contextualize an artwork), the art history faculty have come to the determination that in order to better accomplish what we indicate that we intend for our students to do (students will demonstrate the ability to explain the cultural, social, and historical contexts of art), that the required course ARTH 1010 Survey of Western Art needs to be replaced by a course that provides an introduction to art from cultures around the world. While the major curriculum does have a "Global Art" course requirement that ensures that majors take a course in the art of a non-Western culture in order to complete the program, the faculty no longer feel that this lone course requirement is sufficient in order to demonstrate to our students the importance of thinking about the discipline from a global perspective. Therefore, we are instituting a change in the program, wherein all majors will be required to take the course ARTH 1010 Art and Its Histories (see the attached syllabus), which will involve studying works of art from different parts of the world in pairs, highlighting how the study of each is illuminated by seeing it relation to a larger global context. With this new course, students being introduced to the history of art will not be limited to contextualizing art from a predominantly Western perspective.

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

This change was made in the Spring 2021 semester, and has only just been submitted to the college curriculum committee and the core curriculum committee for approval. The new course will go into effect in Fall 2022.

### C. What were the findings of the assessment?

This new course has not yet been assessed—see B above.

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

While this is a new change and has not yet been assessed, we will continue to focus our assessment of Student Learning Outcome 1 on how students contextualize works of art with the expectation that, due to the curricular change, students who are interested in contextualizing art from global perspective will not be limited to doing so from a Western perspective.

**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.**