

Undergraduate Degree Program Assessment Progress Report Cover Sheet:

Degree: BA Art History - Plan 13 For Calendar Year: 2009

(Date submitted to college committee: February 26 By: Dr. Laura Amrhein)

(Date posted on college assessment website: _____)

Overall Rating: _____

Respond to all six parts following the “Degree Program Assessment Progress Report Instructions.” (NOTE: Parts 1 through 4 can be copied from the relevant sections of your assessment plan.) Attach additional pages as needed.

(1) Student learning goal(s) addressed this year:

Goal 3. Students are expected to write about specific works of art and their historical contexts, using appropriate art historical terminology. Term papers or projects will demonstrate the student’s ability to define, research, and creatively analyze art historical problems. Student research papers were reviewed in the 2009 assessment cycle to determine how well Goal 3 is being met. The data collected will be added to the previous year’s assessment information concerning research papers. In the previous cycle, we began to collect data for Goal 4 which addresses oral reports. (<http://ualr.edu/cahss/index.php/home/assessment/>) In this cycle, faculty schedules conflicted with the timing of the single course in which oral reports were given. In other words, three raters could not be present for the reports. We have decided to defer this activity until fall 2010, when all three art historians are teaching (one is currently on OCDA) and can formulate a better process of evaluation.

(2) Learning outcomes/objectives for Goal 3 addressed in this assessment cycle:

1. Identify works from, and analyze the creative influences on, art from major periods and classifications selected from Ancient, Medieval, Italian Renaissance, Northern Renaissance, Baroque, 18/19 Centuries, Early Modern and Late Modern, and Non-Western art. Students will determine basic information about key monuments (i.e. major works of architecture, painting, sculpture and other media) such as date, location, materials, information about artists, information about period styles, and information about themes.
2. Write effectively about specific works of art and their historical contexts, using appropriate art historical terminology. Term papers or projects will demonstrate the student’s ability to define, research, and creatively analyze art historical contexts and methodological problems.

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It is the goal of the UALR art historians to improve students' research methods, creative approaches to research, and their ability to write convincing research papers.

(3) Courses & activities assessed:

Upper level art history course research papers were randomly chosen from upper level courses and assessed in an annual assessment meeting. This year two art historians evaluated papers since one was on OCDA. We used the same rubric (see p. 4 of report) in evaluation. All 14 traits or characteristics of the rubric relate explicitly to Learning Objective #2. Learning Objective #1 is implicit to trait #3, the quality of visual analysis. The courses were Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Art in Europe and Northern Renaissance Art. These courses were selected because art history majors and minors were enrolled in these courses. Students in a third upper level art history course were not selected because all of those students were studio art majors. The Capstone Course, which has been recently added to the curriculum, will be included in future assessment cycles.

(4) Methods used:

Goal 3. A random sample of papers was collected from art history students in two upper-level courses. In the upper level courses, it is possible to identify art history majors; if needed, art history minors may be included in the sample. The BA in Art History is a small program. If an art history major or minor is enrolled in more than one course, we select only one of the student's papers to assess in a given cycle.

The UALR art historians and an external reviewer rated the characteristics or traits appropriate for a research paper; both internal and external reviewers used the same rubric. The outside reviewer also wrote a statement about the strengths and weaknesses of the student work, the assessment plan, and the art history program. The breadth of experience represented by the UALR art historians, as well as the additional perspective of the external evaluator, assists in validity.

There is no national norm for scoring the college student writing samples we have chosen to assess. The use of the rubric by each evaluator ensures inter-rater reliability. Among the evaluators, the total paper score must be within three points for the research paper. Usually a high degree of agreement exists among the UALR art historians although a disagreement on individual traits by a point or two does occur.

(5) What are the assessment findings? How did you analyze them?

Findings:

Goal 3

Research papers or projects are assessed by scoring fourteen traits or assessment characteristics on a 0-3 scale. The goal for the assessment of research papers is that 70% of the sample should score 26 or more points out of 42 possible points.

Six research papers were scored in the fall semester which was the total of art history majors or minors in the current cycle. Of these, 100% met the goal of 26 points. The sample average score was 30 points. This is a major improvement from last assessment cycle as majority of the papers were weak in every measure, from identifying a thesis statement, to developing an argument, to providing supporting documentation. In the preceding assessment cycle the average score was 22.2.

An analysis of the findings was discussed during our annual assessment meeting with two of the three UALR art historians. Numerical calculations were made based on the six upper level research papers/samples, which were averaged to provide the above information.

(6) What conclusions were drawn and what decisions were made as a result? How were stakeholder groups involved?

It is clear that students are beginning to incorporate the fundamental elements of scholarship (thesis, identification of evidence, development of argument, conclusion) in their own papers. Our strategy has been to introduce students to scholarly writing in a step by step process. To improve *upper level* student writing, we are first addressing assignments in *lower level* courses. Typically, in the lower level (Survey courses) have not yet declared an art history major. All students in ARHA 2311, Art History Survey II, a key pre-requisite for upper level courses, read the same scholarly article and are required to identify the author's thesis as well as discuss why the author uses specific footnotes. To reinforce and further these skills, an assignment in the upper level courses requires students to analyze scholarly articles to identify the thesis statement, the author's develop of the argument, the author's use of sources, and the author's use of footnotes to document sources. In last year's assessment cycle, the art historians revised the department document "Guidelines for Writing Research Papers," which is posted on the art department web site, to provide additional guidance and examples of correct footnotes and visual documentation. Students are directed to this document in the research paper assignment. The art historians also schedule one-on-one student conferences fairly early in the semester to discuss the requirements of the term paper or project. Perhaps the improvements to the website improved the aspects of student papers, such as stronger organization, and the technical aspects, which were reflected in scores.

The external evaluator concluded "the learning objectives are clear and create a good method for evaluating art history students." She noted the quality of research, but commented that many papers could be improved and noted some were weak in terms of a well developed thesis. This problem is a typical one noted in the previous assessment cycle by the three art historians.

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Stakeholder Involvement:

All full-time art history faculty, Amrhein, Brown, and Martin, are involved in assessing the program. Faculty continue to meet throughout the year to evaluate student work, interpret the data, plan future assessment activities, and develop ways to use assessment data. In early fall 2009 the results of the spring 2008 progress report and the evaluation by the college panel were discussed with the entire art faculty at a department meeting. Each assessment committee in the department provides update reports at faculty meeting throughout the year. The results of the 2009 report and its review will be shared with all art department faculty in fall 2010.

Research Paper Assessment Rubric

	None	Weak	Adequate	Strong
	Not present	Mentions few traits	Mentions & discusses some traits	Discusses most traits thoroughly
Trait/Assessment Characteristic	0	1	2	3
1. Thesis statement: ✓ Identification of research problem				
2. Development of paper: ✓ Development of ideas from thesis ✓ Organization ✓ Persuasive discussion				
3. Quality of visual analysis: ✓ Selection of art works for the topic ✓ Familiarity with visual information				
4. Research ability: ✓ Selection of authoritative sources ✓ Appropriate use of secondary sources ✓ Original ideas				
5. Documentation of sources: ✓ Use of department standard footnotes ✓ Use of department standard bibliography ✓ Use of department standard illustrations				
6. Disciplinary content: ✓ Use of art historical terminology ✓ Use of art historical methodology				
Column totals:				
Total score out of 42 points:				

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70% of samples should have a minimum rating of 26 points