Expected Outcomes: effective written communication

Students completing a BA degree in Art History will be able to write effectively. Students should be able to demonstrate the ability to use correct grammar and word choices. They should be able to write in a scholarly tone and organize ideas clearly, logically, and effectively. They should use a writing style that is clear, smooth, consistent, and readable.

Related typical general education outcomes:

7 Written Communication

Assessment methods

Method: Review of Final Research Paper

Review of Final Research Paper for Arts 4700: Capstone in Art History Final research papers by all the Art History majors (a total of 3) in the capstone class were evaluated using a rubric that measured students’ abilities to (1) organize information clearly and logically, (2) maintain a scholarly tone, (3) write in a style that is clear, smooth, consistent, and readable, and (4) demonstrate correct grammar and word usage.

Findings:

66% of students met our benchmark (“Very good”) for all four areas of assessment. 33% were below benchmark, displaying only “good” abilities in these areas.

How did you use findings for improvement?

This is the first year that we are using the Art History capstone (Arts 4700) to assess the Art History BA program (implemented in 2008). Much class time in the capstone is devoted to writing instruction; students complete multiple writing assignments throughout the course of the semester. This practice will continue in future semesters. Three students completed the course in fall 2011. In AY 2012-13, eleven students will complete the capstone. Art History faculty discussed the assessment process and results. We will continue to assess written communication and predict that the greater number of students expected next year will yield more nuanced results that we can then analyze more thoroughly.

Additional comments:

None

Expected Outcomes: Independent Research

Students completing the BA degree in Art History will be able to conduct independent art historical research. Students will be able to synthesize the work of other scholars and produce their own effective arguments.
Related typical general education outcomes:

2  Analytical and Critical Reading
7  Written Communication
12 Aesthetic Appreciation and Engagement

Assessment methods

Method: Review of Final Research Paper

Review of Final Research Paper for Arts 4700: Capstone in Art History Final research papers by all Art History majors (a total of 3) in the capstone class were evaluated using a rubric that measured students' abilities to (1) synthesize and communicate the ideas and arguments of other scholars, (2) construct a clear, well-defined thesis statement, (3) employ appropriate art historical data (about form, iconography, context, etc.) to support an argument, (4) understand and use established art historical methodologies (5) cite scholarly sources correctly and completely using a standard citation style.

Findings:

66% of students met the benchmark ("Very good") for all five areas of assessment. 33% were below benchmark, displaying only "good" abilities in these areas.

How did you use findings for improvement?

The capstone course requires an intensive semester-long research project that involves multiple assignments and culminates in an oral presentation and 25-page paper. Throughout the semester, students also complete weekly readings and discussions about art historical methodology, historiography, and research practice. This format will continue in future capstone courses. Three students completed the capstone course in fall 2011. In AY 2012-13, eleven students will take the capstone. Art history faculty discussed the results of our assessment. We will continue to assess this outcome and predict that a larger enrollment in next year’s capstone course will yield more nuanced results that we can then analyze more thoroughly.

Additional comments:

None

Expected Outcomes: Effective Oral Communication

Students completing the BA degree in Art History will be able to give effective oral presentations about art historical topics.

Related typical general education outcomes:

8  Oral Communication

Assessment methods

Method: Effective Oral Communication

Students completing the BA degree in Art History will be able to give effective oral presentations about art historical topics.

Findings:
Because students are not required to give oral presentations in all upper-division Art History classes, the benchmark for assessing oral communication is “good.” All students (100%) met the benchmark for all areas of assessment in oral communication.

How did you use findings for improvement?

The capstone course requires an intensive semester-long research project that involves multiple assignments including a 20-minute formal presentation on the student's research topic. The talk also requires the use of projected images and handouts. This practice will continue in future capstone courses. Three students completed the capstone course in fall 2011. In AY 2012-13, eleven students will take the capstone. Art history faculty met to discuss the results of this assessment. We will continue to assess this outcome in the capstone class and predict that a larger enrollment in next year's capstone course will yield more nuanced results that we can then analyze more thoroughly.

Additional comments:

None