

6/8/18

Art Department Assessment Report

Narrative of Strength: The Senior Handbook and Grade Rubrics

In its annual assessment discussion of the art major and the senior capstone, the Art Department reviews course evaluations and discusses the quality and quantity of work produced for the senior exhibition. In 2011 there were some challenges identified during the course of these discussions. The faculty found that there was some confusion about the structure of the senior capstone, and about how the seniors were being evaluated. There was also dissatisfaction with the senior work that year in terms of the level of rigor and dedication to their research and studio practice. The faculty felt that they could and should pull better quality work from the senior majors and took steps to improve the program.

In order to answer the general confusion of the students and to clearly delineate the level of work expected and the criteria for evaluation, the "Senior Handbook" was created. This manual for the senior art major outlines the goals of the department, the requirements for the senior capstone, a timeline for the production of the senior exhibition, and concludes with a catalog of each grading rubric that the faculty uses to evaluate each component of the capstone. This handbook is introduced to the junior (rising senior) majors at the end of the Spring semester prior to their senior year.

The Art Department continues its assessment discussion of the major, the capstone, and the senior handbook each year. Since its implementation in 2011/2012, we have made a few adjustments and refinements to it. In 2015 a new, more concise grade rubric was introduced for the Spring critiques in comparison to the much more nuanced Fall critique rubrics which provide lengthy written feedback appropriate for that stage of their development. Most recently this year, more explicit language was added to clarify the oral presentation requirement for the capstone.

The implementation of the Senior Handbook has been quite successful in providing a more pronounced structure to the senior capstone, and by acting as a valuable planning tool for our seniors as they navigate their final year at Hendrix College. We have seen a marked improvement in the quality of work our seniors produce, and in their overall education in the major. In future, the Art Department will continue to evaluate the major and senior capstone annually, making further adjustments whenever necessary.

Action Plan: Developing a mechanism for assessing our move to stacked courses

By suggestion of the outside assessor Christine Reising in 2012 to address a problem with low enrollment, two of the five art faculty have switched to stacked (multi-level) classes- Melissa Gill (printmaking) and Matthew Lopas (drawing and painting). Two methods are in place to assess the effects of this move; (1) both Gill and Lopas include a question in their course evaluations asking students to comment on their experience in a stacked course, and (2) Gill added a question about stacked courses in the senior exit survey.

Thus far student comments on evaluations have been inconclusive, but both Lopas and Gill have seen their course enrollments improve since making this change. In both cases, the stacked courses create a broader range of options for students to complete a 2- or 3-course

sequence in the major. At this time the Art Department's plan for assessment is to continue to monitor their course evaluations, student performance and enrollment numbers to assess the stacked courses' effectiveness.