

## **Assessment Plan**

**Program: B.A. Art History**  
**College of Visual and Performing Arts**  
**Kean University**  
**Updated January 2014**

### **Mission:**

The mission of the B.A. in Art History is to have students focus on understanding and interpreting the visual arts within historical contexts. Skills developed in this program of study include knowledge and appreciation of various Western and non-Western cultures and their arts. Also stressed are awareness of the creative process in the arts, written and oral communication, critical and creative thinking, and the relationship between the arts and other humanities. This major provides students with the foundation necessary for graduate study and for careers requiring a background in art history such as work in galleries and museums. The BA Art History Program at Kean University has several related goals that are aligned with the University Mission as evidenced in the student learning outcomes.

### **Assessment Process:**

Over the years, faculty in the art history program have implemented various forms of assessment; according to senior faculty, ten years or so ago students were required to take a short content exam in the capstone course and were given an exit survey at graduation to see how students perceived their college education to have contributed to personal and institutional learning objectives. These assessments were implemented regularly for a number of years and then were dropped as some faculty retired and new ones were hired. At the moment student assessment is done on an individual basis through faculty mentoring, and program assessment occurs in AH 3740, Modern Art, and in the capstone course, AH 4700, in which students create a semester-long project that integrates their art history content knowledge with practice. Such projects vary by semester and the interests of the supervising faculty and students; in the last ten years they have included research papers; research for group projects on New Jersey's first African-American architect that resulted in a website; organization and installation of an exhibition of New Jersey-based Latin American artists; a series of public talks on various artworks; research and installation of an exhibition on Robert Rauschenberg, and others. These projects were evaluated in spring 2012 using the General Education writing and oral presentation rubrics, and students completed a content exam and department and university exit surveys.

Beginning last year, we have implemented an assessment for written and oral projects in AH 3740 (Modern Art), and GE and writing and oral assessment in AH 4700 (capstone), as well as

continuing the administration of the content exam.

Art History students have ten core courses to take as part of the requirements for the major (AH 1700 and 1701, AH 3740, one non-western art history course, five additional upper division art history courses, and the capstone course, AH 4700). These core courses provide a sound backbone of the discipline with regard to the research and theoretical aspects of art history as well as the various areas of study within the field. These core courses are the primary vehicle for assessing the knowledge of our students. Beyond the core courses, students take courses in foreign languages, studio arts, and various free electives designed to supplement core courses in their discipline, and it is likely that no two majors take the exact same grouping of courses. Therefore, the faculty has agreed to center our assessment on the core knowledge of art history; interim assessment takes place in AH 3740 (Modern Art), and final assessment in the capstone, AH 4700. We are still discussing the implementation of e-portfolios for art history majors.

Each core course has assessment tools such as exams, research and reflective writing assignments, portfolio work, group work products, etc., as part of the evaluation process, and the program has used results of assessment for making improvements to program practices aimed at increasing student learning. One example of such an improvement ten years or so ago was the addition of the non-western art history requirement in order to increase students' awareness and knowledge of art traditions worldwide as the discipline has grown to encompass the art of other cultures. Also in the last ten years, the capstone course has been expanded to include a distinct career preparation component as we have realized that Kean art history students infrequently go to graduate school for academic study; recent students have continued their education or begun careers in art conservation, gallery management, museum education, and other non-curatorial fields.

Specifically, art history students are assessed in upper division courses for content knowledge and writing ability; in particular, the art history capstone project, whether primarily written or project-based, should demonstrate their progress toward these goals. The capstone course is designed to give students hands-on experience in designing and creating a project making use of their art history knowledge (e.g. exhibition, website, public talks, research paper) and also serves as a career seminar with individual attention paid to the specific career trajectory of each student. Rather than adding any new courses to the curriculum, we are working with General Education to ensure that the research and writing process begun in GE 2025 (Research and Technology for CVPA students) is intensive and focused. We re-implemented a short content exam in the final year of a student's program starting in AY 2011-2012. We have considered adding a thesis to the program requirements, but this would necessitate a change in the program and would not necessarily benefit the kind of students we attract to the program nor their career goals, which are usually non-academic in nature. (The majority of our majors are transfer students as well; they frequently want to complete the program in two years or less, giving us less control over

their academic background and potential progress.)

Beginning in the spring of 2012 the direct measures for assessing attainment of our program Student Learning Outcomes in the capstone course were the content exam and course projects (the capstone is now offered on an as-needed basis). The indirect measures included a university exit survey and a department exit survey. In this course, we collected assessment data from the exam and the project (which were written and/or oral) in order to evaluate whether our students are meeting program goals. Each time the course is offered, composite data from scored student assignments are collected and analyzed to address areas of program strengths and weaknesses and to inform our decisions, ultimately to result in program improvements. In addition, we have and will continue to make use of the Graduating Student Survey, an indirect measure developed by the Assessment Office. Data from the student survey will also help inform our decisions regarding program improvement to increase student learning.

---

**Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) – as aligned with KU SLOs\* derived from the Institutional Mission and GE SLOs\*\*. (Data from Direct and Indirect Measures collected each semester in the Capstone Course or a designated, end-of-program course.)**

*Students who graduate with a BA in Art History should be able to:*

**SLO1:** Demonstrate content knowledge of European, U.S., and one non-western area of art history (enables students to demonstrate respect for diverse cultures and perspectives). (KU 1, 4) (GE K4, S1, S3, GE V4)

Direct Measure:

- 1) Achievement in AH 3740 (Modern Art) coursework
- 2) Scored GE rubrics for oral and written presentations in both AH 3740 and AH 4700
- 3) Content exam, AH 4700 (capstone)

Indirect Measure:

- 1) Instructor notes in both AH 3740 and AH 4700
  - 2) University exit survey.
  - 3) Departmental exit survey
-

**SLO2:** Utilize critical thinking and problem solving skills and demonstrate respect for diverse cultures and perspectives. (KU 1, 2, 4) (GE K2, K3, K4, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, GE V4)

Direct Measure:

- 1) Achievement in AH 3740 (Modern Art) oral and written presentations
- 2) Scores on AH 3740 exams
- 3) Capstone (AH 4700) project grade and comments
- 4) Capstone (AH 4700) content exam

Indirect Measure:

- 1) University exit survey
- 

**SLO3:** Demonstrate the ability to research and analyze works of art. (KU 1, 2, 4) (GE K2, K3, K4, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5)

Direct Measure:

- 1) Achievement in AH 3740 oral and written presentations
- 2) Graded student exams, AH 3740
- 3) Capstone (AH 4700) project
- 4) Capstone content exam

Indirect Measure:

- 1) Instructor notes and comments, AH 3740 (Modern Art)
  - 2) Instructor notes and comments, AH 4700 (capstone)
  - 3) University exit survey
  - 4) Departmental exit survey
- 

**SLO4:** Attain verbal and written communication skills, including the ability to evaluate and describe (in written form) works of art. (KU 1, 4) (GE K4, S1, S3, S4, S5)

Direct Measure:

- 1) Scored GE rubrics, AH 3740
- 2) Grades and comments on written and oral presentations, AH 3740
- 3) Scored GE rubrics for oral and written presentations and critical thinking, AH 4700
- 4) Grades and comments on written and oral presentations; instructor notes.
- 5) Capstone content exam

Indirect Measure:

- 1) University exit survey
  - 2) Departmental exit survey
-

**\* KU Student Outcomes: *Kean University graduates should be able to:***

1. Think critically, creatively and globally;
2. Adapt to changing social, economic, and technological environments;
3. Serve as active and contributing members of their communities; and
4. Advance their knowledge in the traditional disciplines (GE) and enhance their skills in professional areas (Prof. pgms)

**\*\*General Education Student Learning Outcomes**

***Knowledge:*** *Students will demonstrate proficiency in knowledge and content by:*

- (K1) applying the scientific method to comprehend natural concepts and processes;
- (K2) evaluating major theories and concepts in social sciences;
- (K3) relating historical references to literature; and
- (K4) evaluating major theories and concepts in the fine arts.

***Skills:*** *Students will demonstrate the skills necessary to:*

- (S1) write to communicate and clarify learning ;
- (S2) communicate effectively through speech;
- (S3) solve problems using quantitative reasoning;
- (S4) think critically about concepts in multiple disciplines; and
- (S5) show information literacy.

***Values:*** *Students will exhibit a set of values that demonstrate:*

- (V1) personal responsibility;
- (V2) ethical and social responsibility;
- (V3) social and civic engagement;
- (V4) respect for diverse cultures and perspectives;
- (V5) life-long learning.