Art History Concentration Assessment Plan

Full-time and part-time members of the Art History faculty work together on an ongoing basis to review and improve the Art History curriculum. Assessment is based on a plan of study whose goals meet the level of the discipline for the Bachelor’s degree. By continually re-appraising the overall curriculum’s sequence of coordinated courses, syllabi, and assignments meant to move students toward specific learning objectives, we can assure concentrators in Art History a strong liberal arts education and solid preparation for graduate school and a range of art professions.

The curriculum is also designed to ensure that Art History courses serve the objectives of the Art Studio and Art Education concentrations in the Art major as well as the aims of General Education at Sacramento State. Art Studio and Art Education concentrators take a limited number of Art History courses (12-15 units), which achieve the goals outlined below at the level of the discipline for the Bachelor’s degree in Art Studio and Art Education. The Art History concentration objectives and assessment plan incorporate the standards of the California Council on Teacher Credentialing for future K-12 art teachers.

The Art History faculty meets regularly to discuss the effectiveness of our teaching as reflected in the overall progress of students enrolled in our courses. Every semester failures are defined and addressed through collaborative agreement and effort. Annual assessments of success of the Art History concentration are based on student achievement in the Senior Seminar in Art History (ART 192B) and on the assessment materials described in the plan below. The various means of assessment indicate what needs to be done to improve learning outcomes.

OBJECTIVES:
Students in the Art History concentration achieve the following at the BA level of the discipline:

1. Visual literacy: a broad foundation in Western and Non-Western art and visual culture and greater literacy in one of four areas of specialization (i.e., European Art prior to 1800, Asian Art, Art of the Americas, and Modern and Contemporary Art). This includes familiarity with a wide range of canonical works from throughout the world as well as the most significant art works in regional and Bay Area museum collections and exhibitions. The art of women and other underrepresented groups also are addressed in the Art History curriculum.

2. Critical thinking skills, including the ability to ask questions of works of art and texts, to analyze the characteristics and qualities of the elements of art, and to articulate the ways in which artists have used them to convey meanings.

3. A professional vocabulary appropriate to the area of specialization and the discipline in general

4. The ability to connect art works with relevant historical and contemporary contexts

5. Information literacy: the ability to find trustworthy information using digital and traditional resources including: a) databases, collections, interlibrary loan and other university library resources; and b) primary sources such as archives and personal interviews
6. Written and oral communication skills enhanced by competence in the use of digital technologies for art historical research, information management and design (e.g. the production of PowerPoint and video presentations)
7. Comprehension and ability to apply art historical methods, theory, and historiography
8. Multiple and trans-cultural consciousness towards global citizenship
9. Knowledge of materials, tools, and processes of art, historical to contemporary, and a basic hands-on understanding of art-making practices
10. Understanding of the relationship of art history to other histories, related academic disciplines (e.g., literature, anthropology, religion, sociology, and political science, and history), and to lived experience outside of art
11. Practical application of knowledges and literacy

PROGRAM DESIGN:
The Art History concentration meets the above objectives with the following program. All the concentration’s course offerings contribute at the appropriate level to the attainment of these objectives. (For a more detailed description of Art History concentration requirements and course content, consult the Sacramento State Catalog.)

Students in the Art History concentration will be expected to follow the logical order of courses (lower division courses before upper division; History 100 before upper division courses and seminars, etc.) as determined by the department and outlined in the "Art Department Advising Sheet" for their catalog year. Instructors will certify that students have met minimal competency standards in a given course by assigning a grade of C or better (students in the Art History, Art Education, and Studio Art concentrations must have a minimum grade of C in all courses used toward the BA degree). Students in the Art major who do not achieve the minimum grade will have to repeat or replace the course. All Art History students should complete the University’s Graduation Writing Assessment requirement and two semesters of a foreign language (1B or equivalent) before taking the Senior Seminar.

All Art History courses have writing requirements. Lower division courses include essay exams and graded written assignments that introduce students to a variety of skills developed further in subsequent Art History courses (basic research techniques, critical thinking, visual analysis, etc.). Upper division courses require essay exams, research papers, and other written exercises (response papers, museum papers, etc.).

1) Lower Division Prerequisites (15 units) -- ART 1A, 1B; ART 3A, 3B, or 5; ART 20A; and another lower division Studio Art course that is not in drawing. With these five courses, students begin to acquire a broad foundation in Western and Non-Western art and visual culture, including an understanding of the relevant historical contexts of art (Objectives 1, 4, and 8); begin developing an art historical vocabulary (Objective 3); are introduced to basic principles of art historical research/writing (Objectives 2, 5 and 6); and acquire a basic hands-on understanding of art-making practices (Objective 9).

2) Keystone Course: History 100 -- Historical Skills (3 units) -- This sophomore/junior course, offered by the History Department, will prepare students to do successful research papers in their
upper division Art History classes. It is to be taken in the second semester of the sophomore year (for native students) or first semester of the junior year (for transfer students) after at least six units have been completed in history. Students receive introductory training in the following: writing and oral communication skills (Objective 6); and information literacy, or the ability to use both printed and electronic media to access appropriate secondary literature (Objective 5).

3) Upper Division Core Courses (18 units) -- Students select 18 units in upper division courses (numbered 100-118), following the department’s requirements for both breadth and focus. By taking one course in each of the four groups (Group 1: European Art before 1800, Group 2: Asian Art, Group 3: Art of the Americas, and Group 4: Modern and Contemporary Art), they will improve their foundation in Western and Non-Western Art (Objectives 1 and 8); by taking two additional courses in one of the four groups, they will acquire an in-depth knowledge and greater visual literacy in a single specialization (Objective 1), including a mastery of the vocabulary used in that specialization (Objective 3). Regardless of the topic covered, all Upper Division Core courses aim to help students bring their critical thinking, research, and writing skills – introduced at the lower division level – to the BA level (Objectives 2 and 6).

4) Upper Division Electives (6 units). With the approval of an Art History advisor, students will select two upper division courses, at least one of which (3 units) must be taken outside the Art Department. This will help them understand the relationship of art history to related academic disciplines (including, but not limited to: Anthropology, Asian Studies, Design, Ethnic Studies, History, Humanities and Religious Studies, Philosophy, and Women’s Studies), meeting Objectives 2 and 9. The other upper division elective may be any regularly scheduled Art History course within the Art Department or any one of the following: independent study courses (ART 119: for developing research and writing skills: Objectives 2, 5, 6, and 7), gallery management (ART 193: for developing professional skills: Objective 11), and fieldwork or internship (ART 195: for developing professional skills: Objective 11).

5) Seminar (3 units, a graduation requirement effective with the 2010-12 Catalog): After completing the University’s Graduation Writing Assessment requirement, students will enroll in either one of the special topics seminars offered in the Art Department (ART 115 or ART 116). With the approval of an Art History faculty member, students may satisfy the seminar requirement with a seminar in another liberal arts discipline. ART 115 and ART 116 help students achieve and perfect many of the concentration’s objectives (among them 2, 4, 5, 6, 10 and 11).

6) Senior Seminar (6 units): After completing the University’s Graduation Writing Assessment requirement, two semesters of a foreign language, all lower division Art History requirements, and the seminar (item 5), students with senior status will enroll in this culminating course, ART 192B (generally offered in Spring semesters only). Building on the art historical skills and knowledge acquired in previous course work, students enrolled in Senior Seminar will further develop their skills in art historical research using primary and secondary sources (Objective 4); in critical thinking (Objective 2) writing (Objective 6); in oral communication through the presentation of research results to other students, among other in-class exercises (Objective 7); and in the application of art historical methods, theory/philosophy, and art historiography (Objective 7). ART 192B also will serve as an important assessment tool in the Art History concentration.
ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE -- Assessment in the Art History concentration is primarily the responsibility of the entire full-time Art History faculty, which will act as the Art History Assessment Committee when drafting the assessment reports. Full- and part-time Art History faculty will gather assessment data from their courses each semester. The Art Department Chair will combine data and insights from the Art History report with ones from the assessment reports from the Art Studio and Art Education concentrations to create an Art Department assessment report.

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS: The following strategies are used to gather additional information about the efficacy of the Art History concentration curriculum and teaching methods:

1) Questionnaires:
   - The department administers an Exit Questionnaire every Spring semester to all graduating students in the Senior Seminar, ART 192B. The questionnaire assesses: 1) the students’ estimate of their academic growth over the course of their college career at Sacramento State, particularly in the Art major 2) the students’ experience in the Art History concentration; and 3) students’ recommendations for changes in the art history curriculum and/or departmental policies affecting the Art History concentration. The questionnaire has both an objectively evaluated portion and a written part for extended student comments.

   - In collaboration with Sacramento State’s Office of Institutional Research, the Art Department will also conduct an Alumni Questionnaire. This questionnaire will focus on ways in which former students have applied the Art History concentration to their subsequent careers, their critique of the Art History program at Sacramento State, and suggestions for changes. This questionnaire will be conducted every five years in conjunction with the Department’s Academic Program Review, and also in conjunction with the NASAD reaccreditation review, scheduled every ten years. The Department seeks to create a closer relationship with the Art History alumni for the benefit of both parties. The Art History faculty maintains an e-list of alumni and a Facebook page to keep them informed of ongoing educational and career opportunities. These vehicles make it easy for our graduates to keep in touch with faculty and student colleagues.

2) Discussions with Graduating Seniors: The Art Department Chair will conduct moderated group discussions every year with students in the Art History Senior Seminar ART 192B. The discussions will cover in more detail the subjects discussed in the Exit Questionnaire.

3) Performance Measures: The Art History Assessment Committee collects a representative sample of, a) research papers from upper-level Art History courses and from the topics seminars ART 115 or 116, and b) a selection of student papers from the Senior Seminar, ART 192B, that indicate the progress toward achieving the concentration objectives. The selection should include portfolios of first and final drafts of individual term papers to see progress made in one assignment, should include copies of papers from all satisfactory grade categories, and should be stored in readily accessible ring binders or as scanned PDFs for the Art Department’s assessment website.
ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE: The Art Department's general assessment program runs on a five- and ten-year cycle so that the results of the ongoing assessment may be included in the Program Reviews mandated by the University and by NASAD. The Art History Assessment Committee, however, performs an interim assessment every academic year. At the end of the Spring semester it drafts a short interim report based upon the assessment materials described above (e.g., Art History faculty discussions of overall student progress in their courses during each semester that academic year, samples of student papers, and the surveys of graduating seniors). The annual report will be added to the binder of sample papers for that year, discussed by Art History faculty, acted upon, and reported to the whole department faculty in its annual retreat meeting prior to the start of the Fall semester or in another department meeting early in the Fall semester.