



## Department of Art History

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May 1, 2006

Dean Gary Sandefur  
c/o L&S Academic Planning, Program Review and Assessment  
307E South Hall  
1055 Bascom Mall

Dear Gary,

As required, I am submitting the Assessment Plan of the Department of Art History. Since the plan that we have on file with the College has received only sporadic follow-up, we have chosen to propose a new array of assessment activities. Most importantly, we have determined to give the charge of overseeing implementation specifically to the department's Curriculum Committee. We do not expect that the changes will go into full effect until 2007-2008. In the meantime, we will continue to use means taken from our old and new plans as they are developed.

Sincerely,

Quitman E. Phillips,  
Chair

## **Department of Art History Plan for Assessment of Student Learning**

Art History offers the following degrees: B.A./B.S.; M.A.; and Ph.D. We have about 100 majors at any given time and grant an average of 38 BA degrees annually. 64% of our majors graduate in 4 years or less and 92% within 4.5 %. About 40% of our students are double majors. (Fewer than eight majors a year are discontinued, and students dropping the Art History major are very rare.) We admit about six to nine graduate students and grant about five MA and two Ph.D. degrees per year. We generally have about 40 graduate students enrolled.

### **EXISTING ASSESSMENT PLAN**

Our existing assessment plan is attached. Many of its procedures have not been implemented in full or in part for nearly a decade. We have relied instead on informal reports from the instructors of our capstone courses (proseminars) regarding the performance of senior majors. We have been collecting exit surveys annually, with perhaps a 20% response and have used these to look for particular gaps or weaknesses in our curriculum. It is based on these, for example, that we have begun to discuss the best ways to enhance our training in critical theory. We now offer advanced courses with a larger theory component and have concrete plans to propose a course particularly focused on theory. Another issue that became apparent through the exit surveys was the need for our students continuing on to graduate school to have a methods class. Exit surveys, however, are usually filled out by our best and most committed students, and do not represent a large enough sample. Thus we see the value of committing to a wider variety of assessment instruments and have therefore proposed a new assessment plan.

### **NEW ASSESSMENT PLAN**

The new plan will be developed over the next academic year and will replace the currently used assessment procedures in 2007-2008. The departmental Curriculum Committee will be in charge of implementation.

### **LEARNING GOALS:**

#### **UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**

The Department of Art History holds those general education goals of the College of Letters and Sciences most pertinent to the Humanities (critical and analytical thinking, writing skills in English, etc.) to be primary components of its mission. In addition and in more detail we have the following goals for our students:

In **Undergraduate introductory courses**, majors and non-majors learn the basic theories, methods, and terminology used in art history as they gain basic knowledge of major art historical periods and important works of art. They learn techniques of visual analysis and the integration of visual and other kinds of information required to understand the place of the work of art within its specific aesthetic, historical and social contexts. Students learn to discern the meanings works of art convey and how meanings are constructed.

In **Intermediate and advanced courses**, majors and non-majors (with a higher percentage of the former) continue to learn the skills taught at the introductory level and gain greater knowledge of the art through more focused studies of particular times and places. They begin to gain more advanced skills in critical reading, writing, and discussion, based on study of the writings of artists, critics, and contemporary art historians. They also learn how to conduct scholarly research and write research papers that combine skills in use of secondary sources and complex visual evidence.

In **Proseminars** students consolidate and expand their knowledge and understanding of art historical theory and method by focusing on an area of art of their choosing. They gain skills in verbal argumentation and learn how to develop major research projects and present them effectively in both oral and written form.

## GRADUATE STUDENTS

The department of Art History trains graduate students for a variety of careers. Students who complete the M.A., but do not go on for the Ph.D. find jobs in museums, galleries, art related publishing, and other areas in which training in art history is directly important as well as less directly related fields. Most of those who take the Ph.D. go on to be college and university faculty and museum curators and directors. To prepare them for such careers, our curriculum has the following goals:

In **Intermediate and advanced courses**, graduate students gain greater knowledge of the art of particular times and places. Through special assignments, they gain more advanced skills in critical reading and writing. They also enhance their skills in conducting research and developing research papers that combine skills in use of secondary sources (and sometimes primary ones) and complex visual evidence.

In the **graduate methodology course** new graduate students gain familiarity with the larger scope of the discipline, its history, and its methodologies, and learn the tools they will need to conduct research at the advanced level.

In **Graduate seminars** students gain a deeper understanding of particular methodologies and learn how to conduct and present original research, using original sources, as both written papers and oral reports.

**Planned Measures of Assessing Undergraduate Learning:**

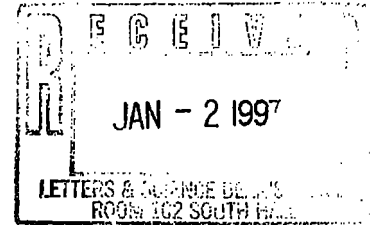
	<b>Goals measured:</b>	<b>Procedures:</b>
<b>Direct Measures:</b>		
In class testing in lecture courses at the elementary through advanced levels.	Acquisition of area-specific knowledge, which varies considerably from student to student.	Continue the normal procedures mid-terms and final examinations.
Comparison of earlier and later written work.	Development of skills in critical thinking and writing and in visual analysis.	1) Collect writing samples (3-4 pages in length from an art history class) from majors when they declare; 2) Keep copies of all proseminar papers; 3) Compare a small, randomly selected sample each year of earlier and later writing samples to measure progress.
<b>Indirect Measures:</b>		
Student evaluations of preparation for proseminar.	All skill-based goals of the curriculum. The evaluation will focus on how prepared they felt they were for particular activities conducted in the proseminar.	Distribute an appropriate questionnaire at the end of the term rating their preparedness in key areas (on a scale of 1-5) and commenting on what they felt most useful (and most problematic). Analyze student responses in terms of a numerical score and look for patterns in written responses.
Exit survey of all graduating majors and certificate students.	All curricular goals.	Develop a new survey that lays more stress on cumulative learning and make it web-based or email-based to maximize participation. Collect and analyze the responses, which will include numerical rankings and qualitative written responses.
Survey of alumni/ae	All curricular goals.	Conduct survey at five and ten years from degree to ascertain their career progress and solicit their assessments of the preparation provided by the major.

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**Planned Measures of Assessing Graduate Student Learning:**

	<b>Goals measured:</b>	<b>Procedures:</b>
<b>Direct Measures:</b>		
In class testing in lecture courses at the intermediate through advanced levels.	Acquisition of area-specific knowledge, which varies considerably from student to student.	Continue the normal procedures of mid-terms and final examinations.
M.A. papers and dissertations.	All curricular goals.	The curriculum committee will survey thesis advisors on students' preparedness. The department has instituted a dissertation prospectus colloquium that will act as a means of evaluating preparedness
<b>Indirect Measures:</b>		
Exit survey of all M.A. and Ph.D. recipients	All curricular goals.	Develop a new survey that lays more stress on cumulative learning and make it web-based or email based to maximize participation. Collect and analyze the responses, which will be numerical and qualitative
Survey of alumni/ae	All curricular goals.	Conduct survey at five and ten years from degree to ascertain their career progress and solicit their assessments of the preparation provided by the program.

**DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**



**PLAN FOR ASSESSING THE  
UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

Preamble

In answer to the call from the College of Letters and Science to compose assessment plans for undergraduate and graduate programs at the departmental level, six departments inaugurated a pilot program of assessments during the 1995-96 academic year. A selection of those, in addition to guidelines from the College, provided a basis for the Art History Department plan outlined below.

Since such an assessment policy is still at an experimental stage, the Art History Department realizes that aspects of its plan may need revision along the way. For the present, our purpose is to devise a plan that works to the benefit of both students and faculty.

Educational Goals and Objectives

The Art History Department seeks to educate undergraduate and graduate students on the artistic and architectural productions of diverse regions and periods as they have shaped and been shaped by culture and history. Art History fulfills its goals through consideration of theory, technique, composition, subject matter, and content, and thus reaches beyond formalism and aesthetic appreciation. Methods of comparative study impart a broad range of knowledge, in areas of social, economic, political, and philosophical thought. Students learn to analyze art within the context of the culture that produced it and to gain access to a large and diverse body of knowledge.

A. Undergraduate Major

At the 100- and 200-level, lecture and discussion courses provide students with basic skills for applying the language of the discipline. Study of stylistic progression, culture-based and thematic narratives, and arrays of examples develop the students' visual memory. Descriptive analysis and content comparison help them gain an art-historical eye. Curricular area requirements provide them with overviews of western, Asian, and African art and architecture. At the next stage, 300-level courses focus on specific fields, periods, and regions. In these courses students acquire greater awareness of historiography and research methods, reach an increased sophistication in reading pictures, sculptures, and buildings, and improve their writing skills. Courses at the 400- level share pedagogical aims with those at the 300-level, but their range of subject matter is more specialized, and their research and writing expectations more

rigorous. Finally, all majors take a 500-level proseminar before graduation. This is our students' last opportunity to work on semester-long research and write on projects that hone their critical, analytic, and descriptive skills.

## B. Graduate Major

As an M.A. and Ph.D. granting program, Art History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison accepts students with the primary purpose of advancing their knowledge and training them in methods of art-historical interpretive research and writing. While additional lecture courses are required, seminars and independent research become increasingly significant. Necessary language skills, pertinent minor fields of study, research travel, archival investigations, and interviews become essential to the pursuit of an M.A. or a Ph.D. The doctoral process culminates in the writing of a dissertation and its final defense before a faculty committee.

## Instruments and Methods of Assessment

To assess its students' productivity, the Art History Department already tracks and measures their performance in lecture courses, discussions, and research and writing exercises. To broaden its assessment, a committee of three faculty members will evaluate a sample of six proseminar research papers each semester. As the culminating scholarly experience for most undergraduates, proseminar papers are the best indication of students' abilities to research and analyze an art historical problem. To monitor the program further, the department will circulate assessment questionnaires to graduating seniors and recent graduates. Beginning with the close of the 1996-1997 academic year, Art History majors who complete an undergraduate or a graduate degree will be asked to complete exit surveys.

To assess development, the department will collect the following records:

### A. At the undergraduate level:

- 1) Entry surveys that measure students' expectations and goals as art history majors.
- 2) Each major's proseminar paper.
- 3) Exit surveys (see attached) that measure how students feel the program prepared them for their intended career goals and plans.
- 4) Annual or biennial surveys that track the professional or academic progress of B.A. graduates.

**B. At the graduate level:**

**M.A.**

- 1) Entry surveys that measure students' expectations and goals for M.A. work in art history.
- 2) The master's paper.
- 3) Exit surveys (see attached) that measure how students feel the M.A. program prepared them for their intended career goals and plans.
- 4) Annual or biennial surveys that track the professional or academic progress of M.A. graduates.

**Ph.D.**

- 1) Entry surveys that measure students' expectations and goals for Ph.D work in art history.
- 2) The master's paper (if written in Madison) and the dissertation.
- 3) Exit surveys (see attached) that measure how students feel the Ph.D. program prepared them for their intended career goals and plans.
- 4) Annual or biennial surveys that track the professional or academic progress of Ph.D. graduates.

**Timetable for Implementation**

If this plan is approved by the Dean and the L&S Academic Planning Council, the Department of Art History will conduct the first assessment cycle in the 1997-1998/1999-2000 triennium. Instruments of assessment will be in place in the 1997-1998 academic year. Beginning in the fall semester of 1997-1998, graduate surveys will be sent out to all those who completed a graduate degree since 1991-1992. Undergraduate exit surveys will begin to be tallied at the end of the spring semester of 1997.



**DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

**SURVEY FOR GRADUATE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT**

Dear UW-Art History alumnus/a:

As part of a plan designed to improve our graduate program, we are asking graduates of the last five years to complete this brief questionnaire and return it to us, if at all possible by (DATE) \_\_\_\_\_. As you respond to questions, we would request that you refrain from mentioning specific professors by name. We enclose a stamped envelope for your convenience.

Sincerely,

x, y, & z  
for the Department of Art History

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1. The degree you completed was? M.A. \_\_\_\_\_ Ph.D. \_\_\_\_\_

Semester and year of your graduation \_\_\_\_\_

In what area did you write your M.A. thesis, master's paper, or dissertation? \_\_\_\_\_

2. On a scale of 1-5 (where 1=low and 5=high), rate your overall experience in taking Art History lecture courses during your graduate program regarding the following:

Reading load \_\_\_\_\_

Writing load \_\_\_\_\_

Quality of examinations in regards to testing knowledge \_\_\_\_\_

Your overall interest in courses offered \_\_\_\_\_

Interest and enthusiasm of faculty in conveying material \_\_\_\_\_

Accessibility of faculty \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many seminars did you take?\_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1-5 (where 1=low and 5=high), please tell us to what extent the seminars you took improved your ability to:

read critically\_\_\_\_\_

analyze material\_\_\_\_\_

conduct research in your field\_\_\_\_\_

write clearly arguments you formulated and developed\_\_\_\_\_

4. On a scale of 1-5 (where 1=low and 5=high), please tell us how the Kohler Art Library helped you in the following:

research for lecture courses\_\_\_\_\_

individual research\_\_\_\_\_

research for seminars\_\_\_\_\_

research for thesis, master's paper, or dissertation\_\_\_\_\_

5. Which aspects of your experience as a graduate student in our program do you value the most?

6. What would you like to see changed about the way we teach and administer the program?

7. If you have enrolled in another graduate program, please rate in a scale of 1-5 how our program prepared you for your subsequent studies\_\_\_\_\_

8. Please tell us about you.

What is your current occupation? Check as many as may apply.

Employed full-time (where and in what capacity)? \_\_\_\_\_

Employed part-time (where and in what capacity)? \_\_\_\_\_

In a field related to your graduate studies in Madison? \_\_\_\_\_

In an unrelated field? \_\_\_\_\_

Unemployed \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate school (where and in what field)? \_\_\_\_\_

Other professional school or training program (where and in what field)? \_\_\_\_\_

9. How did you find out about our graduate program?

Bulletin/Catalogue \_\_\_\_\_

Friend \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor or Professor \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Please share with us any comments you may wish to offer.

**DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

**UNDERGRADUATE EXIT SURVEY**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1. Please tell us which courses you took

(introductory)

At the 100-200 level \_\_\_\_\_

(intermediate)

At the 300 level \_\_\_\_\_

(advanced)

At the 400 level \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why did you major in Art History?

3. In your opinion, what are the main strengths of the program?

4. What are the weaknesses?

**5. What are your professional plans for the immediate future?**

**For next year (graduate school, job, other training)?**

**6. What are your career plans?**

**7. Do you intend to include your Art History education in your career plans?**

**8. How will your Art History degree contribute to your future goals?**

**9. Please share with us any comment you may wish to offer but please refrain from mentioning any faculty member by name.**