

Annual Report for Program Outcomes Assessment, 2015-16

- A. Degree Program: Art History, MA
- B. Report Author: Dr. Rebecca Brienen
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C. Degree Program Mission Statement

The graduate program (MA) in Art History in the Department of Art, Graphic Design and Art History is intended to develop in our students a solid grounding in art historical content and methodology. This program allows students to engage multiple geographic locations, cultures, time periods and methodological perspectives. They will develop their scholarship around issues such as the evidence of globalization in visual culture; the political, social, economic, and cultural interactions between nations and cultural groups; and the manner in which the aforementioned forces influence and are influenced by visual culture. We seek to prepare students for success in a Ph.D. program in art history, or other art-related careers including museum administration, gallery management, corporate art investment, interior design, clinical art therapy, theater, film and television production, government administration of the arts, library management, journalism and visual resources management.

In addition, art history provides students with a rich and balanced liberal arts education. Art engages in a dialogue with society and through visual representation explores historical and political realities, religious and philosophical values, and cultural attitudes. Art history offers both a comprehensive insight into human cultural development as well as a uniquely challenging area of study that integrates rigorous analysis with creativity and interpretive thought. It is, in its broadest sense, a systematic exploration of imagination that develops in its students the capacity to identify and critically relate to issues inherent in the highest forms of human thought and expression. The practical skills that are developed in this study, particularly in research, writing, and the analysis of complex visual signs, constitute the essential components necessary in all professions and are directly applicable in a wide variety of career options.

D. Assessment Methods Used:

1. Outside Program Evaluator:

Dr. Allie Terry-Fritsch, Associate Professor of Italian Renaissance Art at Bowling State University, attended the Art History Symposium on April 16, 2016 to evaluate the presentations of 3 senior art history students, comparing them to national standards. She also presented the keynote address at the Symposium. She then commented on and critiqued the 3 presentations, offering constructive criticism and suggestions for improvements. She received one MA thesis for assessment; we introduced a non-thesis option in the MA program in 2015-16, which is proving very popular among the students, resulting in a lower number of theses for review.

- a. Assessment results: Dr. Terry-Fritsch described the MA thesis she reviewed as an “ambitious cultural overview of both the critical opinion and social experience of American artists living abroad in France during the nineteenth century.” While Dr. Terry-Fritsch scored the thesis above average in nearly every category, she felt that the thesis could have supported the main points being argued in more convincing ways. She also suggested that being able to read French would have been helpful to this student and would have broadened her knowledge of the extant literature. In terms of the overall MA program, Terry-Fritsch suggests that we should encourage our MA students to “narrow their critical focus in order to develop an original claim and perform the deep analysis with a clearly articulated theoretical format.”
- b. She rated the one student on a pre-designed evaluation form (also used by faculty) that had four categories: **substantive mastery, research skills, effective writing, and critical thinking**. The scores were from 1-5 with 5 being the highest and three being average in comparison to national standards. The mean score for the students are as follows: **substantive mastery 3.25, research skills 3.6, effective writing 3.5, and critical thinking 3.5**. Averaging these, the overall student score was **3.4**, which is largely in keeping with the scores from last year. It is premature to draw any conclusions about these scores because only 5 students have completed MA theses since the program was launched in fall 2012.
- c. Faculty interpretation of results: It is impossible to make any sweeping generalizations about the program based on a single thesis. Art History faculty members consider this thesis to be one of the strongest produced to date in the program.
- d. Program changes: No substantive changes are planned until the department has similar data from several years and the program becomes more established. Nevertheless, the faculty members are encouraging students to select topics and complete their thesis proposals sooner (before the beginning of the second fall semester) so that more energies in the second year may be devoted to deep research and sustained thinking on a focused topic.

2. Faculty Assessment of Theses

- a. Assessment Method: Two tenure/tenure-track art history faculty members then read each of the 2 theses, evaluating it according to a four-point rubric: **substantive mastery, research skills, effective writing, and critical thinking**. A five-point scale was again used to

evaluate the rubric areas, with 5 being the highest. **The average score was 4** (average of scores of all 4 areas).

- b. Assessment Results: Scores are faculty averages for each section.
 - 1. **Substantive Mastery: 4**
 - a. Knowledge of main art historical trends
 - b. Recognize and identify theories and methodologies
 - c. Identify key scholars and their work
 - 2. **Research Skills: 4.2**
 - a. Design appropriate topic
 - b. Conduct in-depth research, demonstrate knowledge of work on the topic
 - c. Formulate a thesis supported by evidence
 - d. Awareness of relevant theories and methodologies
 - e. Consultation of primary sources
 - 3. **Effective Writing: 3.9**
 - a. Content
 - b. Organization
 - c. Style (including grammar and vocabulary)
 - d. Documentation and citation
 - 4. **Critical Thinking: 4**
 - a. Identification of problem/question at issue
 - b. Consideration of other salient positions
 - c. Consideration of context
 - d. Assessment and use of supporting evidence
 - e. Discussion of conclusions, implications, consequences
 - f. presentation of student perspective/position
- c. Faculty Interpretation of Results: According to our internal assessment of the theses, the work was above average in all four categories, with an **average overall score of 4**. Internal ratings continue to be somewhat higher than the outside assessor's ratings, which we believe may stem from the faculty's greater familiarity with the projects, but also a better understanding of where the students began in terms of skills and how much their projects developed over their time at OSU.
- d. Program Changes: The program's faculty members remain reluctant to make any significant changes to the program until several groups of students have graduated and data from multiple years has been

assessed and compared. At the same time, faculty members are aware that students often struggle with the same issues, and they will put additional emphasis on the issues raised here when advising the graduate students writing MA theses in the next several years. For instance, art history faculty members are actively encouraging students to select topics and complete their thesis proposals sooner (before the beginning of the second fall semester) so that more energies in the second year can be devoted to deep research and sustained thinking on a clearly focused topic.

With the recent introduction of the non-thesis trajectory, we will need to consider an additional way to assess the scholarly and professional development of these students. Plans for this are under discussion.

RUBRIC FOR EVALUATION OF SUBSTANTIVE MASTERY

SKILL	1	2*	3	4**	5
Knowledge of main art historical trends applicable to two areas of specialization	Significant references missing; definitions lacking, incorrect, or inadequate.		Most important references correctly identified & defined.		All important references correctly identified & defined; relationship to topic articulated.
Recognize and identify theories and methodologies	Theoretical framework is ignored, incorrectly stated, and/or inappropriate to the question at hand.		Applicable theory or theories are correctly identified but not applied or fully articulated.		Identification of appropriate theory or theories is complete. Relationship of identified theories to topic is clearly exposed & developed.
Identify key scholars and their work	Discussion of specific work in the field missing; incomplete bibliography.		Some writers & work correctly identified, but with significant omissions or minor errors; bibliography		Work in the field fully identified, including relevant controversies. No significant omissions or errors; complete bibliography

			sufficient for topic.		included.
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* Exhibits most characteristics of “1” and some of “3”

** Exhibits most characteristics of “3” and some of “5”

RUBRIC FOR EVALUATION OF RESEARCH SKILLS

SKILL	1	2 *	3	4* *	5
Design an appropriate topic for thesis	Research question poorly framed and articulated		Research question generally clear; adequate framing		Research question precisely and clearly framed and stated
Conduct appropriately extensive and in depth research and demonstrate knowledge of work already done on the topic	Review is limited and poorly organized; project is not supported with the relevant literature.		Review is adequate and somewhat organized, but incomplete; project not well supported with the relevant literature.		Review is thorough and well organized. Project is well supported by the relevant literature.
Formulate a thesis that is supported by the content of the paper	Explanatory framework/argument not present		Explanatory framework/argument present but incomplete		Well-developed explanatory framework/argument
Demonstrate awareness of relevant theories or methodologies pertinent to topic	Methodologies are not present or ineffectively presented		Methodologies are adequately presented		Methodologies are clearly and effectively presented
Consultation	Poor demonstration		Adequate		Thorough evidence

of primary sources	of familiarity with the primary sources relevant to topic		demonstration of familiarity with the primary sources relevant to topic		of familiarity with the primary sources relevant to topic
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* Exhibits most characteristics of “1” and some of “3”

** Exhibits most characteristics of “3” and some of “5”

RUBRIC FOR EVALUATING EFFECTIVE WRITING

SKILL	1	2*	3	4**	5
Content	Topic is poorly developed; support is vague or general; ideas are trite; wording is unclear, simplistic; reflects lack of understanding of topic and audience; minimally accomplishes goal of assignment		Topic is evident; some supporting detail; wording is general clear; reflects understanding of topic and audience; generally accomplishes goals of assignment		Topic/thesis clearly stated and well-developed; detail/wording is accurate, specific, appropriate for the topic and audience; evidence of effective, clear thinking; accomplishes the goals of assignment
Organization	Unstructured; most paragraphs are rambling and unfocused; no clear beginning or ending paragraphs; inappropriate or missing sequence markers		Structured; most paragraphs are focused; discernible beginning and ending paragraphs, some appropriate sequence markers		Well-structured; paragraphs are clearly focused and organized around a central theme; clear beginning and ending paragraphs; appropriate, coherent sequences and sequence markers
Style	Inappropriate or		Generally		Word choice

(including grammar and vocabulary)	inaccurate word choice; repetitive words and sentence types; inappropriate or inconsistent point of view and tone; frequent non-standard grammar, spelling and punctuation		appropriate word choice; variety in vocabulary and sentence types; appropriate point of view and tone; some non-standard grammar, spelling and punctuation		appropriate for the task; precise, appropriate vocabulary; variety of sentence types; consistent and appropriate point of view and tone; standard grammar, spelling, punctuation used
Documentation and Citation	Documentation generally inconsistent and incomplete; non-standard citation; citation information not incorporated into document		Documentation generally clear, consistent and complete; general use of standard citation; citation information is somewhat incorporated into document		Documentation clear, consistent and complete; standard citation; cited information is incorporated effectively into document

* Exhibits most characteristics of “1” and some of “3”

** Exhibits most characteristics of “3” and some of “5”

RUBRIC FOR EVALUATION OF CRITICAL THINKING

CHARACTERISTIC	1	2*	3	4**	5
Identification of problem/question at issue	No identification		Main question is identified and clearly stated		Main question and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of a question are identified and clearly stated
Consideration of other salient perspectives	Does not acknowledge		Acknowledges other possible		Uses other perspectives

and positions important to analysis	other possible perspectives		perspectives although they are not clearly stated		effectively
Consideration of influence of context of the issue (e.g., cultural, social, economic, technological, ethical, political, or personal)	Problem is not connected to other issues or placed in context		Context of question is provided; not clearly analyzed		Issue is clearly analyzed within scope and context of question.
Assessment and appropriate use of supporting evidence	No supporting data/evidence		Evidence is used but not carefully examined.		Evidence is identified and carefully examined.
Discussion of conclusions, implication, consequences	No conclusions		Conclusions without discussion of implications or consequences. Some reflection.		Conclusions clearly stated and discussed. Implications and consequences of conclusions are thoroughly considered.
Presentation of student perspective/position as related to issue	Student's own position relative to question is not provided. Fact and opinion not stated or clearly distinguished		Student's position is stated; some support Facts and opinion are stated but not clearly distinguished		Student's position is stated and well-supported by appropriate sources Fact and opinions stated and clearly distinguished

* Exhibits most characteristics of "1" and some of "3"

** Exhibits most characteristics of "3" and some of "5"

M.A. in Art History Assessment Form

MA Candidate (please print name):

Anticipated Date of Graduation:

Thesis Title:

Evaluator:

Title:

Please rank the candidate in the following categories using a numerical scale of 1 to 5. (1 being a low ranking and 5 being high). In providing a ranking, please consult the specific rubrics that are attached.

I. Substantive Mastery

A. Knowledge of main art historical trends applicable to these (two areas)

B. Recognize and identify theories and methodologies

C. Identify key scholars and their work

D. Identify and use most important scholarly resources

II. Research Skills

A. Design appropriate topic

B. Conduct in depth research, demonstrate knowledge of work on the topic

C. Formulate a thesis that is supported by the content of the paper

D. Demonstrate awareness of relevant theories or methodologies

E. Consultation of primary sources

III. Effective Writing

A. Content

B. Organization

C. Style (including grammar and vocabulary)

D. Documentation and citation

- IV. Critical Thinking
- A. Identification of a problem/question at issue _____
- B. Consideration of other salient positions important to analysis _____
- C. Consideration of context (e.g. cultural, social, economic, technological,
Ethical, political, or personal) _____
- D. Assessment and appropriate use of supporting evidence _____
- E. Discussion of conclusions, implications, and/or consequences _____
- F. Presentation of student perspective/position as related to issue _____

Additional Comments:

Evaluator Signature:

Date: