General Information

1. Name / Number of Course / Sequence:  
   ARTS 1710/ARTS 1720/ARTS 1730 Introduction to Art History I, II, and III

2. SLO(s) being assessed:
   
   Student will understand and appreciate the arts and aesthetics as ways of knowing and engaging with the world.

3. Department:
   Art

4. Department Representative:
   Gary Wagoner

5. AGSC Content Alignment:
   Area II: Humanities

Assessment Information

6. Assessment Method: [Explain how assessment for the measures associated with this SLO – not grading for the course as a whole was conducted.]

   For each of the outcomes sought, and described below, we developed a rubric that identified an acceptable level of student competence (described as our benchmark), and also articulated criteria for high and very high levels of accomplishment. These rubrics were detailed to assess for specific aspects of competency.

   Expected Outcome 1:
   Students will be able to recognize and identify major monuments of global art history.
Students in core art history courses will be able to recognize and correctly identify the artist, title, style, culture, and historical period of significant art historical monuments.

Assessment Method for Outcome 1:
Method: Faculty assessed a broad sample of final exams in core art history classes for students' abilities to identify the artist, title, style, culture, and historical period of artworks projected on a screen for approximately sixty seconds.

Expected Outcome 2:
Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of key art and art historical concepts by using discipline-specific terminology appropriately and correctly. Students in core art history courses will demonstrate an understanding of key art and art historical concepts by using appropriate discipline-specific terminology, including terms related to historical periods and styles, philosophies, theories, methods, media, and forms.

Assessment Methods
Method: Scrutiny of short-answer questions from a randomly selected sample of final exams. Faculty assessed a sample of final exams in core art history classes for students' abilities to define and make use of key art and art historical terminology in short answer questions.

Expected Outcome 3:
Students will be able to synthesize basic types of art historical information about form, subject matter, and cultural context to express a thorough historical understanding of a work of art. Students in core art history courses will be able synthesize and organize different types of art historical data (formal, iconographic, cultural, and theoretical/conceptual information) in order to express a thorough historical understanding of a work of art.

Assessment Method 3:
Method: Faculty assessed a significant, random, sample of image-based essay questions from final exams in core art history classes for students' abilities to synthesize information they had learned about the work's form, subject matter, and cultural context and to organize this information in an essay that expressed a full historical understanding of the artwork.
7. Findings: [What assessment data did each assessment method produce?]

Outcome 1:

The findings demonstrated that by the end of the semester students possessed strong capabilities for learning to recognize and identify important works of art. 94% of students were at or above the benchmark for this skill. 24% were able to identify most of the major monuments they were shown correctly, while 54% were able to identify all of the images correctly.

Outcome 2:

75% of students met the benchmark for their ability to understand important art and art historical concepts and use appropriate discipline-specific terminology. 9% achieved a high level of competence in this area.

Outcome 3:

Findings:

81% of students met the benchmark for the ability to synthesize art historical data and effectively express an understanding of a work of art in an essay. 3% demonstrated a high level of achievement in this area while 52% demonstrated a good ability.

8. How did you or will you use the findings for improvement: [What questions / issues / concerns did your data raise for the faculty teaching the course? What discussion did the faculty have about the findings? What future actions to improve student attainment of this outcome will the department / program take as a result of this analysis?]

Art and Art History faculty discussed the above findings. We are currently collecting raw data and reevaluating our rubrics and methods in preparation for assessing core art history courses for AY 2011-2012. Specifically, we are considering whether it will be necessary to assess Outcome 1 again as the findings confirm that our approach to teaching students the basic skills needed to recognize and identity monuments is highly effective. We may, however, reassess this outcome in the future to reconfirm our findings.

For Outcome 2, while it is clear that course content is being effectively conveyed, we are surveying and discussing the various approaches to the presentation of art and art historical concepts and terminology used by different art history instructors to identify best practices. We are also examining approaches to evaluating student comprehension of these.
For Outcome 3, in conjunction with our study of student writing in art history courses, we want to look at further ways to measure separately the ability to synthesize information versus the ability to express it clearly and logically in an essay.

9. Additional comments: [What else would you like the Committee to know about your assessment of this course or plans for the future?]

Introductory art history courses fulfill fine arts core credit for non-majors as well as serve as foundation courses for art history majors (ARTH) and minors, and studio art majors (ATLA and ARTF). Exams typically consist of slide identification sections, short answer questions, and one or more long essay question. Typical exam essay questions include guided single-slide or comparison essays in which students write for 15-20 minutes about an image or images projected on a screen, as well as synthetic essays in which students discuss examples of their own choosing based on a specific question. Exams are hand-graded by the professor; computer grading (“scan-tron”) is not used, nor are teaching assistants or graders. Core art history courses are typically capped at 90 students. These courses, and the manner in which they are conducted, provide good opportunity for detailed assessment.

10. Core Curriculum General Education Committee Comments:

None