

Art Assessment Plan

Mission Statement

The art department at Juniata College is an integral part of the liberal arts experience contributing to students' creative and intellectual skills. The department sees its primary function as a contributor to the students' breadth and depth of creative and cultural expression. Students achieve a strong understanding of cultural ideologies through the study of the history of art and the process of artistic production while in the studio. Students develop aesthetic judgments and learn to analyze art critically, while acquiring a greater awareness of and appreciation for artistic endeavors.

Student Learning Outcomes

While some goals are to be accomplished mainly through the studio arts, others are to be achieved essentially through art history, and some goals are intentionally addressed by both programs. The goals of the department follow.

A. To awaken and heighten aesthetic sensitivity:

Students become aesthetically sensitive in two primary ways: by creating their own works of art and by analyzing works of historical importance. Combining these activities helps shape responses to aesthetic experience in art and in the world at large.

B. To facilitate aesthetic judgments:

Learning to make informed aesthetic judgments is a goal common to both students and teachers of art. The studio artist and the art historian share the conviction that while there may be favorite works of art and favorite theories about art, there are no perfect works of art and no perfect theories. Art thrives on ambiguities and challenges assumptions.

C. To make artistic comparisons:

A common goal of those who function on a creative level in any field is to make connections between and among seemingly unrelated ideas, objects, or events in ways leading to new forms or concepts. Such people are alert to taking advantage of chance and the unexpected as allies in the creative process. These capabilities are indispensable to artists and can be cultivated in people willing to learn.

D. To encourage a sense of community with others in creative fields:

Creating and/or analyzing works of art encourages confidence and the sense of commonality with others committed to the development of ideas and the use of varied modes of expression and responses to innovation. An extension of this quality is a growing receptivity to creative developments in any area of interest: literature, the performing arts, mathematics, business, science, and other fields such as architecture and computer applications.

E. To accept and appreciate diversity in the arts:

Learning to create and analyze art means learning to understand how the entire field of art seethes with diversity, innovation, and controversy. Art as we know it accommodates those

who approach it with rigorously structured, highly reasoned laws and rules as well as those who challenge accepted laws and rules, working sincerely and rigorously with assertiveness (and perhaps spontaneity) and conviction, as artists and scholars.

F. To encourage artistic honesty:

In art, truth and beauty are regarded as one. A work of art depends upon the principle of honesty for its success. For the artist this means honesty in feeling, thought and the perception of order. Appreciation of art, as well as its creation, requires recognizing the spirit contained within the forms and rituals. Recognizing similar spiritual and moral qualities in areas of life helps students encounter aesthetic experiences they might otherwise miss.

G. To be able to analyze art (to think critically and analytically both in written and verbal form):

Creating a work of art in a studio course involves critiquing the work as well, while art history involves researching and analyzing the great works of art. Both disciplines share the belief that only through analysis can one make informed judgments about the quality of a work.

H. To become knowledgeable about, to understand, and to appreciate the heritage of western art:

The creation and appreciation of art is a distinctly human endeavor that enriches one's understanding of human history. Through the description, analysis, and interpretation of art works, it is hoped that students will gain an appreciation of western art.

I. To demonstrate craftsmanship within a given medium:

Studio art involves the intimate use of various media in the two- and three-dimensions. Through experience and trial and error, students become skilled in a given medium. In addition, those involved in art acquire a sense of loyalty to their medium or process and feed their creative impulses from life's experiences.

J. To be confident in taking risks:

Studio courses emphasize the use of imagination and creative problem-solving. These are decision-making skills as vital to artists as they are to scientists, writers, and business people. Emphasizing visual-tactile ways of thinking rather than employing verbal or mathematical models, however, is the unique role of studio art. Scholarship in art history involves many similar risks. Students are encouraged to forge new links and propose innovative interpretations of art works.

Assessment Tools and Methods

Portfolios

Alumni surveys

Senior Exit Interviews

Senior Thesis projects

Time line for implementation

The alumni surveys and exit interviews will begin in the spring. Senior Thesis projects are already part of the department's curriculum and portfolios are being implemented with the start of the Art department Capstone courses.

Analysis of results

Faculty on a rotating basis will be assigned to examine the results of alumni surveys and exit interviews. The faculty as a department will review the student portfolios and thesis projects to determine whether the goals of the program seem to be accomplished on a yearly basis.

Program for improvement

The faculty will devote time during department meetings to discuss assessment results and possible curriculum revisions based on the results.