

2017-2018 Millikin University Creative Arts Assessment Report

Student Learning in the Creative Arts Requirement (University Studies)

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25 June 25, 2018

The Creative Arts Requirement (CAR) is one of several non-sequential University Studies requirements that all Millikin University students must take to graduate. Students must earn three hours of Creative Arts credit to satisfy the requirement. The requirement can be taken at any time during a student's four-year-experience.

The external review of the University Studies program (May 2016) identified several problems with the Creative Arts requirement that needed to be addressed immediately. These concerns included:

- Improving leadership and coordination of the CAR, including making sure the coordinator is a tenured faculty member.
- Improving faculty commitment to the requirement.
- Rewriting the learning outcome goals so that all faculty understand what they mean.
- Writing goals that are assessable and using opportunities to be trained on best practices for assessment.
- Identifying appropriate assignments for assessment and consistently collecting data.
- Rewriting the rubrics with an eye toward greater clarity and usefulness.

A committee was formed consisting of a faculty member from the Art Department, Art Technology Department, School of Music, School of Theatre & Dance, and Creative Writing program. These are the majors which have traditionally contributed the courses fulfilling the requirement, so they have knowledge of the challenges of the CAR. In the past 18 months, this committee has done the following:

- Appointed Jana Henry Funderburk, tenured Associated Professor as Chair of the Creative Arts Requirement Committee.
- Rewritten learning goal for the CAR, looking at the current issues with assessability and examining models from other universities. These goals were then passed by faculty in the College of Fine Arts and Creative Writing for input/revision.
- Created a process for approval of courses to fulfill the CAR. This process includes submitting a syllabus with the learning goals included and identifying the assignments to be collected and assessed by the CAR committee. No courses were "grandfathered" in as the learning goals have changed, and artifacts were not being submitted for assessment from currently approved courses.

-Written a rubric for assessment of artifacts submitted. This rubric was included in course proposal form, so faculty would understand what the committee will be looking for when assessing submitted assignments.

-Devised a method for submission of artifacts. Students enrolled in a CAR identifying course will be automatically enrolled in a Moodle shell which will be the collection point for artifacts.

-This proposed change to the requirement was then passed through the Council on Curriculum and was approved by the full university faculty in a unanimous vote.

(1) Learning Goals

In the 2017-2018 school year, the learning goals for the Creative Arts Requirement were rewritten. The previous goals were:

Students will:

1. Demonstrate engagement in/with the creative process.
2. Respond to and reflect on the aesthetic experience of the creative arts.
3. Make connections between aesthetic experiences and the larger cultural context of creation.

Traditionally, the emphasis of the requirement rested on “the doing” of the arts and an attempt has been made to shift the emphasis to “the knowing” of the arts, which certainly can be a result of doing. Courses like Art History, Dance Appreciation, and Ethnomusicology didn’t fulfill the previous goals and yet these courses are very popular with non-College of Fine Arts students to begin to engage with the arts.

The new Creative Arts Requirement learning goals are:

Students will:

1. Investigate discipline-specific creative processes.
2. Analyze the art using discipline-specific vocabulary.
3. Evaluate how art relates to an individual life of meaning and value.

These learning goals complement the university-wide mission in multiple ways. While we might not think of professional success coming from taking one course in the arts, in fact we’ve seen students such as the physics major who after taking a course in theatre realize that Technical Direction was the combination of his love of physics and his love of construction. In subtler ways, professional success can be helped by understanding the collaboration and different ways of knowing which come from the Creative Arts. In terms of community citizenship in a global environment, there are course which will fulfill the Creative Arts requirement, such as Global Haiku, which bring non-Western perspectives to the learning. And as a study of the arts often a study of humanity, students cannot help but reflect on how they evaluate what brings personal meaning and value to their lives.

(2) Course Satisfying the CAR

With the adoption of the new learning goals and approval process, the courses that have been approved for Fall 2018 come from a variety of areas within a variety of majors. Some of them are courses that have fulfilled the requirement in the past, and some of courses that didn’t meet the previous learning

goals but do meet the new ones. For example, in the School of Theatre & Dance the following courses approved include:

-TH131- Play Analysis

-DA110- Dance Appreciation

-TH103- Acting for Non-Majors

Of those three courses, TH103 met the previous learning goals, DA110 was being offered to fulfill the requirement (but didn't meet the learning goals) and TH131 hasn't changed but meets the new goals. We see this across the programs- some growing pains in adapting courses that worked in the past, and some courses fulfilling the new requirements without much effort.

(3) Assessment Methods

Assessment was in the forefront of the conversation as we made changes to the Creative Arts Requirement. As courses are proposed to meet the requirement, faculty must identify what the artifacts are for each of the learning goals. The committee can then help the faculty to shape the assignments to ensure success in the delivery of the goals. It is upon the faculty member/student to upload the materials for assessment. Failure to upload a significant number of artifacts will initiate conversations with the faculty member about the importance of submission for the course to continue to count for the requirement. The CAR committee has devised a rubric to be used to assess the submitted artifacts. Again, if a course's artifacts aren't scoring well on the rubric, the committee will work with the faculty member to improve outcomes.

(4) Assessment Data

There is no data to assess as 2017-2018 has been a year of revision and change. We will begin collecting data in Fall 2018 and will have data for the 2018-2019 report.

(5) Analysis of Assessment Results

As reported above, data was not collected in 2017-2018, so there is no data to assess. It is the goal to have two semesters worth of data to assess for next year's report.

(6) Conclusions

This year has been a year of assessment, planning and change for the Creative Arts Requirement, and it is clear that not all faculty believe that assessment is necessary. The tradition of "just doing" is strong in the arts, and we will continue to work to show the value of assessing Creative Arts. Whether or not faculty will have the buy in to submit materials for assessment remains to be seen, but we have a new start for the Creative Arts Requirement.

(7) Plans for Future

We have worked through the last year to build consensus and buy in from faculty in terms of the Creative Arts Requirement. We will implement these changes for the 2018-2019 school year, continue to work with faculty to find courses meeting the learning goals and then assessing how well those goals are being delivered to the students. It is my hope that faculty will begin to see this process of assessment as useful rather than onerous.