

2010-2011 Millikin University Fine Art Assessment
Student Learning in the Fine Arts Requirement (University Studies)

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The Fine Arts Requirement is one of several non-sequential University Studies requirements that all Millikin University students must take to graduate. The requirement can be taken at any time during a student's four-year experience.

This non-sequential requirement can be met with any fine arts course that blends experiential, theoretical, and reflective approaches. Examples include Art 101, 107, 121, 122, and 235; Music History 100, 101, 213; Theatre 103 and 107. Three credits of Applied Music, Music Organizations or Dance, or a combination thereof, also satisfies this requirement. See Snapshot below for a full list of courses that meet the requirement.

(1) Learning Goals:

In fine arts courses, students appreciate the intellectual and aesthetic contributions that the visual, dramatic, and/or performing arts make to their ability to understand themselves and others and to their capacity to enjoy their own and others' creative processes and products. Students develop an understanding of themselves and the ability to reflect on and express their thoughts and feelings responsibly.

The following learning outcome goals are delivered by all courses designated as meeting the Fine Arts requirement.

Students will:

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

These learning goals complement the university-wide mission in the following ways. Engaging in the arts sharpens the diagnostic/critical thinking skills necessary for professional success. Recent literature, has, for instance, made claim to the fact that pre-med students who have taken art appreciation (Art 101) are better diagnosticians. By studying the arts, including non-western art forms, students become more open to global citizenship. And, of course, studying and performing art aids in the understanding our own humanity, thereby helping to create a personal life of meaning and value.

(2) Snapshot:

Visiting artists, adjuncts, senior and full time faculty have all taught the classes meeting the fine arts requirement. Classes typically consist of studio work, lecture, and critique. Fine Arts majors as well as non-majors occupy the classes. Courses are offered in both the traditional and PACE formats and are offered during Spring and Fall semesters, as well as January and Summer Immersions.

The following courses meet or are accepted as meeting the three-credit fine arts requirement.

Courses Designated as Meeting the FAR Requirement

Art Department	Theater & Dance	Music Department	
AR 121	TH 103	MC 101	MO 140
AR 101	DA 105	ME 251	MO 161
AR 103	DA 108	MH 213	MO 173
AR 104	DA 107	MH 101	MO 160
AR 105	DA 102	MH 211	MO 133
AR 106	DA 106	MH 213	MO 122
AR 107	DA 101	MH 101	MO 139
AR 125	DA 160	MO 174	MO 172
AR 122		MO 160	MO 183
AR 235		MO 183	MO 161
		MO 161	MO 172
		MO 120	MO 110
		MO 183	MO 135
		MO 174	MO 161
		MO 170	MO 122
		MO 137	MO 139
		MO 183	MO 172
		MO 183	MO 183
		MT 100	MO 161
		MT 111	MO 172

(3) The Learning Story:

“The college of Fine Arts is committed to the instruction of both aspiring professionals in the performing and creative arts and those who wish to enrich their aesthetic experience or to develop an a vocation. Opportunities are for all students to grow aesthetically and to increase in sensitivity of their cultural environment...” 2010-2011 MU bulletin.

The Art, Music, and Theatre and Dance departments provide both lecture and studio courses that satisfy the Fine Arts Requirement for all students. Lecture classes serve larger numbers of students per semester and are taught by a single instructor. Smaller classes engage students in performance or production. Because of size some classes are taught as lecture with specially designed fine art activities and other classes that are smaller generally has a performance activity that occurs each class period.

The fine arts requirement is inclusive. Student’s want choice and Millikin University’s University Study program agrees. The Fine Arts Requirement is one place in every Millikn student’s educational experience where they may choose to experience performance learning. Students have the opportunity to participate in department sponsored musical, artistic, theatrical and dance productions that occur throughout campus. This inclusiveness and immersion in the arts aligns with Millikin’s unique brand of performance-based learning.

(4) **Assessment Methods:**

The methods have continued to change throughout our assessment history at Millikin University. Most agree that testing in the fine arts is difficult at best. Collection of artifacts, writing about the arts or answering questions do not fully allow for the application of knowledge in the fine arts. We do, as a faculty, believe that we are meeting the fine art goals with the student's accomplishments, their overall effort, and their progress in the classroom. Yet, we recognize the difficulty of capturing the inclusive value of the arts.

This Spring of 2011, we piloted a new assessment method, using select courses from the Art and Music departments. We asked students in the selected classes to submit a written artifact responding to their engagement with the fine arts. The artifact instructions asked students to reflect on their performance, production, and/or engagement with the fine arts. Focusing the reflection artifact on the student learning outcome goals might allow faculty to determine if students in the classes were meeting the FAR learning outcome goals.

Students in the pilot classes were given the following instructions.

Enrolling in the Fine Arts Assessment Moodle Shell

Student Instructions

1. Login to myMILLIKIN: <http://my.millikin.edu>
2. Choose "Moodle" from the menu of links on the right-hand side.
3. On the left-hand side, near the bottom, click on the link that says "all courses."
4. A list of categories will appear. Choose the one called "Assessments"
5. Choose the course called "Fine Arts Assessment Spring 2011"
6. You will see a message asking if you want to enroll. Choose "Yes."
7. You've now enrolled yourself successfully! Find your instructor and course in the list and submit your assessment as instructed.

Fine Arts Requirement Goals

Through reflection students will speak about the following goals:

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

Reflection Prompt

Address all three goals in your essay.

1. To demonstrate your engagement in the creative process, **recall** and **describe** what and how you created or engaged with art. What did you make? How did you "do art"?

Sample Prompt Response Cues:

"When engaging in creation I ..."

"My favorite part of the process of doing art is..."

2. Respond to, reflect on, and **evaluate** the aesthetic experience with art. What impact did the experience have on your understanding of creative expression? What did you learn about beauty or lack thereof through the experience? How did you respond to the familiar and unfamiliar effects of the creative process? What emotions were evoked?

Sample Prompt Response Cues:

"Beauty or its polar opposite can express life's events. Speak of a piece that made you feel strongly about something and what emotions were evoked?"

"Understanding the unknown was possible through this work of art. ... because"

3. Make connections to **show your understanding** between your aesthetic experiences and responses to art and the larger cultural context of creation. From what traditions have you drawn inspiration? How is your creation or engagement a response to contemporary contexts?

Sample Prompt Response Cues:

"Why, like you, have people all over the world engaged in the arts?"

"Past creations are inspiration or contributed to my growth by"

Faculty who piloted the course were asked to include the following statement in their syllabus.

Fine Arts Requirement Artifact Collection: The College of Fine Arts collects written reflections from designated courses within the college for program assessment of the university-wide Fine Arts Requirement. This course has been designated a course for student artifact collection. Submitting the writing reflection artifact is a requirement for this course. You will not receive a grade for the course if you do not submit the requested artifacts.

The artifacts are assessed using the rubric in Appendix A. Each criteria for evaluation corresponds to one of the three FAR learning outcome goals.

(5) Assessment Data:

We collected reflection artifacts from the following classes for the assessment:

Professor Georgia Hornbacker, MH 100-01 Understanding Classical Music

Professor Shelley Cordulack, AR 101-01 Intro to Visual Culture

Professor Annette Russo, AR 107-01 Introduction to Studio Art

Professor Jamie L. Kotewa, AR 104-01 Drawing Orientation

Professor Katie L. Hinton, AR 104-02 Drawing Orientation

Professor Annette Russo AR 106-01 Design Orientation

Professor Annette Russo, AR 106-02 Design Orientation

Professor James Schietinger AR 122-01 Ceramics Handbuilding

(6) Analysis of Assessment Results:

The Moodle site was opened and students were asked repeatedly to participate. The non-fine arts major students did submit randomly. Fine Art majors did not submit. Sixty-three students responded. Twenty responses were randomly chosen to be assessed by a committee comprised of members from all Fine Arts departments. Assessment committee team members for 2010-2011 were: Steve Widenhofer, Denise Myers, Shelley Cordulack, and Annette Russo. The twenty documents were sent to each of the assessors and each team member assessed each artifact using the rubric found in Appendix A.

The scores for each student were calculated by adding the totals of his or her three responses. For example: Student responder "ONE" scored 3, 3 and 2 assessor one, 3, 3, & 1 assessor two and 3, 3 & 2 assessor three and 3, 5 & 1 by assessor four. These were added to 32 divided by four giving the student an average of 8 for the score. Using this method of evaluating the scores three students were found to be in the "green", 14 were in the "yellow" and three were in the "red" areas of evaluation according to the rubric. The student's average score was 8.88

The four assessor scores given to each student in one prompt were then added by separating out the individual prompts. So instead of rating the whole individual this average represents the rate of learning in one area.

Prompt one: 3.15 out of a possible 5
Prompt two: 3.125 out of a possible 5
Prompt three: 2.46 out of a possible 3
8.735 total average out of a possible 13

SO are we really in the yellow?

Numerically speaking, we are in the yellow for prompt one (Demonstrate engagement in creative process) and two (respond and reflect on the aesthetic experience). We are in the green for prompt three (make connections between aesthetic experience and the larger cultural context of creation).

Why are we in the yellow - green area?

-Students moaned and/or did not participate in the assessment. Not one stated - "I can't wait to respond to another assessment or do another reflection". Assessments are wide spread, occur often at the end of the semester and are but one more chore at an already overloaded time period called the end of the semester.

- Possible score issues... Learning goal one was to measure demonstration in the creative process: All students discussed making art physically or listening and identifying the critical features of music.
- Real scoring issues – change numbers and weight.
- Respond to and reflect – prompt two was discussed in all reflections students say the words "emotion, beauty or the class helped me understand..." The prompts words were used and used often.

What are we going to do (the same or differently) next time?

1. Change the time of the Assessment: Testing what a student learns usually occurs at the end of a semester. Could we assess at the midterm point of engagement in the fine arts? Students seem to find the arts a welcome part of their education and understand how it impacts their profession and connects them to the wider context of our culture.
2. Require more word count to include depth about how a student grows.
3. Change rubric wording- less about the words.
4. Change the score breakdown.
5. Better prepare students to write about the prompts using their own words and ideas
6. Get fine art major students to participate

Issues and Concerns to Note:

1) Some faculty assessors found difficulty in student participants' level of expression, lack of communication, and general disinterest in the assessment.

2) Rubric Use (see Appendix A)

a. Are the areas of rating a response about what is learned or use of writing skills?

b. Math issues

Goal one:

5 is a perfect score

3 in the yellow

1 - red

Goal Two:

5 is a perfect score

3 in the yellow

1 in the red

Goal three:

3 is a perfect score

2 is yellow

1 is red

Weight variation modifies the average thus the score variable.

C. Score skipping

Scores miss some numerical placement

Note Problem with rubric:

1-6 = red

*6-7= what?

7-10.5= yellow

10.5to 13= green

Conclusions:

Most students responded positively and successfully to the experience of an art class in assignments, assessments, and in classes. Only one in 20 discussed the experience as "just doing a requirement". Growth was personally noted and positive outcomes were dominant in personal reflection.

Let's say the role of the artist is to link the contemporary with the elementary ideas of life. Then a great German philosopher and poet's belief that one must let the word behind the thought to be what is heard is an accurate description in the process of art. The message must be extracted from a void - a place of no words for the thoughts. The artist's task is to reach a transparent transcendence of how we relate to the environment as a human and express this. Do our students get this and know how to express this? Most students were, in fact, able to express appreciation for and understanding of this task and to connect to it on some level. This University Studies common experience allows for all students to connect to the humanity of existence.

(7) Improvement plans:

Because faculty decided to pilot a new assessment method, this year's assessment includes only a few visual art classes and one music class. For this pilot study, we narrowed the focus to gain valuable assessment knowledge. Future assessments will attempt to accommodate and include the variety and range of students' fine arts experiences.

Other areas for improvement:

Reflection prompts offered earlier in the semester

More inclusive FAR class listing

Requirement status of the FAR assessment

Look at Rubric: make it less an evaluation of writing skills

Modify scores

Better prepare students to express with words

This report will be shared with all faculty in the Art, Music, and Theater and Dance departments. Feedback for improvement on the implementation and assessment of the goals will be solicited from all faculty in all three departments.

The committee will continue to communicate with modifications for the rubric.

The list of all classes to participate will grow.

The student's motivation to participate in the assessment will be addressed.

Appendix A
 Assessment Rubric for Reflection Artifact
 Fine Arts Requirement
 Revised February 3, 2011

	Excellent (Green—Go)	Adequate (Yellow—Caution)	Nominal (Red—Stop)	Pts.
Goal 1	An excellent reflection response demonstrates a highly developed engagement with, description of, and understanding of the expressive possibilities and techniques in the arts area studied. [5 points]	An adequate reflection response contains a passive attempt at engaging with and describing the major aspects of the art’s medium. The response reflects an understanding of the concepts, but does not actively engage with structure or strategy and/or play of ideas. [3 points]	A nominal reflection response contains an incomplete attempt at engagement or a misunderstanding of the major aspects of the art medium. [1 point]	
Goal 2	An excellent reflection response contains either careful, well-supported, and well-positioned judgments about the aesthetic experience, using language of the medium and/or an active conversation concerning personal or an individual’s or group’s responses to the aesthetic experience. [5 points]	An adequate response contains only some careful, supported and positioned judgments and/or passive engagement with the arts. [3 points]	A nominal response contains little or no judgments about or engagement with the arts. [1 point]	
Goal 3	An excellent reflection response demonstrates a highly developed understanding of the methods of production or performance of others’ and/or one’s own work within the larger cultural context of creation. [3 points]	An adequate response demonstrates an attempt to understand the expression, methods of production or performance of others’ and/or one’s own work within the larger cultural context of creation. [2 points]	A nominal response demonstrates a minimal attempt to understand expression, method of production or performance of others’ and/or one’s own work within the larger cultural context of creation. [1 points]	

Total Points for this Student:

Final Signal Rating:

Excellent (Green—Go)	Adequate (Yellow—Caution)	Nominal (Red—Stop)
10.5-13	7-10.5	1-6