

The Arts

The pursuit of individual artistic excellence is a lifelong quest that begins by developing a profound understanding and appreciation of the contributions made by the most innovative creators in the field.

Faculty Viewpoint

Knowledge & Skills Foundations

This section discusses the attributes of students who are successful in the range of creative endeavors known collectively as the arts. Successful students display a wide range of behaviors, some that can be learned and others that are reflections of personality traits and personal attributes. Successful students in the arts are self-aware individuals who use their time at the university to continue and to intensify a process of skill development and personal growth designed to prepare them to be life-long learners and participants in the arts.

Faculty members describe successful students as those who can think independently, logically and then maturely. Successful students understand themselves as instruments of communication and expression who demonstrate mastery of basic oral and physical expression through sound, movement, and visual representations. They embrace a diversity of academic interests from world cultures and political history to scientific research, sociology, psychology and the study of religion. They view the arts as an instrument of social and political expression. They formulate and present difficult questions through their personal artistic visions. They are able to justify their aesthetic decisions when creating or performing a piece of work and know how to make decisions regarding the proper venue for performing or exhibiting any creative product.

One of the things that differentiates college from high school is the longer periods of time spent improving, revising

and perfecting work. Successful students know how to practice in a sustained, focused fashion without external supervision, how to manage their time, and how to discipline themselves to remain focused for extended periods of time while mastering the technical aspects of their area of endeavor. Artists, like athletes, sometimes describe this hard work as *flow*: a state of mind characterized by high concentration and blocking out of distractions, thus achieving advanced levels of creativity. Time management and patience are essential. Starting a project when it is assigned without procrastination, learning to work in stages, and planning so that it can be completed in the amount of time given are critical skills for all arts students. At the same time, successful students do not lose touch with the larger campus community, and, in fact, participate in a wide range of campus activities and interact with a cross-section of the student body.

Students prepared for study in the arts demonstrate intellectual curiosity and a willingness to experiment with media. These students strive to develop their creativity and ingenuity by struggling with a concept, an object, a space, or a sound. Rather than solely fixating on proper form, they seek to utilize knowledge of form to facilitate and support personal creative development. They are aware and curious about genres with which they are not familiar and are eager to experiment with them. They are willing to learn about a diverse range of historical eras and practices related to the arts.

Many arts courses at the college level require research skills in part because the creative process of producing one's own



work usually raises questions about issues that are external to the piece, particularly a knowledge of what influences the piece. This process requires research that incorporates cultural criticism. The presentation of the research is often in the form of a clearly written essay. Successful students also know about the moral and legal issues around plagiarism and can see the difference between being influenced by other artists and stealing from them.

It is crucial that students be able to think critically. Students who are ready for college-level study in the arts must be capable of making independent judgments about a work of art and not be afraid to ask questions. Curiosity and a willingness to explore many layers of meaning are important to success, as well. Successful students reflect on and assess the strengths and weaknesses of others' ideas and ways of expressing them. In addition, they are comfortable formulating and expressing their own ideas.

Successful students are able to accept criticism about their own artwork or performance as well as to critique the work of others. One cannot create art or perform without considering at some point the opinions of others. Students learn through formal critiques how to distinguish between constructive criticism and unfounded criticism and how to use constructive criticism to become more self-analytic. The underlying point of critiques and feedback is not just to improve one's work, but also to foster self-reliance and to build a peer network simultaneously. Different methods of critique are used at the college level. In some, the emphasis is on listening to classmates' comments; in others, the student is expected to present the class with a rationale for the work or performance.

Collaboration is an essential aspect of theatrical production which is manifested in one's ability not only to effectively communicate a personal creative idea but to also engage in an exchange of ideas that will result in a shared artistic vision.

Faculty Viewpoint

A character trait that university-level arts classes develop is helping students learn not to get discouraged when they are asked to do things that are complex or time-consuming. Rising to the substantial challenges students face in university-level arts courses is an integral component of the learning experience. Many students who have been accustomed to being outstanding find themselves in a community where everyone is similarly gifted. The shock of not being the best or the most accomplished is often great for students in entry-level courses. The challenge is to embrace this new role and status and learn from the diversity of expertise, talent and creativity that now surrounds the student.

The Arts Standards

The Knowledge and Skills for University Success standards in the arts are presented in a somewhat different fashion than they are in the other disciplines. The arts section adopts a unique approach due to the fact that arts classes are not necessarily taken during the freshman year. Arts courses may be experienced for the first time by students at any point in their academic careers. Thus, it is more difficult to identify arts classes associated with first-year students, the criterion used to identify knowledge and skills in the other five academic content areas addressed in this document. Additionally, the arts are uniquely complex in a number of other ways. First, the arts include both the performing arts and arts appreciation. Second, the arts comprise a number of distinctly different areas of emphasis. Music, art, dance and theatre require more distinctly different skills and knowledge than do biology and chemistry or geography and history.

Students should be able to consider the social context of the dance performance and ask pertinent questions about the conditions of dance production and the intended audience for the dance.

Faculty Viewpoint

The arts standards presented here represent a set of general skills and abilities derived from national arts standards documents and the expressed values of arts faculty. This section includes knowledge and skills for art history, dance, music, theatre and the visual arts. For each of these sub-areas, knowledge and skills are grouped under three headings: Technical Knowledge and Skills, Cultural and Historical

Knowledge and Skills, and Aesthetics and Art Criticism Knowledge and Skills. Although grouped under these headings for organizational convenience, the knowledge and skills are understood best when viewed as being integrated within each heading and across headings within a sub-area.

When students take an introductory course in art history, they often discover a talent or interest that they never imagined—and that's a significant part of what college is about: personal discovery.

Faculty Viewpoint

I. Art History

Technical Knowledge and Skills

Students in introductory art history courses are successful when they:

1. Know a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas in the visual arts.
2. Know how characteristics of the arts vary within a particular historical period or style and how these characteristics relate to ideas, issues or themes in other artistic disciplines. For example, paintings often were made for specific architectural contexts, such as a mural made for a dining area or a specific location in a Hindu temple.
3. Understand the connections between various artistic genres and media, such as the relationships between music and art during a given period.
4. Know that characteristics of the arts vary within a particular historical period or genre.
5. Connect characteristics of visual arts within a particular historical period or style with ideas, issues or themes in the humanities, social sciences or natural sciences.

Cultural and Historical Knowledge and Skills

Students in introductory art history courses do well when they:

1. Recognize that artworks are created in relation to major cultural, socio-political and historical periods.
2. Reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally and functionally, and according to geographical place.
3. Analyze common characteristics of visual arts evident across time and among cultural/ethnic groups to formulate analyses, evaluations and interpretations of meaning.

Aesthetics and Art Criticism Knowledge and Skills

Students in introductory art history courses do well when they:

1. Write clearly and cogently, formulate logical arguments and demonstrate intellectual curiosity.
2. Are skilled in visual literacy; can interpret artwork as a visual text.
3. Understand the link between the artist and society, and understand that artists are generally professionals who are successful in their time because they produce what their audiences want to see.

II. Dance

Technical Knowledge and Skills

Students in entry-level dance courses do well when they:

1. Possess technical skills in proper body-part articulation, strength, flexibility, agility and coordination in locomotor and nonlocomotor/axial movements.
2. Display an awareness of proper breathing techniques, and understand choreographic principles, processes and structures.

3. Use improvisation to generate movement for choreography.
4. Understand various complex time elements, such as duple and triple meters and tempi varied in relation to a basic pulse.
5. Create and perform combinations and variations within a broad range of dance styles.
6. Can memorize and reproduce extended movement sequences and rhythmic patterns.
7. Understand that dance is a way to create and communicate meaning.
8. Use movement choices to communicate abstract ideas and social themes in dance.
9. Understand and demonstrate how dance interpretation can be influenced by personal experience.

Cultural and Historical Key Knowledge and Skills

Students in entry-level dance courses do well when they:

1. Understand dance across various cultures and historical periods.
2. Compare and contrast the role and significance of dance in different social, historical, cultural and political contexts.
3. Place significant dance events of the twentieth century in their proper social, historical, cultural and political contexts.
4. Perform and describe similarities and differences between two contemporary theatrical forms of dance, and know the traditions and techniques of classical dance forms.

Aesthetics and Arts Criticism Knowledge and Skills

Students in entry-level dance courses do well when they:

1. Discuss the intentions and effects of dance work in both solo and group dance performances.

2. Analyze and describe the tempo, bodily precision, intention, musicality, costumes, lighting, space, rhythm, body position and synchronicity between elements in their critiques.
3. Describe how a choreographer manipulated and developed basic movement content in a dance.

III. Music

Technical Knowledge and Skills

Students beginning vocal or instrumental college-level music do well when they:

1. Can use their voice as a performing tool.
2. Can sing a varied repertoire of vocal literature with expression and technical accuracy at a moderate level of difficulty including some songs performed from memory.
3. Pay attention to phrasing and interpretation, various meters and rhythms in a variety of keys.
4. Can sing music written in four parts, with and without accompaniment.
5. Know how to play a varied repertoire of music both alone and with others.
6. Can perform with expression using appropriate dynamics, phrasing, rubato and technical accuracy with attention to interpretation.
7. Perform in various meters and rhythms in a variety of keys.
8. Perform in an ensemble, demonstrating well-developed skills in creating balance, varying intonation and maintaining rhythmic unity.
9. Read and notate music that contains moderate technical demands.

10. Are familiar with music theory and composition and can demonstrate an ability to use the elements of music for expressive effect, including pitch, rhythm, timbre, texture and form.

Cultural and Historical Knowledge and Skills

Students in music courses do well when they:

1. Understand how music is related to history and culture.
2. Are able to classify unfamiliar but representative aural examples of music by genre, style, historical period and culture, and to explain the reasoning behind their identification.
3. Can identify and describe music genres or styles that show the influence of one or more cultural traditions.

Aesthetic and Arts Criticism Knowledge and Skills

Students who observe or listen to musical performances do well when they:

1. Know and apply appropriate criteria to music and music performances.
2. Understand the technical vocabulary of music—including terms in Italian and markings for form, harmony and tempo.



3. Understand compositional devices and techniques that are used to provide unity, variety, tension and release in a musical work.
4. Can listen to, analyze and describe music and music performances.
5. Describe the elements of music in a given work that make it unique, interesting and expressive.
6. Evaluate composition, arrangement or improvisation by comparing it to similar or exemplary models.
7. Compare ways in which musical components are used in a variety of works of the same genre or style.
8. Understand and can describe the relationships between music, the other arts and disciplines outside the arts.

IV. Theatre

Technical Knowledge and Skills

Students in entry-level theatre courses do well when they:

1. Demonstrate evidence of dramatic experience including the ability to analyze the physical, emotional and social dimensions of characters found in dramatic texts from various genres and media.
2. Develop, communicate and sustain characters in rehearsal, in informal or formal productions and in an ensemble that communicates with audiences in improvisations.
3. Understand what goes on behind the scenes in terms of design, direction and production of a theatrical piece.
4. Possess the technical knowledge and skills to collaboratively and safely create functional scenery, properties, lighting, sound, costumes and makeup.
5. Can collaborate with directors to develop unified production concepts that convey the

metaphorical nature of the drama for informal and formal theatre, film, television or electronic media productions.

Cultural and Historical Knowledge and Skills

Students are successful in theatre when they:

1. Are familiar with the social, cultural and historical contexts in which theatre, film, television and electronic media are performed today and were performed in the past.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of theatrical heritage.
3. Are aware that theatre can reveal universal concepts across time.
4. Appreciate the ways in which personal and cultural experiences can affect an artist's dramatic work.
5. Understand and can describe how their own cultural experiences influence their work.
6. Understand and appreciate cultural and historical effects influencing theatre.
7. Compare, analyze and integrate traditional theatre, dance, music, visual arts and emerging art forms.

Aesthetics and Art Criticism Knowledge and Skills

Students are successful in theatre when they:

1. Know how informal and formal theatre, film, television and electronic media productions create and communicate meaning.
2. Understand how social meanings, represented by aural, oral and visual symbols are communicated.
3. Can identify how productions and performances relate to current issues.
4. Understand that the context in which a dramatic performance is set can enhance or hinder its effectiveness.

5. Are able to compare and explain the roles and interrelated responsibilities of people involved in a production.
 6. Can describe the influence of drama in film, television, rock concerts and religious ceremonies and other kinds of ceremonies and performances.
 7. Have good observational skills.
 8. Articulate and justify their personal aesthetic criteria.
 9. Use their knowledge of other aesthetic philosophies such as Greek drama, Shakespearean forms, Japanese kabuki and others.
2. Understand how visual, spatial, temporal and functional values of artworks are tempered by society, culture and history
 3. Show an understanding of the work of critics, historians and artists.
 4. Investigate the influence of international and national cultural institutions and art policies on art and art making.
 5. Develop an appreciation of art as a social agent that contributes to a sense of community in situations such as community forums, events and festivals.

V. Visual Arts

Technical Knowledge and Skills

Students in entry-level visual arts courses do well when they:

1. Know fundamental visual arts techniques and processes in a variety of media, including basic drawing, color theory and design.
2. Initiate, define and solve challenging visual arts problems in order to create cohesive artworks.
3. Demonstrate awareness of how emotions expressed in art give new insight and clarity to issues.
4. Differentiate between the applications of various media and understand how media generate different types of expression.
5. Explore ways to integrate and combine various arts media.

Cultural and Historical Knowledge and Skills

Students in college-level visual arts courses do well when they:

1. View and identify examples of artworks from a variety of cultural contexts to understand their function and meaning.

Aesthetic and Art Criticism Knowledge and Skills

Successful students in entry-level visual arts courses:

1. Are willing to learn from the process of evaluation by peers and faculty.
2. Apply intellectual skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation in visual art critiques.
3. Discuss the implications of an artist's intentions.
4. Demonstrate their own interpretations and synthesize those of peers, professors and critics.
5. Form and defend judgments about artistic characteristics.
6. Compare two or more perspectives about the use of organizational principles in an artwork, and defend personal evaluations of these perspectives.
7. Reflect upon and assess how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally and functionally.
8. Balance between the ability to identify and trust one's instincts and the ability to question one's preconceived assumptions.

ISBN 0-9729538-0-9