

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS (VPA)
September 1, 2015

I. Short Description

Studies in the Visual and Performing Arts courses enable students to understand artistic forms and genres and introduce them to elements of creativity. Courses in this area may include historical and theoretical study of music, art, and theatre, studio art, design, and performance; and participation in Conservatory ensembles. Students will encounter both canonical and contemporary works.

II. Thematic Core Learning Outcomes and Interpretation

A. Students will be able to....

1. interpret artistic works within their social, cultural, and historical contexts of art creation and continued practice
2. engage a primary work of art through performance, creation, presentation, or study
3. articulate a Christian theological understanding of artistic content and creativity

B. Expansion and interpretation of the outcome statements

1. Learning Outcome #1: Students will be able to interpret artistic works within their social, cultural, and historical contexts of art creation and continued practice.

“Interpret artistic works . . .”: Interpretation of a work of art includes, but is not limited to: finding and explaining its meanings, assigning aesthetic value, and reflecting on its purpose. Students must demonstrate social, cultural, and historical understandings of a work of art and have the ability to interpret within those contexts. To use a musical example, for a student to interpret fully Dmitri Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony '*Leningrad*', he or she must spend time understanding the 1930s-40s political climate in the Soviet Union, Russian nationalism, and the work's prominence and reception in the West during that time in history.

2. Learning Outcome #2: Students will be able to engage a primary work of art through performance, creation, presentation, or study.

“Engage a primary work of art . . .”: In *Education for Socially Engaged Art*, Pablo Helguera outlines differing levels of encounter or participation with works of art. While he rejects any hierarchy between these levels, he advocates for clarity of roles and expectations in creative projects. When students “engage” work as prescribed in outcome no. 2, any of the following levels of participation are satisfactory:

Nominal participation: Participants experience a finished (master)work through observation, presence, and reflection..

Directed participation: Participants execute a prescribed task to a prescribed portion of an already designed work.

Creative participation: Participants invent their own contribution within their ascribed portion of a project.

Collaborative participation: Participants initiate and author their own project.

III. Guidelines

A. Expanded Description

None given.

B. Connection between area outcomes (Part II above) and the 12 overall program goals of Christ at the Core (see p. 8-9 of the Proposal).

1. Engaging with or creating works of art is the primary goal for courses in the Studies in the Visual and Performing Arts thematic core group. Students will learn to experience, analyze, and contextualize artworks. This relates to “Christ at the Core” Holistic Learning Goal #1, “Students will demonstrate holistic learning by developing strong ability to discover and evaluate information they need to draw conclusions; . . . and developing skills in aesthetic engagement.”

2. The arts are a vital part of cultures and societies throughout the world; they provide distinct and diverse modes of engagement and points of contact for students. This related to “Christ at the Core” Holistic Learning Goal #4: “Students will demonstrate holistic learning by engaging constructively with racial, cultural, social and religious diversity with the goal of learning to treasure the breadth and scope of Christ’s church and God’s world.”

3. All of the arts require both collaborative and individual effort. While creativity and imagination come into play in many fields of endeavor, they are the special province of the arts. This relates to “Christ at the Core” Wisdom Learning Goal #4: “Students will grow in wisdom by cultivating their collaborative abilities, their capacities for independent thought and action, and their imaginative and creative faculties.”

4. Throughout the history of Christianity, the arts have served the church. Students who have learned to engage the arts should then use this knowledge and experience in service to the church and society, and not just to one’s own entertainment or self-expression. Serving worship and society is not the only purpose of the arts, but for the Christian community it is an important one. This relates to “Christ at the Core” Christian Character Learning Goal #2: “Students will mature in Christian character by drawing upon their learning to serve the church and world throughout their lives, as they respond to the call of Christ.

C. Examples of Assessment

A range of rigorous assignments could provide evidence that students have successfully achieved the three Student Outcomes given in section II.A. Depending on the structure of the course, one significant assignment might be relevant for assessing more than one outcome; in other cases a series of assignments will be more appropriate. A few examples and suggested approaches are offered here as *possible inspiration* of disciplinary appropriate and rigorous options, but use of these exact assignments is not required. Faculty are encouraged to go beyond these or substitute other creative assignments as they develop individual courses.

1. Assessment of Outcome #1: This could be measured and evidenced by an oral or written articulation. Such an assignment should address some of the following traits of a work of art:
 - *why and by whom it exists (with consideration of historical, social, and cultural contexts)
 - * of what is it made in regards to formal elements?,
 - * how does it work? (that is, what are its modes of expression, its effect—upon reflection—on the viewer/listener?)
 - * Music Performance concentration. This could be measured and evidenced by an oral or written articulation examining of the following these two traits: Context—the "who, when, what, where and why" of a specific piece of music studied and performed during the semester, examining its historical, social and cultural context; and Analysis—form and architecture, harmony in context, tonality, texture, text (for choral or vocal works), and style.
2. Assessment of Outcome #2: Bearing witness in whole personhood through any of the prescribed levels of participation (course will specify level) to any assigned plays, scripts, operas, choreography, dances, musical performances, experimental performances, art exhibitions, museum galleries, film screenings, art/studio/lab production processes, community art event/pageants, etc. (as demonstrated by a Pass/Fail credit earned for attendance and participation, engaging intended audience at intended time) If the specified level of engagement with a work is level 1: Nominal Participation (see II.B.2 above), then an additional written or oral reflection piece is required via, e.g., facilitated class discussion, attending a theater Talk Back, journal entry, drawing sketch, etc. If the Visual and Performing Arts theme is met through participation and performance in rehearsals and concerts of an ensemble, including practice/preparation outside of class time; or, participation and performance in private/group lessons and appropriate performances (e.g. jury, open recital), including outside practice (required or recommended in syllabus (as demonstrated by a Pass/Fail credit earned for attendance and participation, engaging intended audience at intended time), then this outcome may be met without additional assignments.
3. Assessment of Outcome #3: This could be measured and evidenced by an oral or written articulation of what bearing the course's artistic discipline has on students' lives, recorded at the beginning of the course AND an oral or written articulation of the same question at the end of the course, upon students revisiting their initial responses. Such reflection should include spiritual/theological insights gained through the course from experiencing and pondering the arts, and the piece studied, in particular.

D. General Advice

The Visual and Performing Arts theme must be met with courses from two of three artistic domains – music, visual arts including media studies, and theater. To meet the requirement in four hours, students may take two 2-credit courses or their equivalent. Only the Visual and Performing Arts theme may offer 2-credit courses within the Thematic Core, and each 2-credit course must meet each of the three learning outcomes for the theme. Performance equivalents that are juried or require recitals may also be approved for meeting this requirement. Students that register and complete the requirements for an approved ensemble (that is, an ensemble that has applied for and received approval for VPA credit through the Curriculum Committee) may also receive Visual and Performing Arts credit.