

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025 University Core Competency Assessment Report

Fine Arts Survey. To explore the purposes and processes in the visual and performing arts and the ways in which fine arts conceive and express human experiences.

Prepared by: Dr. John T. Dunn, program coordinator

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Approved by: Dr. Greg Handel, Provost

Date: 6/18/25

Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

Northwestern Core Curriculum: In January 2018, under the direction of the Provost, the General Education Committee completed a deliberate and systematic 18-month review of the University Core Curriculum to ensure its alignment with policy 2.16 Statewide General Education Requirements, Louisiana Board of Regents. As a result, the University modified its General Education Core Curriculum ensuring the courses selected were introductory, survey, or appreciation courses and not tied to a specific degree program. The current broad-based core curriculum leverages six key competencies central to the University's mission and is consistent with the Louisiana Board of Regents' requirements for general education. The selection of courses encompasses the knowledge and abilities that Northwestern believes are essential to college graduates. The requirements are designed to improve students' writing and speaking; provide students with mathematical skills at the level of college algebra and above; strengthen students' understanding of biological, physical, social, and behavioral sciences; and develop an appreciation and knowledge of the arts and humanities. These courses provide the breadth of a student's educational program while the degree program requirements provide the depth of education. The goal of the core curriculum is for undergraduate students, depending on their respective degree program, to obtain appropriate learning outcomes for this general education competency

Purpose: The purpose of the Fine Arts core competencies is to improve students' understanding of the artistic endeavors of artists who contribute to our society. The knowledge and skills developed in this class can be put into context with other upper-level courses, in the workplace, and in their everyday life.

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025 University Core Competency Assessment Report

Methodology:

- (1) The instructors will conduct two online assessments from each student enrolled in FA 1040 in the summer, fall, and spring semesters. They will also conduct students to complete four written assignments and gauge student participation in artistic events in the community.
- (2) The course steward will analyze the data to determine whether the applicable outcomes are met.
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with faculty during on-call week of the fall semester. Any changes to the methodology will be discussed at this time.
- (4) Faculty will meet during the fall on-call week to discuss the results and determine the actions that need to be taken in response to the evaluation. Individual meetings will be held with faculty during on-call week, if necessary. The course steward, in consultation with the staff and departmental leadership, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next period and, where needed, service, curriculum, and program changes.

Student Learning Outcomes.

SLO 1. Students identify genres, artists, works, techniques, and trends within the arts

Measure 1.1. The student will recognize important terminology used in describing the arts, important individual works of art, famous composers, playwrights, artists, choreographers, and performers, and identify important historical periods and trends in the arts.

Methodology: Direct Measure—Fine Arts 1040 Pre-test and Post-test.

Target: 40% growth between the two tests with at least 70% of the students enrolled taking the exam. 45% growth is ideal. Students take two online tests to partly assess their understanding of basic terminology, important artists, and critical moments in the history of art.

Course Name	Methodology	Target	Term
FA 1040	Pre-and Post-Test	40% Growth	AY 2024-2025
FA 1040	Participation Rate	70% Participation	AY 2024-2025

Findings: target met for growth percentage, Pre-test participation, and Post-test participation.

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025 University Core Competency Assessment Report

Analysis: In AY 2023-2024, the targets for this measure changed: the growth rate for the classes was raised to 40% and the Participation Rate was lowered to 70%. The justification for these changes comes in the form of consistently hitting targets above 30% in previous years by more than ten points. The higher growth rate challenges the quality of instruction. Lowering the participation target to 70% reflects the reality of this class: as a freshman level core curriculum class, too many students drop each semester for a target of 80% to be consistently met. In fact, since we started collecting data for this class, the Post-Test rate has never met an 80% completion rate. With the changed targets, the results reflect the realities of this course: the pre-test has an extremely high rate, whereas the post-test is almost 15 points less: targets were met for the growth rate, the pre-test, and the post-test. The low Post-Test could be explained because as the semester progresses, more students either drop the class or stop attending, and the percentage of available students drops.

The new targets for measure 1.1 in AY 2023-2024 was 40% growth with a 70% participation rate. Students achieved a 45% growth rate with a 88% Pre-test participation rate and a 76% Post-test participation rate. The 2023-2024 targets were accomplished. A total of 1311 students were enrolled in 39 sections of FA 1040, which included online and live formats. Of these 1311 students, 366, or 28% were dual enrollment students.

In AY 2024-2025, all three targets were met. There was no disparity between dual enrollment, online, distance learning, or live students since everyone takes the same assessment in the same format. Students are given the online Pre-test at the beginning of the semester and the same exam as the Post-test at the end of the semester. Individual scores are collected, and growth is determined using the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Post-test} - \text{Pre-test}}{\text{Pre-test}} \times 100$$

Enrollment in FA 1040 was lower than last year: 1329 students were enrolled in 39 sections of FA 1040, and 367 of them (28%) were dual enrollment. Out of these 1329 students, all but three sections participated in the pre-test and post-test. From the remaining sections, involving 1253 students, 1210 (or 97%) took the pre-test and 1021 students (or 81%), participated in the post-test. The pre-test average was 25.68/50 and the post-test average was 42.93/50, leading to a growth rate of 67%. The participation rates, the averages, and the growth rate are all increases from last year.

Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, the faculty made the following changes to drive the cycle of improvement:

- sent emails to encourage student participation in assignments and tests,
- created more pre-test and post-test test score opportunities,
- utilized different procedures for tests and assignments,

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025 University Core Competency Assessment Report

- annotated lecture notes, updated tests, web resources, welcome videos, assignments, forums, lecture slides, quizzes, and guidelines to reflect student needs.

As a result of these changes, the 2024-2025 targets were met. The 67% growth rate, which is the highest rate in this class ever, meets the ideal target for the year. The Pre-Test participation rate was 97%, also the highest ever, and the Post-Test participation rate was 81%, which met the adjusted target of 70%.

Decision or Action to drive future improvement. In 2024-2025 the target was met with the growth rate, pre-test rate, and post-test rate. The participation rates are up from last year. Based on the analysis from 2024-2025 data, the faculty will implement the following changes in the 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement:

- Require the mostly adjunct instructors to increase participation and availability in their courses,
- Require all sections of the class to collect data
- Maximize the involvement of summer and dual enrollment students in the assessment process. As more sections are added to the results, we anticipate a more comprehensive set of results.

Measure 1.2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the arts in European culture as well as the arts and culture of other countries. Students take two online tests to partly assess their understanding of European and non-European cultural trends and important examples and people in the artistic community.

Methodology: Direct Measure—Fine Arts 1040 Pre-test and Post-test.

Target: 40% growth between the two tests with at least 70% of the students enrolled taking the exam. 45% growth is ideal. Students take two online tests to partly assess their understanding of basic terminology, important artists, and critical moments in the history of art.

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Assessment Cycle 2024-2025 University Core Competency Assessment Report

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Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, the faculty made the following changes to drive the cycle of improvement:

- sent emails to encourage student participation in assignments and tests,
- created more pre-test and post-test test score opportunities,
- utilized different procedures for tests and assignments,
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Assessment Cycle 2024-2025 University Core Competency Assessment Report

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SLO 2. Students will examine the arts through event attendance and reflection.

Methodology: Direct Measure—Performance Critiques.

Course Name	Methodology	Target	Term
FA 1040	Assignment participation	70%	AY 2024-2025

Finding. Target met in Music, Theater, Dance and Visual Art performance critique assessments.

Measure 2.1. Students will attend, review, and analyze a music event using Standard American English with 70% student participation.

Methodology: Direct Measure—Performance Critiques. By the end of each semester, the student will have completed the music performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on their participation as a member of the audience for a musical performance.

Finding. Target met in the music performance critique assessment.

Analysis: In 2023-2024 the target was met. 1079 students completed the assignment out of 1311 enrolled in the class, with 366 of those students (28%) being dual enrollment students. The music performance critique completion percentage was 82%, which exceeded the 70% target number. Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, the faculty made the following changes in 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement:

- Made the assignment worth more points
- Added online options for completion,

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025 University Core Competency Assessment Report

- Updated the wording of the assignment,
- Focused on instructor involvement early on.

Based on these changes, in 2024-2025 the target was met. 973/1329 (73%) students completed the assignment, with 367 of those total students (28%) being dual enrollment students.

Decision or Action to drive future improvement. In 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in 2025-2026 academic year:

- Make the assignment worth more points
- Accept more options for acceptable events
- accepting online videos on moodle as opposed to going to live events in performance.

Measure 2.2. Students will attend, review, and analyze a theater event using Standard American English with 70% student participation.

Methodology: Direct Measure—Performance Critiques. By the end of each semester, the student will have completed the theater performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on their participation as a member of the audience for a theatrical performance.

Finding. Target met in the theater performance critique assessment.

Analysis: In 2023-2024 the target was met. 1077 students completed the assignment out of 1311 enrolled in the class, with 366 of those students (28%) being dual enrollment students. The theater performance critique completion percentage was 82%, which exceeded the 70% target number. Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, the faculty made the following changes in 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement:

- Made the assignment worth more points
- Added online options for completion,
- Updated the wording of the assignment,
- Focused on instructor involvement early on.

Based on these changes, in 2024-2025 the target was met. 946/1329 (71%) students completed the assignment, with 367 of those total students (28%) being dual enrollment students.

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025 University Core Competency Assessment Report

Decision or Action to drive future improvement. In 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in 2025-2026 academic year:

- Make the assignment worth more points
- Accept more options for acceptable events
- accepting online videos on moodle as opposed to going to live events in performance.

Measure 2.3. Students will attend, review, and analyze a visual art event using Standard American English with 70% student participation.

Methodology: Direct Measure—Performance Critiques. By the end of each semester, the student will have completed the visual art performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on going to an art gallery.

Finding. Target met in the visual art performance critique assessment.

Analysis: In 2023-2024 the target was met. 1166 students completed the assignment out of 1311 enrolled in the class, with 366 of those students (28%) being dual enrollment students. The visual art performance critique completion percentage was 88%, which exceeded the 70% target number. Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, the faculty made the following changes in 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement:

- Made the assignment worth more points
- Added online options for completion,
- Updated the wording of the assignment,
- Focused on instructor involvement early on.

Based on these changes, in 2024-2025 the target was met. 988/1329 (74%) students completed the assignment, with 367 of those total students (28%) being dual enrollment students.

Decision or Action to drive future improvement. In 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in 2025-2026 academic year:

- Make the assignment worth more points
- Accept more options for acceptable events
- accepting online videos on moodle as opposed to going to live events in performance.

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025 University Core Competency Assessment Report

Measure 2.4. Students will attend, review, and analyze a dance event using Standard American English with 70% student participation.

Methodology: Direct Measure—Performance Critiques. By the end of each semester, the student will have completed the dance performance critique, which is a reflection paper based on their participation as a member of the audience for a dance event or viewing of a pre-approved list of online dance videos/movies.

Finding. Target met in the dance performance critique assessment.

Analysis: In 2023-2024 the target was met. 1054 students completed the assignment out of 1311 enrolled in the class, with 366 of those students (28%) being dual enrollment students. The dance performance critique completion percentage was 80%, which exceeded the 70% target number. Based on the analysis of the 2023-2024 results, the faculty made the following changes in 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement:

- Made the assignment worth more points
- Added online options for completion,
- Updated the wording of the assignment,
- Focused on instructor involvement early on.

Based on these changes, in 2024-2025 the target was met. 930/1329 (70%) students completed the assignment, with 367 of those total students (28%) being dual enrollment students.

Decision or Action to drive future improvement. In 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in 2025-2026 academic year:

- Make the assignment worth more points
- Accept more options for acceptable events
- accepting online videos on moodle as opposed to going to live events in performance.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of improvement based on the analysis of results. The following reflects all the changes implemented to drive the continuous process of seeking improvement in AC 2024-2025. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through the AC 2023-2024 results analysis.

- Faculty were educated on the assessment process and expectations. The objective of each measure was reinforced to ensure understanding to facilitate student learning. This is an ongoing process as there are still sections which do not gather accreditation data.

Assessment Cycle 2024-2025 University Core Competency Assessment Report

- Instructor feedback improved, as more individual critiques were given as opposed to addressing the entire class.
- Adjusted or added course material in the following subjects: aspects of creativity, tips for surviving (Fine Arts) college exams, the “Dies Irae,” martyrs, Humanism, the pre-Raphaelites, Roman mosaics, Greek bronzes, absolute monarchs, Rock Opera, and 20th Century art.
- Faculty focused on increased response rates for assignments of measure 2.2. This indicated that the message received during the instructor meetings led to stronger collection and reporting of data.
- Addressed issues involving end-of-semester and exam weariness.

The consensus among Fine Arts faculty is that we seem to have reached a plateau in our ability to improve our numbers and reach our target. This is a freshman course with a high dropout rate. We will continue to try new strategies to fix this issue.

Plan of Action Moving Forward.

Student achievement of the target for measures 1.1 and 1.2 demonstrates the success of the program regarding our established SLOs that tie directly to the purpose of the Fine Arts core competency.

At the Fine Arts Committee meeting, the agenda included:

- Switching from using growth rate as a measure to a set target number.
- Further training in the administration, collection, evaluation, and reporting of assessment data for both SLOs and all six measures for all faculty teaching FA 1040.
- Establish more realistic targets
- Include more Dual-Enrollment sections in the report
- Include summer school sections to include in the report
- Post-tests will be given as a part of the course grade (the equivalent of a final exam), and the target will change from growth rate to a target number. Changes will reflect the various types of learning going on in the classroom, thereby pushing the improvement of the assessments' results.