Department of Art

Change in Program Requirement Initiative

Re: additional requirement, time-based credits consequently adding three more credit hours to our major from 33 to 36

Rationale:

The Department of Art is proposing to alter its current requirements by adding 3 more credit hours from 33 to 36 for our studio art major. This comes in conjunction with a proposed new requirement: **time-based media** that includes courses video art, performance art and animation. We are adding the extra 3 credit hours to the major because we feel the necessity to maintain the need for our majors to take advanced classes allowing for a brief concentration in a specific area. We didn’t want the time based requirement to take away from that option.

Time-based media arts have developed with a vengeance across the United States in the last 10 years. Our program is currently behind the curve in this regard. We have been teaching media/time-based courses but only as an aside and an all in one course, never as a serious area within the program. Last fall we introduced both video and performance as separate courses. These courses have been extremely successful.

In today’s world of Youtube, Facebook and the Internet, time based media is a critical part of the arts dialogue. Vanderbilt’s Department of Art was one of the few art departments nation-wide without a significant or dedicated time-based instructor. Performance and video art are so much a part of contemporary art’s dialogue that not have these programs would render our program outdated or traditional. Please see the 2008 Whitney Biennial website for a clear indication of the importance of this media:


( the Whitney Biennial is considered the clear indicator of what is being done around the country…)  

These new courses fulfilled our expectations and beyond. In video and performance classes we jumped in enrollment by more than 70 percent in both classes from fall to spring. This is due to the exposure and visiting artists that dealt with these forms of expression, but it is also a true indicator of the great job that Ms. Winger-Bearskin is doing with these courses. This is a substantial enrollment increase and makes the case that when given the option and opportunity, the students will take more experimental, out of the norm courses. This is the first semester we offered straight video art as a course with no other art forms attached and I am happy to report that it is over capacity (
presently 14 enrolled). Performance was offered last semester and it was very difficult to fill as so few students understood it. This semester, thanks to Professor Winger-Bearskin’s effort, we currently have 12 enrolled. This part of our program, time-based art, has been so successful that we, the art faculty, have voted unanimously to make it a requirement for our major. I believe the faculty will support my efforts to make this a tenured/tenure track line at some point in the near future.

These courses relate directly to our pedagogical philosophy. That is to offer a well-rounded blend of traditional and contemporary practices in the field of art. Media arts and time based style performance are, as pointed out, very much a part of contemporary art practice. This is an area that needs to be exposed to our students. Without it we are not fulfilling our pedagogical mission and the students need to be exposed to it in conjunction with 2-D and 3-D requirements.

We have felt the tremendous impact of these classes on our students. As mentioned, we were responding to a much needed area of our curriculum which was not being covered anywhere else. We believe, in a world of contemporary electronic media, at least one time-based media course should be required by all of our majors.

Please let me now if you need more from me. Our goals are strictly for the improvement of our program. These additions to our major are critical to our mission!

Respectfully,

Mel Ziegler
Chair, Department of Art
Program of Concentration in Art

The art major requires 36 hours and presents our students with the opportunity to explore their ideas in a visual language, as well as to learn the technical skills involved in the creation of art. The program offers a wide range of classes and media. Our students are offered a strong grounding in traditional processes such as drawing, painting, and sculpture, as well as the opportunity to explore contemporary processes involving video, digital, and photographic media. Our diverse faculty of artist/educators represents a wide range of teaching styles and aesthetic philosophies. We consider how ideas have been developed through the centuries as well as how specific techniques have been used to enrich the expression of the idea. In addition to modern art history offerings, art majors are encouraged to take courses in pre-Renaissance and/or non-Western art history.

Requirements for the Program of Concentration in Art

Drawing Requirement (6 hours)
- Options: ARTS 102, 202, 203 (Drawing and Composition), or ARTS 205 (Life Drawing)

Studio Requirement (18 hours), which must include at least:
- One 2-D course (Printmaking, Painting, Photography, or Digital) and
- One 3-D course (Sculpture, Assemblage, Ceramics or Installation) and
  * One time-based course (Video, Performance, or Digital Animation)
- Within the 18 hours, students must take at least two 200-level ARTS courses

Related Requirement (9 hours)
- HART 110 or 111 History of Western Art surveys (suggested for entry into 200-level ARTS courses)
- One course from the following: ARTS 180, 285, 288, HART 231,242, FILM 125, 201, PHIL 241, THTR 170,
  * And one additional 200-level History of Art (HART) course.

Directed Study: Senior Show and Contemporary Practices (3 hours)

Only one independent research/study course can be applied toward the major.
Prerequisites are required by some courses in order to ensure proper placement.
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