

Communication Arts Department  
Five-Year Assessment Plan  
2012-2017

Program Mission Statement:

The Department of Communication Arts combines the theoretical foundations and practical applications of human communication, creating a hybrid experience grounded in the liberal arts. In addition to engaging in general approaches to communication theory, critical media, and visual studies, all students are exposed to a wide range of educational methods in both visual production and performance competence. This integrated curriculum gives students an enhanced learning opportunity and a substantial grounding for futures in both the workplace and post-baccalaureate study.

Program Goals and Outcomes: All students in Communication Arts, upon completion of the major, are expected to develop proficiency in each of the following areas:

Communication Theory:

- Understand theories of perception
- Understand concepts of persuasion
- Understand communication theories in relation to media effects research
- Understand communication theories as they pertain to media criticism

Visual Studies:

- Understand iconic concepts in history and design
- Understand iconic concepts in meaning, importance and changes over time
- Understand color palettes
- Understand structures of visual texts

Performance Competence:

- Be able to work dependably with peers and supervisors
- Be able to effectively organize and deliver speech content extemporaneously
- Be able to perform a creative process through successful practice

Writing Competence:

- Understand motion media writing that can inform, influence and emotionally engage
- Develop critical thinking and writing skills
- Be able to synthesize ideas or solutions into a coherent whole
- Be able to apply, in writing, contemporary theories and practices
- Understand an array of creative processes regardless of medium

Visual Production

- Be able to evolve a motion image media piece from concept to completed artifact
- Develop skills in Adobe Photoshop by compositing digital images
- Be able to propose a photo illustration for a news story
- Be able to work cooperatively with others on production projects
- Be able to demonstrate effective use of field technologies

Be able to produce a professional proposal for a web site project  
Assessment Plan Overview:

Throughout the course of AY 2011-2012, the Communication Arts Department prepared the groundwork for a five-year assessment plan to commence in AY 2012-2013. In so doing, the Assessment Office administered a Survey to Juniors and Seniors in Dr. Derrick TePaske's Senior Seminar (COMM 450) class in the Spring of 2012 (April 25th). The Survey sought feedback on students' experiences with the Communication Arts department. The Assessment Office also held two Focus Groups from Dr. Audrey Kali's Persuasion and Social Influence Class (COMM 322) in the Spring of 2012 (May 3rd). Data from the survey and transcriptions of the focus groups were analyzed by the Assessment Office, summary findings reported, and recommendations made. In the Summer of 2013, Department Assessment Liaison, Dr. Audrey Kali, and Department Chair, Dr. Derrick TePaske, will review the Assessment Office's findings and convey suggested adjustments to the Department Faculty in September of 2013.

During each academic year over the next five years, particular Goals will be assessed (as outlined below). In each consequent Summer, data will be analyzed from both indirect and direct assessment protocols and a report written detailing the findings. This report will be delivered to the Department Faculty in the following September and recommendations made for adjustments to the program.

Indirect assessments, such as surveys and focus groups administered by the Office of Assessment, will be ongoing each year and will elicit student feedback on particular areas of program development.

Based on the results of the direct assessments (student artifacts) indirect assessments (surveys and focus groups), the Department Faculty will explore pilot testing Major Senior Portfolios and Exit Interviews in the last two years of the Assessment Initiative.

Five-year Plan:

Year 1:

2012-2013

INDIRECT ASSESSMENT

Focus Group & Survey

DIRECT ASSESSMENT

Fall Assessment: Communication Theory

Spring Assessment: Visual Studies

Summer

Rate, evaluate and analyze data (Indirect & Direct Assessments)

Includes:

Identifying strengths and gaps in both desired and actual student learning

Making recommendations for improvement

Evaluate assessment process

Make recommendations for improvement

Year 2: 2013-2014	Write assessment annual report
	INDIRECT ASSESSMENT Focus Group & Survey
	DIRECT ASSESSMENT Fall Assessment: Performance Competence Spring Assessment: Writing Competence
Summer	Rate, evaluate and analyze data (Indirect & Direct Assessments) Includes: Identifying strengths and gaps in both desired and actual student learning Making recommendations for improvement Evaluate assessment process Make recommendations for improvement Write assessment annual report
Year 3: 2014-2015	INDIRECT ASSESSMENT Focus Group & Survey
	DIRECT ASSESSMENT Fall Assessment: Visual Production Spring Assessment: Internships
Summer	Rate, evaluate and analyze data (Indirect & Direct Assessments) Includes: Identifying strengths and gaps in both desired and actual student learning Making recommendations for improvement Evaluate assessment process Make recommendations for improvement Write assessment annual report
Year 4: 2015-2016	Senior Portfolio Pilot Test
Summer	Rate, evaluate and analyze Senior Portfolio Pilot Test Includes: Identifying strengths and gaps in student performance Making recommendations for improvement Evaluate assessment process Make recommendations for improvement Write assessment annual report

Year 5:  
2016-2017

Exit Interview Pilot Test

Summer

Rate, evaluate and analyze Exit Interview Pilot Test

Includes:

Identifying strengths and gaps in student performance

Making recommendations for improvement

Evaluate assessment process

Make recommendations for improvement

Write assessment annual report

### **Moving Forward:**

Establishing an Assessment Plan necessarily considers an amalgam of what the individual faculty members deem important to student learning, what the students consider worthwhile, what the discipline recommends, and what the particularities of the economic and socio-political climates impose. These variables will be considered as the Department reflects on assessment results each year and makes plans for changes.

For the most part, the Indirect Assessments (Surveys and Focus Groups) will be good, albeit more subjective, barometers of students' perceptions. The Direct Assessments, as evaluated alongside specific rubrics, will clue the faculty into student learning more empirically. By limiting each semester's assessment to a particular goal, the Department can make a more concentrated effort in determining weaknesses in student learning. Upon making the recommended changes to address these weaknesses, the assessment process will be ongoing in order to stay cognizant of learning outcomes through time.