



WESTMONT

Art Department Curriculum Revision Proposal

It has been a long-standing goal of the Department of Art at Westmont College to take a thorough look at our major requirements. The art department has enjoyed great success in its 30-year existence at Westmont, but we have been aware that the curriculum was built one piece at a time, and not in a holistic designed fashion. With the recent appointments of Nathan Huff and Meagan Stirling, now is the time to re-design the curriculum to better bring it to the standards of a vital art department in the 21st century.

Existing art major requirements (53 units)

ART 010 2-D Design
ART 015 Drawing I
ART 115 Drawing II
ART 093 Sophomore Project (1)

One of the following:

ART 040 Ceramics
ART 070 Sculpture
ART 110 Design II

One of the following:

ART 021 Survey of Art: Prehistoric through Gothic
ART 022 Survey of Art: Renaissance through Modern

ART 128 Modern & Contemporary Art
ART 131 Theory and Criticism in the Arts
ART 193 Senior Project (2)
ART 195 Senior Seminar (2)

Studio electives, at least one of which must be upper division (20 units)

Revised art major requirements (57 units, increase of 4 units)—key differences are in bold

ART 010 2-D Design
ART 015 Drawing I
ART 065 Graphic Design
ART 070 3-D Explorations in Sculpture
ART 110 4-D Intermedia
ART 115 Drawing II
ART 093 Sophomore Project (1)

One of the following:

ART 021 Survey of Art: Prehistoric through Gothic
ART 022 Survey of Art: Renaissance through Modern

ART 128 Modern & Contemporary Art
ART 131 Theory and Criticism in the Arts
ART 193 Senior Project (2)
ART 195 Senior Seminar (2)

Studio electives, at least one of which must be upper division (16 units)



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Explanation of revisions/additions:

We are adding one existing course and one new courses to our core Studio Art major requirements, ART 065 Graphic Design and ART 110 4-D Intermedia. We are condensing our three previous 3-D course options into one required and lightly revised course. In order to keep our unit increase modest, we are pulling back our required elective units from 20 to 16. These changes result in a net increase of four additional units to the major.

Benefits of revisions:

Our curriculum revision proposal comes from careful analysis of SNAAP data, our own alumni survey report, and comparisons with art departments of institutions including Gordon, Biola, Azusa Pacific, and Yale. With this data in hand, we made the following conclusions:

- Our current offering of three options for the 3-D aspect of the major is too diluted and does not sufficiently equip students the foundational skills they need. We seek to redefine our existing Sculpture I class as a more holistic introduction to thinking and working three-dimensionally, and move its existing stone sculpture focus to our advanced Sculpture II class. Apart from strengthening the education of our majors, the simplification down to one 3-D required course will ensure better enrollment, and will relieve pressure from the often oversubscribed Ceramics I course, which will now simply be a studio elective.
- All other comparison institutions require a 4-D course, a very contemporary direction in art. This need was part of our thinking as we held our searches for both Nathan and Meagan. We have been consistently advised by our outside guest critics for the Senior Exhibition that this was an area we were sorely lacking. This multi-disciplinary class will encourage student exploration in time based media, performance, and video. Using a variety of materials, techniques, and technologies allows us to engage more fully with historical and contemporary perspectives and to expand personal creative investigations. With both of our new hires holding skills and interests in this area, we are now finally ready to both offer such a course and fold it into our requirements. Having our new ART 110 4-D Intermedia course be a requirement ensures enrollment in what previously (ART 110 Design II) was chronically under-enrolled.
- All other comparison institutions also require some kind of literacy in computer graphics, recognizing that even the traditionally-trained gallery painter still benefits deeply from a solid grasp of digital tools. Being able to color-correct scans of one's artwork, prep images for one's own website, and being able to design basic promotional materials are an essential part of the toolkit for a complete 21st century artist. It also opens up further job market possibilities, as graphic design-related jobs are the greatest supply of employment for working artists today. Our own alumni surveys and recent SNAAP data shows that art students are more successful after college than the stereotype would have it, but almost all art graduates express the need for better preparation for life as self-employed, small-business owners. Having at least the basics of computer literacy is the platform on which one builds websites and personal brands, not to mention a potential design career. Recognizing this information, we have added our entry-level Graphic Design course as a requirement for our majors.



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Possible impact of revisions:

- We foresee no fiscal impact, and no bearing on faculty loads. With the recent reshuffling of roles that happened with first the retirement of John Carlander and then Susan Savage, the schedules of Nathan Huff and Meagan Stirling were designed from the start to allow them to each teach a new elective course of this type. With both of them taking on a section of the new required 4-D Intermedia course, it can be taught every semester and easily meet demand.
- If the art major continues at current levels, we expect that the adjunct staffing for our redefined ART 070 3-D Explorations in Sculpture and our new requirement of ART 065 will be sufficient.

This proposal comes to the Senate with the full and enthusiastic recommendation of the full-time art department faculty members. We believe these simple changes will bring our major fully into the 21st century and enhance the rigor of our curriculum.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Anderson
Department chair