Unit Plan: Description of the Unit

Unit: Art History

Division or Area to Which You Report: Art & Humanities

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(To be read and responded to primarily by Marketing and Outreach, and used for public relations, posted on department pages by webmaster, and used in catalog or brochures. About one paragraph and an image or picture. Should include unit’s mission statement. Description will roll over each year with updates as needed.)

By all indications, the Art History Unit is flourishing at Chabot. Several of these indicators will be discussed below, including unit growth, unit development, enrollment, student evaluations, transfer success, adjunct instruction, and contribution to the college.

Unit Growth
When I first arrived at Chabot, the college offered three art history courses. I have increased that number to eight. Because the program has grown so significantly and offers such unique opportunities for students, I changed my unit’s rubric last year. In the future, the discipline of Art History will not fall under the rubric of ART but will stand alone as ARTH. This will give the unit the separate identity it deserves, allow for further growth into discipline areas not being pursued by LPC (such as the Museum and Gallery Practice Program), and separate it from studio art, a unit with which it actually has little in common.

Unit Development
Last year I added a “Twentieth-Century Art” lecture course to the unit. As a fully-transferable and IGETC-status course it will serve all students, but is intended to serve our art students in particular. Studio majors must have a solid grounding in recent art history, but our students were not getting such grounding with the previous only-up-to-modern survey. Twentieth-Century Art, along with the History of Photography course added a few years back, fills gaps once present in the unit. In a future curriculum cycle I intend to add a non-western art history course, and eventually I want to add a course on art by women.

The two newest gallery studies courses to my unit, Art Gallery Apprenticeship and Art Gallery Practicum have been successful in helping me create a full gallery studies program: the Museum and Gallery Practice Program. This gives Chabot students the opportunity to study, in depth, a subject offered nowhere else in the CCC. In addition, as a result of my program, the campus art gallery is able to more thoroughly fulfill its function as a hands-on laboratory for students, and the college and community will continue to benefit from the exhibitions displayed. Students benefit not only from the experience itself, but the fact that they can parlay that experience into careers and internships in local arts organizations. My students have had many successes. Top successes of the past year are Helene Ridella, who is now an art history major at UC Berkeley and studying theories of folk art displays in museums; Marcess Owings, who is serving as a curatorial intern at the Hayward Area Historical Society, and Raquel Iglesias and Jose Ferreira, both of whom will begin serving as docents at the historical McConaghy house here in Hayward.

Enrollment
Enrollments are huge in the Art Appreciation (ART 1) and Art History lecture courses (ART 4, 5, 67), especially the “basic skills” ART 1 course. At this point I am able to fill two combined sections of ART 1 (100 students each) every semester. At the same time, attrition in these courses (at least the sections I teach) is extremely low. The lecture/survey courses I offer
invariably draw enough students to qualify for large lecture status, again with low attrition. By taking on a hundred or more students (beyond max capacity) every semester, I am balancing the necessarily smaller class sizes in the gallery program. Gallery program enrollments are low both due to necessity (they are hands-on, lab oriented classes) and also because they are not transferable (the keystone class in the program, Museum Studies, is the equivalent of an upper division, not lower division, class in the UC system).

**Student Evaluations**
Because I teach several large lecture sections each semester, I circulate student evaluation forms frequently. My evaluations are consistently positive. Students are fond of the discipline, and they are fond of my style of instruction, which includes lecture, activities, class presentations, museum visits, and group work.

**Transfer Success**
I have inspired a number of students to choose art history as their major. I write approximately twenty-five letters of recommendation per year, and about half of those are for students who are applying to transfer to art history programs specifically. I have had students accepted at CSUEB, Davis, CSUSF, Cal and Stanford. I am most proud of my Cal transfers, because the art history program there was recently ranked number one in the entire country.

**Adjunct Instruction**
The quality of my unit is a top priority for me, and I work diligently to ensure that art history students have excellent instruction available to them. To this end I seek out only the most qualified and dedicated adjuncts. I strongly advocate only the hiring of art historians to teach art history courses, not studio art instructors, because the differences between art history and studio art are vast. One side effect of hiring the best art history adjuncts available is that they aren't always here for the long term—they are often hired elsewhere. Still, putting the best talent in the classroom is the right thing for students. I also make sure that my adjuncts are treated with warm respect, and support. My last adjunct, Candace Huey, was hired full-time by the Academy of Art University in San Francisco. Still, she has chosen to continue teaching for Chabot, even with a full schedule at the Academy, because she loves how she has been treated here. This same is not true, unfortunately, of the adjunct hired to replace Candace. Because of campus reconstruction, and the loss of the lecture hall in 916, Carrie McDade, myself, and other lecturers in the Arts and Humanities area were given the Little Theater to use as a classroom. This space is not conducive to art history lectures. Lighting, theater props, lack of adequate technology and a host of problems befell us all last semester. By mid-semester, Carrie McDade informed me she would not return to teach at Chabot again.

**Contribution to the College**
The Art History unit makes in largest contribution to the college through the Chabot Art Gallery, which originated and is maintained by me, the campus art historian. As of April 3rd of this year, my students and I will have mounted ten art exhibits in the gallery. These have been enjoyed by thousands of students, faculty, staff, and members of our public who would otherwise not have traveled to our campus. The Chabot Art Gallery and its gallery program graduates are the pride of the college.

The Gallery and Museum Practice Program was nominated by this year’s Faculty Senate to represent Chabot’s “most innovative” program in career technical education.