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Setting a Policy for AP[®] Art History

The purpose of this guide is to provide college faculty and administrators with research data, participation and performance data of AP[®] Art History students, curricular content, and sample exam questions to facilitate the establishment of appropriate credit and placement policies for AP Art History.

The Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP) provides motivated students with the opportunity to take college-level courses while still in high school. Students demonstrate their mastery of the curriculum by taking AP Exams—35 exams are available in 20 subject areas. In 2005, more than 1.2 million students took AP Exams worldwide. Of the 2.1 million AP Exams taken in 2005, about 17,000 were in Art History. More than 3,000 colleges and universities, including many international institutions, accept qualifying AP Exam scores for credit, placement, or both.

Throughout its 50-year history, the AP Program has maintained high standards of rigor in its courses and exams. Since its inception, AP has been a respected force in American education due to the critical involvement of college and university faculty members.

Art History Faculty Involvement in AP

College and university faculty members play a vital role in every stage of development of an AP course and exam, helping to ensure their high quality. Each AP discipline has its own Development Committee—composed of college and university professors and experienced AP teachers—that is responsible for creating the course guidelines and exam questions. College and university faculty members also serve as the Chief Readers, responsible for establishing the exam-scoring guidelines and overseeing the annual AP Reading of the free-response section for their academic discipline.

“The AP Examinations in Art History are rigorous, thorough, and comprehensive. They set a high standard for the teaching of art history both for schools and, by implication, for colleges and universities.”

—Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, AP Art History Development Committee Chair
Princeton University

AP Art History Exam Readers

College faculty and AP teachers in art history join together each June to read and score the essays on the AP Art History Exam. Listed below are some of these individuals, along with a citation of a recent publication or other scholarly achievement by each Reader.

Susan Aberth, Bard College

Leonora Carrington: Surrealism, Alchemy and Art. Lund Humphries, 2004.

Mark J. Aeschliman, The American School in Switzerland

One-Person Exhibition of large works, Bryn Mawr College Library, PA. October–December, 2004.

Susan Bakewell, University of Texas at Arlington

A History of Visual Culture: Western Civilization from the 18th to the 21st Century, ed. Jane Kromm and Susan Bakewell. Berg Publishers, 2006.

Kate Bonansinga, University of Texas

"Sook Jin Jo: Collaborative Public Art, Sculpture and Drawings 1994-2004," and "Hanging in Balance: 42 Contemporary Necklaces," curator and author of catalogue. Stanlee and Gerald Rubin Center for the Visual Arts, University of Texas, 2004.

Jacqueline Chanda, University of North Texas

"Learning About Culture through Visual Signs." In *Semiotics and Art Education: Sights, Signs, and Significance*, ed. Deborah Smith-Shank. National Art Education Association, 2004.

Gwen F. Chanzit, University of Denver

From Bauhaus to Aspen: Herbert Bayer and Modernist Design in America. Johnson Books and the Denver Art Museum, 2005.

Valerie Eggemeyer, Casper College

"Manipulation of the family photo album: A commentary on Esther Parada's Transplant, A Tale of Three Continents." *Art Education Journal*, March 2004.

Lisa Farrington, Parsons School of Art and Design

Creating Their Own Image: The History of African-American Women Artists. Oxford University Press, 2005.

Mary F. Francey, Utah Museum of Fine Arts, University of Utah

American Art: Challenging Traditional Interpretations. Lorraine Press, 2003.

Wells Gray, Mercersburg Academy

Exhibit "CUP," University of Miami, FL, October 5–31, 2004.

Frima Fox Hofrichter, Pratt Institute

A Basic History of Art, ed. H.W. Janson and Anthony F. Janson, with Andrew Stewart, Frima Fox Hofrichter, and Joseph Jacobs. Prentice-Hall, 2005.

Soo Y. Kang, Chicago State University

Rouault in Perspective: Contextual and Theoretical Study of His Art. University Press of America, 2000.

Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Princeton University

Toward a Geography of Art. University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Yu Bong Ko, Tappan Zee High School

"Accessing and Integrating Digital Images in Teaching AP Art History." In *Art History Teacher's Guide*, College Board, 2003.

Jane Kromm, SUNY-Purchase

The Art of Frenzy: Public Madness in the Visual Culture of Europe, 1500–1850. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003.

William R. Levin, Centre College

The Allegory of Mercy at the Misericordia in Florence: Historiography, Context, Iconography, and the Documentation of Confraternal Charity in the Trecento. University Press of America, 2004.

Elizabeth Lipsmeyer, Old Dominion University

"Devotion and Decorum: Intention and Quality in Medieval German Sculpture." *Gesta* (34:1), 1995.

Kimberly Masteller, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University

From Mind, Heart, and Hand: Persian, Turkish, and Indian Drawings from the Stuart Cary Welch Collection. Yale University Press, 2004.

Heather McPherson, University of Alabama at Birmingham

The Modern Portrait in Nineteenth-Century France. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, Vassar College

The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy. Yale University Press, 1999.

Robert Nauman, University of Colorado at Boulder

On the Wings of Modernism: The United States Air Force Academy. University of Illinois Press, 2004.

John B. Nici, Lawrence High School

Advanced Art History. Teaching Point, 2004.

Elizabeth Pilliod, Rutgers University Camden

Pontorno, Bronzino, Allori: A Genealogy of Florentine Art. Yale University Press, 2001.

Barbara P. Putnam, St. Mark's School

Visiting artist, lecture and exhibition at Tyler School of Art, Temple University. March 2005.

Patricia Rosoff, Kingswood-Oxford School

The Innocent Eye. Tupelo Press, forthcoming 2006.

Carey Rote, Texas A & M University-Corpus Christi

Cesar Martinez: A Retrospective. University of Texas Press in Conjunction with the McNay Art Institute, San Antonio, TX, 1999.

Amy Schwartzott, Canisius College

"Obsolete Objects or Repatriation of Cultural Traditions: Contemporary Iroquois Women Artists and the Iconography of Beadwork." In *Working from Community: American Indian Art and Literature in a Historical and Cultural Context*, ed. Gail Tremblay. National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute, forthcoming.

Nada M. Shabout, University of North Texas

"The Forgotten Era: Modern Art in Iraq." *CAA News* (30:1), January 2005.

Joy Sperling, Denison University

Famous Works of Art in Popular Culture. Greenwood Press, 2003.

Margaret Zielinski-Spinner, Stamford High School

Organizer for Mini Masterpiece Art Exhibit. Stamford, CT, since 2001.

“The first year I read AP Art History Exams I wondered why on earth I had signed up to spend a week grading papers. Now, several years later, I can’t imagine starting my summer without the AP Reading. I have come to realize many important benefits to AP Art History, but to the Reading particularly there are three: First, there is the benefit of knowing that you are doing something for the field of art history. As you read exams you literally shape and ensure standards in high school art history education. The more and the better trained art history students are at the high school level, the faster and easier they will be to teach at the college level. Second, as a Reader there is the benefit of working with a community of other Readers whose scholarly interests in art history are both deep and diverse, and who are open and willing

to share ideas, opinions, and advice. Many of the professional friendships that I have seen develop at the Readings have led to visits and professional papers, as well as all kinds of collaborations on exhibitions, articles, and even books. Third, the most important benefit as a Reader is the privilege of reading the essays of so many dedicated, hardworking, and talented young high school students, some of whom have ideas and insights that remain with you for years after you read their papers. Although the work is often tiring, it is also refreshing. What better way to start your summer than to be impressed and inspired by the work of some of our best high school students, some of whom might be sitting in your classroom in the fall.”

—Joy Sperling, AP Art History Chief Reader
Denison University

How to Set an AP Policy

The College Board encourages higher education institutions to base their AP policy decisions on data and research, and recognizes that different institutions and departments will set different policies, based upon factors unique to their institution, student body, and academic discipline. The best way for colleges and universities to determine their AP credit and placement policies is to conduct their own research on the performance of AP and non-AP students at their own institution and in their own department.

Research on AP Art History Student Performance

Research studies show that students who do well on an AP Exam are academically prepared to place out of a corresponding college course and move on to the next higher-level course in the discipline.

[Taking the AP course and exam stimulates further interest in the subject area and encourages deeper disciplinary knowledge.](#)

Research studies show that students who take the AP Art History Exam are significantly more likely to take further course work in art history than students who do not take the AP Exam. See Table 1 for data from this research study.

Table 1: Additional College Art History Course Work AP Students Versus Non-AP Students

	AP EXAM GRADE	PERCENT TAKING ADDITIONAL ART HISTORY COURSES	AVERAGE NUMBER OF COLLEGE ART HISTORY COURSES
AP Art History Students	AP 5	43	1.9
	AP 4	46	1.3
	AP 3	44	1.5
Non-AP Students	Non-AP	23	0.5

PDF copies of this research and other research studies can be found at apcentral.collegeboard.com/colleges/research.

In addition to research studies on AP student performance, the College Board conducts college comparability studies to measure the degree to which the AP courses and exams are equivalent in content and difficulty to corresponding college courses. The AP Exam scoring rubric is established so that the lowest composite score that earns an AP grade of 5 is equivalent to the average score earned by college students who received grades of A in a comparable course. The lowest score that earns an AP grade of 4 is equivalent to the average B, and the lowest score that earns an AP grade of 3 is equivalent to the average C.

The research that the College Board conducts is intended to help institutions and academic departments as they establish appropriate AP policies. AP Central® (apcentral.collegeboard.com), the College Board's online home for AP professionals, contains other resources that may assist in this process, including the Course Description, released exam questions, and sample student responses at different levels of ability.

For more information go to:
apcentral.collegeboard.com/arthistory/exam

AP Credit Policy Info on the Web

Information about AP credit and placement policies at more than 1,000 colleges and universities is available on the College Board's Web site at www.collegeboard.com/ap/creditpolicy.

AP Art History Students, Course, and Exam

Participation and Performance Data for AP Art History Students in 2005

Total Number of Schools Offering AP Art History: 1,230

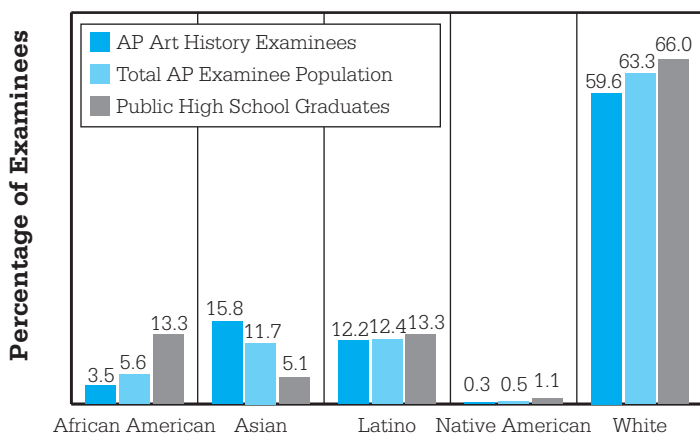
Table 2: AP Art History Exam Score Distribution, 2005

EXAM GRADE	NUMBER OF EXAMINEES	% AT
Score of 5	2,323	13.8%
Score of 4	4,237	25.2%
Score of 3	5,105	30.4%
Score of 2	2,951	17.6%
Score of 1	2,169	12.9%
	16,785	100.0%

Figure 1: AP Art History Examinees by Gender, 2005



Figure 2: AP Art History Examinees by Race and Ethnicity, 2005



The AP Art History Course

The AP offering in Art History is designed to provide the same benefits to secondary school students as those provided by an introductory college course in art history: an understanding and knowledge of architecture, sculpture, painting, and other art forms within diverse historical and cultural contexts. In the course, students examine and critically analyze major forms of artistic expression from the past and the present from a variety of cultures. Although visual analysis is the fundamental tool of the art historian, art history also emphasizes understanding works in context, considering such issues as patronage, gender, and the functions and effects of works of art. Teachers are encouraged to include in their courses the direct study of original works of art in local collections.

The Development Committee creates the guidelines for the AP Art History course and designs the AP Exam. Periodically the Development Committee conducts curriculum surveys, sent to professors who teach the comparable college-level course, that help ensure that the AP Art History course remains current with concepts and themes as taught in college and university classrooms.

College courses generally cover the various art media in the following proportions: 40–50 percent painting and drawing, 25 percent architecture, 25 percent sculpture, and 5–10 percent other media. The following content table reflects other results of the most recent college surveys, showing the content areas generally covered in these college courses and a percentage range of course time devoted to each content area. The AP Art History course is designed to cover the various art media and these same topics in the same proportion and depth as introductory art history courses at the college level.

CONTENT	APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE	
I. Ancient Through Medieval		30%
A. Greece and Rome	10–15%	
B. Early Christian, Byzantine, Early Medieval	5–10%	
C. Romanesque	3–7%	
D. Gothic	7–10%	
II. Beyond European Artistic Traditions		20%
Africa (including Egypt); the Americas; Asia; Near East, Oceania, and global Islamic tradition		
III. Renaissance to Present		50%
A. Fourteenth Through Sixteenth Centuries	12–17%	
B. Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries	10–15%	
C. Nineteenth Century	10–15%	
D. Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries	10–15%	

Beginning in fall 2006, AP Art History teachers and principals of schools where AP Art History is taught must certify that their 2007-08 courses follow all the requirements stipulated by the Development Committee, including using a college-level textbook, in order to ensure that the AP course reflects college-level standards. By completing this AP Course Audit, high schools will receive individual licenses to label their art history courses “AP.” In fall 2007, colleges and universities will receive a list of all high schools authorized to use the “AP” designation for their art history courses.

The AP Art History Exam

The AP Art History Exam consists of a multiple-choice and a free-response essay section. The multiple-choice section includes 115 questions to be answered in 60 minutes and constitutes 40 percent of the total grade. This section is designed to test the student’s knowledge of art history, such as basic information about artists, schools, and movements; chronological periods and significant dates; cross-currents among artistic traditions; and the subjects, styles, and techniques of particular works of art. A significant portion of these questions are correlated to slides of art viewed by students during the exam administration and to black-and-white illustrations reproduced in their individual exam booklets.

The free-response section consists of two long essay questions, each to be completed in 30 minutes, and seven short essay questions, each to be completed in 5 or 10 minutes. One of the long essays requires students to incorporate examples from different cultures, at least one of which must be beyond the European tradition, in their response. The two long essay questions constitute 25 percent of the total grade and the seven short essays, 35 percent. The free-response essays allow the student to demonstrate his or her knowledge of style, iconography, materials and, importantly, the relationship between the work of art and the historical context in which it was created. Specific identification or attribution of the works is sometimes required. Most questions, however, focus on the student’s ability to apply knowledge to both familiar and unfamiliar works and primary-source documents.

In both the multiple-choice and long and short essay questions, the AP Art History Exam reflects the proportional distribution of art media and chronological periods taught in the course. Additionally, the exam contains an increasing number of questions and essays that exemplify the increasing emphasis in the discipline of art history on understanding a work of art in its historical context, including such issues as politics, religion, patronage, gender, function, and ethnicity, alongside formal stylistic observations.

AP Art History free-response questions from recent exam years are listed below.

Question 1

A slide image of Mary Cassatt’s *The Letter*, 1891, is displayed while students answer the following question:

The following statement, made by Mary Cassatt in 1904, refers to her 1879 collaboration with the artistic group with which she is most closely associated.

“Our . . . exhibition . . . was a protest against official exhibitions and not a grouping of artists with the same tendencies. . . .”

To which group of artists does Cassatt’s remark pertain? Referring to the Cassatt work shown and a work by one other artist in this group, defend her claim that these artists did not have the same stylistic tendencies. (5 minutes)

Question 2

A slide image of Eugène Delacroix’s *The Barque of Dante and Virgil* is displayed while students answer the following question:

The slide shown is Delacroix’s *The Barque of Dante and Virgil*, exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1822. The following text is an excerpt from a contemporary review of that exhibition.

“No painting in my opinion better reveals the future of a great painter than that of Delacroix depicting the ‘Barque of Dante and Virgil’. . . The brush stroke is large and firm, the color simple and vigorous although a bit raw. The artist has . . . artistic imagination that one might call imaginative draughtmanship. . . . He disperses his figures, groups them, gathers them at will with the boldness of Michelangelo and the richness of Rubens. I find in it savage strength, ardent but natural, which gives way without effort to its own momentum.”

With what art historical movement is the work of this artist commonly associated? Discuss ways in which the critic’s response to Delacroix’s picture relates to artistic concerns and trends of the period. Be sure to refer to both the slide and text in your answer. (10 minutes)

Question 3

Slide images of the Purse Cover from the Sutton-Hoo Ship Burial, c. 625-33 C.E., and of the Cross Page from the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, c. 700 C.E., are displayed while students answer the following question:

Identify the culture or style of the manuscript page on the right. Discuss the art historical relationship between the two works shown. (10 minutes)

Question 4

Slide images of the Arch of Constantine, 312-15 C.E., and of the west façade of Sant'Andrea, Mantua, c. 1470, by Leon Battista Alberti are displayed while students answer the following question:

The architect of the building shown on the right is Leon Battista Alberti. Name the period of the building on the right. How and why did Alberti adapt elements of the work on the left? (10 minutes)

Question 5

Slide images of the west portal of Cathedral of Saint-Lazare, Autun, c. 1120-35 and a detail of Gislebertus' *Last Judgment* from the tympanum are displayed while students answer the following question:

The slide on the left shows a portal with a tympanum representing the Last Judgment. The slide on the right shows a detail of that portal. Name the art historical period of the portal. Discuss the relationship between the placement of the tympanum and its iconography. (5 minutes)

Question 6

No slides are displayed; students must choose and discuss their own examples.

How a culture is perceived is often expressed in depictions of the human figure. Choose two specific representations of the human body from different cultures. Only one of your choices may be from a European artistic tradition. Discuss significant aspects of each culture that are revealed by the way in which the human body is depicted. (30 minutes)

Question 7

No slides are displayed; students must choose and discuss their own examples.

The relationship between an artist or architect and a patron very often shapes the form and content of a work of art or architecture. Identify two works, each from a different art historical period, and name the specific persons who commissioned them. Discuss how the specific interests and intentions of the particular patrons are revealed in each work. (30 minutes)

Question 8

No slides are displayed; students must choose and discuss their own examples.

Most cultures have made use of art's narrative function. Select and fully identify two works of art that visually convey a narrative. At least one of your choices must be from beyond the European tradition. Identify the subject of each narrative and discuss the means used to convey the narrative. (30 minutes)

Question 9

No slides are displayed; students must choose and discuss their own examples.

Frequently in the history of art, artists and architects have challenged established traditions. Select and fully identify two works that challenged established traditions. One example must have been produced before 1800 C.E. Discuss how and why each work constituted a significant challenge to accepted artistic conventions of its time. (30 minutes)

How to Get Involved

There are many ways college and university faculty members can help maintain the high standards of the AP Program:

- Participate in a college comparability study
- Be an AP Reader
- Contribute multiple-choice test items for the AP Exam
- Become an AP Faculty Consultant

For more information, please go to: apcentral.collegeboard.com/highered/getinvolved

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The College Board: Connecting Students to College Success

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 5,000 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves seven million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT®, the PSAT/NMSQT®, and the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®). The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns. For further information, visit www.collegeboard.com.