

University of Hawai'i School of Communications
2014 Assessment Panel Report
Media Arts Track

November 2014

The Media Arts track is one of three tracks in the Communications B.A. program, which has seven Student Learning Outcomes. That track has two capstone classes: COM 476 Capstone in Digital Cinema Production, and COM 477: Capstone in Interactive Multimedia.

An assessment instrument that was created in 2012 has been applied to the Media Arts track for this report. It was used previously in two assessments after revisions — Communication and Communities track (2013) and ICTs & Policy track (2013). In the capstone, students are asked to create a portfolio of their work that demonstrates the Communications B.A. program Student Learning Outcomes. In the ICTs assessment, for example, students selected examples of their work from ICT classes, such as COM 330, and COM 432 as well as non-ICT-focused classes, such as COM 320 (Communication and Communities) and COM 340 (Intercultural Communication). Students are also required to create a major project to demonstrate mastery of the curriculum.

This is an assessment of how closely the capstone projects and portfolios align with the current student learning outcomes of the COM B.A. program. For the Multimedia capstone class, students selected projects that they felt met the SLOs from a variety of classes they took in the COM program, including those in their track, and presented them as individual Acrobat files. They also included their final capstone project.

For the Digital Cinema Production capstone class, the professor selected class projects to demonstrate alignment with the SLOs while showing mastery of their field and presented those as a video. A sample of capstone major projects demonstrating the SLOS were provided as well as DVDs of all student projects. Members of the assessment team randomly sampled projects in both capstones, totaling 15 projects.

The assessment panel consisted of two professors outside of the track, the department chair and an industry professional who is also an adjunct lecturer in the School.

The 2014 Panel

Professor Ann Auman is chairman of the School of Communications and teaches journalism and media ethics (COM & JOUR)

Assistant Professor Francis Dalisay teaches Communication theory, methods and capstone in the Communication and Communities track.

Assistant Professor Brett Oppegaard teaches multimedia journalism courses.

Chris Vandercook is an adjunct professor and teaches video journalism. He is co-host of Hawaii Public Radio's The Conversation and previously worked in television.

Consultant & adjunct

Professor Robert Hochstein is TVPRO program coordinator, Professional Arts and Technology department, Leeward Community College. He's also an adjunct in the Media Arts sequence, and provided some feedback for this assessment. He will be teaching the capstone class (COM 476) in spring 2015.

Capstone leaders:

Assistant Professor Patricia Buskirk, MFA, anchors the multimedia sequence and teaches the COM 477: Capstone in Interactive Multimedia

Associate Professor Marc Moody, MFA, anchors the film and digital cinema track and teaches COM 476: Capstone in Digital Cinema Production.

Feedback on SLOs and Assessment Process

This section gives examples of student projects that align with the B.A. program SLOs, and it provides feedback on the assessment process as well.

SLO1

Design communication and media projects to make meaningful contributions to diverse social, professional or academic communities, communicating effectively orally, in writing, and through digital media.

Our assessment revealed that students were meeting this SLO. This was evident among the videos produced, which we evaluated as being “exemplary.” A number of the videos we viewed also employed various “cutting-edge” production techniques, such as the use of sophisticated computer-generated graphics. In addition, several of the artifacts we assessed included self-created Web sites that incorporated a variety of multi-media elements (e.g., videos, still photographs) meeting standard conventions.

Examples: Artifacts included projects from courses in the Media Arts track, including Com 337: Techniques in Multimedia (a Web site for a fictitious non-profit organization; a final written multimedia concept proposal), projects from the multimedia capstone class, projects from the digital cinema production capstone class, and projects from our department’s public relations tactics class (e.g., campaign plans).

Four projects were “very good.” Two others were marginal and several had challenges with writing skills.

Examples: An example from a course from the digital cinema production track was a video featuring a performance interpretation of a song. Included from other courses were: a project on public libraries and the digital divide in Hawaii, an analysis of Facebook’s cultural impact, and an analysis of non-verbal deception in online contexts.

Most met the SLOs with “strong” projects, and as one assessment panel member noted, students “showed an excellent understanding of project goals and communication tools.”

SLO2

Reflect critically on communication products such as media productions, research and policy reports and everyday texts.

It is clear from the artifacts that we assessed that students were meeting this SLO.

Examples: An artifact meeting this SLO included a sound analysis for a movie (produced from the COM 310 course). Several artifacts were also acquired from

other courses outside of the Media Arts track, such as a comparative media assignment that analyzed and compared the coverage and effects of international newspapers, which was produced from the Media Ethics class.

SLO3 Demonstrate preparedness for academic and professional careers in communication.

All eight video projects from COM 476 met this SLO as well as several from COM 477.

Examples: Some students provided samples produced from their internships (e.g., photographs), or reflections of their internship experiences (e.g., one student wrote a paper about her experiences working in a Japanese public relations firm). As required, several students included artifacts from courses outside of the Media Arts track. For example, one student included detailed field notes produced from a participant observation project for the Communication Inquiry class (COM 401).

There was a relatively strong fit with this SLO, with four projects “very good.” Two others were marginal and several had challenges with writing skills.

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SLO4

Demonstrate global awareness, including an awareness of cultures in the Hawaii-Pacific region and issues related to cross-cultural communication.

Projects showed a strong alignment with SLO 5.

Examples: One artifact included a video that featured the cultural phenomenon of stand-up paddle boarding in Hawai’i. This artifact was a project from a class in digital cinema production. Other artifacts came from courses such as the COM 438 Telecommunications in the Pacific Hemisphere class (e.g., an analysis of the technological infrastructure for a particular foreign country); and a service-learning project from COM 320, which allowed students to work with the Kumoloa Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to the preservation of Hawaiian culture.

SLO5

Engage in collaborative problem-solving, both face-to-face and in online environments.

Our assessment revealed that the students were meeting this SLO. Indeed, collaborative problem-solving and the ability to work in teams are prerequisites for completing cinematic productions and multi-media projects.

Examples: A number of the artifacts were of cinematic productions containing shots and sequences that could not be produced by a single individual. Many videos used multiple actors and actresses. One particular video featured a choreographic sequence that included about 10 dancers. Other videos, notably, the ones from the multi-media capstone course, incorporated interviews with several individuals. In order to successfully work and manage these individuals, one needs to possess the ability to solve problems collaboratively and to work in teams.

There was a strong alignment with this SLO.

SLO6

Analyze the ethical dimensions of communication.

There was a strong alignment with this SLO.

Examples: Several artifacts were produced from courses outside of the Media Arts track. For example, one artifact was an analysis of the effect of communication technologies on message comprehension produced in a Mediated Interpersonal Communication class. Another artifact, which analyzed the cognitive effects of social media, came from the Media Effects class. Another artifact was an analysis of online activism during the Arab Spring protests, which came from the COM 330 class.

SLO7

Critically evaluate the use of technology in communication.

Projects demonstrated a strong alignment with this SLO.

Examples: Several artifacts were from courses outside of the Media Arts track. These included artifacts from the ICT track, such as a critical evaluation of the use of technology — a mobile ethnography that involved at least one hour of field research with direct observations of how people use mobile technologies; and a synthesis of the historical development of digital video technologies.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

From a sampling of student portfolios, we found several high-quality examples of all of the departmental SLOs being met, at proficient or exceptional levels. There were also projects that marginally met some of the SLOs. The assessment process generated several discussion prompts and questions about the role of the capstone and the process, which we recommend as topics of future discussion.

Recommendations:

1. Articulate the role of the capstone in the COM program and each capstone's learning outcomes.
2. Evaluate and clarify the assessment process in the context of the B.A. program SLOs. In addition to evaluating the COM B.A., should the assessors also give feedback on the track, the role of the capstone, and the students' ability to gather artifacts and determine whether they align with the SLOs?
3. Clarify the value to students of the creation of a portfolio for program assessment purposes in terms of the time they spend on it vs time spent on a major project; include the collection of artifacts and portfolio creation at the beginning of their program or as part of advising. Should the burden be on students to determine how their projects meet the program SLOs? Are they trained in what "Student Learning Outcomes" are?
4. Clarify the role of the Capstones and portfolio in the B.A. Program. Create track-specific SLOs and increase course requirements for the Media Arts capstone classes. Currently only COM 331 or COM 337 are prerequisites for the Media Arts capstone, which is not adequate preparation for the final project in these capstones.
5. Put more emphasis on the major project as a demonstration of their mastery of SLOs of their track, which could also be articulated.

Details are included in a separate report for internal use only.