**IAI GECC Fine Arts Panel**
Course Approval Criteria
Created Fall 2026

An institutionally approved representative syllabus in electronic format is required by the panel for its review. Institutions should submit an actual and recent instructor syllabus which is not more than three years old. If the course is yet to be taught, a sample syllabus intended for future students is still required.

## The representative course syllabus and any additional submission materials must include:

- **Institution Name**
- **Course prefix, number, and title**
- **Course description:** Including the full catalog course description is required. The course description should compare favorably with the proposed IAI course description.
- **Number of credit hours**: For combined lecture and lab/studio courses, please include lecture credit hours, lab/studio credit hours as well as contact hours for lecture and lab/studio components. Indicate if these are semester or quarter hours.
- **Prerequisites and co-requisites**: If prerequisites are required for a course, it is preferred that the course prefix, course number, course name, and when IAI approved, the IAI code, are included in the submitted syllabus. Important note: as a rule, general education (GECC) courses in IAI should not have prerequisites. There are a few exceptions to this rule for sequences such as written composition and calculus; see panel specific information. Major courses may have prerequisites as appropriate. Co-requisite courses should show the credit hour breakdown between the two courses.
- **Textbooks, additional readings, additional course materials**: Please note if different resources are required for different delivery modes. Course materials should reflect content outcomes and requirements, and should be recently produced. For published texts, please include author, title, edition, date of publication, publisher, and the ISBN. If the course utilizes online or OER materials, please include an active hyperlink; hyperlinks cannot be embedded in the LMS nor be blocked by a password because the panel needs to have full access to the resource.
- **Delivery mode**: traditional/nontraditional, in-person/online/hybrid, etc.
- **Course Objectives**: The course objectives should clearly support the course description.
- **Assignment descriptions**: Please include a detailed description of assignments, readings, projects, etc. Assignment details should be clearly evident and referenced, and show connection to the course learning objectives. Assignments should demonstrate the rigor and scope of the course.
- **Methods of evaluating student learning**: The syllabus should state clearly how learning outcomes will be assessed, such as through objective/subjective examinations, quizzes, written assignments, oral presentations, projects, etc.
- **Grading scale and assignment weighting:** Please provide a grading scale and indicate the relative weight of assignments or evaluation categories (e.g., exams, essays, projects, etc.).
- **Detailed course outline, daily/weekly/hourly schedule**: A detailed topical outline and weekly schedule that ***goes beyond chapter numbers and titles from a textbook*** ***(or select readings)*** must be included and it should provide specific details of topics being presented in class. This may include assignments, readings, projects, etc. as appropriate. This could be done using a few bullet points or a couple of sentences. This level of detail is also appropriate for the lab/studio outline in courses that contain a lab or studio component. The lab/studio outline should include similar information but also detail the tools, materials, equipment, and instruments being used and the outcomes or topics that the students will be exploring.

## General Coding Practice:

A course can only be assigned to one IAI code/description per panel. Institutions should be clear and careful in determining which IAI code is identified for any syllabus submitted for approval. The institution should also ensure that the course meets the minimum semester credit hour requirement included with the IAI course description.

A student may "count" only one course per code in fulfilling transfer requirements, even though an institution may assign more than one course to a code. In some cases, however, students at schools on a quarter calendar may need to complete two courses to equate to a one-semester course. An equivalency in this circumstance would be three quarter-credits equals two semester credit hours and five quarter-credits equal three semester credit hours.

## Panel Specific Requirements:

Note: Explanation of writing component within course content. Successful completion of formal writing assignments is necessary for successful completion of the course. This must be reflected in the grading scale. (See Writing Requirements section below.)

Note: If this course has a prerequisite that has not been approved for inclusion in the IAI GECC, please provide complete catalog copy for that course.

Note: Because critical thinking, investigation, and reflection are necessary to the study fine arts, these processes--as embodied in writing (essays and essay examinations) -- are a significant component of fine arts courses.

Note: The assignment or evaluation categories grade weighting information provides both a sense of the scope and rigor of the course, as well as aiding the panel's evaluation of writing as an integral component of the course.

### Prerequisites

- The panel does not generally accept courses with prerequisites, with the following exceptions:
  - If the course is the second in a two-course sequence, the panel will accept the first course in the sequence as a prerequisite.
  - If the course prerequisite is all or part of the General Education Core Curriculum writing sequence (i.e. C1 900/R and C1 901/R) because all fine arts courses require writing.
- Multiple prerequisites that indicate a course is an advanced course are unacceptable.
- Courses or prerequisites that are restricted only to majors are unacceptable.

### Student Learning Outcomes

- Outcome information may provide evidence of the content and rigor of the course. Evaluation methods should be directly tied to the student learning outcomes.

### Assignments

- Information on the nature of all assignments is required. Special attention should be paid to providing clear information concerning the nature and extent of writing assignments (see below).

### Writing Requirements

- **Writing assignment descriptions should be detailed and included either as separate document or a clear section of the syllabus.**

- Formal writing must be present in assessed components of the course for IAI approval. Written components must be described in the syllabus and be clearly reflected in the grading scale. **The nature and extent, breadth and scope of the writing required within the course should be meaningful and intentionally integrated with the subject matter.** Writing components may include, but are not limited to: reaction papers, journals, essay questions on exams or class assignments, extended blogs/discussion posts, and research papers. Extended blogs/discussion posts are defined as those that are significant and part of the assessed writing required in the course.
- **Formal writing is defined as writing that articulates and develops an idea in a sustained and critical manner with consideration of the discipline and academic level of the course.**
- Written assessments should be present in balance with, or at a higher percentage, of other assessment methods and should include significant rigor as applied to the course outline and outcomes.
- Suggested details to include when describing writing assignments are: Page/word count, research requirements (if any), connected learning outcome(s), assessment value, and goal of the assignment.

**Discipline Specific Concerns**

- Skills based courses
  - Courses such as those commonly found in the Fine or Performance Arts-that focus on skills acquisition or refinement are generally not acceptable for General Education credit.
- Interdisciplinary Courses
  - To qualify as an interdisciplinary course, the course must incorporate methodologies from all of the disciplines involved. Courses in which a single discipline's methodologies are used to examine subjects within another discipline (such as a historiographic examination of fine arts) is not considered interdisciplinary.
  - HF courses should clearly represent both Humanities and Fine Arts disciplines within the course outline/content listed within the syllabus. There should be at least one discipline from each for a submitted course to qualify for these IAI identifiers.
- Topics Courses
  - Topics courses are generally not appropriate for General Education credit as they lack a broad approach to general topics.
- Lab Requirements
  - Fine Arts courses normally do not require laboratory work.
- F1 900 Music Appreciation and F1 901 Music History and Literature I and F1 902 Music History and Literature II are not acceptable if they require score reading or a background in music performance skills or theory.
- Art, music, and theater fundamentals courses that are skills oriented are not acceptable as appreciation courses (F9 900, F1 900, F1 906, F1 907, F2 900, F2 905).

  **Experiential Learning in Lecture-Based Arts Appreciation Courses**

  Lecture-based Art History, Music Appreciation, Theatre Appreciation, and related arts appreciation courses may incorporate hands-on demonstrations, object- and performance-based learning, gallery and performance experiences, listening activities, visual and theatrical analysis exercises, and other forms of active engagement that deepen students' understanding of artistic processes, materials, techniques, performance practices, and historical and cultural contexts. These experiential components should support and enhance the primary goals of critical inquiry, analysis, interpretation, and contextual understanding.

  Because these courses are distinct from studio art, music performance, and theatre production courses, creative or performance-based projects should remain limited in scope and collectively account for no more than 25% of the total course grade. Assessment should primarily emphasize disciplinary knowledge, critical thinking, analytical skills, research, discussion, and written or

oral communication. Any creative, studio-based, or performance-oriented activities should be directly connected to course learning outcomes and serve as a means of reinforcing disciplinary concepts rather than evaluating artistic, musical, or theatrical performance proficiency.

**Common Reasons Courses Are Not Approved**

- Course does not match description.
- Course is not lower division.
    - Each institution has devised its own course-numbering system. Some institutions identify as matches courses that appear to be upper-division (generally with 300 or 400 numbers). So long as these courses do not require prerequisites, such courses may be allowed. However, if the course is clearly upper division (for juniors, seniors or graduate students only), the panel generally does not accept it.
- Course is not broad in scope.
    - Special or variable Topics courses are not considered matches to any description since the topic can vary from offering to offering.
- Course has inappropriate prerequisites.
    - Please see section on prerequisites above.
- Course includes skills-based assignments or assumes a skills-based prerequisite.

**Common Reasons Submissions Are Returned For Additional Information**

- Materials do not contain enough detail, typically:
    - Not enough information about the writing assignments.
        - The panel cannot determine the nature of the writing assignments.
        - The panel is unsure how much writing is required.
        - The panel is unsure how much weight is given to the writing assignments.
    - Not enough detail is provided in the topical outline.
    - There is no indication of the nature and weight of evaluations.
    - Course is a better fit in a different category. In these cases, the panel will usually suggest an alternative category.