Visual Arts IB DP course syllabus
2016-2018
School of Young Politicians Gymnasium 1306

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Nature of the subject
The visual arts are an integral part of everyday life, permeating all levels of human creativity, expression, communication and understanding. They range from traditional forms embedded in local and wider communities, societies and cultures, to the varied and divergent practices associated with new, emerging and contemporary forms of visual language. They may have sociopolitical impact as well as ritual, spiritual, decorative and functional value; they can be persuasive and subversive in some instances, enlightening and uplifting in others. We celebrate the visual arts not only in the way we create images and objects, but also in the way we appreciate, enjoy, respect and respond to the practices of art-making by others from around the world. Theories and practices in visual arts are dynamic and ever-changing, and connect many areas of knowledge and human experience through individual and collaborative exploration, creative production and critical interpretation.

The IB Diploma Programme visual arts course encourages students to challenge their own creative and cultural expectations and boundaries. It is a thought-provoking course in which students develop analytical skills in problem-solving and divergent thinking, while working towards technical proficiency and confidence as art-makers. In addition to exploring and comparing visual arts from different perspectives and in different contexts, students are expected to engage in, experiment with and critically reflect upon a wide range of contemporary practices and media. The course is designed for students who want to go on to study visual arts in higher education as well as for those who are seeking lifelong enrichment through visual arts.

Supporting the International Baccalaureate mission statement and learner profile, the course encourages students to actively explore the visual arts within and across a variety of local, regional, national, international and intercultural contexts. Through inquiry, investigation, reflection and creative
application, visual arts students develop an appreciation for the expressive and aesthetic diversity in the world around them, becoming critically informed makers and consumers of visual culture.

**Distinction between SL and HL**

The visual arts syllabus demonstrates a clear distinction between the course at SL and at HL, with additional assessment requirements at HL that allow for breadth and greater depth in the teaching and learning. The assessment tasks require HL students to reflect on how their own work has been influenced by exposure to other artists and for them to experiment in greater depth with additional art-making media, techniques and forms. HL students are encouraged to produce a larger body of resolved works and to demonstrate a deeper consideration of how their resolved works communicate with a potential viewer.

**The arts aims**

The aims of the arts subjects are to enable students to:

1. enjoy lifelong engagement with the arts
2. become informed, reflective and critical practitioners in the arts
3. understand the dynamic and changing nature of the arts
4. explore and value the diversity of the arts across time, place and cultures
5. express ideas with confidence and competence
6. develop perceptual and analytical skills.

**Visual arts aims**

In addition, the aims of the visual arts course at SL and HL are to enable students to:

1. make artwork that is influenced by personal and cultural contexts
2. become informed and critical observers and makers of visual culture and media

3. develop skills, techniques and processes in order to communicate concepts and ideas.

**Assessment objectives**

Having followed the visual arts course at SL or HL, students will be expected to:

**Assessment objective 1: demonstrate knowledge and understanding of specified content**

- a. Identify various contexts in which the visual arts can be created and presented
- b. Describe artwork from differing contexts, and identify the ideas, conventions and techniques employed by the art-makers
- c. Recognize the skills, techniques, media, forms and processes associated with the visual arts
- d. Present work, using appropriate visual arts language, as appropriate to intentions

**Assessment objective 2: demonstrate application and analysis of knowledge and understanding**

- a. Express concepts, ideas and meaning through visual communication
- b. Analyse artworks from a variety of different contexts
- c. Apply knowledge and understanding of skills, techniques, media, forms and processes related to art-making

**Assessment objective 3: demonstrate synthesis and evaluation**

- a. Critically analyse and discuss artworks created by themselves and others and articulate an informed personal response
- b. Formulate personal intentions for the planning, development and making of artworks that consider how meaning can be conveyed to an audience
c. Demonstrate the use of critical reflection to highlight success and failure in order to progress work

d. Evaluate how and why art-making evolves and justify the choices made in their own visual practice

**Assessment objective 4: select, use and apply a variety of appropriate skills and techniques**

a. Experiment with different media, materials and techniques in art-making

b. Make appropriate choices in the selection of images, media, materials and techniques in art-making

c. Demonstrate technical proficiency in the use and application of skills, techniques, media, images, forms and processes

d. Produce a body of resolved and unresolved artworks as appropriate to intentions

**Syllabus outline**

**Core areas**

The core areas, which have been designed to fully interlink with the assessment tasks, must be central to the planning of the taught course that is designed and delivered by the teacher. Students are required to understand the relationship between these areas and how each area informs and impacts their work in visual arts.

**Visual arts in context**

The visual arts in context part of the syllabus provides a lens through which students are encouraged to explore perspectives, theories and cultures that inform and influence visual arts practice. Students should be able to research, understand and appreciate a variety of contexts and traditions and be able to identify links between them.

Through the visual arts in context area, students will:

- be informed about the wider world of visual arts and they will begin to understand and appreciate the cultural contexts within which they produce their own works
• observe the conventions and techniques of the artworks they investigate, thinking critically and experimenting with techniques, and identifying possible uses within their own art-making practice

• investigate work from a variety of cultural contexts and develop increasingly sophisticated, informed responses to work they have seen and experienced.

Visual arts methods

The visual arts methods part of the syllabus addresses ways of making artwork through the exploration and acquisition of skills, techniques and processes, and through engagement with a variety of media and methods.

Through the visual arts methods area, students will:

• understand and appreciate that a diverse range of media, processes, techniques and skills are required in the making of visual arts, and how and why these have evolved

• engage with the work of others in order to understand the complexities associated with different art-making methods and use this inquiry to inspire their own experimentation and art-making practice

• understand how a body of work can communicate meaning and purpose for different audiences.

Communicating visual arts

The communicating visual arts part of the syllabus involves students investigating, understanding and applying the processes involved in selecting work for exhibition and public display. It engages students in making decisions about the selection of their own work.

Through the communicating visual arts area, students will:

• understand the many ways in which visual arts can communicate and appreciate that presentation constructs meaning and may influence the way in which individual works are valued and understood

• produce a body of artwork through a process of reflection and evaluation and select artworks for exhibition, articulating the reasoning behind their choices and identifying the ways in which selected works are connected
• explore the role of the curator; acknowledging that the concept of an exhibition is wide ranging and encompasses many variables, but most importantly, the potential impact on audiences and viewers.

Mapping the course

Students are required to investigate the core syllabus areas through exploration of the following practices:

• theoretical practice
• art-making practice
• curatorial practice.

The table below shows how these activities link with the core syllabus areas at both SL and HL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical practice – 21 weeks</th>
<th>Visual arts in context</th>
<th>Visual arts methods</th>
<th>Communicating visual arts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students examine and compare the work of artists from different cultural contexts.</td>
<td>Students look at different techniques for making art.</td>
<td>Students explore ways of communicating through visual and written means.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students consider the contexts influencing their own work and the work of others.</td>
<td>Students investigate and compare how and why different techniques have evolved and the processes involved.</td>
<td>Students make artistic choices about how to most effectively communicate knowledge and understanding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Art-making

Students make art through a process of

Students experiment with diverse media and explore

Students produce a body
| practice – 23 weeks | investigation, thinking critically and experimenting with techniques. Students apply identified techniques to their own developing work. | techniques for making art. Students develop concepts through processes that are informed by skills, techniques and media. | of artwork through a process of reflection and evaluation, showing a synthesis of skill, media and concept. |
| Curatorial practice – 21 weeks | Students develop an informed response to work and exhibitions they have seen and experienced. Students begin to formulate personal intentions for creating and displaying their own artworks. | Students evaluate how their ongoing work communicates meaning and purpose. Students consider the nature of “exhibition” and think about the process of selection and the potential impact of their work on different audiences. | Students select and present resolved works for exhibition. Students explain the ways in which the works are connected. Students discuss how artistic judgments impact the overall presentation. |

To fully prepare students for the demands of the assessment tasks teachers should ensure that their planning addresses each of the syllabus activities outlined above, the content and focus of which is not prescribed. The connections between the syllabus areas and the assessment tasks can be seen in the table in the section “Linking the visual arts core syllabus areas to the assessment tasks”.

The visual arts journal

Throughout the course students at both SL and HL are required to maintain a visual arts journal. This is their own record of the two years of study and should be used to document:

- the development of art-making skills and techniques
- experiments with media and technologies
- personal reflections
their responses to first-hand observations
creative ideas for exploration and development
their evaluations of art practices and art-making experiences
their responses to diverse stimuli and to artists and their works
detailed evaluations and critical analysis
records of valued feedback received
challenges they have faced and their achievements.

Students should be encouraged to find the most appropriate ways of recording their development and have free choice in deciding what form the visual arts journal should take. The aim of the visual arts journal is to support and nurture the acquisition of skills and ideas, to record developments, and to critique challenges and successes. It is expected that much of the written work submitted for the assessment tasks at the end of the course will have evolved and been drawn from the contents of the visual arts journal.

Although sections of the journal will be selected, adapted and presented for assessment, the journal itself is not directly assessed or moderated. It is, however, regarded as a fundamental activity of the course.

Art-making forms

Throughout the course students are expected to experience working with a variety of different art-making and conceptual forms. SL students should, as a minimum, experience working with at least two art-making forms, each selected from separate columns of the table below. HL students should, as a minimum, experience working with at least three art-making forms, selected from a minimum of two columns of the table below. The examples given are for guidance only and are not intended to represent a definitive list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two-dimensional forms</th>
<th>Three-dimensional forms</th>
<th>Lens-based, electronic and screen-based forms</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
- **Drawing:** such as charcoal, pencil, ink
- **Painting:** such as acrylic, oil, watercolour
- **Printmaking:** such as relief, intaglio, planographic, chine collé
- **Graphics:** such as illustration and design
- **Sculpture:** such as ceramics, found objects, wood, assemblage
- **Designed objects:** such as fashion, architectural, vessels
- **Site specific/ephemeral:** such as land art, installation, mural
- **Textiles:** such as fibre, weaving, printed fabric
- **Time-based and sequential art:** such as animation, graphic novel, storyboard
- **Lens media:** such as still, moving, montage
- **Digital/screen based:** such as vector graphics, software generated

Interaction and engagement with local artists or collections as well as visits to museums, galleries, exhibitions and other kinds of presentations provide valuable first-hand opportunities for investigation and should be used to inform student work wherever possible. Personal responses to these experiences should be documented in the visual arts journal.

**Research**

When carrying out research, students should be encouraged to consult a suitable range of primary and secondary sources. As well as the more obvious sources (books, websites, videos, DVDs, articles) research may also include art-making experiences and encounters such as workshops, lectures, correspondence with experts and visits to exhibitions. All sources consulted during the course must be cited following the protocol of the referencing style chosen by the school and be presented in a bibliography or as footnotes.

**Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment tasks</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External assessment</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Part 1: Comparative study**

Students at HL analyse and compare different artworks by different artists. This independent critical and contextual investigation explores artworks, objects and artefacts from differing cultural contexts.

- HL students submit 10–15 screens which examine and compare at least three artworks, at least two of which need to be by different artists. The works selected for comparison and analysis should come from contrasting contexts (local, national, international and/or intercultural).
- HL students submit 3–5 screens which analyse the extent to which their work and practices have been influenced by the art and artists examined.
- HL students submit a list of sources used.

**Part 2: Process portfolio**

Students at HL submit carefully selected materials which evidence their experimentation, exploration, manipulation and refinement of a variety of visual arts activities during the two-year course.

- HL students submit 13–25 screens which evidence their sustained experimentation, exploration, manipulation and refinement of a variety of art-making activities. For HL students the submitted work must have been created in at least three art-making forms, selected from a minimum of two columns of the art-making forms table.

**Internal assessment**

This task is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course.

**Part 3: Exhibition**

Students at HL submit for assessment a selection of resolved artworks from their exhibition. The selected pieces should show evidence of their technical accomplishment during the visual arts course and an understanding of the use of materials, ideas and
practices appropriate to visual communication.

- HL students submit a curatorial rationale that does not exceed 700 words.
- HL students submit 8–11 artworks.
- HL students submit exhibition text (stating the title, medium, size and intention) for each selected artwork.

HL students may submit two photographs of their overall exhibition. These exhibition photographs provide an understanding of the context of the exhibition and the size and scope of the works. While the photographs will not be used to assess individual artworks, they may give the moderator insight into how a candidate has considered the overall experience of the viewer in their exhibition.