Department of Apparel, Housing and Resource Management
College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences

Housing Option Plan:
Discipline Specific Spoken, Visual, and Written Communication

The Housing Option in the Department of Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management (AHRM) was formally approved in Fall of 2004, with its initial graduating class in 2007. Students completing this degree option are preparing for a variety of careers in the field of housing, including residential design, and the kitchen and bath, appliance, home furnishings, and home building industries.

The ability to communicate visually and graphically is critical to students in this option. Often, what they will be communicating is a creative product. In addition, they must be able to speak and write about these visual ideas. In their future professional lives, the students will work with colleagues who will share their visual vocabulary as well as clients who will need interpretation of and assistance with visual materials.

The Housing Option is endorsed by the National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA). As part of the endorsement, minimum competencies must be met, and these are reflected in the Spoken, Visual, and Written (SVW) Communication objectives. In addition, the learning assessment portion of this plan reflects the reporting and evaluation required to maintain the NKBA endorsement.

Objectives

After successful completion of the Housing Option, each graduate should be able to:

1. Use appropriate graphic and presentation standards to convey design ideas and solutions that are understood by both professionals and clients.

2. Interpret a design solution by developing a written and/or verbal design statement to substantiate a project to a client.

3. Prepare contract documents using written and graphic presentations to define and communicate the obligations of all parties.

4. Communicate with the client through oral, written, and visual presentations through the various design stages.
5. Give persuasive visual, oral, and/or written presentations providing technical information to industry or consumer audiences.

6. Write a clear, coherent, grammatically correct document that provides an effective argument for a defined audience.

Implementation

The Faculty in the Housing Option believes strongly that each and every course a student takes should include elements of spoken, written, and visual communication. This philosophy is reflected in how we teach, and the curriculum provided to our students. We anticipate that most courses, inside and outside of the department, further our students' communication skills. For purposes of this Spoken, Visual, and Written (SVW) Communication Plan, we have chosen to target required courses in the option most closely allied with the above objectives, competencies of our NKBA endorsement, and our teaching/learning philosophy.

The following is a recommended sequencing of courses.

**Freshman Year**

_AHRM 2254\(^4\) Idea Development \\& Creativity_

- Students prepare written and visual projects and present projects orally

_AHRM 2254, originally entitled Idea Development and Creativity in Apparel Design, is under revision to be more comprehensive for both Housing and Apparel Design students, and will be taught in the new format in Fall 2005._

**Sophomore Year**

_AHRM 2604 House Planning_

- Students: 1) prepare hand drafted and/or computer generated two and three dimensional plans, following various trade and industry conventions; 2) prepare written design programs for original designs; 3) prepare written design statements; and 4) orally present a design project.

_AHRM 2614 Introductory Household Equipment_

- Students: 1) prepare written laboratory reports; and 2) participate in a team term project involving product analysis and selection and requiring a visual, written, and
oral presentation

AHRM 2504
Resource Management for Individuals & Families

• Students write at least three papers and participate in peer review in this Writing Intensive course.

Junior Year

AHRM 3604
Family Housing

• Students prepare two analysis papers, one based on client interviews and one based on market research.

AHRM 4984¹
Housing & Society

• Students prepare a research and analysis paper using demographic data and a term project with both visual and written components.

AHRM 4984²
Advanced House Planning

• Students: 1) prepare hand drafted and/or computer generated original designs; 2) prepare written design programs; 3) prepare written design statements and project specifications; and 4) orally present original design projects.

AHRM 4964
Field Study

• Students: 1) keep a written log of activities; 2) prepare a detailed analysis report at the end of the Field Study; and 3) orally present a summary of Field Study to a professional audience.

¹ AHRM 4984 Housing & Society is a new course, being developed to support the Housing Option, and required for graduation. It will be offered for the first time in Fall 2005.
² AHRM 4984 Advanced House Planning is a new course, being developed to support the Housing Option, and required for graduation. It will be offered for the first time in Spring 2006.

Senior Year

AHRM 4664
Universal Design

• Term project is a team design and requires both a graphic plan and oral presentation.

AHRM 4604
Housing: Energy & the

• Students: 1) write three papers using current data collected by multiple
Environment methodologies; and 2) conduct "real world" situational analyses and present the results in written, visual, and oral formats.

AHRM 4624 Advanced Kitchen & Bath Design

- Students: 1) prepare hand drafted and/or computer generated original designs; 2) prepare written design programs; 3) prepare written design statements and project specifications; and 4) orally present design projects.

Outcomes Assessments

Several methods to assess the success of this plan are proposed.

- **Current Students:**
  - The senior survey will be revised to specifically refer to the communication competencies.
  - Student grades on specific projects measure accomplishment of SVW Communication objectives.
- **Field Study Evaluations:**
  - Every Housing Option student is required to take a Field Study, and a Supervisory evaluation is required. The current evaluation form will be reviewed and revised as necessary to more specifically evaluate communication skills.
- **NKBA Endorsement Review:**
  - As part of the National Kitchen and Bath Association Endorsement process, several reviews are required that specifically address communication skills.
    - Every year at least two student design projects are submitted for review and scoring by two industry professionals.
    - A complete re-endorsement review is required every three years, and includes documentation of student accomplishment of communication competencies.
- **Alumni Surveys:**
  - The Housing Option will not graduate students until 2007, and will not be included in department alumni surveys and Outcome Assessment plan until 2010. At that time, questions will be included in the alumni survey regarding the accomplishment of SVW Communication learning outcomes.
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Apparel Area Plan:
Discipline-Specific Visual Expression, Written, and Spoken Communication

Overall Goal
This document describes the Visual Expression, Written, and Spoken (ViEWS) communication requirement for undergraduates in the Apparel Area, including both the Apparel Design and the Merchandising Management options, in the Department of Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management. The program consists of a variety of spoken, visual, and written communication assignments in nine courses that are required in both options, as well as two capstone courses, one for each of the two options. Linking these is the following communication goal that we have identified for the Apparel Area.

Each student in the Apparel Area should be effective in giving and receiving information related to the subject matter of the field, with the communication being in the spoken, visual, and written forms.

Objectives
Each graduate of the Apparel program should be able to:

1. give persuasive oral presentations providing technical information on products, consumers, and markets to industry-oriented audiences.

2. write a clear, coherent, grammatically correct paper, whether that is a long paper or a short technical report, that provides an effective argument for defined audiences.

3. understand technical information related to Apparel subject matter that is presented in verbal, graphical, tabular, and pictorial forms.

4. visually represent technical information related to Apparel subject matter through graphs, tables, story and concept boards, and professional presentations.

Plan for Implementing Curriculum
Because students are expected to develop their abilities as communicators throughout the curriculum, the expectations in the courses comprising the curriculum build upon each other toward meeting the overall ViEWS goal and objectives stated above. In the 1000-level courses, students are introduced to basic oral, visual, and written communication assignments. In the 2000-, 3000- and 4000-level courses, the expected competency increases in both subject matter content and communication skills. The assignments involve information from various sources, and students are expected to integrate the information and present it in various formats. By the time Apparel students take the capstone courses in their final year of undergraduate study, they are expected to have become effective spoken, visual, written communicators, both individually and in teams. In those courses, students have intensive communication assignments.
Curriculum

Freshman Year - In the first semester of their studies in the Apparel Area, students begin learning to communicate subject matter in the discipline. In the first course, AHRM 1204 (Clothing and People), students complete a series of short, one-to-two page papers in which they communicate concepts of dress behavior. In addition, students work in groups to create photo essays of dress behaviors on campus and to give oral presentations of the photo essays.

In the second semester, students take AHRM 1224 (Basic Apparel Assembly). During this course, students work in teams to write technical specifications for apparel products designed by the students.

Sophomore Year – During the sophomore year, students continue learning to communicate their work in various formats. In AHRM 2204 (Introduction to Textiles), students build competencies in oral communication through 20 short, group-discussion assignments. In addition, students develop skills in visual communication through creating PowerPoint presentations on technical information from published sources. In the concurrent, on-line AHRM 2214 course (Apparel Textiles Lab), students work in groups over the Internet to complete various assignments.

Another course in the sophomore year is AHRM 2264 (Introduction to the Fashion Industry), which provides opportunities for students to build their skills in ViEWS. Students work in teams to carry out projects that involve literature review, group discussion, and visual and oral presentations of their findings from the literature review.

Junior Year – During the junior year, students take AHRM 3214 (Apparel Quality Evaluation) in which they practice technical writing and written professional presentations. Each student writes two technical reports that require the use of statistical tools in analyzing data from fabric inspection and/or apparel assembly processes, as well as the use of tables and graphs to present information. These reports also require the application of financial and technical product information obtained from Internet sources to complete spreadsheets on cost analysis. In one of the reports, students create PowerPoint presentations on product specifications including fabric-sourcing information; these presentations incorporate scanned sketches and digital images.

In AHRM 4984 (Global Apparel Production and Trade), students use various communication skills in addressing critical issues in a global context. Each student writes a paper of one to three pages in length that expresses reflections on apparel workers' circumstances as described in readings and that addresses questions on patterns of international production and trade of apparel. Students also work in teams to write papers on pros and cons of trade policies and on possible ways to improve working conditions in U.S. apparel factories. As well, students practice oral communication by working in debate teams to argue pros and cons of trade policies, and in role-play teams representing industry-related organizations to develop collaborative strategies for improving working conditions in U.S. apparel factories. The debate and role-play teams give oral presentations requiring the use of visuals to summarize major points; the students select the form of the visuals (e.g., PowerPoint, poster). Along with the spoken and written communication components, an important visual component of the course is the expectation that students comprehend world and regional maps, as well as numerical information presented in graphs and tables.
**Senior Year** – During the senior year, Apparel students take three courses that require VIEWS of subject matter in the field. In AHRM 4204 (Introduction to Textile Evaluation), each student collaborates with other team members in writing 20 technical reports that each include description of a data analysis process and a possible solution to a given problem. Later in the semester, each student writes a technical report and also participates in an oral group presentation; the technical report and the oral presentation each include orientation to a problem, description of the data analysis process that the student or students used, and a conclusion that indicates a solution to the stated problem. The technical reports and oral presentations must incorporate illustrations and equations. A further assignment is each student’s critique of three presentations by classmates.

In AHRM 4214 (Economics of the Textile and Apparel Industry), a major assignment is each student’s thesis-governed paper of 12-15 pages in length, which includes citations of several literature sources the student used in developing the paper. In this paper, the student describes and analyzes a selected company in the textile and apparel industry. Each student also completes four writing assignments to provide preliminary information for the thesis-governed paper; one of these assignments is a draft of the thesis statement, which is less than a page long, whereas the other three papers for these assignments are each three to eight pages in length. The last of those four assignments is a prospectus of the thesis-governed paper. In addition to being turned in for grading, each student’s prospectus is evaluated by a classmate who provides written answers to a set of questions concerning organization and other criteria and who also discusses the prospectus with its author in a paired-student interview. In the interview, the paired students discuss their evaluations of each other’s prospectus and share ideas for strengthening the papers. Along with the spoken and written communication components, an important visual component of the course is the expectation that students comprehend world and regional maps, as well as numerical information presented in graphs and tables.

In AHRM 4224 (Fashion Analysis and Communication), students work in teams to plan and execute store-window displays of merchandise, with each display incorporating actual merchandise, props, and signage; team members also evaluate their displays and submit written reports of the evaluations. In other assignments, students work in teams to evaluate retailers’ web sites for their effectiveness in communicating between the on-line merchants and consumers; to write reports of the evaluations; and finally, to plan and give oral presentations on their evaluations of the web sites.

**Capstone Courses** – During the spring of the final year of study, students take one of two capstone courses, dependent on their Apparel options. Students in the Apparel Design option take AHRM 4024 (Portfolio). Within this course, each student is expected to create both an original portfolio and a web portfolio of professional quality. The students complete assignments to include in their portfolios. These assignments involve creating a logo or trademark for a student’s apparel design work; developing a resume; designing, illustrating, and writing technical specification sheets for two apparel lines; and computer-aided design of fabrics. In addition, the students orally present their portfolios of their apparel designs.

Students in the Merchandising Management option take AHRM 4984 (Merchandising Strategies). During the course, they complete four projects covering the following topics: marketing research; product development and specification; product selection and quantitative analysis; and promotions planning. The students work in teams, as suggested by our industry advisory board, and prepare PowerPoint
presentations for each project. In addition, each team gives oral presentations for two of their projects, which are evaluated by student teams, faculty, and outside evaluators. The students also develop notebooks of their work, showing their skills in interpreting market research, sourcing and writing product specifications, conducting cost analysis and classifying inventory, and creating promotions materials.

Outcomes Assessment

Outcomes assessment of the ViEWS requirement will occur in several ways:

1. graduating student exit interviews that will specifically refer to the spoken, visual, and written communication requirement;

2. faculty evaluations from the two capstone courses that will include questions regarding the ViEWS requirement;

3. interviews of alumni of the Apparel program that will include questions regarding the ViEWS requirement; and

4. periodic surveys of employers of our graduates, that will ask the employers to rate the performance of graduates of our program on items related to the ViEWS requirement.

The information gleaned from the surveys and faculty feedback will be used to continually improve the program and restructure course assignments.

Logistics

The current Apparel curriculum meets the ViEWS requirements of the discipline; thus, no new courses are needed for the two Apparel options to meet the ViEWS requirements. Given that all courses in the ViEWS plan are taught in the department, no courses taught in other departments are needed. The checksheets will be updated as we phase out the writing intensive designation for the two Apparel courses so designated currently, AHRM 3214 (Apparel Quality Evaluation) and AHRM 4214 (Economics of the Textile and Apparel Industry) by Spring 2008. Those two courses will continue to be taught, and the ViEWS-related assignments in them will remain, but the page-number and rewriting requirements for the writing intensive designation will be eliminated.