



**PERFORMING ARTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE MAJOR
ASSESSMENT REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-2025**

Names and contact information of the faculty coordinating the assessment of each program and report:

Roberto Gutierrez Varea
Department Chair &
Theater Concentration Coordinator
varea@usfca.edu

Introduction

This report addresses the Undergraduate Performing Arts and Social Justice (PASJ) Major. It is focused on assessing PLO #1, but it also reflects some aspects of our work, *in progress*, towards a new curriculum for our program. This is important to note, as PASJ is about to enter into its APR (F26), and the FT faculty have been working on a more integrated, interdisciplinary (Theatre, Music, and Dance) model for our programs. Included in this report, in addition to addressing the current PLO #1 are other elements reflective of the work-in-progress, such as a current and draft versions of our Mission Statement, and our Curricular Map.

I. Your Mission Statement; note any changes since last report

Below the current statement, and the direction we are moving onto with the revised Mission Statement

Current Statement

Our Department offers the unique Performing Arts and Social Justice major, with concentrations in dance, music, and theater. The faculty and staff are committed to providing coursework, activities, and productions that acknowledge and study the performing arts' role as an agent of creative and social change. We strive to achieve academic and artistic excellence in the classroom, on stage, and in the community, offering students professional preparation for a variety of careers in the performing arts, as well as for further study, while working towards a more humane and just society.

Revision in-progress

The Performance and Social Justice Department mission is to provide students with a highly engaged and embodied educational experience focused on performance as an agent of social change. The program gives students the artistic tools, theories, and skills to critically question and creatively act to address pressing social problems and structural inequalities. Onstage, in the classroom, and in the community, our curriculum prepares students for a variety of careers as artists, educators, facilitators, and scholars working towards a more humane and just society. The Department strives to create a collaborative, collegial, and enriching working environment for the professional growth of its members and associates.

II. Your PLOs; note any changes since last report

Current PLOs:

1. Analyze principles, works, and methodologies in the Performing Arts within their socio-historical contexts.
2. Apply technique and conceptual skills to creative and scholarly practices.
3. Explain how the Performing Arts contribute to a humane and just society.
4. Prepare for professional work or graduate studies in Performing Arts and related fields.

Proposed PLOs: *In progress*

1. Analyze works and methods in the Performing Arts within cultural and socio-historical contexts. [in progress]
 - a. Evaluated in Performance and Culture course
 - b. Signature Assignment: Using a specific performance work or artist/company, explain their background and working methods. Then analyze how their work or methods engage with specific cultural and social issues, and the significance of this impact on the larger field of performance.
 - c. Rubric Criteria
 - i. Identifies work/artist/company within their historical and social context
 - ii. Explains the work/artist/company's impact on a specific social or cultural issue
 - iii. Provides insights on how the work/artist/company's actions affect the field more broadly
2. Apply research methods and technical skills to creative and scholarly work. [in progress]]
 - a. Evaluated in PASJ 480/85 Sr. Projects
 - b. Signature Assignment: Self Analysis: Identify the research methods, technical skills, and conceptual approaches you used to create your work (Sr Project) and provide examples of where they appear in your completed work (Sr Project). Choose 2 methods and speak to why you chose them, how you used them in making the work, and how it was useful. (Items to Collect for Assessment: Video; student writing/reflection)
 - c. Rubric Criteria:
 - i. Identifies and Explains Research Methods and Technical Skills used to create the work
 - ii. Offers examples of where they appear in the completed work (with video timecode?)
3. Explain how the Performing Arts contribute to a humane and just society. [in progress]
 - a. Evaluated in PASJ 380 PACE
 - b. Signature Assignment: Based on your experiences in class and in the community this semester, explain how the Performing Arts contribute to a humane and just society. Start by defining how you understand what social justice looks like and how it creates a more humane and just society. Then, analyze at least 2 specific examples (one from a class reading and one from an occasion of community engagement) that reflect how the Performing Arts contribute positively to social justice and human wellness. (750-1,000 word essay)
 - c. Rubric Criteria:
 - i. Defines humane and just society
 - ii. Analyzes Performing Arts contributions with breadth (2 examples), clarity and specificity

4. Demonstrate understanding of professional practices in the Performing Arts through production, internships, and fieldwork [in progress, still discussing]
 - a. Evaluated in Workshop courses, PASJ Lab courses; new internship course

III. Your current Curricular Map; note any changes since last report

Below is the current curricular map, and here is the [LINK](#) to the new curricular mapping (in progress)

Curriculum Map

A	B	C	D	E
last updated 10.19.20	PLO1	PLO2	PLO3	PLO4
PASJ Curriculum Map	Analyze principles, works, and methodologies in the Performing Arts within their socio-historical contexts.	Apply technique and conceptual skills to creative and scholarly practices.	Explain how the Performing Arts contribute to a humane and just society.	Prepare for professional work or graduate studies in Performing Arts and related fields.
PASJ SPINE (all concentrations)				
PASJ 110 Intorducton to PASJ	I	I	I	I
PASJ XXX Lab Electives (2)		I		I
PASJ 120 Workshop in Stage Production		I		I
PASJ 220 Design Lab		D		D
PASJ 280: Research Methods	D	D	D	D
PASJ 380: Performing Arts and Community Exchange	D	D	D	D
PASJ 480: Senior Project	M	M	M	M
Dance Concentration (in addition to spine)				
DANC 180 Dance and Social History	I	I	D	I
DANC 200 Dance Composition I	I/D	I/D		
DANC 300 Dance Composition II	D/M	D/M		D
DANC 200-300 series Adv. Technique Electives		D/M		D/M
DANC 200-level Core F classes	D	I	I	
DANC 360 Dance in the Community	D	D	D	D
DANC 480-01/02 Workshop in Dance Production		D		D
Music Concentration (in addition to spine)				
MUS 181 Music and Social History	I	I	D	I
Music 110/111: Instrumental or vocal ensembles	I	D		
Music 120 series: Applied: Private Lesson		D/M		I
Music 200 series Core F Music Elective	D		I	
MUS 205 Anthropology of Music	D	I	I	
MUS 300 Music Theory I	I	D		
MUS 301 History of Western Art Music to 1800	M			
Music 310 series: Theory II	I	D		I
MUS 392 Seminar in Western Art Music from 1800	M			I
Theater Concentration (in addition to spine)				
THTR 182 Theater and Social History	I	I	D	I
THTR 110 Acting Foundations		I		I
THTR 220 Acting II - Scene Study		D		D
THTR 320 Theatrical Composition	I/D	I/D		D
THTR 300-level (Core F/CD) Performance and Cultura	D	D	D	D
THTR 330 Theater Technique Electives		D/M		D
THTR 340-series Technical Craft electives		D/M		D
THTR 372 Workshop in Play Production		D		D
Key:				
I = Introductory				
D = Developing				
M = Mastery				

IV. Your assessment schedule between APRs: a year-by-year list of PLOs assessed since your last APR and those to be assessed before your next APR (Contact your FDCD for clarification if needed)

2016-17 PLO 3

2017-18 PLO 2

2018-19 PLO 4 (old)

2019-20 PLO 4 (new *now again being revised)

2020-21 PLO 1 (old)

2022-23 year of reflection

2023-24 alternate assessment

2024-25 PLO 1 (new *now again being revised in light of new curriculum)

V. Description of the assessment methodology

We are assessing PLO 1: Analyze principles, works, and methodologies in the Performing Arts within their socio-historical contexts for the second time since our 2016 APR. We decided to do this PLO as we had reflection and alternate assessments in the last year, particularly due to the way COVID impacted the “live performance” dimension of our practice, and our inability to assess that aspect of student learning while in “remote” instruction mode. PLO 1 was developed after our 2016 APR, and the alternate assessment methods offered then were not as applicable as with our current course offerings. In accordance with the new direction, and the work-in-progress Curricular Map, we decided to focus on the “performance & culture” series of courses to assess PLO 1 according to the new rubrics being developed and this rationale:

1. Evaluated in Performance and Culture course
2. Signature Assignment: Using a specific performance work or artist/company, explain their background and working methods. Then analyze how their work or methods engage with specific cultural and social issues, and the significance of this impact on the larger field of performance.
3. Rubric Criteria
 - Identifies work/artist/company within their historical and social context
 - Explains the work/artist/company’s impact on a specific social or cultural issue
 - Provides insights on how the work/artist/company’s actions affect the field more broadly

The work product was the final examination for THTR 305 Latin/@ America: Performance & Politics, using a direct method of evaluation. There were 10 student work products, and each was evaluated by faculty members and scored.

VI. Rubrics

PASJ Major PLO #1: Analyze principles, works, and methodologies in the performing arts within their socio-historical contexts.

PASJ PLO #1 Rubric				
Criteria	Exceptional (4)	Acceptable (3)	Developing (2)	Inadequate (1)
Can situate works, artists, and social issues within their historical time period and geographic location	<i>Can confidently, clearly, and correctly place performance works and artists within historical and geographic contexts</i>	<i>Has a good idea of where artists and works fall within historical and geographic contexts and can express it clearly</i>	<i>Has an approximate idea of where artists and works fall within historical and geographic context</i>	<i>Cannot (or did not) place artists or works within the chronological continuum</i>
Can analyze trends and/or make connections between artistic/performance styles, forms, and/or cultures	<i>Can discuss coherently and completely the connections between works, ideas, trends, and styles within a culture and/or across cultures</i>	<i>Has a demonstrated competent but not comprehensive understanding of the connections between works, ideas, trends, and styles within a culture and/or across cultures</i>	<i>Can sometimes discuss connections between works, ideas, trends, and styles within a culture but not always, and not always with a broad understanding</i>	<i>Cannot see connections between works and styles within a culture</i>
Can contextualize works within their appropriate Socio-economic environment	<i>Can situate most or all performance works within their socio-economic context and can explain the relationship between the works and society/social issues</i>	<i>Has a demonstrated awareness of socio-economic context for performance works and can make a link between them</i>	<i>Can sometimes and/or only superficially discuss connections between performance works and social issues.</i>	<i>Is not able to recognize that works of art are dependent on and related to their socio-economic environment</i>
Uses appropriate methods to analyze and discuss works within their cultural context	<i>Has a broad and deep understanding of what methods and terminology are appropriate for analyzing performance works within a culture or across cultures, and can demonstrate their use</i>	<i>Has a good, if at times limited/incomplete grasp of the methods and terminology used to analyze performance works within a culture or across cultures, and can demonstrate their use</i>	<i>Has an approximate but acceptable understanding of the methods and terminology used to analyze performance works</i>	<i>Does not understand the methods and terminology used to analyze performance works</i>

Adapted by Roberto Varea from previous assessment developed by profs. Nicely and Dowling

VII. Description of your results, noting any significant findings from the data or assessment process

The major takeaways from assessing PLO #1 for the second time were as follows:

The data, as our student numbers are not high, is not strong and it is difficult to draw important, concrete conclusions, from otherwise very positive student work outcomes. Based on what we do have, 70% of students scored in the Mastery area for PLO #1, 20% mastered some parts of the outcome, and 10% (1 student) scored in the lowest range, as seen in the table below.

It should be noted that this is the second time we have assessed this PLO, but this time, with a representative work product. While we did not have a robust number of participants, it is a similar number to our previous and first time (post APR) evaluating PLO 1, and there has been clear progress between both samples.

It should be noted that in discussions with faculty, we are intent in removing the word “mastery” from the verbiage going forward.

Assessment Data:

Level	10 students evaluated
Complete Mastery of the outcome (3.5-4.0)	(5/10)
Mastered the outcome in most parts (2.75-3.5)	(2/10)
Mastered some parts of the outcome (2.0-2.75)	(2/10)
Did not master the outcome at the level intended (1.0-2.0)	(1/10)

VIII. Description of how the results were shared with faculty and how your department/ program responded to the results, including any plans for future improvement or assessment of your program indicated by the results

Following our two retreats last year to reimagine and make our curriculum more cohesive and interdisciplinary, we started work on our revised PLO's, so this was an exercise on how this might work moving forward. This was the second time the Department assessed PLO 1, and it seems to us that having an assignment directly tied to it to evaluate it had produced better outcomes and provided faculty with a clear path to conduct the assessment. This time the rubric matched the assignment more clearly, a positive point in the context of recording higher scores than the previous round.

It is also important to note here that the new curriculum and revised PLOs and rubrics is a work in progress. It is being done concurrently and as part of the development and writing of our APR Self Study, due next semester (spring 2026).

IX. Discussion of any significant feedback from your previous year's report and how your program responded to that feedback

One of the main takeaways from previous reports is the need for a more cohesive major. On exit interviews and other informal feedback sessions such as performance "post-mortems" we have received feedback about how students sometimes miss the whole vision for the major as they go from class to class: "Students tend not see the curriculum as a whole as 'PASJ'. They see individual classes or performance experiences they had as being or representing PASJ." Over the years we have had to adjust resulting in students taking classes not necessarily always in the right order, due to numbers falling in discipline-specific concentrations, following the closing of the Music concentration to the major, and the reality that we cannot offer some classes every semester or every year as before.

An ongoing discussion is where this PLO is developed and "mastered" in the major curriculum, as we ponder the future of the main area of courses offering student products to evaluate it, the "Performance & Culture" series involving PASJ 316 African American Performance & Culture, THTR 303 Performance & Cultural Resistance, and THTR 305 Latin/@ America: Performance & Politics. We hope that the new Core Curriculum can offer areas where these classes, currently Core F, can transition to as they are important to the vision of our program.

In a previous assessment, we wrote: "The university, the department, and the performing arts as a discipline are undergoing significant re-evaluation of their values, teaching and grading methods, labor practices, and skills and practices that support students graduating and entering the field. We continue to see a disconnect in some cases between the PLOs written in 2016 to align with Core F arts outcomes, and the content we actually focus on around community engagement, facilitation and teaching skills, and creative work in relation to social justice. This PLO in particular: "Analyze principles, works, and methodologies in the Performing Arts within their socio-historical contexts" takes a historical lens on the arts that is not emphasized in all 3 disciplines. However, it would be incorrect to say that our students are not aware of social issues and their impact on the arts--quite the contrary. Student work directly focuses on social issues, but less within a historical arts trajectory. This leads me to state that a better understanding of the PLO's intention is needed within the Department."

In looking at broadening the assessment base for this PLO, the new curricular map is being crafted to integrate most significantly in the PASJ "ASH" classes (Dance/Music/Theater And Social History), into a "PASH" (Performance And Social History) course integrating all three areas which could also support this PLO's assessment. We are focusing as well on including the PASJ 110: Intro to PASJ course in this PLO's assessment.