

Theme 1 – Arts in Society (GED0011) PLAR

General Education

The purpose of General Education (Gen Ed) courses in the Ontario college system is to develop educated citizens who are aware of the diversity, complexity and richness of human life and are able to contribute thoughtfully, creatively and positively to the society in which they live and work.

Gen Ed courses provide opportunities for learners to explore questions related to the issues and values raised by the subject matter, along with their application to contemporary life, covering at least two of the following:

- ethics and values
- historical context
- theoretical origins

General Education Themes

Depending on their length, Algonquin College programs typically include one or two general education online electives. [General Education courses](#) cover areas of general interest and are divided into five themes:

- 1 – Arts in Society
- 2 – Civic Life
- 3 – Social and Cultural Understanding
- 4 – Personal Understanding
- 5 – Science and Technology

Check your program of study to determine which of the above themes are available to you within your program. This will help you decide which Student Resource Guide to use as you apply for credit through the PLAR process.

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Rationale

Your capacity to recognize and evaluate artistic and creative achievements is useful in many aspects of life. Since artistic expression is a fundamental human activity that both reflects and anticipates developments in culture at large, its study will enhance your cultural understanding and self-awareness.

Content

Courses in this theme group lead to an understanding of the importance of visual and creative arts in human affairs, of artists' and writers' perceptions of the world, and the means by which those perceptions are translated into visual, auditory, performance, literary, and other art forms. They will also provide an appreciation of the aesthetic values used in examining works of art and possibly a direct experience in expressing perceptions artistically.

Objectives

Here are the learning outcomes associated with courses within the Arts in Society Gen Ed theme.

Art Itself

1. Explore artists' and writers' perceptions of the world.

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2. Discuss the aesthetic values used in examining works of art.
3. Evaluate artistic and creative achievements.

Social Context

4. Explain how artistic expression is a fundamental human activity.
5. Describe how art both reflects and anticipates developments in culture at large.
6. Evaluate the importance of visual and creative arts in human affairs.

Meaning

7. Explain how art produces meaning and affects audiences.
8. Analyse how artistic perceptions of the world and human affairs are translated into artistic expression in various media.
9. Evaluate art in relation to personal and cultural self-awareness.

Creation

10. Express personal perceptions in an artistic medium.

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Are You Eligible for PLAR Credit under Theme 1? Self-Assessment

Complete the following self-evaluation to determine which past experiences you have that might qualify you for an Arts in Society Theme (GED0011) PLAR credit.

Before you devote your time and financial resources to this PLAR application, please answer **Yes** or **No** to the following four questions to determine if your application in Gen Ed Theme 1 is likely to succeed.

Have you ever...

1. been (or are you still) an enthusiast of the arts?
2. studied the arts or any one in particular?
3. taken lessons in and practiced an art?
4. performed or created your own art?

“Art” and “the arts” in this context could mean music theory or performance, literature (such as poetry, novels, short stories, plays, creative non-fiction, travel writing, etc.), painting, drawing, graphic design, photography, film, animation, acting (film, television, theatre), dance, installation or concept, production, culinary, other media, criticism or related work.

If you answered **No** to all of the above, please visit the [PLAR website](#) to choose a more appropriate General Education Theme to PLAR.

If you answered **Yes** to any of the above, ask yourself if your experience and prior learning is of suitable depth for a successful PLAR application. Your application will have a good chance of succeeding if you are confident that your arts experience:

1. lasted for months or years rather than a few days or weeks (**Duration**)
2. helped you reflect on new ideas about yourself, your community, and the world (**Impact**)
3. exposed you to new concepts, especially related to theory, history, and ethics (**Learning**)
4. provided you with a depth of life experience beyond mere facts and skills (**Experience**)

Here are some life experience examples that would NOT result in a successful Gen Ed Theme 1 PLAR:

- ✗ *“I took a salsa lesson while in Cuba last spring. Cha-cha-cha!”*
- ✗ *“Yeah, I’m into music. I listen to the top 40 radio stations on my way to work and I have about 250 songs on my iPhone.”*

On the other hand, the following experiences MAY result in a successful Gen Ed Theme 1 PLAR:

- ✓ *“I have studied ballet since I was six years old. I have attended many amateur and professional dance performances, participated in dance competitions, and now work part-time as a dance teacher’s assistant.”*
- ✓ *“I am a music enthusiast. I have a collection of about 2000 records and CDs, and attend about 30 shows per year. I run a music blog with weekly reviews of recent releases, classics, forgotten gems, and live shows.”*

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If you believe your experiences are of a suitable depth, please answer the four self-assessment questions again, this time using the [online self-assessment form](#). If you are able to provide evidence of learning for all four questions in any one section, you may be a good candidate to proceed with the PLAR process.

The next step is to [apply online for a PLAR](#), and attach your completed self-assessment form.



The academic area will confirm whether you are a good candidate for this PLAR. It is recommended that you do not begin working on your Portfolio until your candidacy has been approved.

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Portfolio Submission Guidelines

Once your candidacy for PLAR has been confirmed, you can begin working on your Portfolio.

There are three essential components of the Portfolio:

1. Cover Letter

Your one-page cover letter must:

- a) begin with a paragraph that states the purpose of the application (i.e., to obtain credit in GED0011: General Education Theme 1 – Arts in Society) and introduces you by explaining what you are doing now and which goal a successful PLAR will help you achieve.
- b) in your main body paragraph, explain why you feel you qualify for this PLAR theme by summarizing how you have the related learning and prior experience to meet the Arts in Society Theme Objectives on pages 1-2 above. You may also want to provide more detailed answers to the four questions above (in the “Have You Ever?” section).
- c) conclude with a statement verifying that you own all the evidence included in the enclosed Portfolio.
- d) follow the detailed instructions in the “PLAR Portfolio Instructions and Rubric” section starting on the next page.
- e) be written in a narrative form (without bullet points) and proofread for spelling and grammar.
- f) not exceed one 8.5 by 11” page in length.

2. Arts Experience or Accomplishments Summary Report

This key Portfolio component showcases your art or art-related work and shows your ability to distinguish between workplace/life experience (the act of doing something) and the significant learning that results from it. To address Theme 1 Objectives (listed on pages 1-2), this section must include a title, introduction, and either:

- a) 10 creative writing samples or a photo essay reproducing 10 select visual artwork or performance accomplishments, each accompanied by (i) a written summary of learning derived from the piece or performance and (ii) verification of original authorship;

OR

- b) evidence of a strong interest in or study of the arts in the form of 10 written commentaries, analytical essays, or critical reviews of other artists'/authors' work with clear reference to the artist/artist and particular work discussed, each accompanied by a written summary of learning derived from each work and your response to it.

3. Personal Reflection Essays

- a) Write a two-page essay explaining the role and impact of the art form you showcased in your Summary Report in culture and society, focusing especially on addressing Theme 1 Objectives (listed on pages 1-2).
- b) Write a one-page reflection on how your art and the creative process have affected you over time. To address Theme 1 Objectives 1, 6, 7, 8 and 9, summarize:

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1. what impression you think your work gives about your outlook on life and art
2. the influence that the creative process has had on your own self-awareness
3. the influence of art on your personal and professional development
4. what role you as an artist, or as one involved in the arts, plays in society

The **PLAR Portfolio – Instructions and Rubric** on the following pages provide more detailed instructions.

Note on your submission: once you have completed your Portfolio, submit an electronic copy to the PLAR Office while keeping original documents for possible future use.

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PLAR Portfolio – Instructions and Rubric

Assessment of Your Portfolio

The instructions and rubrics below explain the assessment for each of the three parts of your Portfolio:

- Cover Letter
- Arts Experience or Accomplishments Summary Report Cover Letter
- Personal Reflection Essay

To ensure a successful PLAR Portfolio, please follow the description given under the “Excellent” heading for each of the three portfolio components of the rubric. Avoid the mistakes listed under the “Unsatisfactory” level of achievement.

The success of your Portfolio depends on achieving a minimum score as noted at the bottom of each of the three individual component rubrics. By doing so, you will meet or exceed the required **minimum total of 65 out of 130 possible points** for all three parts combined.

1. Cover Letter

Format

Please use the following formatting guidelines for your cover letter.

1. Your street address
2. Date line
3. Recipient address
4. Subject line
5. Recipient salutation
6. Body consisting of three blocked paragraphs
7. Closing goodwill statement
8. Your signature and full printed name
9. All on one 8.5” by 11” page with single-spaced lines, double between items 1-8, and a consistent font.

Excellent	All 9 format components are included in the required order.	5 points
Satisfactory	Some of the 9 format components are absent, presented in the wrong order or incomplete.	3-4 points
Improvable	Many of the 9 format components are absent, presented in the wrong order or incomplete.	1-2 points
Unsatisfactory	No cover letter provided, or none of the 9 format components followed.	0 points

Opening Paragraph

State:

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1. the purpose of the application (to obtain credit in GED0011: General Education Theme 1 – Arts in Society);
2. introduce yourself by explaining what you are doing now; and
3. describe what ultimate goal this application will help you achieve.

Excellent	All three of the required points are stated clearly in the given order.	5 points
Satisfactory	Two or three of the three required points are stated clearly, but one or two are unclear, in the wrong order and/or mixed with some irrelevant, redundant or repeated detail.	3-4 points
Improvable	One or two of the three required points are stated clearly, but the others are absent, unclear, in the wrong order and/or mixed with some irrelevant, redundant or repeated detail.	1-2 points
Unsatisfactory	Cover letter omits an opening paragraph, or it covers none of the three required points.	0 points

Main Body Paragraph

Summarize the learning and prior experiences you have acquired to meet some or most of the five Arts in Society Theme objectives listed on pages 1-2 of this Resource Guide.

Excellent	Paragraph convincingly, clearly, concisely and coherently summarizes how your prior learning and experience meet most (7-10) of the Theme Objectives.	9-10 points
Satisfactory	Paragraph summarizes how your prior learning and experience meet some (4-6) of the Theme Objectives. There may also be minor problems with clarity, coherence and conciseness.	6-8 points
Improvable	Paragraph summarizes how your prior learning and experience meet 1-3 of the Theme Objectives. The paragraph may also be incoherent (e.g., sentences jump around and run off-topic), too short or too long, with off-topic details and a general lack of clarity.	3-5 points
Unsatisfactory	There is no discernible main body paragraph, or it barely summarizes how your prior learning and experience meet any of the Theme Objectives. Most of the sentences lack clarity and coherence, and/or are riddled with off-topic details.	0-2 points

Closing Sentences

Clear statement verifying that you are the rightful owner of all materials included in the enclosed portfolio, as well as a goodwill expression of thanks to the assessor for considering your application.

Excellent	Closing sentences clearly and concisely state that you are the rightful owner of all materials included in the enclosed	5 points
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	portfolio, as well as thank the assessor for considering your application.	
Satisfactory	Closing sentences state that you are the rightful owner of all materials included in the portfolio and thank the assessor, but there are minor problems with the clarity and conciseness of expression.	3-4 points
Improvable	Closing sentences state that you are the rightful owner of all materials included but don't thank the assessor or vice versa. There may also be problems with the clarity and conciseness of expression.	1-2 points
Unsatisfactory	Closing is either absent, or doesn't clearly and concisely state that you are the rightful owner of all materials included in the enclosed portfolio, nor does it express thanks to the assessor for considering the application.	0 points

Quality of Writing

Letter content is correct in terms of spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax and mechanics, and is generally professional in style throughout.

Excellent	Well-written, with few or no spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, mechanical or stylistic errors.	5 points
Satisfactory	Generally well-written but with some spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, mechanical and/or stylistic errors.	3-4 points
Improvable	Several spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, mechanical and/or stylistic errors.	1-2 points
Unsatisfactory	Too many errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, mechanics (e.g., capitalization) and/or stylistic errors.	0 points

To gain a PLAR credit, the Cover Letter must score a minimum of 15 out of 30 points.

Points Total	/ 30
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2. Arts Experience or Accomplishments Summary Report

Format

All work is contained in a single document with a descriptive title, introduction, and pages that combine learning summary statements, along with photos or writing samples on each page, with a professional overall appearance, a document title and a consistent use of font type/size and headings throughout.

Excellent	The report is titled descriptively, has an introduction page, followed by pages that combine titled learning summary statements and photos or writing samples. The report appears professional, with a consistently-applied font type and size, heading styles and spacing throughout.	5 points
Satisfactory	The report has a title that is not descriptive, the introduction is not on a page of its own, and/or the report has some minor inconsistencies in the font type and size, heading styles, spacing, and/or organization of learning summary statements and photos or writing samples.	3-4 points
Improvable	The report's title is misleading or absent, the introduction is not on a page of its own, the report has many inconsistencies in the font type and size, heading styles and spacing, and lacks organization in its presentation of learning summary statements combined with photos or writing samples.	1-2 points
Unsatisfactory	The report lacks a title, has many inconsistencies in the font type and size, heading styles and spacing, and lacks organization in its learning summary statements combination with photos or writing samples.	0 points

Introduction

A brief (at least a paragraph but no more than one page) introduction that explains the purpose of the Arts Experience or Accomplishments Summary Report and the occasion for its being written, and gives a brief overview of its contents.

Excellent	The report has an introductory page with a clear title ("Introduction") and at least one paragraph that clearly and concisely explains the purpose of the Report and the occasion for its being written, and gives a brief overview of its contents.	5 points
Satisfactory	The report's Introduction is not appropriately titled and does not clearly and concisely explain either the purpose of the Report, the occasion for its being written, or its contents.	3-4 points
Improvable	The report's Introduction is not titled, is not on a page of its own, and/or does not clearly and concisely explain the purpose of the Report, the occasion for its being written and its contents.	1-2 points

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Unsatisfactory	The report omits an Introduction, or includes one that meets none of the requirements.	0 points
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Learning Summary

A title and introductory paragraph summary above each photo or writing sample explains the context and learning that resulted from creative arts experiences or accomplishments, in relation to the Theme Objectives stated on pages 1-2 above.

Excellent	Above each of the 9-10 photos or writing samples is a title and 1-2 paragraph summary explaining the context (time, place, people involved, occasion, importance, etc.) and learning that resulted from the creative arts experience or accomplishment, and the learning described relates to at least 4-5 of the Theme Objectives.	16-20 points
Satisfactory	The summary paragraph introducing each photo or writing sample is titled but there are only 6-8 of them, or there are 9-10 of them but they lack clarity and focus when describing the context and learning that resulted, and they relate to only a few (3-4) of the Theme Objectives.	11-15 points
Improvable	The summary paragraphs introducing each photo or writing sample are good but are untitled, there are only 3-5 of them, or there are more but they don't clearly describe the context and learning that resulted, they do only one of these, and/or they relate to only one or two of the Theme Objectives.	6-10 points
Unsatisfactory	There are no summary paragraphs introducing each photo or writing sample, or they are untitled and so thin that they describe neither the context nor the learning that resulted, nor do they relate in any way to the Theme Objectives.	0-5 points

Reproductions, Photo Essay or Writing Samples

For visual or performance arts experience: a “best of” selection of reproductions or photo essay chronicling musical or dance performances (one reproduction or photo per page).

For creative or critical writing experience: a “best of” selection of poetry, short stories, creative non-fiction, criticism, reviews, commentaries, analyses, and/or excerpts from longer works.

Original works by the applicant must include a statement verifying that they are the producer of the content reproduced.

This component meets Arts in Society Theme Objective #10.

Excellent	For visual or performance arts experience: a photo essay with a representative selection of 9-10 high-resolution reproductions of your original paintings, drawings, or photographs of work in other media or performances (one photo per page); you may also provide active web links to YouTube videos of films or performances.	20-25 points
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	<p>A representative selection of 9-10 creative or critical writing pieces, in whole or in part, totaling no more than 20 pages.</p> <p>For creative work, a statement verifying sole authorship accompanies each piece.</p>	
Satisfactory	<p>For visual or performance arts experience: a photo essay with a representative selection of 6-8 reproductions or photos of physical pieces or performances.</p> <p>The photos may not be high enough resolution, and/or you may not have devoted a page to each.</p> <p>A representative selection of 6-8 creative or critical writing pieces, in whole or in part, totaling no more than 15 pages.</p> <p>For creative work, a statement verifying sole authorship accompanies each piece.</p>	13-19 points
Improvable	<p>For visual or performance arts experience: a photo essay with a representative selection of 3-5 reproductions or photos of physical pieces or performances.</p> <p>The photos are low resolution and you have not devoted a page to each.</p> <p>For creative or critical writing experience: a representative selection of 3-5 creative or critical works, in whole or in part—totaling no more than 10 pages.</p> <p>For creative work, a statement verifying sole authorship accompanies each piece.</p>	6-12 points
Unsatisfactory	<p>There is no representative selection of evidence of artistic experience, accomplishment, or interest in the arts through commentary; or evidence is minimal and presented in a manner that defies evaluation and thus does not meet Theme Objective #10.</p>	0-5 points

Quality of Writing

The Summary Report is correct in terms of spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax and mechanics, and is generally professional in style throughout.

Excellent	Well-written, with few or no spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, mechanical or stylistic errors.	5 points
Satisfactory	Generally well-written but with some spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, mechanical and/or stylistic errors.	3-4 points
Improvable	Several spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, mechanical and/or stylistic errors.	1-2 points
Unsatisfactory	Too many errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, mechanics (e.g., capitalization) and/or stylistic errors.	0 points

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To gain a PLAR credit, the Summary Report must score a minimum of 30 out of 60 points.

Points Total		/ 60
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3. Personal Reflection Essays

Format

The essays fill three single-spaced pages, have a descriptive title and a subheading for each of the two sections named below.

Excellent	The essays fill three single-spaced pages with the title given above and a subheading for each of the two sections named below; the font type and size, heading styles and spacing are consistent throughout.	5 points
Satisfactory	The essays deviate slightly from the format requirement (for example, the title is not the same as that given above), or has minor inconsistencies in the font type and size, heading styles or spacing.	3-4 points
Improvable	The essays are not single-spaced and are inconsistent in font type and size, heading styles and spacing.	1-2 points
Unsatisfactory	One or more of the essays is absent or disorganized, with too many format errors, such as no title or section headings, multiple line spacing or inconsistencies in font type or size, heading styles or character spacing.	0 points

Section A: Cultural Role and Impact

A two-page essay on (1) the role that the art form you showcase in your Summary Report generally plays in culture at large, and (2) its impact on society historically and today, addressing the first eight Theme 1 Objectives.

Excellent	The Personal Reflection Essays document begins with a full, two-page original essay with the subheading “The Cultural Role and Impact of [Your Chosen Art—e.g., Poetry]” and explanation of (1) the role that the art form you showcase plays in culture at large and (2) its impact on society historically and today; the essay addresses all of the first eight Theme 1 Objectives given on pages 1-2 above.	16-20 points
Satisfactory	The essay is closer to 1.5 pages in length, may not identify your chosen art in the subheading, covers topic (1) in more depth than (2) or vice versa, covers contemporary but not historical aspects for topics (1) or (2) or vice versa, runs slightly off-topic, and/or addresses only 5-7 of the first eight Theme 1 Objectives given on page 1-2 above.	11-15 points
Improvable	The essay is slightly more or less than a page in length, discusses art in general rather than the specific discipline you focus on in your Arts Summary Report, fails to follow the required subheading name, covers topic (1) but not (or barely) topic (2) or vice versa, fails to clearly address historical or contemporary aspects for either topic, runs off-	6-10 points

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	topic, and/or addresses only 2-4 of the first eight Theme 1 Objectives given on page 1-2 above.	
Unsatisfactory	The document omits the Cultural Role and Impact essay or it is less than a page in length, vaguely discusses art in general rather than the art you focus in your Arts Summary Report, omits a subheading, vaguely addresses only topic (1) or (2), fails to discuss the historical and contemporary aspects of either, largely ignores the first eight Theme 1 Objectives, runs off topic and/or is plagiarized in whole or in part.	0-5 points

Section B: Personal Meaning

A one-page personal reflection on how your art experience and creative processes have affected you over time, addressing Theme 1 Objectives 1, 6, 7, 8 and 9 by summarizing (1) what impression you think your work gives about your outlook on life and art, (2) the influence that the creative process has had on your own self-awareness, (3) the influence of art on your personal and professional development, and (4) what role you as an artist, or as one involved in the arts, plays in society.

Excellent	The Personal Meaning essay fills one full page with a reflection on how your art experience and creative process have affected you over time, addressing Theme 1 Objectives 1, 6, 7, 8 and 9 by summarizing (1) what impression you think your work gives about your outlook on life and art, (2) what influence the creative process has had on your self-awareness, (3) the influence of art on your personal and professional development, and (4) what role you as an artist, or as one involved in the arts, plays in society.	9-10 points
Satisfactory	The Personal Meaning essay fills less than a page with a reflection on how your art has impacted your life and addresses 3-4 of the five required Theme 1 Objectives by clearly and coherently summarizing three of the four topics suggested in the guidelines on page 4 above, though the fourth topic and other Themes Objectives may be unclear or crowded by off-topic digressions that may even bring the essay to the required length or more.	6-8 points
Improvable	The Personal Meaning essay fills around half a page with a reflection on how your art has impacted your life and clearly addresses 1-2 of the five required Theme 1 Objectives by clearly and coherently summarizing at least half of the four topics suggested in the guidelines on page 4 above, though some of the topics and Theme Objectives may be unclear or crowded out by off-topic digressions.	3-5 points
Unsatisfactory	The Personal Reflection Essays document omits the Personal Meaning reflection on how your art has impacted your life or it falls short of half a page in length, barely addresses any of the five required Theme 1 Objectives or	0-2 points

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	four topics suggested in the guidelines on page 4 above, adds off-topic digressions.	
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Quality of Writing

The Personal Reflection Essays are correct in terms of spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax and mechanics, and are generally professional in style throughout.

Excellent	Well-written, with few or no spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, mechanical or stylistic errors.	5 points
Satisfactory	Generally well-written but with some spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, mechanical and/or stylistic errors.	3-4 points
Improvable	Several spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, mechanical and/or stylistic errors.	1-2 points
Unsatisfactory	Too many errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, mechanics (e.g., capitalization) and/or stylistic errors.	0 points

To gain a PLAR credit, the Personal Reflection Essays must score a minimum of 20 out of 40 points.

Points Total		/ 40
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To gain a PLAR credit, your complete PLAR Portfolio must score a minimum of 65 out of 130 points.

Portfolio Points Total		/ 130
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