Values for Admitting Students into Limited Enrollment Classes
AFVS Critical Pedagogy Working Group

As a department we are committed to creating an anti-racist, inclusive and accessible environment. The admission procedures for limited enrollment classes have been identified by students as a significant barrier to many BIPOC and FGLI students. We, the Critical Pedagogy Working Group, composed of students, staff, and faculty, have established a set of shared values to make this process more equitable and inclusive.

Building upon two core values—transparency and accessibility—this document provides guiding principles not only for AFVS faculty but also for visitors unfamiliar with the format of limited enrollment classes.

Transparency

● Transparency is paramount in any competitive admissions process.
● Limited enrollment classes in particular can make students insecure about their “performance” in an interview process; conducting the application process as a conversation and exchange of ideas about the class, rather than an examination of their skills and previous knowledge, can alleviate their potential anxieties.
● Admissions procedures and selection criteria, whether by lottery or interview, should be clearly stated—including relevant department policies—on the course website and syllabus.
● These procedures and criteria should be also communicated to individual students who inquire about the course.

Accessibility

● Faculty determine admission to their classes in various ways. These procedures should be inclusive of and responsive to students’ existing skills and interests relevant to the course.
● Provide application materials and clear instructions on the Canvas site in advance, explicitly stating options for applications and space to articulate accessibility needs.
● When possible, reserve larger classrooms for the shopping period to accommodate all prospective students.
● There are invisible barriers of which we must be mindful in all communication with prospective students. This includes expecting and accepting that some students will not yet have had access to the anticipated skills and being careful about using specialized language that may be unfamiliar.
● Students communicate in different ways—give them multiple options, e.g. a written questionnaire or an interview, or give them time to formulate their thoughts by offering them the option to send their questionnaire via email (rather than submitting it in class).
● Provide suggestions for alternate classes when a student is not admitted to yours. Consult the department's live spreadsheet of class enrollments during the shopping period, which should be institutionalized and consistently maintained.
● When students are not admitted to your class, prioritize them for admission to future classes. The department should keep them informed about AFVS resources, workshops, and events by maintaining lists of the emails of students who applied to classes but were not admitted.