

Art 303/403 - Advanced Drawing

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Office Hours:
T/Th 11:00-12:00
or by appointment

The course catalog description for this class is as follows: *Advanced problems in drawing emphasizing experimentation, individual conceptual development and contemporary issues in art.*

I consider that description as a three-spoked wheel, in which all three spokes are necessary to facilitate the wheel going 'round and 'round. I like to think of experimentation as a given in art, but that is not necessarily true. Do you recall making drawing marks as a kid, not caring that proportions were way out of whack, or that the spaces did not make sense? There was autonomy in your mark-making, leaving a trace that you were there, in control of that world you created. There was joy in the ability to voice something, even if adults did not understand (see: *The Little Prince*). Somewhere along the way, that experimentation faded for many, as experimenting can be a risky business, with unknown outcomes that became something to avoid. Why did we decide that a safe known approach was better than a risky, unknown result? Are we no longer curious about what we might learn from taking a risk?

The second spoke of the wheel is concept. Those of you who had classes with me in the past know that your conceptual development is important to me. The ability to hone our skills and replicate forms on the surface of a picture plan can also be important, and that skill can certainly lead to high praise from viewers, as well as a stroked ego, but is it enough to convey your thoughts, emotions, or concepts? As many of you know, I don't mind if you work from photographs, but I'll usually ask, "What will you bring to the piece that the photo doesn't already convey?" In short, what will you bring of yourself to your work? How will you allow yourself to branch into concepts that you don't already know, or that are riskier than the concepts you are already comfortable with?

Contemporary issues in art. Any period that you make art in is the one that is contemporary to you, so the issues you deal with, or the issues that you see at work in the Art World, or the world in general, are contemporary to you. While contemporary, many of the issues in art remain timeless. We will consider any and all contemporary and historic issues as we proceed during the semester.

Do you feel that you've mastered the skills you've learned? One does not master skills. Skills allow one to interpret the world. There is an energy that flows throughout life, and skills help you understand that energy. So, I have no desire to master anything. I wish to experience it with wonder.

– Amos Kennedy, from *Stop Calling Yourself a Creative*

"There is a basin in the mind where words float around on thought and thought on sound and sight. Then there is a depth of thought untouched by words, and deeper still a gulf of formless feelings untouched by thought."

– Zora Neale Hurston, from *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

The quotes by Kennedy and Hurston are related in a number of ways. Kennedy challenges the idea of the mastery of skills, embracing the experience of art-making instead. The Hurston quote, taken from her most well-known novel, speaks to the idea of layers of conscious and unconscious thought. In both cases, it is the experience that appears to matter most; the engagement with the work that leads to discovery. That is my main goal for you in the class, that you take your skills and use them to challenge the known and unknown in your work, figuring out what you discover along the way.

Art-making: You will have finished artwork due at every scheduled critique. With the exception of the four set assignments, the work you create is to be self-generated, coming from your own motivation, investigation and passion. It is my expectation, since this is an advanced level class, that you will be working on and towards concepts that are of importance to you. Do not let perceived perfection get in your way. Do not be afraid to bring in pieces that you believe to be utter and complete failures. Do not be afraid to bring in pieces that are purely experimental in nature to

you, both in terms of concept and execution. There is much to be culled from those pieces that do not follow an expected course and outcome. While I expect each of you to remain your own harshest critic when it comes to your artwork, we sometimes do not readily see what is right in front of us. Lastly, how much work is enough? Think about the amount of work that is comfortable to you and double or triple that number. This is not about meeting goals. This is about discovering goals that you did not know existed for you.

Critiques: Critiques are an invaluable process, providing an opportunity for objective opinions and insights about the work you and others create. Allow yourself to perceive what others see in your work. Discover how those perceptions might cause you to think about your own work differently. Offer your own perceptions and insights into the works of others, but make them your own perceptions and insights, avoiding words that can have little meaning. In the end, the critique process will be as valuable as you make it.

Readings: Each of the Art 403 students will be responsible for providing a reading about the creative process, related to any of the arts. Each reading must be a minimum of one page, and the person providing the reading will lead the discussion on that piece. We will discuss these over a period of two days.

Scheduled Assignments: There are four scheduled assignments over the course of the semester:

- **75 Drawings** -- 25 drawings that are purely felt.
25 drawings that are purely observed.
25 drawings that you allow yourself to approach with absolute reckless abandon.
- **Layered Life** – A drawing consisting of at least five layers, with two of two of the layers being transparent. A drawing that deals with elements hidden and revealed. Shown over two critiques: in-progress and final.
- **Drawing as Reportage** – Drawing as reportage has a long and storied history, from cave paintings that retell the story of a hunt, to drawings done by combat artists during war. In this assignment, you will have options for the approaches that you can take. You can: 1) create a biographical drawing with someone that you do not know well. This person cannot be related to you, and they cannot be a good friend. A perfect stranger would be best; 2) report on a live event in the community; 3) report on an uncomfortable autobiographical issue/event. The media you use is open, but you must combine hand-drawn text and imagery. Some of the imagery must be derived from on-the-spot drawing. Consider the various formats that you can use for this assignment. Some artists to consider looking at:
 - Marvin Friedman
 - Feliks Topolski
 - Zina Saunders
 - WWII art: Howard Brodie, Ronald Searle, Gregor Duncan.
- **Drawing Above Our Heads** – An exhibition of challenging drawings hidden in plain sight above our heads. The building is your canvas, but 1) you cannot draw on the building, and 2) you cannot attach works to the building in such a way that there will be any residue remaining. When something is above your head, it can be taken literally in terms of space, but it can also be something that we do not understand due to the level of information. Think about both of those components.
- **Grades:** When determining grades, I look at the final artwork produced, but there are other factors that come into play. Your work ethic and risk-taking are vital elements in your work and will be evident in the breadth and depth of the drawings you create. Elements that I take into grade consideration are:
 - **Quality** and **amount** of work produced
 - Critique and discussion participation
 - Improvement in your work and risk-taking
 - Attendance

In terms of the artwork that you produce, I consider grades with the follow criteria:

- A = Excellent work that displays thoughtfulness, risk-taking, daring, craft, and challenge.
- B = Good work that displays some of the elements above, but to a lesser extent. Less challenging work in general.
- C = Average work, with little or no extra effort put in outside of class. Work that is okay, but does not venture into uncharted territory; always plays it safe.
- D = Weak work that displays little drive, effort and motivation.
- F = Work does not meet the criteria of the class. Poor attempts at quality and effort.

The formula for a strong grade is fairly simple: excellent worth ethic + strong motivation + a desire to challenge yourself and your work. If you find that you're not able to give of yourself to your work outside of class, and do what you believe is just enough to get by, please be prepared for a grade of "C". If you are unprepared for discussions/readings, critiques, or presentations, please be prepared for a lower final grade.

You will have two occasions to hand in portfolios of your work. There will be a mid-term portfolio, at which time you will be given an indication of your in-progress grade. I will meet with you individually at mid-term to discuss your half-semester grades. You will hand in your final portfolio after our final critique on December 13. You will receive those portfolios back, with a final grade evaluation, during our final exam time on December 20.

Any grade demotion due to absences or lack of preparation will be applied on your final grade evaluation.

Attendance: You are expected to attend class. After two unexcused absences, your final grade will be lowered by half a letter grade for each unexcused absence thereafter. If you are not ready for any of the scheduled events, you will be marked absent for that day. *If you have extenuating circumstances (death in the family, serious illness or other physical/emotional trauma) that may impact your performance negatively, please contact me as soon as possible. Arrangements may be made for your specific situation.* Two late arrivals (of more than 15 minutes) will equal one absence. Please be on time.

Lab Fees: Your lab fees will be netting you a good deal of supplies: Litho crayons, sets of water soluble oil pastels, two types of Dura-lar, charcoal paper, watercolor paper, Strathmore 400 drawing paper, RiverPoint paper, and various other papers. Not a bad haul for your forty bucks.

Studio Materials: There are many changes in how we look at the materials being used in the classroom/studio. You'll note that we now have Right-to-Know stations in the studios, which contain the Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for the materials that we use in the classroom. These sheets communicate the "...hazards of hazardous chemical products." All of the chemical products that we use must have an SDS in the Right-to-Know book. This includes any chemically-based materials or mediums that you bring into the classroom. You can find the SDSs via Google searches, on the manufacturers' websites, or often on the website from which you purchased the materials. Feel free to email PDFs of the SDSs for me to print off.

IPods and MP3 players will be allowed this semester, unless I find them distracting.

Cell Phones will be allowed for music and research. Please do not text or make phone calls during class.

Ask: If you need anything, please ask. If you need a demo on something, or you're not sure where to go for research, ask. Need help with two-point perspective? Ask away. Be proactive. Don't always wait for me to suggest things to try, but research things, and check out what others are doing. Take a chance.

Contacting Rob: I have scheduled office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 to 12:00. I am around all day on Mondays and Wednesdays, so you can try and catch me before or after classes, but given the new shorter breaks between studio classes, I cannot guarantee that I'll have time for you immediately. Scheduling appointments also works well. Email me for an appointment and we'll set something up. When emailing, please include a salutation, write in complete sentences, and include a closing. It would be much appreciated.

Final Exam: Our final exam takes place on Wednesday, December 20, from 10:15 to 12:15 a.m.

It's possible, in a poem or short story, to write about commonplace things and objects using commonplace but precise language, and to endow those things—a chair, a window curtain, a fork, a stone, a woman's earring—with immense, even startling power.

• Raymond Carver

Be careful lest, in casting out your demons, you cast out the best thing that is in you. • Friedrich Nietzsche

Art 303/403 Int/Adv Drawing - Semester Schedule

Fall 2017

Week 1	Wed. 9/6	Class intro. First assignment: 60 drawings. Due on Wednesday 9/13.
Week 2	Mon. 9/11	Studio workday.
	Wed. 9/13	Studio workday.
Week 3	Mon. 9/18	<i>60 Drawings</i> due. Critique.
	Wed. 9/20	Studio workday.
Week 4	Mon. 9/25	<i>Critique</i> of finished and in-progress work.
	Wed. 9/27	Studio workday. The first set of readings are due (Moberg, Orzel, Stevenson, Sweeney).
Week 5	Mon. 10/2	<i>Creative process readings #1 – discussion.</i>
	Wed. 10/4	Studio workday.
Week 6	Mon. 10/9	<i>Critique of Layered Life drawing, version I.</i>
	Wed. 10/11	Studio workday.
Week 7	Mon. 10/16	<i>Reportage presentation.</i>
	Wed. 10/18	<i>Critique and studio workday. Midterm portfolios due.</i>
Week 8	Mon. 10/23	Midterm meetings.
	Wed. 10/25	Midterm meetings
Week 9	Mon. 10/30	The second set of readings are due (Eiden, Johnstone, Larsen, Minster).
	Wed. 11/1	<i>Critique of final Layered Life drawing.</i>
Week 10	Mon. 11/6	<i>Creative process readings #2 – discussion.</i>
	Wed. 11/8	Studio workday.
Week 11	Mon. 11/13	Studio workday.
	Wed. 11/15	<i>Above Our Heads</i> critique.
Week 12	Mon. 11/20	Studio workday.
	Wed. 11/22	No Class.
Week 13	Mon. 11/27	<i>Drawing as Reportage</i> critique.
	Wed. 11/29	Studio Workday
Week 14	Mon. 12/4	Studio workday.
	Wed. 12/6	<i>Critique</i> of in-progress and finished work.
Week 15	Mon. 12/11	Studio workday.
	Wed. 12/13	<i>Final critique. Final portfolios are due</i>
Final Exam	Wed. 12/20	Final Exam – 10:15-12:15 Studio Clean-up and discussion