

Biology 325: Introduction to Biological Illustration, 2 Credits (Oral Communication)

Working Syllabus:

Mini lectures introducing topics: 1) developing illustration objective statements, 2) learning how to critique scientific illustrations, 3) timed drawing exercises designed to hone observation skills, 4) draw using the right hemisphere of the brain (extemporaneously, holistically), 5) how to recreate detail efficiently, 6) how to recreate repeated structures efficiently, 6) how to manage a drawing table/environment, 7) how to appreciate and use the “draft phase” of the illustration process, 8) how to digitally archive/enhance illustrations, and 9) discussions of how to develop illustration techniques covered in the weekly assignments/portfolio (below).

Assessment will be two-fold. First, students will orally critique each other’s drafts and final products in small groups and/or in front of the entire class. The instructor will moderate and take notes on these critiques. Students’ final products (assignments and portfolios) will also receive written, formal critiques by the instructor.

First Eight Weeks

Assignment/Lecture Phase:

1. Perusal/analysis of types of illustrations in pertinent fields of biology, based on their specialties/majors
2. Negative and positive space
3. Line only (with hatching)
4. Stippling
5. Half tone (graphite, carbon dust, watercolor, etc.)
6. Combination (positive/negative space, line, stippling, half tone)
7. Color (pencil, watercolor pencil specifically)
8. Digital (illustrating entirely on the computer)

Second Eight Weeks

Portfolio Phase: Five weeks of amorphous open meetings/critiques to discuss drafts of portfolio items, attendance will be taken. Portfolio will include 5 illustrations in any style (above) or by any medium (above) but will include an illustration of something microscopic (student must use light microscopy to complete) and an illustration of a biological process. The final two weeks of class periods will include formal critiques (20 min) of one portfolio illustration per student in front of the entire class. We will meet during finals week to hang student works in the COLS Museum of Natural History in a formal art show that will run over the Spring interim and Summer Session. Students will provide brief descriptions of for their illustrations appearing in the formal show. There will be a show opening reception held after all works are hung.