

Drawing I: Observation and Mark-making

Course Description

This introductory drawing course provides studio experiences with processes, media, and techniques used in observational drawing. Gesture, contour, value, composition, and spatial illusion are studied to develop fundamental strategies for interpreting the visible world.

Course Objectives

With the successful completion of this course, the student will:

1. Engage the active studio community, and contribute to its evolution and growth.
2. Establish a disciplined approach to studio work.
3. Discover and invent new visual problems, and understand a range of ways to solve them.
4. Develop perceptual and manual skills to interpret, organize, and describe observed reality through drawing.
5. Diligently record visual notes from imagination and observation in an ongoing sketchbook practice.
6. Learn to use line with proficiency and confidence.

Course Work

Studio art courses are structured somewhat differently than typical academic courses. In most university courses you attend three hours of lectures, and are expected to engage in several hours of reading and independent study each week. Drawing, however, can only be successfully learned through the act of drawing. The instructor will lecture on concepts and demonstrate techniques, but these only become meaningful when applied by the student. Therefore, the majority of your time will be spent engaging in guided studio practice. Class meetings will be supplemented by assigned studio and sketchbook problems.

In-Class Drawings

Each class meeting, students will undertake guided drawing exercises. These will include a wide range of methods, including fast gesture exercises, contour drawings, tonal drawings, and various other observational drawing practices. Many of these will be timed exercises. Some drawings may require completion outside of class time.

Homework / Studio Problems

Each week, students will be given drawing assignments to complete at home or in the studio on their own time. These will be specific problems, intended to build specific skills. Students should expect to spend a **minimum of one hour each week**, beyond class time, working on these drawings.

Sketchbook

From the very beginning of the semester, students will receive new sketchbook assignments each week. During the first four weeks, students will be asked to read from *Freehand Sketching: An Introduction* by Paul Laseau, and to complete specific exercises derived from that text. Beginning the fifth week, students will be assigned five studies each week. Most of these will ask the student to address certain compositional problems with different observational sketches. Students are also expected to conduct significant sketchbook explorations of their own design. These may include observational sketches, studies from imagination, and conceptual and technical notes. Students are required to spend a minimum of 2 hours each week working in their sketchbooks, and must keep a log of these hours on the inside of the sketchbook's front cover.

Critiques

Evaluation and analysis of one's own art and the art of others is important to artistic development. The class will conduct four group critiques during the semester. During these meetings every student is expected to engage the group in discussions about her artwork, and to provide thoughtful and informed feedback to his peers. Attendance and participation in critiques are required, and will be reflected in Involvement grades. Additionally, students must attend three art exhibitions during the semester, and prepare written critiques of work that they view in person. These short critical responses will help students apply concepts learned in class to become more thoughtful viewers and artists. To encourage engagement of the broader artistic community, at least one of the exhibitions must occur off-campus.

Involvement

Attendance

Art studios are experiential learning environments. There is no adequate substitute for time spent in the studio, working alongside one's peers. In addition to missing demonstrations and announcements by the instructor, absent students will miss the opportunity to receive timely feedback, and will not be contributing to the learning of others. The studio model of learning depends on all participants learning from one another, and so engagement with your peers is a major responsibility in this course. For these reasons, attendance is absolutely essential.

For each absence, the student will lose 25 points from her or his overall Involvement score. Students arriving late or leaving early will lose 1 point for each minute of class time missed (up to 25 points). At the instructor's discretion, students may recover some portion of these points by executing additional studio problems, sketchbook assignments, or related work. It is the student's responsibility to contact the professor to inquire about

missed work and to schedule an office meeting to request recovery assignments. If at all possible, office meetings and recovery work should take place prior to subsequent class meetings. Class time WILL NOT be used to discuss recent absences or to assign recovery work – being prepared for class means that the student has already taken care of these issues.

Participation

Engagement with the studio community is a necessary element of success for all students. In addition to being present and punctual at every class meeting, each student is expected to contribute to the productive learning environment. Each student must be prepared for class meetings with the required materials, have completed the assigned work, be prepared for critiques, and participate in class discussions.

Students should work diligently during class, for the entire period. Learning to draw requires a significant time commitment on the part of the student, and engaging for the assigned amount of time is at least as important as completing a certain number of drawings. For this reason, students who finish daily drawing exercises before the designated class time has passed will be expected to repeat the exercises, or otherwise engage in drawing practice until the class meeting has ended.

Online Involvement

This course is enhanced by online communications. All PowerPoint presentations, handouts, grades, and the syllabus will be available on the course's Blackboard site (available at *url*). There is also a blog for this course (available at *url*). Students are strongly encouraged to post images of their artwork, to comment on peers' work, and to invite interested family and friends to join in the conversation.

Community Involvement

Students are encouraged to engage the broader community. Art, as a form of communication, requires an audience to be complete. Even at this early stage of studio education, students should begin to conceive of ways to address local, campus, and global communities with their artwork.

The instructor will frequently inform students of exhibition opportunities and local art events. Students will be required to attend three exhibitions throughout the semester (at least one off campus) and submit written critiques (see "Course Work" above).

Studio Etiquette

Cell phones must be turned off or silenced upon entering the studio, and should not be used (including to send or receive text messages) except during breaks. Students may listen to earphones while they draw, but must keep the volume low enough that they can hear the instructor's general comments, and that their music doesn't disturb those around them. While some amount of conversation is expected, students should avoid excessive off-topic chatter, as this may disturb some students' concentration.

Evaluation

<u>Portfolios</u> (selections of in-class drawings and studio problems)	500
Mechanics Portfolio (weeks 1-4)	100
Contour Portfolio (weeks 5-8)	100
Value Portfolio (weeks 9-12)	100
Series Portfolio (week 13-16)	200
<u>Sketchbook</u>	250
Weekly Sketchbook Assignments (70 sketches total)	150
Additional sketchbook exploration	100
<u>Involvement</u>	250
Critiques (in-class and written exhibition critiques)	150
Preparedness, Engagement, and Attendance	<u>100</u>
	1000 points

Materials

The instructor will contact each enrolled student prior to the semester’s beginning to discuss supplies needed for the first day: ream of recycled printer paper and black felt-tip marker. Additional required supplies and suppliers will be discussed during first class meeting. Most of the required supplies will be needed at the beginning of Week 3. This allows time for students to order from online suppliers or to gather necessary supplies from local sources. Students not prepared with necessary supplies on any given class day will lose points from their participation grades, as such lack of preparedness inhibits productivity and prevents student engagement.

Textbook

Freehand Sketching by Paul Laseau (W.W. Norton)

Media

- graphite pencils, set of 6 or more
- charcoal pencils, set of 4 or more
- vine charcoal, 1 box of 30 assorted sticks
- white chalk, charcoal, or conté crayon, 1 or 2 sticks
- technical pens, set of 3 or 4

Paper

- sketchbook, approximately 8 x 10 (spiral or sewn binding)
- 24 x 18” white drawing paper pad, at least 70 lb., at least 20 sheets
- 24 x 18” newsprint pad(s), at least 100 sheets

Additional Supplies

- erasers: white vinyl, pink pearl, kneaded, retractable stick eraser
- handheld pencil sharpener (w/ container for shavings)
- masking tape (preferably low-tack painter’s tape)
- spray fixative
- portfolio
- sandpaper
- supply box

WEEK #	IN-CLASS DRAWINGS	LECTURES, CRITIQUES, DUE DATES, ETC.	STUDIO PROBLEMS 2 HOURS/WEEK	SKETCHBOOK 2 HOURS/WEEK
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Part 1: Mechanics, Materials, and Developing Studio/Sketchbook Habits				
1	Drawing Mechanics Gesture Contour	Course Introduction, syllabus, materials, etc.	Object Drawings	Pre-Sketchbook (exercises from Laseau text): Intro. & Chapter 1
2	Gesture Contour	Drawing Materials Lecture	Object Drawings	Pre-Sketchbook: Chapter 2
3	Gesture Contour Measuring and Sighting Angles	Individual Meetings to discuss first portfolio.	Object Drawings	Pre-Sketchbook: Chapter 3
4	Gesture Contour: Line Variety	Critique #1 4 Week Portfolio and Sketchbook due by 5:00 p.m. Friday	Portfolio	Pre-Sketchbook: Chapter 4

Part 2: Contour and Composition				
5	Contour: Cross-Contour	Composition Lecture: Master Studies	Contour Drawings: Objects in environment.	Master Studies: Compositional analysis.
6	Contour: Line Weight	Written Critique #1 due by 5:00 p.m. Friday	Contour Drawings: Objects in environment.	Master Studies: Observational sketches emulating compositions.
7	Contour: Surface details and interior contours.	Composition Lecture: Film stills	Contour Drawings: Objects in environment.	Film Stills: Compositional analysis.
8	Contour into tone.	Critique #2 8 Week Portfolio and Sketchbook due by 5:00 p.m. Friday	Portfolio	Film Stills: Observational sketches emulating compositions.

Kyle McKenzie (Sample Syllabus: Drawing I)

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Part 3: Value and Composition				
9	Value: Tonal drawing with pencils. Value Composition	Composition Lecture: Compositional Problems	Contour Drawings: Complex still life, light/dark structure.	Compositional Problems: Dynamic
10	Value: Tonal drawing with pencils. Value Relationships	Written Critique #2 due by 5:00 p.m. Friday	Value Drawings: Complex still life, light/dark masses.	Compositional Problems: Off-Centered Focus
11	Value: Tonal drawing with charcoal.	Lecture on final series.	Value Drawings: Complex still life, light/dark masses.	Compositional Problems: Unconventional Viewpoint
12	Value: Charcoal and chalk on toned paper.	Critique #3 12 Week Portfolio and Sketchbook due by 5:00 p.m. Friday	Portfolio	Compositional Problems: Asymmetrical Balance

Part 4: Series				
13	Series Portfolio	Sketching Lecture: Figure/Environment	Portfolio	Figure/ Environment Gestures
14	Series Portfolio	Written Critique #3 due by 5:00 p.m. Friday	Portfolio	Figure/ Environment Gestures
15	Series Portfolio	Individual Meetings to discuss final portfolio.	Portfolio	Future Series Concepts/Supporting Observational Sketches
16	Series Portfolio	Critique #4 Final Portfolio and Sketchbook due by 5:00 p.m. Friday	Portfolio	Future Series Concepts/Supporting Observational Sketches