

Art 303/403 - Advanced Drawing

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T/Th 11:30-12:30
or by appointment

Course catalog description: Advanced problems in drawing emphasizing experimentation, individual conceptual development and contemporary issues in art.

The act of drawing is among our first modes of expressive mark-making. As an infant you may have been seated in your highchair, running your fingers through spilled applesauce, pleased at how it felt, leaving your mark. You were there (as if your parents didn't know). You left a trace of your existence in applesauce (as if your parents didn't know). The immediacy in drawing is found in few other disciplines. All you need you need is a mark-making tool and a surface. Pencil and paper. Greasy pigment and litho stone. Stick and dirt. Applesauce and a highchair.

The process of acquiring the skills to make art includes the ability to see and record information, information that is sometimes in front of us, and sometimes in our imagination. As we hone our abilities and see information more clearly, we are better able to replicate that information onto a surface. While the ability to replicate often leads to high praise and a stroked ego, it can also lead to a one-trick pony syndrome. The ability to replicate is craft, and while craft is a vital component in the making of art, questions arise: what do you do with craft? How do you make it tell a story, relate a concept, or express an emotion? That is the very concept Rene Magritte tackled in his painting of a pipe, titled "The Treachery of Images". The pipe wasn't a pipe. It was an expression of a pipe. A fiction of a pipe. When Magritte was asked if it was a pipe, he responded, "Of course not. You can't fill it with tobacco." Craft and concept brought together, to challenge both the viewer and artist.



The following was appropriated from a MIAD course description some years ago:

Students search, invent, embrace and develop individual concerns within traditional concepts. They work within broad parameters which promote and motivate drawing as a means to explore ideas rather than necessarily to arrive at a conclusive visual statement or goal.

There are a couple parts of this description that interest me most. The idea that searching, inventing, embracing and developing are a part of art-making points to intellectual curiosity and passion. What makes the artwork tick? What makes me tick? How can I make it (and me) tick differently? And then there is the idea of using drawing as "...a means to explore rather than necessarily to arrive at a conclusive visual statement or goal." Is it always necessary, or even desirable, to always be aware of your end goal? If you're making muffins, maybe so. If you're making artwork and you already know what the result will be, is it worthwhile to undertake the work? We will incorporate approaches that will be both traditional and less-traditional. There will be drawing, and there will be critiques. But we'll also be viewing image-making in movies. We will look at the idea of drawing that extends beyond the borders of a piece of paper, into the viewer's space. We will explore the process of art-making in terms of what we hold precious and what we're willing and/or forced to let go of.

"Sometimes it's a good idea to continue drawing until you run out of paper. Once the notion of producing something 'special' is abandoned, the liberation that follows may yet yield something halfway decent, somewhere else on the page." – John Cuneo, illustrator

Art-making: You will have finished artwork due at every scheduled critique. With the exception of the four set assignments, your work 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 be afraid to bring in pieces that you believe are 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 don't follow an expected course. While I expect each of you to remain your own harshest critic when it comes to your artwork, we sometimes don't readily see what is right in front of us. Lastly, I would strongly suggest that you maintain a sketchbook throughout the semester and forever.

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.

Movies: We will be viewing and discussing four movies this semester: Citizen Kane, The Seventh Seal, Ikiru, and The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari. If there is enough time, there may be a fifth movie to view.

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

- **100 Autobiographical Drawings**
- **Reworked Drawing** – A drawing that you will work on for the entire semester, reworking as the semester progresses. You will bring the drawing to every critique and must change/destroy at least 50% of the drawing in each incarnation. Each version of the drawing must be documented digitally in a PDF file, to be submitted/viewed at the end of the semester. There needs to be a minimum of eight variations of this drawing. This assignment begins after the 100 Autobiographical Drawings assignment.
- **Most Beautiful Drawing/Ugliest Drawing** – Create two drawings: one that is the most beautiful drawing you can create, and one that is the ugliest drawing you can create.
- **Group Drawing Project** – You will be assigned into groups, and will use a portion of the building as your “canvas”. The final results may not be permanent, and the materials used can be fugitive, moveable, temporary, etc. One or more of the following words must be considered when coming up with the concept for the work:

Compliance	Curiosity	Direct	Educate
Engage	Hinder	Obfuscate	Redirect

- **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 work 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 14. You will receive those portfolios back, with a final grade evaluation, during our final exam time on December 19.

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, with most of it going to various papers. You'll be receiving: charcoal paper, watercolor paper, Strathmore 400 drawing paper, RiverPoint paper, Utrecht American Masters printmaking paper, a set of gouache paints and India ink. Not a bad haul for your forty bucks.

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

Cell Phones are not allowed, period. This includes phone calls and text messaging. I don't want phones in the class at all. If I see anyone texting during class, you'll be asked to leave and will be marked as absent. If you have an emergency situation, let me know and accommodations may be made.

Ask: If you are in need of 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 11:30 to 12:30. I am around all day on Mondays and Wednesdays, so you can try and catch me before or after classes, but if I'm prepping for class, 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 is #5, which takes place on Monday, December 19th, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

I do not want to die...until I have faithfully made the most of my talent and cultivated the seed that was placed in me until the last small twig has grown.

• Käthe Kollwitz

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

Unfiltered Thinking: Why We All Should Sketch More

Take a look around your agency, studio, office, collective—whatever you call your place of work—and you will see that something is missing. There is a noticeable lack of sketching and doodling. I'm not talking about the kind of beautiful drawing that is done by a professional illustrator, requiring a specialized knowledge of form—this seems to be alive and well. I'm referring to the kind of sketching that designers, writers and other creative professionals use to formulate scattered thoughts into something visual. The kind of sketching that helps creatives work through new ideas and communicate them to peers.

I understand all of the very logical factors that have led to this happening. From the improved technology that allows us to mock up ideas faster on a computer than we ever have before or simply the fact that we as humans rarely hold a pen or pencil anymore. In some cases, we are even faced with peers or internal decision makers that do not have the ability to see past a poorly drawn thumbnail sketch. For these people, they just won't know if it is the right approach until they see it mocked up or better yet "they'll know it when they see it." With that said, I find myself on a current quest to bring back the thumbnail sketch and all of the sloppy, unfiltered thinking that goes along with it.

A dumping ground for thoughts

If we are evaluating ideas in our heads and then jumping straight to the computer, we are putting a lot of faith in our own ability to determine if an idea is worthwhile. Sketching allows you to work through your thoughts in a very fast way, while keeping record of them along the way. It is a process that allows us to dump out the contents of our brains in a way that leaves the ideas highly malleable or ready for the trash bin—whichever is most appropriate. Ideas are far less precious when they are scribbled down on paper. Countless times I've seen designers jump right into designing a solution on the computer, spending hours pushing pixels around only to be told that their concept is off strategy—but it looks nice, even if it is worthless. Now imagine if all those hours were spent with a #2 pencil doodling a copious amount of thumbnails and bouncing the ideas off colleagues. The concepts that are off strategy, unoriginal or just plain boring get scrapped and the ideas that have promise make it to the computer. Efficiency is gained and the work is stronger in the end.

The strengthening of ideas

Even the process of presenting an idea to your peers using only a thumbnail sketch is an excellent way to sharpen the idea and your pitch of the idea. If you can inspire your colleagues while merely talking through the merits of a lousy thumbnail sketch, imagine what you will be able to do when you're in the board room pitching the idea to the client with a tightly designed comp. Sketching should be an integral part of the process that shapes thoughts into ideas. Those ideas ultimately become real tangible things, whether it is an app, website, print ad, television commercial, poster, t-shirt, product—you get the idea.

You don't even have to be good at it to be good at it.

Most people stop drawing at a young age when they start to lose confidence in their ability to draw. The art of sketching can be freeing when you realize that the final product does not have to be a representational masterpiece—you do not need to have the rendering ability of da Vinci. In fact, your sketches should be rough and most importantly quick as you work through ideas with a goal of quantity over quality. Think of it like a note taker's shorthand, you just need enough recognizable bits to decipher when the time comes. Don't get me wrong, I am the first one to gush over beautifully drawn user journeys, wireframes or storyboards, but ultimately it is only the thinking behind it that matters. Last time I checked, industry award shows like Cannes have yet to include a category for "best thumbnail sketch"—because that is not what it's about.

In an increasingly automated world, computer aided design has helped us work faster and with higher quality. But, what good is it if we are delivering only half-baked ideas—really fast? So join me in grabbing a Sharpie, mechanical pencil, quill pen or whatever your tool of choice is and start sketching all of the good, bad and ugly ideas in your head.

Art 303/403 Int/Adv Drawing - Semester Schedule

Fall 2016

Week 1	Wed. 9/7	Class intro. First assignment: 100 Autobiographical Drawings. Due on Wednesday 9/14.
Week 2	Mon. 9/12	No class
	Wed. 9/14	100 Autobiographical Drawings due. Critique.
Week 3	Mon. 9/19	Movie – <i>Citizen Kane</i> . Bring sketchbook
	Wed. 9/21	Discussion and workday.
Week 4	Mon. 9/26	Workday
	Wed. 9/28	Workday
Week 5	Mon. 10/3	Critique. Continuously reworked drawing
	Wed. 10/5	Workday.
Week 6	Mon. 10/10	Movie – <i>The Seventh Seal</i> . Bring sketchbook
	Wed. 10/12	Discussion & workday.
Week 7	Mon. 10/17	Critique. Most Beautiful Drawing/Ugliest Drawing + continuously reworked drawing
	Wed. 10/19	No class.
Week 8	Mon. 10/24	Workday.
	Wed. 10/26	Workday and Critique. Portfolios due. Group ideas due, including space usage
Week 9	Mon. 10/31	Midterm meetings
	Wed. 11/2	Midterm meetings
Week 10	Mon. 11/7	Movie – <i>Ikiru</i> . Bring sketchbook
	Wed. 11/9	<i>Ikiru</i> continued. Discussion. Workday.
Week 11	Mon. 11/14	Critique + Group Projects workday.
	Wed. 11/16	Group Projects workday.
Week 12	Mon. 11/21	Group Projects critique
	Wed. 11/23	No class
Week 13	Mon. 11/28	Workday
	Wed. 11/30	Workday
Week 14	Mon. 12/5	Critique + continuously reworked drawing
	Wed. 12/7	Movie – <i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i> .. Bring sketchbook. Discussion.
Week 15	Mon. 12/12	Workday.
	Wed. 12/14	Final critique + continuously reworked drawing. Final portfolios are due
Final Exam	Mon. 12/19	Exam #5 – 8:00-10:00 Studio Clean-up and discussion