

Art 334/434 - Int/Adv Painting

Rob Stolzer
Office: 188
Office Hours:
M/W 1:15-2:00
or by appointment

Art 334 and Art 434 are the intermediate and advanced level painting classes. These are upper level courses, with the expectation that your work be self-generated in thoughtful, meaningful, and *challenging* ways. The classes are less assignment-driven than the beginning painting class, which means that you will have to assign yourself the work that you *need* to execute, to tackle your own serious motivations and concepts. This is not a class for hobbyists and this is not an opportunity to generate artwork as holiday gifts. This class will help you foster the means to explore, examine and develop your own ideas, bringing them to life (or sometimes death) in paint.

I expect accountability from you in this class, that your work here does not get pushed aside by classes with more structured assignments and deadlines. That means you should not pushing yourself to create work specifically for critiques, but are challenging yourself to create work consistently throughout the semester. I expect that you will be pushing your work to its limits, rather than playing it safe. I also expect that you will be delving into areas of unfamiliarity, rather than painting about what you already know. Even if you are preparing for the BFA Exhibition. In the end, it's about constantly challenging yourself and your process of art-making. Learn how to make yourself uncomfortable in your work. Allow your work to fail and learn from that failure. Tell your story, warts and all.

Instructions for living a life:

Pay attention.

Be astonished.

Tell about it.

Excerpt from *Sometimes*, by Mary Oliver

- **Statement:** Write a one-page, no bullshit statement about your specific goals for the class, related to your *concepts*, *techniques* and *work schedule*. This statement needs to be succinct, and should be broken down into the three elements mentioned above. One paragraph per element is sufficient. PLEASE NOTE: when it comes to concepts, broad statements such as, “I want to try abstract painting”, or “I want to paint still-lives” are not concepts at all. They are declarations of subject matter you may want to touch on in the class, but they do not address the issue of concept. Concepts are ideas based upon things that are meaningful to you. What are ideas are important to you? Why are they important to you? You all have a story to tell. Tell it.

Please email these statements to me *no later than* Thursday, January 24, by 5:00 pm.

- **Semester Schedule:** You’ll find a semester schedule at the end of the syllabus. The schedule is not set in stone, but gives you a good idea of the timeline for this semester. Please keep track of any pertinent dates and deadlines and be prepared for class.
- **Alternate Surfaces:** I would strongly suggest that each of you maintain a non-precious surface (or surfaces) to work on during the semester. A stretched canvas can often feel too formal/final, where a sheet of newsprint paper seems more disposable, allowing, possibly, for more risk-taking.
- **Presentations:** A Work of Art You Hate/A Work of Art You Love. Show two pieces of artwork (not your own) to the class; one you hate and one you love.

- **Readings:** We will have readings to discuss as a class. Please refer to the semester schedule for the dates.
- **Critiques:** Your involvement in critiques is important to the person whose work you're critiquing, as well as to yourself. The critique process allows others to see their work through different and objective eyes. It also allows the one critiquing to objectively formulate thoughts and ideas about the work of others, which may lead to more objectivity when thinking about one's own work. You are expected to attend all days of all critiques, even if your work was critiqued on the first day. Missing a critique day will count as two absences. Only completed, new work will be critiqued during the scheduled critiques.
- **Demonstrations:** A valuable part of working in a classroom community is the ability to learn from each other. This isn't a competition. As you watch someone paint, try and learn from them, just as others may learn from you. If you would like to learn more about a particular technique and/or medium, ask. At a minimum, I'll point you in the right direction, or will arrange for a demo.
- **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 of the paintings you produce. 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 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 readings/discussions, critiques, or presentations, please be prepared for a lower final grade.

I will meet with you individually at mid-term, and again at the end of the semester, to discuss your half-semester grades. Those two grades will be averaged out, to give you an indication of your final grade. Any grade demotion due to absences or lack of preparation will be applied after your final individual meeting. For example, if your averaged grade from your two meetings is a "B", but you had two unexcused absences over the course of the semester, your final grade will be a "C+". If you would like to talk with me about your in-progress grade at any time during the semester, just ask. I'll be glad to talk with you at any time.

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. As mentioned above, if you miss a critique day, that will count as a double-absence. Two late arrivals (of more than 15 minutes) will equal one absence. Please be on time.

Please note: in my classes, family and mental health issues take priority over school. 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.

Material Handling, Storage and Disposal: 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 paints 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.

For oil painters, please use the small metal cans to store your Gamsol solvent. The small size will mean needing to get clean solvent more often, but you can always purchase a larger can. All other mediums that you are keeping on your own must be clearly labeled. **Do not pour solvents or other mediums down the sink.** They are to be disposed of in the containers within the smaller yellow safety cabinet. **Paints do not go into the sink either.** If you are cleaning off your palette, use the red garbage can to dispose of the old paint, as well as your solvent/medium soaked rags. Used Neutral Thin goes into one of the carboys in the smaller yellow safety cabinet. Please keep the lids on all of your solvents and mediums when not in active use. Lastly, the exhaust system must remain on at ALL times.

This Studio is a shared space. Please be mindful of other students' paintings and property while you're using the studio. But please know that you are ultimately responsible for your own work. Leave work out and about at your own risk.

Your **Lab Fees** are hard at work for you. You'll be receiving: Neo Megilp glaze medium, canvas, Gamsol paint thinner/cleaner, linseed oil, stand oil, drying mediums (Japan dryer, Copal dryer), gesso, acrylic mediums (matte and gloss), RiverPoint paper, cold wax medium, and wood. Gamsol an excellent thinner. It's produced by Gamblin and while it is a petrol product, it's much safer than traditional solvents. It's even safer than the popular citrus solvents, without the strong orange odor.

Cell Phones will be allowed for reference and music, but not for texting or phone calls.

Contacting Rob: I have scheduled office hours on Mondays and Wednesday from 1:15 to 2:00. If you cannot meet during my office hours, scheduling appointments works best, especially for lengthier appointments. 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.

Facebook: While I appreciate friend requests on Facebook, I don't accept them from current students. Nothing personal, but it allows me to keep my private and professional lives separate. Once you've graduated, feel to fire off those friend requests if you so desire.

Final Exam: Our final takes place on Wednesday, May 15, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

The Summer Day

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean-
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down-
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?

Week 1	Tues. 1/22 Thurs. 1/24	Course introduction; syllabus. Statements are due by Thursday, January 24, by 5:00 pm. Studio Workday.
Week 2	Tues. 1/29 Thurs. 1/31	Studio Workday. Studio Workday.
Week 3	Tues. 2/5 Thurs. 2/7	Studio Workday. Studio Workday.
Week 4	Tues. 2/12 Thurs. 2/14	Group Critique. Group Critique.
Week 5	Tues. 2/19 Thurs. 2/21	Studio Workday. Readings.
Week 6	Tues. 2/26 Thurs. 2/28	Studio Workday. Studio Workday.
Week 7	Tues. 3/5 Thurs. 3/7	A Work of Art You Hate/A Work of Art You Love Presentations. Mid-Semester Meetings.
Week 8	Tues. 3/12 Thurs. 3/14	Mid-Semester Meetings. Mid-Semester Meetings.
SPRING	BREAK!	SPRING BREAK! SPRING BREAK! SPRING BREAK! SPRING BREAK!
Week 9	Tues. 3/26 Thurs. 3/28	Studio Workday. Studio Workday.
Week 10	Tues. 4/2 Thurs. 4/4	Readings Studio Workday.
Week 11	Tues. 4/9 Thurs. 4/11	Group Critique. Group Critique.
Week 12	Tues. 4/16 Thurs. 4/18	Group Critique. Studio Workday.
Week 13	Tues. 4/23 Thurs. 4/25	Studio Workday. Studio Workday.
Week 14	Tues. 4/30 Thurs. 5/2	Studio Workday. Studio Workday.
Week 15	Tues. 5/7 Thurs. 5/9	Final Individual Meetings Final Individual Meetings
Final Exam	Wed. 5/15	8:00-10:00 – Mandatory Studio Clean-up and Student Evaluations

“Or else just do it to the best of your abilities, your talents, and then don't justify or make excuses. Don't complain, don't explain.” ● Raymond Carver