

Art 334/434 - Int/Adv Painting

Rob Stolzer
Ext. 4065
Office: 188
Office Hours:
T/Th 11:30-12:30
or by appointment

Trust yourself.

Fuck perfection.

Art 334 and Art 434 are the intermediate and advanced level painting classes. As these are upper level courses, they are less assignment driven, with the expectation that your work be self-generated in a thoughtful and meaningful way. This does not mean that it will be easy work. The lack of formal assignments means that you will have to assign yourself the work you need to execute; to tackle your own serious motivations and concepts. Let me emphasize the last part of the previous sentence: **...to tackle your own serious motivations and concepts**. This isn't a class for hobbyists. This isn't an opportunity to generate artwork as holiday gifts. This class will foster the means to explore, examine and develop your own ideas, bringing them to life (or sometimes death) in paint. Georgia O'Keeffe said, "I don't understand – I get shapes in my head – can never make them exactly like I want to – but there is a fascination about trying –"

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. I expect that you will be pushing your work to its limits, rather than playing it safe. I expect that you'll be delving into areas of unfamiliarity, rather than painting about what you already know. As O'Keeffe alluded to, embrace the "...fascination about trying". In the end, it's about challenging yourselves. Remaining on comfortable ground may feel safe and sound, but comfort rarely leads to new discoveries or new directions in your work.

Some thoughts to consider:

In the end it all comes down to this: you have a choice (or more accurately a rolling tangle of choices) between giving your work your best shot and risking that it will not make you happy, or not giving it your best shot—and thereby *guaranteeing* that it will not make you happy. It becomes a choice between certainty and uncertainty. And curiously, uncertainty is the comforting choice.

• David Bayles & Ted Orland *Art & Fear*

"It's not that the creative act and the critical act are simultaneous. It's more like you blurt something out and then analyze it." • Robert Motherwell

"In yourself right now is all the place you've got." • Flannery O'Connor, from *Wise Blood*

- **Statement:** Write a one-page 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. 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. As you develop your concepts, I want you to delve into the "why" behind your motivations and explorations. The following questions may be helpful to you as you think about how to construct your statement, but you certainly don't have to specifically answer all of the questions in your statements:

1. What do you most want to address in your work?
2. What do you value most in your work?
3. Is perfection important to you? If so, why so?
4. What are the largest obstacles in the making of your work?
5. What stops you from making your best work?
6. Who do you listen to most when it comes to your work?
7. What is most important for you to achieve in your work?
8. Are you ever afraid to take a chance in your work? If so, what do you fear?
9. Do you care too much about what other people think of your work?
10. Is it more important to paint something to look realistic, or to convey an important concept?

Please email these statements to me no later than Friday, September 9, by 3:00 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.

- **Group Research Assignments:** Each group will be responsible for researching and presenting on a different aspect of post-undergraduate life as an artist. I will ask that each group choose a group leader to coordinate the activities. Research information will be presented to the class, both verbally and visually, and in digital and hard copy format. Some of you are already undertaking aspects of this research, but as the saying goes, more hands makes less work. The focus of each group will be as follows:

- **Exhibitions**

- Galleries
- Retail locations
- Private businesses
- Public/city/state buildings
- Submission procedures
- Pop-up galleries
- Juried exhibitions
 - ❖ Resources for prospectuses
- Invitational Exhibitions

- **Graduate School**

- Gather faculty, alumni, and friends' experiences (what to look for, avoid, etc.)
- Various portfolio requirements
- Teaching Assistantship (TA) possibilities
- Scholarships and TA remuneration
- Acceptance rates
- Breadth and depth of programs
 - ❖ Please be sure to address programs from different parts of the country (and abroad?)

- **Art Residencies**

- List of residencies available in different parts of the state, country and world
 - ❖ Specify the different varieties of residencies that include art-making
 - ❖ Length of residencies
- Query faculty, alumni and friends about residencies they have taken part in
- Typical submission procedures
- Scholarship possibilities
- Residency resources

- **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.

Since the studio workdays involve discussion about in-progress work, only completed work will be critiqued during the scheduled group crits. You are required to have new, finished work at each critique. If you do not have new, finished work available for the scheduled critique, you will not be allowed to participate, will be marked absent, and will be docked one-half a final letter grade.

- **Readings:** We will have a number of readings for this class. Please refer to the class schedule for the pertinent discussion dates. *Most importantly, read the assigned writings.*
- **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'd 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. *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.

Material Handling, Storage and Disposal: Please be sure to label all of your containers. The containers **MUST** have tight fitting lids. I will not supply solvents or other painting mediums to students who do not have proper containers. Solvents cannot be stored in plastic containers, so please make sure to have glass or metal ones. You should probably not store your solvents or mediums in your lockers, or everything you own will reek of them. Use the taborets that are supplied in the painting studio. ***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 NeutralThin goes into one of the carboys in the smaller yellow safety cabinet. We'll be attempting to recycle used NeutralThin once the sediment has settled. Please keep the lids on all of your solvents and mediums when not in active use. Lastly, whenever you work in this studio, you **MUST** have the exhaust system turned on.

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.

The Wood Shop remains one of the busiest spaces in the department. When another class is actively using the shop, please do not intrude upon them. Ask Keith, or the teacher of the particular class, if it would be okay for you to use certain pieces of equipment. There will be open hours scheduled for the shop, so please make use of them. As always, I'll be more than glad to help anyone with stretcher building. If you would like a stretcher building demo, just ask.

Your **Lab Fees** are hard at work for you. You'll be receiving: Liquin glaze medium, canvas, Neutral Thin paint thinner/cleaner, linseed oil, stand oil, drying mediums (Japan dryer, Copal dryer), gesso, acrylic mediums (matte and gloss), rosin paper, and hand cleaner. Neutral Thin has proven itself to be an excellent thinner. It's produced by Eco-House 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.

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

Cell Phones are not allowed in the classroom. This includes making/receiving phone calls and text messaging. 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. Heard about encaustic, but don't have a clue as to what it is? Ask away. Be proactive. Don't always wait for me to suggest things to try, but check out what others are doing and take a chance.

Contacting Rob: I have scheduled office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:30 to 12:30. I'm 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.

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 exam is #6, which takes place on Monday, December 19, from 10:15 to 12:15.

For Tess

Out on the Strait the water is whitecapping,
as they say here. It's rough, and I'm glad
I'm not out. Glad I fished all day
on Morse Creek, casting a red Daredevil back
and forth. I didn't catch anything. No bites
even, not one. But it was okay. It was fine!
I carried your dad's pocketknife and was followed
for a while by a dog its owner called Dixie.
At times I felt so happy I had to quit
fishing. Once I lay on the bank with my eyes closed,
listening to the sound the water made,
and to the wind in the tops of the trees. The same wind
that blows out on the Strait, but a different wind, too.
For a while I even let myself imagine I had died –
and that was all right, at least for a couple
of minutes, until it really sank in: *Dead*.
As I was lying there with my eyes closed,
just after I'd imagined what it might be like
if in fact I never got up again, I thought of you.
I opened my eyes then and got right up
and went back to being happy again.
I'm grateful to you, you see. I wanted to tell you.

Week 1	Wed. 9/7	Course introduction; syllabus. Statements are due to me on Friday 9/9 by 3:00 pm.
Week 2	Mon. 9/12	Studio Workday
	Wed. 9/14	Studio Workday.
Week 3	Mon. 9/19	Readings & Studio Workday
	Wed. 9/21	Studio Workday
Week 4	Mon. 9/26	Studio Workday
	Wed. 9/28	Studio Workday
Week 5	Mon. 10/3	Group Critique
	Wed. 10/5	Group Critique
Week 6	Mon. 10/10	Studio Workday
	Wed. 10/12	Readings & Studio Workday
Week 7	Mon. 10/17	Presentations – Graduate Schools
	Wed. 10/19	Studio Workday
Week 8	Mon. 10/24	Mid-semester Individual Meetings
	Wed. 10/26	Mid-semester Individual Meetings
Week 9	Mon. 10/31	Mid-semester Individual Meetings
	Wed. 11/2	Studio Workday
Week 10	Mon. 11/7	Presentations – Exhibition Possibilities
	Wed. 11/9	Studio Workday
Week 11	Mon. 11/14	Group Critique
	Wed. 11/16	Group Critique
Week 12	Mon. 11/21	Readings & Studio Workday
	Wed. 11/23	No Class
Week 13	Mon. 11/28	Studio Workday
	Wed. 11/30	Presentations – Artist Residencies
Week 14	Mon. 12/5	Studio Workday
	Wed. 12/7	Studio Workday – Possible Group Critique
Week 15	Mon. 12/12	Final Individual Meetings.
	Wed. 12/14	Final Individual Meetings.
Final Exam	Mon. 12/19	Exam #6 – 10:15-12:15 – Student Evaluations & Mandatory Studio Clean-up.