

# Art 334/434 - Int/Adv Painting

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Office: 188  
Office Hours:  
T/Th 1:30-2:00  
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 also less assignment-driven, 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 are 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. In the end, it's about constantly challenging yourself and your process of art-making. Knowing what comes next may help you remain on comfortable ground. That knowledge may allow you to feel safe and sound in the work you create, but comfort rarely leads to new discoveries or new directions in your work or life. Learn how to make yourself uncomfortable in your work. Allow your work to fail, and then challenge yourself to make it better. Let your passion be your fuel.

“A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for.” – John A. Shedd, from *Salt from My Attic*

- **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. Please do answer the following in your statements:

What three things do you do well in your work?

What three things do you need to improve upon in your work?

Please email these statements to me no later than Friday, September 7, by 2:00 pm.

“When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.” – Viktor Frankl

- **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.

- **Beater Canvas:** Each of you will maintain a beater stretched canvas or prepared wood panel for the entirety of the semester. The dimension of this piece will be no smaller than 24"x36" and its sole purpose is full and unrestrained experimentation. Fear color? Attack your beater canvas with as much color as you can. Stink at painting hands? Paint good ones, crummy ones, black, white, and orange ones on your beater canvas. Not sure what to paint? Take it out on your beater canvas. It doesn't care what you paint. It only cares that you paint. You should paint on your beater canvas nearly every class session and outside of class as well. To be prepped and ready to go by Wednesday, September 12. I will hold surprise quick-crits to look at these.
- **Presentations:** Each of you will be responsible for a presentation on the work of a contemporary female painter. I will assign the painters whose work you'll be researching and presenting. The presentation must consist of a minimum of 15 good-sized images, information (medium, year of creation, size, etc.) related to the works shown, the artist's concepts as they relate to the work, and brief biographical information. The vast majority of artwork chosen must be from the last 25 years (or the last 15 of the artist's life, if she is deceased). If you find appropriate video, it may be embedded into the presentation or linked. The research for your presentation must come from a minimum of three documented sources, but the writing must be your own. No plagiarizing from Wiki sources and the like. A bibliography of your sources must be submitted either before, or immediately following your presentation.

Please be sure to keep your presentation format simple. No bells, no whistles. No music, fancy fade-ins or outs. Please use neutral or white backgrounds. If reading from notes, please work from external text, as opposed to reading directly from your projected presentation.

- **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.

Given that we have so many folks in this class, large-scale critiques can be long, and at times, counter-productive. While I believe it's important for everyone to see the work generated in the class, I would like to try a different approach to critiques this semester. We will still have at least two full-class critiques, but will have a number of small optional group critiques, which I hope will generate more in-depth and meaningful discussion.

Since the studio workdays involve discussion about in-progress work, only completed 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 following 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 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:** 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 Neutral Thin 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: Liquin 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. 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. You'll notice that we're moving towards the smaller, personal-size containers of material. While not as cost-effective, these are recommended by the health and safety expert who visited the departed last year.

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

**Contacting Rob:** I have scheduled office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:30 to 2:00. 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.

**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 Tuesday, December 18, from 10:15 to 12:15.

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| <b>Week 1</b>     | Wed. 9/5                 | Course introduction; syllabus. Statements are due by Friday, September 7, by 2:00.  |
| <b>Week 2</b>     | Wed. 9/10<br>Mon. 9/12   | Studio Workday.<br>Studio Workday.  |
| <b>Week 3</b>     | Mon. 9/17<br>Wed. 9/19   | Studio Workday.<br>Studio Workday.  |
| <b>Week 4</b>     | Mon. 9/24<br>Wed. 9/26   | Studio Workday.<br><b>Group Critique.</b>   |
| <b>Week 5</b>     | Mon. 10/1<br>Wed. 10/3   | <b>Group Critique</b><br>Studio Workday.  |
| <b>Week 6</b>     | Mon. 10/8<br>Wed. 10/10  | <b>Presentations:</b> Beto, Kunutson, Madison, Niksa, Peterson, Rodriquez<br>Studio Workday.  |
| <b>Week 7</b>     | Mon. 10/15<br>Wed. 10/17 | Studio Workday. <b>Optional Small Group Critique.</b><br>Studio Workday.  |
| <b>Week 8</b>     | Mon. 10/22<br>Wed. 10/24 | <b>Mid-Semester Meetings.</b><br><b>Mid-Semester Meetings.</b>  |
| <b>Week 9</b>     | Mon. 10/29<br>Wed. 10/31 | <b>Mid-Semester Meetings.</b><br>Studio Workday.  |
| <b>Week 10</b>    | Mon. 11/5<br>Wed. 11/7   | <b>Presentations:</b> Somers, Stevenson, Sweeney, Vahradian, Burk, Falk<br>Studio Workday. <b>Optional Small Group Critique.</b>      |
| <b>Week 11</b>    | Mon. 11/12<br>Wed. 11/14 | Studio Workday.<br><b>Group Critique.</b>   |
| <b>Week 12</b>    | Mon. 11/19<br>Wed. 11/21 | <b>Group Critique.</b><br>Studio Workday.   |
| <b>Week 13</b>    | Mon. 11/26<br>Wed. 11/28 | <b>Presentations:</b> Feuker, Lattimore, Lech, Masini, Neuner, Ochs<br><b>Presentations:</b> Ratchman, Rodriguez, Sella, Wang, Zanter |
| <b>Week 14</b>    | Mon. 12/3<br>Wed. 12/5   | Studio Workday.<br>Studio Workday. <b>Optional Small Group Critique.</b>  |
| <b>Week 15</b>    | Mon. 12/10<br>Wed. 12/12 | <b>Final Individual Meetings.</b><br><b>Final Individual Meetings.</b> Additional meetings can be scheduled after this date.          |
| <b>Final Exam</b> | Tues. 12/18              | <b>Mandatory Studio Clean-up and Student Course Evaluations.</b>  |