

Art205: 2D Synthesis
Art Department
Rhode Island College
Doug Bosch

Course Description

The aim of this course has two connected outcomes. The first is to blend the largely separate tracks of drawing (accurate observation and manual discipline) and design (visual construction strategies and visual problem solving). The second directed outcome is for students to develop a strong and individual personal direction, a visual expression that is driven from within the student, sparked by in-class exercises and lectures. The student is challenged to examine, practice and then exploit in-class material, all toward developing a personal 2D vision that is distinctive and resonate with the student's individual sensibilities. Students will be challenged to address technical and conceptual weaknesses and students will be directed on how to exploit their strengths while generating project ideas, direction and momentum.

Course Introduction

Students must arrive on time and be prepared to work in class as well as complete outside assignments by deadline dates. Students taking the course for credit should plan to attend all lectures, critiques and demonstrations. Unexcused absences exceeding two will affect your final grade, lowering it 1/3 of a letter grade for each unexcused absence exceeding two. Students who have accumulated more than two unexcused absences by the midterm evaluation may automatically be removed from the course at the Professor's discretion. Students who exceed a total of four unexcused absences over the course of the semester may automatically fail the course at the Professor's discretion. Students who arrive on time and remain in class for the full session and who are prepared for the day's work will be recorded as PRESENT. Students who miss any portion of the session that does not exceed 30 minutes will be marked LATE. Students who miss more than 30 minutes of any session will be marked ABSENT. Two LATEs combine to equal one ABSENCE. A petition for having an absence excused must be supported by some form of documentation (traffic ticket, doctor's note, court document, etc.).

Students should plan to keep notes at all times and perform research related to their projects and participate in all group discussions and critiques. There is a high degree of student self-direction expected in this course. There will be group and/or individual critiques every week. In order for students to remain in good standing they must be prepared with completed work for these critiques. Every student will have an individual critique around the middle of the term. Students are always encouraged to make appointments with me throughout the semester for additional individual feedback and guidance on their work. A student who maintains the required attendance, completes all projects on time and to the best of their abilities, participates in all critiques and

discussions and who demonstrates an earnest attempt to learn can expect to earn a minimum of “C” in this course.

A labor-intensive and exhaustive degree of enthusiasm and ingenuity is stressed in this class. Students must strive to push beyond the “familiar.” This course is titled “Synthesis” because students are synthesizing, or combining, real/observed/measurable information with imagined visual concepts and constructions. This endeavor more closely mirrors the artist in his studio than do the separate disciplines of beginning drawing and design. There is a strong “laboratory” component to this course which acts as a segue between freshman academic exercises and advanced independent/individual research. Students will be directed to steer through literal subject matter and into invented image construction. You will explore methods of determining subject matter as well as developing that subject matter. Out-of-class research will be toilsome at times due to the complex nature of this course and also because the student will be on more of a self-directed path than they experienced in their freshman year. For the typical student the high degree of imagination and sheer work necessary to push through obvious solutions will present both obstacle and muse. Group reviews and discussions will be conducted in Socratic fashion.

Students should think of this class as a drawing class, in a broad sense. Fundamentally you will be creating images by hand. Students will work with traditional drawing materials as well as non-traditional materials in an effort to expand one’s understanding of drawing and image making. Students will explore the combining of various media into one image, working with a variety of papers and grounds and exploring various methods of working the surface. Students will visit various types of subject matter and positions toward subject matter. Students will address scale possibilities, both of the subject and the image format. Both investigative (open-ended/non-directed [play]) exploration and controlled (directed/focused/choreographed) experimentation earns high value in this course.

Course Structure

This class meets twice a week for three hours each. There will be session work each class. The work will vary considerably. Each class will usually involve a large period of drawing. In-class work will regularly involve the nude model as well as still life components. The in-class drawing portion of the class will be broken up by group critiques, individual critiques, slide presentations and discussions. Homework is generally given at the second session of the week and due at the very next class after the weekend. Weekly there will be a group discussion of student work, whether it is in progress or finished.

Course Work

Students will design four major projects during the semester. These projects will build off of session exercises, lectures, reference artists/writings and more. With each project there will be some parameters and criteria, designed to help students ignite an individual

idea as well as filter out endless possibilities. At each meeting there will be in-class work, hereafter referred to as session work. Always bring drawing materials to every class. Students will find that keeping a sketchbook, by any definition, is an asset in this class. Students should be enrolled in a 2D studio course simultaneous with this one (Photo I, Graphic Design I, Printmaking I, Painting I). Students are encouraged to integrate these media and techniques into projects in various manners, such as preliminary studies or as collage elements, etc.

Slide Workshop

All students are required to attend the slide workshop which is organized in conjunction with this course. It meets separately from class time and is conducted by a photography faculty member. This workshop involves approximately 8 hours of instruction. A sign-up sheet will be made available sometime in the first month of the semester.

Supplies List

Plan to use all of your drawing materials including graphite, charcoal, ink, conte, etc. Plan to use a few different types of papers. Plan to scrounge for some found materials as well. Being observant and resourceful will open possibilities. Since students are expected to simultaneously be enrolled in a 2D Studio I course, it is appropriate that students integrate materials and techniques from these courses with their Synthesis work.

General Grading Considerations

1. Improvement
 - A. On the individual problems: How far the concept has been developed.
 - B. From assignment to assignment:
 - a. For midterm and final grade, the overall grade curve will be considered. If there is a clear pattern either upward or downwards the grades on the final problems may be adjusted.
 - b. If there is no clear grade pattern, a numerical average will determine the final grade.
2. Quality of concept.
3. Quality of execution.
4. Participation in critiques and class discussions.

Breakdown of End of Semester Grading by percentages

Session Work-----	30%
Out-of-Session Projects-----	45%
Evidence of Research -----	10%
Involvement in Discussions-----	15%