

Art 160, FALL 2013

VISUAL THINKING

Meeting Time / Place:

Monday and Wednesday 8:30-10:20
Second floor west Studios, Dana Fine Arts Building

Instructor:

Nell Ruby, x 5458
Office: Dana 115
Office hours: Tuesday and Wednesday 2:30-3:15, and by appointment



My teaching methods and all of the projects in this course are designed so that you will be successful, at any level of experience. No matter where you are starting, my aim is for you to develop your skills and your thinking. If you are outrageously skilled, your task is to hone and into your voice. If you are starting from zero, or less than zero, you are in an excellent position to improve! I like to have a range of experience in a single classroom. I find that "advanced" students can learn a great deal from beginners, and beginners can go everywhere.

*Your major responsibility is to be open to new experiences, to explore materials and concepts and most importantly, to be **CURIOUS**. I am looking for you to contribute your own energy and mindfulness to the class community. Every class has a personality that is shaped by the generosity of spirit of the random members that make it up. Give and take responsibly, fervently and with joy.*

Class Contract:

By continuing in this class you agree to participate in the following methods for creating a great studio art experience:

*** Make your classroom into a space where you want to be (creative)**

We will collaborate to form an environment that provides an atmosphere where each person feels safe, free and excited to explore. (*This serves well our goal of being curious*)

We will use the skill of peer acknowledgement and recognition generously and responsibly. (We are creating relationships with each other that are mutually beneficial)

We support one another in discovering where we fit into the classroom community and the wider world. Make connections between what you are learning and what you see all the time.

*** Practice looking**

Be disciplined about the practice of direct observation. Do this daily, and record it in some physical visual form. The more you practice looking/recording, the more you see/learn. NOTICE THINGS!

*** Establish skill sets**

Explore tools, equipment and materials. Be inventive and experimental in your approach for developing conceptual solutions. **PLAY!** (playing and **pleasure** are vital)

*** Respect verbal language**

We will identify and practice the language of visual signs. You will be encouraged to write and speak about perception often and in different venues. (Facebook! Blogging! Critique! Conversation!) Exchange ideas with your colleagues, on line, in line and anywhere else you can.

*** Recognize potential**

Your capacity to engage in the creative process is an attribute of being human! Your process is no different from that of Picasso, Einstein, Baryshnikov, Mozart, Snoop Dog, Noah and his Whales (your favorite artist/musician/writer/dancer/band here)...

*** Practice discernment over judgment**

The value of critical analysis is a healthy and necessary catalyst to creativity. Avoid the deprecating qualities of binary judgment, [that something can be only good or bad] which leads to cynicism and makes you run away from risk. Risk is a necessary component for growth and discovery. Failure doesn't exist. Only process. Judgment limits and closes down, discernment opens into infinite options and opportunities.

Speak and write about work positively, with substance and with skill. Be honest, direct, and kind. Value small tasks; identify and name specific qualities in each other's work and approach. Always consider a way for moving forward with your work, and look for paths and connections in the work of others.

*** Take time**

Value the time required to complete tasks, both tangible and intangible.

In the studio, make sure to schedule and recognize the importance of "mull time" – *sitting in quiet dialogue with the work*. You must spend time in the practice and experience of looking. (You will be surprised at what shows up.)

Respect a sense of timelessness, especially in relation to the frantically paced world in which we live. *Schedule time for reflection!*

*** Practice courage**

You will develop confidence in your creative process as you practice looking, and risk-taking.

Engage in creative activity and share personal experiences--especially fears (of the blank canvas, of being in the public eye, of being rewarded and reviewed—or not!).

Art 160 Course Description:

The study and exploration of design and drawing forms and techniques through the examination of line, form color and texture in relation to problems in composition, color theory, subject matter and space. Emphasis is on the **design process** and conceptual development. Media will span a range of materials and technology.

Course Goals:

At the end of this course students will:

- Demonstrate a systematic critical approach to the process of creating and evaluating visual imagery
- Be familiar and comfortable with the use the language of art (design elements and principles) applied to making, analyzing and critiquing work.
- Acquire and hone skills in a variety of media and techniques to make work
- Create an electronic portfolio (process log), and a habit of reflective thinking and writing
- Identify and express an individual vision and expressive style
- Gain insight into the range and variety of artistic approach
- Adopt a level of comfort with oral presentation
- Become comfortable with and encouraging of critical evaluation of art work based on careful visual observation and practical experience

Class Responsibilities:

Students are expected to participate fully in the class. This includes completing assignments on time, being prepared for class, attending class, doing outside assignments and readings and fully engaging in discussions and critiques.

Part of your evaluation will be a “citizenship” grade, which measures your energy expended in class. For example, I expect you to know and establish rapport with your classmates and to seek, share and extend your thoughtful analysis on your own work and the work of your peers. Listen well. Listening is an excellent skill to practice often. (Reap large benefits!). Also listen to yourself, *especially* your non-critical self. What?

Out-of-Class Responsibilities:

One of my goals is for you to make connections between what you are learning in class and the rest of your world. I am interested in your participation in the outside art world and taking advantage of what the city of Atlanta has to offer. Throughout the semester I will send information about local shows in galleries and museums. When you participate in (by attending) these community events, write/show a response in your process journal. You are **REQUIRED** to attend one on campus and one off campus event. But of course, the more you attend (and write/show about!) the better! The events that you participate in provide places for you to find relevance, connections and meaning for the project objectives and the course content.

Attendance:

You are expected to attend ALL class meetings. Much of your work will be done outside of class studio hours – you should plan to spend 2-6 hours per class working on projects outside of class. (4-12 hours/week.) Scheduled class time is for instructor input, questions and direction of your work. The nature of a studio class is that experiential learning. *It is impossible to make up missed work.* The “experience” of making art cannot be confined to two + hours in class studio time, and your technical and critical skills will build as you spend time with your work. Out of class “mull” time is as important as out of class “productive” time. Schedule time when you simply sit and observe. (This “counts” as productive out of class time, and should be noted in your process log.)

I will take daily attendance. You may miss two classes with no excuse, after that your final grade will decrease by 1/3 of a grade for each class you miss (for example from a B+ to a B). Similarly, leaving early and arriving late will be penalized. Three partial absences (arriving late or leaving early) will amount to a complete absence. Also, please keep in mind that it’s tacky to come late and leave early. **If you miss more than three classes (nine in-class hours) you will fail the course.**

Attendance at Critiques

Each project will contain at least one group discussion and one final critique. Critiques are the time when we look at, analyze, define and discuss in full the success and failures of an assignment. Having the work up on the wall for comparison is the most instructive time of the creative process. Critiques are an essential teaching tool for me, and therefore a profound learning opportunity for you. To ensure attendance, evaluative penalties exist for missing these essential days. If you miss a critique your grade will drop a full letter grade (from an A to a B). If you are late to a critique, or leave early your grade will decrease a third of a letter grade (for example from a B+ to a B). I have seven projects planned, however this may change depending on the pace/engagement of the class. Plan on 7 critiques. Specific dates of critique will be determined as precisely as possible, but are subject to change depending on circumstances. *If you know now that you will miss a class during the semester, please let me know via email ASAP, and I will not schedule a crit on that day.*

Moodle and email:

It is your responsibility to check email from me DAILY. I have found that I use email messages extensively for items that might be more useful for you to know ahead of time, for last minute bulletins and for information that you may need for class.

Cell phones and other non-class electronic devices:

Don't do it. Really. Just say no. Ringing, buzzing, looking at phones is tacky, and distracting and is one of the few things that makes me mad. In order to make a strong studio atmosphere **TURN YOUR PHONE OFF**. Not even to silent or vibrate. TURN IT OFF! I know it seems extreme. No texting, no emails, no calls. Imagine there's no cell phone, it's easy if you can, no beeps or screams or techno, or funny sounding man...imagine all the people listening with full brain...you whoooooo you may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one! I am providing an outlet strip as a charging station so that you can feel like at least there's something productive happening with your phone. (Please make sure the phone is turned to off/silent/no buzz. Pretend we are in church/temple/mosque/meditation room.) My preference is that you don't check messages even during the break, but to be without invasive technology for the 2 hour period.

Food

Snacks are OK, but don't bring meals to class, because you can't draw if you're using your hands to eat. Also, we work with charcoal and charcoal dust and ingesting the products we work with is probably not so healthy. If you want to have liquid it should be in a capped container, and PLEASE be careful about where you set things down. Art supplies are expensive

Texts in Use:

Claudia Betti and Teel Sale, *Drawing, A Contemporary Approach*, Thomson, Wadsworth
 Edmund Burke Feldman, *Varieties of Visual Experience*, Prentice Hall, Betty Edwards, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, Putnam Publishing
 Kendall Buster and Paula Crawford, *The Critique Handbook*, Pearson Prentice Hall
 And various as assigned, and read aloud in class

Projects evaluated:

- 40% Process Log (electronic portfolio)
- 5% off campus art event
- 5% on campus art events
- 40% in class projects (paper portfolio)
- 10% citizen grade (participation, discussion, attitude, attendance)

In general all work is evaluated on:

- Conceptual development
- Interpretation and application of design elements according to design principles
- Overall presentation (craft, explanation, research)
- Verbal (oral and written) engagement (questions and comments in crits and class)

Specifics of each assignment will be given at the beginning of the project, and for the most part posted on Moodle, unless the project is a straightforward in class still life drawing from direct observation. For out of class and more complicated assignments you will receive specific expectations of that assignment emailed and/or posted on Moodle.

Evaluation Criteria:

A: Excellent work

All work contains individual and original creative thought and exceeds project assignment parameters. All work has excellent craft. Work is turned in on or before the deadline. Project analysis is engaging, surprising and goes beyond the ordinary or obvious. Demonstrated depth and complexity in the use of design elements within a broad range of the principals of design. Evidence of exploration and growth in skills and knowledge. Clear risk-taking involved in project development and research.

B: Good work.

Work illustrates some creative thought over and above the project parameters. All work is neat, with few craft problems. All work is turned in by the deadline. Project analysis is

thorough, and shows that the student has attempted to engage complex use of design elements and principles.

C: Satisfactory work

Work satisfies the project parameters and shows some individual thought and creativity. Work is neat. Most deadlines were met. Project analysis is competent but not sophisticated. Demonstrated understanding of design elements and/or principles.

D: Poor work

Work shows an inadequate understanding of the project parameters, is messy and/or deadlines were not met.

F: No work evident

Work shows no understanding of the project goals, is careless in presentation and /or deadlines were disregarded

A note on the “A” grade: If you MUST have an “A” grade, do not take this class! “A”s are rare in foundation art courses!

While there is no formula for getting an “A”, common attributes of that rare student include:

- Every project represents flawlessly crafted, engaging work that expresses a personal vision over and above assignment parameters.
- Concepts for every project are sophisticated, surprising and compelling and go beyond the ordinary or obvious.
- Student contributes an engaged energy to the class
- Perfect attendance (one or no classes missed, never late, doesn’t leave early),
- well-structured, eloquent writing that reaches thoughtful and meaningful conclusions and expresses a personal voice.
- Exemplary use of the electronic format for the process blog/eportfolio. Student weaves connections between in-class assignments, out of class subjects, and the implications of art in real-world experiences. Integrates art notions learned in the class with outside life and envisions a clear path for going forward in her creative work.
- The student’s creative voice is clear and identifiable.

Equipment and Materials:

- Wordpress blog
- Various pencils/charcoals and erasers
- Matt board, canson black, grey, white charcoal paper
- Color, black and white and xeroxing costs
- Camera!
- USB flash drive
- Various Papers (through department or you can buy retail)
- Xacto knife and pack of #11 bulk blades
- Drawing board, to accommodate 22 x 30 inch paper (optional)
- Box for supplies (optional)
- Metal 18” straight edge (optional)
- Various group studio supplies (glues, mounting tissue)

All supplies available through the department. Approximate cost \$30-\$40

In class studio assignments:

1. *Direct observation, the discipline of seeing:*
Still life with chair (proportional measurements, spatial relationships, congruencies, way-finding, navigating the space between eye, brain and what's in front of you)
Supplies: vine charcoal; newsprint; drawing board
2. Still life with box (edges and planes),
supplies: vine charcoal and better paper
3. Blind contour (this day only happens once, and only happens in class. If you miss this class you miss a whole project!)
Supplies: your undivided attention. Department will provide drawing supplies
4. Value collage, box interpretation
Pencil, Xacto knife and blades, Xerox copies, rubber cement, mat board)
5. *5a. verbal is visual:* on language and understanding {graphical thinking part 1 }
supplies: Pencils, pens, various "thumbnail" frameworks for thinking; mat board, Xacto knives, dry mount tissue and various supplies)

5b. Visual is verbal {graphical thinking part 2 }
supplies: camera, printouts, dry mount tissue, Xacto knife, mat board
6. Andy Goldsworthy inspired outdoor installation
supplies: gathered
7. THE BIG REVEAL: something out of nothing, the self portrait (direct observation in a mirror: value erasure drawing)
supplies: Charkol; arches cover or BFK Rives (rag paper); kneaded erasers; tissue paper

Honor Code

Live honorably. You have all signed the Honor Pledge, and its principles should govern all of your work for this course as for any other. If you directly (direct quotations) or indirectly (paraphrases, other borrowings) borrow ideas from others—whether those ideas appear in books, articles, or online, or develop during conversations—you must give proper and full credit to the original sources.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's ideas or words without giving them credit. This can mean using someone's ideas without proper acknowledgement for work you are doing for class, or copying a sentence directly from a book or journal without citing the source. Plagiarism is a serious offense and the penalty ranges from warnings to probation or suspension.

I encourage students to work together to discuss and develop your ideas, but students are expected to prepare assignments and independently unless otherwise instructed.

Other Needs:

Agnes Scott College seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, please contact Kelly Deasy in the Office of Academic Advising (X6150) to make complete the registration process. Once registered, please contact me so we can discuss the specific accommodations needed for this course.

Schedule:

Wednesday, August 28

Course introduction

Monday, September 2: Labor day, no classes

Wednesday, September 4

People introductions: a blog, a sentence, a metaphor
The process Log
Considering reflective thinking
The first assignment: out of class chair drawing for next class
Marking the beginning
Process log initial post due by midnight.
Friday, September 6: last day to add a class

Monday, September 9

Direct observation: still life of a chair
The string technique: alignment, angles, proportion

Wednesday, September 11

Studio drawing day

Monday, September 16

Studio drawing day
Tuesday, September 17: last day to drop a class without a W

Wednesday, September 18

Studio drawing day

Monday, September 23

critique of the chair, begin the box
Process log still life post due by midnight.

Wednesday, September 25

Studio drawing day

Thursday, September 26: Material Witness opens 6-8; Talks by senior art majors 5-6

Monday, September 30

Studio day: complete the box
Out of class: diagram values and photograph

Wednesday, October 2

Breather: blind contour day
welcoming random intrigue
Process log blind contour post due by midnight.

Monday, October 7

Discussion and intro to value: box build
Discerning value

Wednesday, October 9

Reconstructing a box through joining edges: value
Mounting demo
Thursday October 10 and Friday, October 11: fall break, no classes

Monday, October 14

Studio: value

Wednesday, October 16

Critique on the reconstructed box
Introduction to Goldsworthy installation project (optional group)
Process log Box post due by midnight.
Midterm summative post on process log due by midnight.

Monday, October 21

Goldsworthy inspired installation project studio day

Wednesday, October 23

Goldsworthy inspired outdoor presentation (take notes for critical discussion)

Monday, October 28

Outdoor installation critique

Process log Installation project post due by midnight.

Wednesday, October 30

The sneaky power of the abstract: Graphical thinking part 1

Thinking, research and experimentation with marks

Last day to drop a course with a W; or change to pass/fail

Monday, November 4

abstract studio day

Spring course selection begins

Wednesday, November 6

abstract studio day

Monday, November 11

The sublime representational: Graphical thinking part 2

Wednesday, November 13

Studio day (mounting)

Thursday, November 14: Spring course selection ends

Monday, November 18

Graphical thinking presentation and critique

Process log graphical thinking post due by midnight.

Wednesday, November 20

The self portrait

Monday, November 25

Studio drawing day

(thanksgiving)

Wednesday, November 27-29: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Monday, December 2

Studio drawing day

Wednesday, December 4

Studio drawing day

Thursday, December 5: course evaluations open

Monday, December 9

Last day of class

Self portrait pre-final discussion

Process log self portrait post due by midnight.

Scheduled final for self portrait critique

All final drawings and electronic documentation, including final summative post, are due by midnight the night of our scheduled final.

Final course summative post on process log due by midnight.

Tuesday, December 10/11: reading days

Wednesday, December 12, exams begin

Tuesday, December 17, 5pm, exams end

Friday, December 20: course evaluations close