
Visual Arts Electives

DRAWING I

offered as a term course and half course

This course builds basic drawing skills, which form the foundation for later creative work in drawing as well as in all other media. Class work introduces students to observational drawing and to techniques used to represent the three-dimensional world on a two-dimensional surface. Through the study of still life and other imagery, students work in pencil, charcoal, and pen and ink to learn about line, value, and rudimentary issues of composition. The class is designed to benefit all levels of ability, from beginner to individuals with experience.

PAINTING

half course

Stressing painting from observation, this course provides a foundation in the use of oil paint and brush techniques through subjects such as landscape, still life, portraits and self-portraiture, and painting from photographs. This course is designed for all levels of students but previous work in drawing is helpful.

INTRODUCTION TO PRINTMAKING

offered as a term course and half course

This course introduces students to the art of relief printmaking through the in-depth study of black and white as well as color linoleum block printing. Students will design, carve, and print several original prints and be introduced to color mixing and press printing techniques. This course is designed for beginning- to advanced-level students.

2D STUDIES: DRAWING II/ PAINTING II/PRINTMAKING II

half course

This course is designed to give students the opportunity to further their studies in either drawing, painting, or printmaking. Students who have previously taken the level I course in any one of those media will have the opportunity to continue to develop skills that are specific to their chosen technique. Drawing students will maintain a progression that leads to a greater understanding of observational and invented representation through a variety of

drawn media. Painting students can continue to develop their oil painting skills and may choose to focus their studies in watercolor painting. Printmaking students will have the opportunity to work with woodblock printing and be introduced to digitally-based relief printing processes. Through their studies, all students will focus primarily on developing personally meaningful visual ideas.

CERAMICS I **GESC**

offered as a term course and half course

This course introduces students to foundational hand-building and wheel-throwing techniques in clay. Students will develop a basic understanding of various methods for constructing, surfacing, and glazing their work. As clay is an ancient and globally significant medium, the course will also explore the aesthetics and techniques of ceramicists from diverse time periods and cultures.

CERAMICS II

half course

This course builds on the skills learned in Ceramics I, emphasizing advanced throwing and hand-building techniques. Students will continue to develop their technical abilities while beginning to explore a personal style in their work. The course will also include further instruction in surface decoration and glazing. Prerequisite: Ceramics I

SCULPTURE

offered as a term course and half course

This course introduces students to the fundamental elements of sculpture, including mass, form, space, proportion, and scale. Students will explore three-dimensional forms using both traditional techniques (carving, constructing, assembling) and nontraditional materials (fabric, found objects, sewing, etc.). A variety of projects will focus on spatial relationships and critical issues in sculpture, such as context, cultural themes, performance, the object's relationship to the body, and site-specific considerations.

ADVANCED STUDIES IN SCULPTURE AND CERAMICS

half course

This course emphasizes the development of personal artistic vision and excellence in craftsmanship. Students will explore advanced

techniques in clay, glazing, and finishing methods in depth. The incorporation of mixed media into their work is encouraged. Various artists will introduce a range of clay techniques, providing additional perspectives and inspiration. Students will be guided to independently develop and refine their own creative ideas. Prerequisite: Ceramics II or Sculpture

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY I **GESC**

offered as a term course and half course

In these courses, students learn the fundamentals of digital photography, starting with proper control, handling, and exposure using a contemporary digital camera. Lessons in capture, resolution consideration, image enhancement/manipulation (utilizing Adobe Photoshop), and ink jet printing techniques are explored. In addition, we discuss the medium's relationship to cultural, historical, and aesthetic issues within a fine art context. Students will find it beneficial to have their own DSLR or mirrorless digital camera for the course, but it is not required. The department has a limited number of cameras available to check out.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY II

term course

This course continues to explore the digital photographic environment, with students learning more complex techniques in Adobe Photoshop. Analogies are made between traditional darkroom practices and digital ones. Students develop a more personal relationship to the medium, which culminates in both a digital and a printed portfolio plus the creation of a printed hardcover photobook. Prerequisite: Digital Photography I

ADVANCED DIGITAL PHOTO III

term course

This course is for students who completed Digital Photography I and II and have shown the ability to work on a self-directed thematic project over an extended period of time that would culminate in an exhibition in the Barnes and Wilde Galleries. In addition, each student will research historically important photographers and/or photographic genres and give two substantial presentations to the Digital Photography I classes within the term. A final portfolio will round out this term course. Prerequisite: Digital Photography II and permission of the department

DIGITAL ART FOUNDATIONS

half course/not offered 2025–26

This course covers the basics of visual communication to help students design more attractive and polished content for use in class (presentations, infographics, animations) and in life (like on social media). In this half course, students will survey digital image making, vector graphics, presentation design, video, and animation, all in service of making projects that address personally expressive topics. Students will also practice their creative thinking skills and learn to innovate from an arts-based perspective.

GRAPHIC DESIGN GESC

half course

This course teaches the underlying principles, techniques, craft, and creative practices of using the computer for art and visual communication. Students will produce a range of computer-based creative projects, which may include digital painting and illustration, photographic manipulation and collage, graphic design for logos and posters, and multi-page publications. In addition, this course will introduce students to the histories, theories, and artists of computer-based art and design. This course covers a range of digital art software, including Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and Lightroom.

GAME DESIGN: WHERE ART MEETS CODE

half course

This year-long introductory half course combines the creativity of digital art with the logic of programming to guide students through the process of designing and building their own 2D video games. In the first trimester, students will explore tools and techniques for creating digital art, learning about design principles, color theory, and digital illustration to develop characters, environments, and other visual elements for their games. During the second trimester, students will learn foundational programming concepts and build confidence in coding, while applying their new skills to create programmatically-generated works of art in a beginner-friendly language. In the final trimester, students will bring together their programming skills and artistic creations to develop a simple, playable 2D game. This course emphasizes creativity, problem-solving, and technical skill, empowering students to bring their ideas to life in an interactive format. No prior experience is necessary. This course fulfills one visual arts

diploma requirement and prepares students to take CL Computer Science.

VIDEO AND ANIMATION

half course

In this course students learn the fundamentals of time-based visual art, including filmmaking, video art, special effects, and animation. Students will learn how to successfully film and edit video projects, use basic special effects, create motion graphics, and combine animation with real-life footage. Projects may include music videos, expressive experimental cinema, green-screen effects, character animation, and stop-motion.

3D FABRICATION AND CRAFT

half course

Students will build three-dimensional objects using both traditional media like woodworking alongside contemporary digital fabrication methods such as 3D printing and CNC machining. Students will use design thinking and critical artmaking approaches to build objects that are valuable for either/both their usefulness and/or their artistic features. The course will emphasize the creative use of materials and fabrication processes.

INTRODUCTION TO GLASS ART

term course

This course introduces students to fundamental skills and contextual knowledge for working with kiln-formed glass and stained glass in a

contemporary visual art and/or design context. Students will learn skills and methods for cutting, fusing, and shaping glass in response to set projects. Transforming glass with heat and cold processes will be the key skills introduced along with strategies to explore and realize creative works. In this course students will competently utilize a range of kiln forming glass working skills and technologies.

CL SENIOR WRITING SEMINAR: WRITING ABOUT ART

term course/seniors

Engaging with the work of artists and makers, curators, critics, and art historians, this course explores the intersections of writing and art. Visits to the Mercy Gallery, the Loomis Chaffee Archives, and local museums will provide students the opportunity, through criticism, exhibition texts, and essays, to contribute to ongoing cultural dialogue through their own writing. Key topics may include: the shifting roles of art and artists in society; the responsibilities of institutions, curators, and the public in shaping reception; debates about the definition of art and the significance of artistic intent; and the roles that art and objects play as agents of individualism or community building. As they explore writing by critics such as Susan Sontag, John Berger, and Claire Dederer, among others, students will craft their own reflections, analysis, and commentary inspired by art and material culture. Prerequisite: permission of the departments *Note: This course does not count toward the diploma requirement in the arts.*



Portfolio Preparation

Advanced and independent study courses provide the serious art student with opportunities to study a preferred medium in greater depth and/or to prepare a portfolio for college or art school admission.

CL ART SEMINAR

GESC*

seniors; juniors with permission of the department

This is a yearlong intensive studio art experience and prepares the serious art student to submit work for two class exhibitions in the Richmond Art Center and, optionally, for the AP examination portfolio. Additionally, students who wish to complete a portfolio for their college application receive instruction and assistance on photographing, editing, and documenting their work. Students follow a self-directed course of study as they complete their work, decide on a preferred medium, and choose a subject matter to explore. Prerequisite: at least two previous courses taken in the visual arts and departmental approval (GESC department approval is required for students who wish to take CL Art Seminar as a GESC minor course elective. Students should let GESC and CL Art faculty know of their intention to pursue this course for GESC diploma credit.)

INDEPENDENT STUDIES IN ART

offered as a term course and half course

Intended for the student who wishes to continue the study of a specific medium beyond the highest level offered, this elective requires a **written proposal** approved by the academic advisor, project advisor, department head, and dean of faculty. If approved, the student must enroll in the highest level of the appropriate course and serve as a studio lab assistant while working on assignments given by the instructor. The department restricts eligibility to students who have completed their arts requirement through visual arts classes and have taken the highest-level course in the particular medium involved. Painting, watercolor, and printmaking candidates must also have completed Drawing I.

