

Oxford College of Emory University

Drawing I – Art Studio 104

Fall 2009 Thursday 1-4 p.m.

Instructor: Daniel Barber

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Office hours: Tuesday/Wednesday 930-11 a.m.

(Also by appointment)

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Nulla Dies Sine Linea

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Drawing I is an introductory studio course that concentrates on developing the essential skills of representational drawing and begins with the premise that the art of drawing is an inherent form of expression and a unique graphic experience as well as the essential ground on which the other visual arts are formed. Drawing I is designed to explore the relationship between perception and visual conception, develop and reinforce basic drawing skills, and increase sophistication in the organization of surface, composition, design, and in the use of varied materials and techniques. Among the core skills explored and developed are gesture, contour, value, volume, shape, space, texture, and perspective. Drawing I also introduces goals and representational strategies beyond direct perception and conventional visual modes, which require the development of strategies for complex conceptual thinking, problem solving, experimentation, and expanded notions of the nature and function of drawing as both empirically descriptive and phenomenologically interpretive. A variety of drawing materials and techniques will be introduced to promote personal expression and understanding and to assist students in beginning to discover which materials and techniques most resonate with and serve to embody their own visual and psychological experience.

COURSE OBJECTIVES and STRATEGIES

- Achieve a basic mastery of representational drawing techniques and develop the observational skills necessary to such mastery. These techniques include such areas of study as analytical and expressionistic gesture, descriptive and interpretive use of line, use of value (gradation of light and dark) to create a convincing sense of form and three dimensional space, geometric simplification, mass and planar analysis, accurate depiction of proportion, perspective and foreshortening, texture and surface description, and overall compositional resolution.
- Introduce various traditional tools and drawing materials and develop their skillful use.
- Deepen knowledge of the various concepts and methodologies applicable to the drawing experience.
- Enhance the ability of each student to generate ideas and explore both the narrative and formal means of developing content.
- Use drawing to extend students' critical visual thinking skills and ability to communicate ideas thoughtfully through critique and dialogue.
- Encourage mature levels of invention and problem solving, communication, and personal expression.
- Enhance the ability of each student to develop transferable conceptual skills based upon intellectual, emotional or aesthetic rationale.
- Stimulate increased awareness of processes for making decisions about the visual, physical, and social aspects that create a drawing.
- Encourage the development of personal avenues of expression based upon a demonstrated foundation of technical proficiency and general knowledge of art history, principles of design, and the basic elements of art.
- Deepen students' capacity to sensitively embody their perceptual and psychological experiences through the act of drawing and increase their receptivity to artistic inspiration and an actively engaged imagination.
- Demonstrate the capacity to observe, distinguish and translate emotional and perceptual responses into unique and powerful drawings.
- Demonstrate the ability to work in a variety of styles, mediums and processes that most appropriately and effectively convey individual responses to assigned exercises for personal artistic growth and development.
- Analyze and apply the ideas, techniques and experiences gained from the study of various artists, past and present, to their own emerging aesthetic awareness and artistic pursuits.

- Develop the necessary vocabulary, knowledge, visual awareness, and thinking skills to critically assess one's own work and that of one's peers.
- Develop an awareness and understanding of the role of drawing historically and in modern and contemporary art and society.
- Increase ability to successfully complete and deeply investigate the required outside assignments by "pushing boundaries" beyond the experiences explored in the classroom.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Students will participate in a series of in-class drawing exercises and homework projects, group critiques, slide presentations, and drawing demonstrations designed to increase the technical, conceptual, and theoretical awareness of the rich and varied possibilities of the drawing process. Work will begin with the fundamentals of drawing and move into more complex ideas and techniques as the semester progresses. Students will pursue these investigations in a supportive and engaging atmosphere of disciplined experimentation and elaboration, wherein students will be actively involved with their peers in developing strong professional studio skills and good work habits. All students will be expected to consistently contribute to and actively play a vital and integral role in shaping the total course experience. As in any studio art class, revelations both subtle and profound will occur. It is the responsibility of each student to arrive in class prepared to be receptive to experiences of all sorts and to be rigorously engaged in all activities with both thoughtfulness and verve.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This class is an intensively hands-on studio course. Students must attend every class period and be prepared with the required materials. An enthusiasm for the process of drawing, for experimentation with new ideas and techniques, and for sharing ideas and methods is expected. Be aware that a poor work ethic will naturally diminish your studio work and will be reflected in your final grade. Each student will be held accountable for all class work, outside assignments, and the general maintenance of the drawing studio. Additionally, all students are strongly urged to visit art museums, galleries, and artist lectures in order to see drawings in person and deepen their understanding of drawing craft and concepts.

SKETCHBOOKS AND OTHER HOMEWORK

Beginning on the first day of class, students will be given weekly sketchbook and other drawing assignments. As scheduled class time is very limited and learning to draw takes diligent, regular, and rigorous practice, these assignments are an essential part of the course. All students are expected to complete all assignments thoughtfully, carefully, and on time. Drawing is a means of thinking and your hand and brain need consistent and challenging practice to learn well.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is required and essential to the successful completion of this course. I assume that all students are responsible adults and all absences must have a 'good' reason. Therefore there are no 'excused' absences. Your final grade will be lowered by one increment (e.g. B to B-) for each class missed. As class time is very limited and class participation essential – please do not be late. Tardiness (more than 15 minutes late) will also count as an absence. Exceptions to the attendance policy will be considered only in advance or in cases of emergency or contagious illness with a doctor's note so stating.

If you are absent it is your responsibility to inform yourself about the contents of the class missed. Speak to your peers and see your professor as soon as you return or before you are absent if possible. Please understand that the nature of this class is that of a dynamic and organic interaction between students, instructor, and, sometimes models, and is thus not replicable outside of class. That said, consideration of make-up work may be given to individual students pending a discussion with your professor if extreme circumstances merit.

EVALUATION and GRADING POLICY

Grades are important to the ambitions of many Oxford/Emory students – particularly those who seek to enter graduate schools of advanced study. That said, I must state that while in many disciplines (e.g. Art History) a fair and useful grading rubric can be established, I do not think that grades are a particularly valid measure of *artistic* progress or achievement. I assign grades to students in studio art because I am obliged to do so as part of my duty to Oxford College and not as a specific measure of the artistic merit of any particular student or her work. The reason is that artistic progress rarely follows a clearly defined linear path fitting neatly into semester constraints and of necessity involves failure and misdirection as much as discernable success. The loops and eddies of creative development are essential and unavoidable and the paths are as individual and complex as the work that results. Because of this, much of the criticism and evaluation

in this course will be individually tailored and dialogic involving both private discussion and the participation in group critiques.

Thus a significant part of your grade will be determined by your commitment to the creative process, your will to constantly challenge yourself technically, aesthetically, and critically, and the finishing of works that evidence such commitment. Your participation – both verbally and through the presentation of your work – in critiques both individual and group is also significant. Works (paintings and drawings) that encourage and sustain such critical discourse are, simply put, of arguably greater artistic merit than those which do not. Progress is also measurable in a meaningful way and will be considered in your evaluation.

Of course there are also skills that are being developed which must be demonstrated in your work including a basic understanding of essential concepts, techniques, material use, etc. Again, rigorous commitment to the learning process and progress in understanding and execution will be considered.

Clearly, then, some measure of progress, understanding, and achievement can be qualitatively measured with reasonable objectivity and I am, again, obliged to translate this measurement into letter grades. What follows, then, is a general guideline for the determination of grades.

All assignments must be completed and an understanding of all essential techniques demonstrated in order to earn a passing grade in this course. Much of the evaluation of student work and participation will take place in the studio and will be reviewed individually as the class progresses.

Your grade will be determined by:

- The quality of your work executed both in and out of class and in the sketchbook/homework assignments
- The demonstration—through your work—of a clear understanding of the concepts and techniques discussed in class
- Your level of focus and participation in all studio activities and by your productive and rigorous participation in class discussions and critiques.
- Evidence of substantial use of open studio time
- Individual progress and class competition will be considered as dual measures of competency.

You will receive one grade at the end of the course, after the final critique. This grade will be determined following the submission of a portfolio, the required contents of which will be discussed in class. The midterm review will be accompanied by an in-class group critique. Students are encouraged to meet individually outside of class with me to discuss your portfolio, progress, and class performance as well as to seek further understanding and technical assistance. The final portfolio submission will be preceded by a final group critique. Your portfolios will be graded based on factors such as technical skill and understanding, creativity, effort, appropriate presentation, and sophistication of technique

Please see your professor if you have any concerns with your progress, He will be happy to advise and assist you.

Grades assigned will reflect the level of energy and commitment given to the work as well as demonstrated skills and overall class participation. Letter grades—modified by pluses and minuses—will be based on:

- Evidence of energy, focus, and demonstrated commitment to the work
- The completion (on time) of every assignment
- The degree to which in-class and outside work evidences investment of quality time-use, the assimilation of in-class technical demonstrations, and the emergence of personal ideas that are reflected in creative, original and imaginative solutions
- Attendance and full participation in all class activities, critiques and discussions
- Note that a grade of “incomplete” will be granted only in the most extenuating, verifiable circumstances. No student will receive an incomplete in lieu of a failing grade.

Grade A: Superior

- Studio/scholarship: Strong, exceeding requirements of instructor
- Initiative: Contributions exceeding the assignments, showing independent resourcefulness.
- Individual improvement: Strong in all areas, marked and growing.

Grade B: Good

- Studio/scholarship: Accurate and complete, meeting all the requirements of the instructor.

- Initiative: Good when stimulated by some desirable achievement or instructor prodding.
- Individual improvement: Good work showing marks of progress and response to stimulation.

Grade C: Fair

- Studio/scholarship: Competent work meeting assignment objectives and showing evidence of need of encouragement. Moderate originality, moderate execution, some imagination, and average self-expression,
- Initiative: Uncertain but modestly apparent at times.
- Individual improvement: Ordinary, definite marks lacking. Inconsistent

Grade D: Poor

- Studio/scholarship: Poor work not meeting basic expectations and requirements of the instructor
- Initiative: Lacking
- Individual improvement: Negligible. Poor effort; lack of creative or technical skill

Grade F: Failure

- Exceeding the allowed absences and/or failing to meet the most basic requirements of the course

STUDIO

Our studio is shared with several other classes and it is thus imperative that we keep it clean and well-organized. The studio is available to you to work in outside of class provided that there is not another class in session. The hours of availability may vary but currently it is open most evenings (closed on Saturday).

If you are in the studio after ordinary Oxford class hours it is imperative that you keep the doors locked and do not allow entry by any unauthorized persons. The Oxford campus is generally safe but ordinary precautions should be taken. For safety reasons, the use of headphones or earbuds is strongly discouraged when working in the studio outside of class hours. During class such devices are not usually permitted.

ADDRESSING YOUR PROFESSOR

As this question is frequently asked of me, I will attempt to avoid any small anxieties by addressing here the following: “How should your students address you?” There is no PhD currently offered in America in studio (visual) art. The terminal degree in the field is the Master of Fine Arts or MFA, the degree that I was granted long ago. Thus I am not a “doctor” and you should not address me as such. “Mr. or Ms.” is usually appropriate for high school teachers but not college professors. The use of first names, while seemingly reasonable to me, is discouraged by Oxford policy and thus is also inappropriate. The usual way to address professors (and always fine for those with or without a PhD) is “Professor X”, in this case, *Professor Barber*. That said, some of my students have, over the years, taken to calling me *Maestro* in the European tradition of so addressing an acknowledged master of an art usually as a term of both respect and affection. This is most common in music but painters in Italy and Spain (as well as Mexico) are frequently addressed this way as well. So your options are two and you should choose whichever you feel most comfortable with at any given moment.

MATERIALS (for reference)

Art supplies and other studio tools and materials will be purchased for you and covered by a lab fee of \$115 per student. The lab fee will be charged to your Opus account.

Certain materials will be distributed for you to use outside of the studio. You will need to provide your own means to transport them (A fancy art case is nice but not necessary. A tackle or tool box will serve well and is recommended.) You must bring all of these materials with you to every class. Please take care of your materials. The budget for replenishing class supplies is limited. At your discretion, you may wish to purchase additional materials as the course progresses.

MATERIALS LIST

- Masonite drawing board and clips
- Drafting (white) masking tape
- Vine (willow) charcoal – thin sticks
- Extra-soft compressed charcoal (Alphacolor Char-Kole or Conté Compressed Charcoal or Grumbacher Compressed Charcoal is the best)
- Ebony (or 6B-9B) pencils (and other assorted degrees – 2H-9B)
- Conté crayons & pencils—black, white, sanguine (red). All should be soft not hard.
- Kneaded, pink, white (pvc-free), and gum erasers

- Black waterproof India ink (sepia-tone is also useful) & brushes—watercolor size #7 or larger or large Asian Sumi type brush
- Pen holders and Speedball Globe type pen nibs
- Small cups for wash
- Paper (pads, blocks, or generous numbers (50+ of loose sheets of each)
 - Rough or cold-pressed watercolor (150#+)
 - Sketchbook—various options but at least head-sized
 - Colored charcoal papers with decent tooth (any size)
 - 18 x 24 general purpose pad drawing paper (80#+) or large watercolor paper
 - 18 x 24 Newsprint
 - 18 x 24 pad of tracing paper or ‘vellum’
- Bamboo pens
- Blending stumps
- Chamois cloth
- Ruler
- Knife for cutting paper and sharpening pencils (small sharp pocketknife, utility knife, or Exacto blade)
- Workable Spray Fixative (outdoor or spray-booth use only—DO NOT spray in the studio or hallways!)
- ArtBin or tackle box to carry supplies
- Large portfolio to safely carry paper and finished drawings

Optional Materials that may be useful

- Watercolor set or tubes
- Watercolor palette
- Watercolor brushes
- Colored chalk pastels
- Sponge
- Rags

DRAWING VOCABULARY

- *Chiaroscuro*: An Italian word designating the relative contrast of dark and light in a painting, drawing, or print. Artists use chiaroscuro to create spatial depth and volumetric forms through slight gradations in the intensity of light and shadow.
- *Contour*: The lines delineating the various surface changes and edges of the forms being observed – the interior and exterior outlines
- *Cross-contour*: Lines used to depict three-dimensional changes in the surface being drawing – the lines follow the curves and angular changes of the object
- *Foreshortening*: The representation of the long axis of an object by contracting its lines so as to produce an illusion of projection or extension in space
- *Form*: The three-dimensional structure of a thing as opposed to merely its shape
- *Gesture*: Quick drawing that captures the action or essence or a pose or object
- *Inherent value*: The values inherent to the object – i.e. the degree of darkness or lightness of hair and skin as opposed to the transient values
- *Line*: A thin, continuous mark, as that made by a pen, pencil, or brush applied to a surface
- *Non finito*: Italian term literally meaning “unfinished” though implying intentionality and referring to an aesthetic quality in drawing, painting, or sculpture
- *Pentimenti*: Italian, literally, “regrets”. Referring to residual visual evidence in drawing or painting of overpainting, corrections, or changes of mind (whether intentional or not)
- *Perspective*: Prescribed method of representing the three-dimensional world on a two-dimensional surface
- *Shade*: Color mixed with black
- *Shape*: The two-dimensional outline or characteristic surface configuration of a thing
- *Tenebrism*: A term signifying the prevalent use of dark areas in a painting. A tenebrist style, such as Caravaggism, uses strong chiaroscuro and artificially illuminated areas to create a dramatic, theatrical contrast of light and dark.
- *Tint*: Color mixed with white
- *Transient value*: Values created by the light cast on the object, not inherent to the object
- *Value*: The degree of lightness or darkness in a painting or drawing

RECOMMENDED TEXTS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Drawing

- Gombrich, E.H. *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. London: Phaidon, 1994.
- Kemp, Martin and Jane Roberts with E.H. Gombrich, *Leonardo da Vinci*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989
- *Leonardo da Vinci: Master Draftsman*. Carmen C. Bambach, ed. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Yale University Press. 2003.
- Nicolaides, Kimon. *The Natural Way to Draw*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1941.
- Pignatti, Terisio. *Master Drawings: From Cave Art to Picasso*. Secaucus, NJ, Wellfleet Press, 1989.
- Rawson, Philip. *Drawing*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987.
- Ruskin, John, *The Elements of Drawing*. Various editions
- A Guide to Drawing, 7th edition, Mendelowitz, Wakeham, Faber, Thomson Wadsworth. 2007

Human Anatomy & the Figure in Art

- Clark, Kenneth. *The Nude*. Princeton, 1957.
- Goldfinger, Eliot. *Human Anatomy for Artists: The Elements of Form*. Oxford, 1991
- Hale, Robert Beverly. *Drawing Lessons from the Great Masters*. Watson Gupitill, 1989
- Hale, Robert Beverly and Terrence Cole. *Anatomy Lessons from the Great Masters*. Watson Gupitill, 2000
- Kapit, Wynn, and Lawrence M. Elson. *The Anatomy Coloring Book*. Harper & Row. 1977.
- Peck, Stephen Rogers. *Atlas of Human Anatomy for the Artist*. Oxford, 1951
- Richer, Dr. Paul. *Artistic Anatomy*. Watson Gupitill, 1986
- Schider, Fritz. *An Atlas of Anatomy for Artists*. Dover, 1957

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that this schedule is subject to change as the course evolves during the semester. Please also note that, while class will meet only on Wednesdays, you will need to spend substantial time drawing outside of class in order to meet course expectations, finish your assignments, and effectively develop your drawing skills.

Thursdays

Aug 27 Introduction to the course

- Review curriculum, tools and materials, and studio practice
- Discuss sketchbook self-portrait assignments
- Discussion: *Gesture, Contour, Value—Perspectives on Representational Drawing*
- Discussion: *Why do we draw?*
- Drawing in the Quad

Sep 3 Gesture: The Essence of Drawing from Life

- Students model
 - Explore the expressive and interpretive possibilities of quick drawing from life
 - Explore and discuss the reductive essence of seeing and of gestural mark-making

Sep 10 Drawing with Line: An Introduction

- Still Life
 - Contour—continuous, blind, and broken
 - Composition—an introduction to the aesthetic and psychological power of careful composition
 - Cross-contour—shaping form with line

Sep 17 Value: Seeing Light: Determining and Creating Value in Drawing

- Still life with controlled lighting
- Drawing on the veranda in natural light

Sep 24 Into the Wild

- Drawing in the Oxford woods (dress appropriately and prepare for the woods)

Oct 1 Drawing Oxford: Exercises in Perspective

- Discussion and demonstration of techniques of basic observational and linear perspective
- Architectural and other subjects drawn outside in perspective

Oct 8 **Midterm Critique**

- **Portfolio review appointments scheduled**

Oct 15 The Figure

- Models
 - Revisiting gesture
 - Foreshortening

Oct 22 The Figure

- Models
 - Revisiting Contour
 - Basic Anatomy
 - Foreshortening and Proportion

Oct 29 The Figure

- Models
 - Revisiting Value
 - Drawing from the model in artificial light
 - Investigating *chiaroscuro*

Nov 5 The Figure

- Models
 - Eye, Body, and Mind—the expressive possibilities of the human form in drawing

Nov 12 The Figure

- Models
 - Drawing the figure in a convincing representational space
 - Perspective, value, composition

Nov 19 The Self-Portrait

- The technical complexities and perceptual perplexities of drawing while looking in a mirror
- Representation, likeness, proportion, and the psychology of self-depiction

Nov 26 **Thanksgiving Break** No class

Dec 3 **Final Critique**

- Last Day of Class
- Final Portfolio and Sketchbooks Due