

ART 3305: LIFE DRAWING Spring 2008

Meets: Cowan 6 MWF 9:45-12

Instructor: James v Langer

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Required Text: *Human Anatomy*, Albinus

Recommended Texts: *Figure Drawing*, Goldstein; *The Human Machine*, Bridgman;
Anything by Robert Beverly Hale

“We were made in order to look at each other.” – Edgar Degas

DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to drawing the human figure, focusing on proportions, anatomy, and composition. Prerequisite: ART 1305 with a grade of C- or better. Satisfies the Fine Arts option for the B.A. degree. You will get traditional Western European-style training in representing the human form. Since there are dangers in both learning and teaching only a single academic approach to any art, however, we cover other styles, too, from Eastern traditions, like Zen, to bold, contemporary cartooning.

EXPECTATIONS

Most tasks in the course demand planning, follow-through and concentration. All require that you attend class regularly and in an engaged way. You will learn a variety of techniques tapping into critical thinking & perceptual analysis; your products will be expected to meet defined standards. You will all be involved in group and individual critiques. You are expected to be on time, prepared and willing to participate in class work, plus discussions and critiques, and keep up with all assignments and deadlines. You must listen and apply instruction.

Because you are a fairly small group, you will be able to see on occasion an entire composition worked in “real time” by the instructor, rather than only rushed, disjointed demonstrations. The instructor will procure models, anatomical and living, and invite guest experts for hands-on experiences to enhance your understanding. The course will be open to many ways of learning, particularly kinesthetic. Slide lectures will be few and not over 45 minutes apiece. Tests will be announced at the start of each week, and the final scheduled exam announced as soon as the date is known. Moodle will be available for getting notes, assignments and instructions you may have missed, lost or forgotten.

OBJECTIVES

You will produce a portfolio of anatomical studies; of series of figures at rest, in motion, and in groups; of a series of metaphorical works involving study/transformation of animal and human characteristics. Exhibition of work is required in two shows during the semester.

REQUIRED ACTIONS & SKILLS

- ❖ *Gesture* with marks (to estimate and adjust generalized impressions)
- ❖ *Compose in advance* (to balance and arrange for greater cohesive impact)
- ❖ *Abstract* from schema (to synthesize information & structure decisions)
- ❖ *Locate* and measure using points of comparison (to guarantee accurate proportion)
- ❖ *Plan perspective & eye level* (to foreshorten & place the figure in its space)
- ❖ *Analyze planar structure* (to convince the viewer of three dimensions)
- ❖ *Discriminate* with a variety of linear qualities (to inflect weight & volume)
- ❖ *Render and model* with tone (to match or exaggerate chiaroscuro)
- ❖ *Memorize and execute* with anatomical accuracy (to intensify all of the above)
- ❖ *Explore* multiple genres of figure art (to discover new forms of expression)
- ❖ *Illuminating* images with complementary color (to heighten impact & beauty)

GOALS

- To increase accuracy of proportion and anatomy
- To fully engage your perceptions and control the entire field of composition
- To develop a personal mark while exploring examples from different traditions
- To present and discuss ideas developed while drawing using specific vocabulary
- To conduct focused, sound research on anatomy and on chosen artists
- To know bodies and heads better, plus what makes them compelling subjects

FORMAT & ASSIGNMENTS

Projects and processes will challenge perception and discipline. On the bare bones of our innate sense of our bodies, we will string sinews of intellectual, kinesthetic and intuitive ideas (in class, on outside assignments, plus visits to the Proctor **anatomy** lab and Reynolds Center). Our first models will be: our own faces; the skeleton; drapery & casts. The live model will be available beginning late January as our main source for the course. Poses will range from mere seconds to an hour or more. Mainly, we draw a lot!

Six hours a week is not sufficient to learn to draw a figure well. Thus, I will give assignments to do outside class, and you should draw, too, on your own, resulting in a full sketchbook and numerous larger drawings. Time spent outside class on assigned work should average three or more hours a week, as outlined in the student handbook for all studio courses.

In addition, you'll "**Adopt-an-Artist**" to emulate and share with large, clear visual aids so the whole class can grasp the technique of that artist and then apply it to a figural composition for homework. This will become your 4th credit, as it will

require *research*, numerous drawings on *themes*, with the *final presentation* in April.

The “**final exam**” will include drawings based on the artist shared, due during exam week.

You will label these with over 100 names of bones, muscles and a few veins/arteries.

Sketchbooks will allow on-the-spot observations and ongoing compositional studies. They also will become your “textbook”: you will *copy diagrams* into them; make notes on *vocabulary, anatomy, lectures, videos and demonstrations*; make *copies of masterworks*; and they will be graded for completeness and creativity.

Keep a journal/schedule of what and how you are seeing and record your completion of assignments. Be clear about all *instructions and deadlines*. So, be sure to **date** all work.

We’ll **exhibit work** in two shows: The first is called “B+W” (black & white) and then the end-of-year student show. Two works for each must be matted or floated for exhibition.

I will review **portfolios** for midterm and final grades based on: ambitious growth, applying instruction & sheer volume. *Dedication goes farther than talent.*

Everyone must participate in periodic **critiques**. Critiques acknowledge and celebrate individual vision and enhance tolerance for creative diversity, plus hone judgment of technique. Be familiar with the *vocabulary of drawing and gross anatomy*: when I ask for a particular skill from you while in front of the model, you can more effectively shift modes if you know my references to certain concepts and their related visual forms.

There are three required **cultural arts event mini-papers** (at least one page each). These are only graded as “finished”, not for academics. Their purpose is to broaden your experiences in the arts, which are increasingly interdependent in the professional world.

EVALUATION

Portfolio = **40%**

Sketchbook = **10%**

Final exam = **15%**

Participation = **10%** (critiques, exhibits, papers)

Adopt-an-Artist” = **25%** (art + presentation = 4thcr)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The models are paid for being here *for you*. **If you don't show up, it will show up.**

It’s a half-letter off for each absence past two; tardiness/leaving early count as

one-half an absence. If you miss *more than six* classes total, you will be dropped with a W/F. *There will be no make-up time, since it is a model-dependent class.* Please call and/or email me before missing days, and in emergencies.

Class Rules:No cell phone use. No palm computers. No iPods or mp3s, though you may record lectures with prior permission for each class period you wish (I will be recording certain classes, critiques and presentations). Figure drawing demands great concentration and also you will benefit from hearing individual recommendations given to classmates.

No food or drink (unless medically prescribed, and then please dispose of outside class).

Academic Honor Code:

Students should “refrain from...cheating;...plagiarizing; ...lying; ...misusing library or computer equipment or materials; ...(and/or) disruptive classroom behavior.”

Students should “report Academic Honor Code violations; ...comply strictly with all examination and testing procedures as may be prescribed by the College, the faculty, or individual members of the faculty.” The complete policy is stated in the Student Handbook. Your admission to this course and the college signifies your solemn agreement to comply.

MATERIALS (You MUST be equipped by second class, or you WILL be dropped)

Please bring the following to class every day:

A sturdy portfolio (not just paper/cardboard), but not overstuffed!!

A carrying box/bin

One 9" x 12" sketchbook (best deal: **Borders \$6-\$8**)

Pocket-sized sketchpad or stapled/bound scrap paper

Several sheets from a large pad of 18" x 24" white paper-80 lbs. (you'll use 50+ sheets)

Several sheets of newsprint from a pad or roll, 18" x 24" (you'll use 100+ sheets)

Soft graphite and charcoal pencils- 4B and 6B (sharpen with razor blade, sandpaper)

Vine Charcoal, soft and extra soft, in fat sticks or blocks

Conté crayons in black, white and sanguine

Grey kneaded eraser and white plastic eraser

Tissues/chamois/éstonpe for blending

Plumb line & viewfinder (two more do-it-yourselfers) and a ruler/straightedge

For specific days later in the semester, and for special assignments:

Charcoal/pastel paper of medium to large size, some tinted

Heavier paper (at least 170 lb., possibly watercolor stock)

Squirrel/horsehair brushes sizes: 8, 10 and/or 12

Waterproof India ink (or Asian non-waterproof ink)

Optional: Ink pens with steel nibs/reed pens/goose quills

Recommended during semester. (the more media you try the better)

Compressed charcoal, sable brush, bristle brush, roller-tip pens, pastels, watercolors, crayons, markers, graph paper, sunglasses, toothbrush

Wear comfortable shoes (always stand, unless assigned to sit at a "horse" bench)

*"Drawing is not what one sees, but what one can make others see."
-Edgar Degas*