EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION

VISUAL ARTS

School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Department of Visual Art Art History

FA / VISA 3087 3.0 SECTION A
INVENTING THE ENVIRONMENT
FALL 2019 / WINTER 2020

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Reflecting on the complex intersection of nature and culture; a vision of cities as living organisms, deeply intertwined with the natural terrain of a geographic site, students invent a series of interconnected environments through the practice of drawing.

SPECIAL FEATURES

“Drawing’s heterogeneity has been cited as a reason why it is hard to classify as a medium, yet perhaps it is this single characteristic that continues to give it such currency for artists”

Katherine Stout, Contemporary Drawing from 1960s to now (p.9)

Students explore drawing as a multidisciplinary process combining traditional approaches to this art form with other media including photography, sculpture, collage and installation. You have the opportunity to exploit the full possibilities of drawing as a two or three dimensional practice. This includes the potential of traditional materials like pencil, ink, charcoal on familiar and unfamiliar surfaces like paper or walls together with the possibilities of photography, film, performance and installation. Conceptual concerns are the basis for your choice of materials, processes, media and stylistic options. Course content includes visual presentations on contemporary art; three drawing assignments; individual and group critiques, independent research and creative visual and conceptual solutions using appropriate media.

Organization of the Course

The course combines classroom studio projects, exercises, visual presentation, individual and class critiques. Discussion during class critiques, slide presentations and group work is an important part of the class dynamic and essential participation. The course is broken into three equally weighted projects, looking at a range of concerns such as; drawing as a 2D and 3D practice, experimental marking making incorporating collage, installation/performance, language and abstraction in a variety of media. The assignments provide an opportunity for individual, personalized creative solutions while demonstrating the understanding and assimilation of concepts and methods discussed and executed in class.

The final resolved drawings for each project are presented in class. Interim deadlines for in-process review and discussion are part of the class dynamic developing the skill of analysis and articulation. Research, planning, discovery and revision in support of personal and imaginative solutions to the course content are essential skills developed. The resolved term projects must demonstrate the facility to apply technical drawing skills as well the ability to work across different media for conceptual and compositional purposes.

Through consultations with the instructor, follow-up discussions and personal research, the expanded
boundaries of contemporary drawing practices will be explored according to your own personal investigation of chosen topics.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:
- expand and question the conventions of the drawing practice
- cultivate thematic understandings of the environment in relation to site/location/space
- articulate their own motivation and methodology
- provide meaningful, critical and thoughtful responses to artworks

**TOPICS AND CONCEPTS**

The studio works are loosely structured projects that are designed to encourage you to explore broader techniques of drawing within contemporary art practice. They are meant to be open-ended in order to guide you to cultivate your own visual language that can communicate your concept to the viewer.

Research methods may include reference materials gathered on Pinterest Pin boards or other Web discovery/archive tools in combination with personal photography, sketches, sketchbooks.

Class critiques will be conducted at the end of each project. Students will present their work to the class and the class will serve as art critics to further explore the possibilities suggested by the work. Keep in mind that in order for a critique to be meaningful, students MUST participate actively. The critique should not be regarded as judgment or verdict on the artwork. Instead, it is an opportunity to enable further development. A critique is a conversation that is really an enabling experience.

**PROJECTS**

Media: wet or dry media, appropriate to your individual process and goal. It may be advantageous to keep the media simple and learn to use it with intense skill. Paper size & format may vary according to your compositional solutions.

1. **Abstraction:** Drawing line, form and space.
   *Obviously a drawing of a person is not a real person, but a drawing of a line is a real line.*
   Sol Lewitt
   1. In class: With your group, construct an environment with string/wool that has a relationship to a space you select in the classroom.
   2. Document the finished construction from many angles with your phone. Add hard copies of the photos to your sketchbook.
   3. Using your photographs to develop a drawing emphasizing line, form, negative and positive space.
   4. At Home: Create an additional drawing using wire or thread or any linear material in combination with your drawing. Shadows created by your wire construction can also be a source of ideas for a drawing. Combine ink and watercolor with line or use ink and graphite, graphite and watercolor.
   5. You are expected to complete TWO drawings: one based on the class string construction and the other to be completed independently at home.

Final TWO drawings. Size: each one minimum 18” x 24” on good paper

2. **Gesture:** drawing and motion
   *“Drawing is a verb”* Richard Serra
   Wonder for a moment what it might look like if everywhere you stepped left a mark, a stark print of your foot. Or maybe at those corners you hurried and turned swift there would be a messy slash, a primordial mark of your body’s cutting through air. Can you feel your feet buoyed by that unshakable pull?
   We are unconscious choreographers, constantly making decisions about which way to navigate around things, step over barriers and through doors. What would it look like to record the dance of our daily journeys? Alyssa Coffin (www.alyssacoffinart.com)

   *The method I have developed requires close observation and actual drawing in real time with multiple razor-sharp pencils and both hands. Simultaneous to an action taking place, I condense movement into accumulations of graphite lines, combining the controlled refinement of classical drawing with the sensuality...*
of spontaneous gesture. My LIVE TRANSMISSIONS render visible normally invisible or fleeting movement patterns, active trajectories, through seismograph-like drawing. The time-space coordinates for each drawing are written across the bottom of each page, thus contextualizing each activity in a specific continuum and geographic place. Morgan O’Hara
(http://mitchellalgusgallery.com/morgan-ohara-artists-statement/)
1. Beginning with Richard Serra’s verb list, explore and develop a series of drawings inspired by a selection from his verb list or add your own verb list...any size and any type of paper...large long sheets or many smaller thumbnail drawings. Incorporate collage with photographs, magazine or online images and use any media (graphite, ink, paint, charcoal, pencils etc single or in combination)2. Working alone or in a group, develop a drawing performance. Document the performance(s) in drawing and/or video. This project can be done both in and out of class. It can include marking simple everyday activities like walking, your daily routine or performing a specific task. Research work by Morgan O’Hara and Alyssa Coffin.
3. Language
Words are my medium, kind of like my oil paint. Fiona Banner, Contemporary Drawing from the 1960s to Now, (p.106)
.....I am much less interested in language as a formal system than I am interested in how language is embodied and used in the act of human communication. Joseph Grigely, Contemporary Drawing from the 1960s to Now, (p.105)

I used repetition to create a mass, to make a mark or to fill a ground or a page......Sometimes repetition is employed in language as a way to allow something familiar to become strange again, you know, saying the same thing over and over until you don’t recognize it anymore.... Frances Stark, Contemporary Drawing from the 1960s to Now, (p.106)

Writing is another form of mark making. Using repetition, collage, stencils develop a series of at least 2 text based drawings in any language, including fictional words. Minimum size 18”x 24” on a variety of papers.

Bibliography:
The library has the books on this bibliography as well as an extensive collection of catalogues, art books and videos. www.art21.org is an excellent video documentation of interviews with many artists who are mentioned in this course as well as others you may find interesting to research.
Butler, Cornelia, Afterimage, Drawing through Process, MIT Press, Massachusetts, 1999
Dexter, Emma. Vitamin D: New Perspectives in Drawing, Phaidon Press, 2005
De Zegher, Catherine, author, Butler, Cornelia, Catherine de Zegher ed., On Line Drawing Through the Twentieth Century, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2010
Ensticke, W. Peters, M. Drawing: Space, Form, and Expression, Prentice Hall, 3rd Ed. 2003
Garner, Steve, ed., Writing on Drawing, Essays on Drawing Practice and Research, Intellect, Bristol, UK/Chicago, USA2008
Lambert-Beatty, author, Lord, Catherine, author, Molesworth, Helen, author, Chan, Paul, contributor, Dance/Draw, Hatje Cantz, 2011
Nicolaides, Kimon. The Natural Way to Draw, Houghton Co. Boston, 1941
Metzger, Phil, The Art of Perspective: North Light Books, Cincinnati, Ohio
Syllabus: (subject to change)

Week One: September 5 Introduction
Overview of course content, structure, grading
Visual Presentation: Overview of term assignments
Studio Work; Project 1 has 2 parts which are both due September 26.
1. your group work and your individual drawing
2. your home assignment

Week Two: September 12
Studio Work

Week Three: September 19
Studio work

Week Four: September 26
Group Critique
Submit work at the end of class

Week Five: October 3
Studio Work

Week Six: October 10
Studio Work
Mid-term interviews

OCTOBER 12-18, 2019  READING WEEK NO CLASSES

Week Seven: October 24
Group Critique:
Submit work at the end of class

Week Eight: October 31
Studio Work

Week Nine: November 7
Studio Work

Week Ten: November 14
Studio Work

Week Eleven: November 21
Group Critique: submit portfolio to grade
Review of all drawings/revisions/refinements

Week Twelve: November 28
Final Interviews
Use this class to organize your portfolio and refine drawings if necessary.

LIST OF LEARNING OUTCOMES AND EXAMPLES OF

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:
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GRADED ASSESSMENT

Course Learning Objectives
Learning objectives include
1. An expanded self-awareness in relation to the creative process through the practice of drawing.
   Transferable skills include technical skills, knowledge of contemporary art, critical thinking, professionalism
   and development of a personal style.
2. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge of contemporary art and studio practice
3. Critical Thinking and Imaginative Thinking: individual, self-realized projects
4. Communication Skills: expanded ability to communicate in visual & verbal terms
5. Independence: Time management and self-directed research and resolution
7. Composition skills: spatial play, atmospheric light and installation
8. Student Responsibility: Prepared and focused attendance is mandatory

Time Management: meeting all deadlines / Respect for self and others
Grading
All drawings, class projects, and home assignments should be signed on the back of the drawing with your
name and email. Respect your drawings. It is preferable to have the drawings stored flat and neatly in a
cardboard portfolio.
A mid-term evaluation will be held Wednesday October 9, 2019.

Evaluation/Grading Criteria
Students are evaluated on the results of a sustained, drawing practice that builds technical skill through a
process of research, planning, discovery and revision in relation to personal, well-executed, imaginative and
ambitious, visual solutions (compositions). Professionalism includes engaged and generous discussion in
class; prepared and timely attendance; focused and engaged
work habits. In other words, you are expected to develop your ideas with visual research as well as through
preliminary drawings. Since you have at least 3 weeks for each project, you are expected to take the time
allotted in class and at home, to be thoughtful and ambitious in developing the projects.

Criteria:
- Critical and Imaginative thinking: development of concepts
- Drawing skills: understanding and application of techniques / composition
- Creativity: sustained and well paced studio practice
- Work habits: research, preparation, focus, pacing, meeting deadlines,
- Participation: alert class work, energetic discussion
**Grade Breakdown**

Geography diptych 30
Urban Environment 30
Interior Triptych 30
Professionalism: 10

Research, Planning, Time Management, Resolution

Last day to withdraw from this course without receiving a grade: November 8, 2019.

**York University Faculty of Fine Arts grading system:**
The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York. Assignments will bear a letter grade. For a full description of York grading go to http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/pdfs/ug2004cal/calug04 5acadinfo.pdf

**Lateness Penalty:**
Assignments received later than the due dates will be penalized one-half letter grade (1 grade point). Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness or compassionate grounds will be given consideration by the instructor, but will require supporting documentation such as a doctor’s letter.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Required Basic Materials List**

**Preparation for the course:**
Large portfolio 22”x30” at least. There is a good selection of types and costs of portfolios at art supplies stores. Label your portfolio on the outside using masking tape and a marker. The identification should include: Name, Course Title and section. **No Plastic Bag Portfolios.**

Plastic Kit such as a small tool or storage box for all of your drawing materials – usually available at a large dollar store (put your name on it with masking tape and marker).

**Mark Marking / Drawing Media: (no acrylic paint, no markers)**
Various good quality Graphite Drawing Pencils (HB – 6B) and Pencil Sharpener
Graphic sticks
Two NEW Grey Kneaded Erasers and two White Erasers
Small Exacto knife to sharpen conte, charcoal etc.
Box of compressed charcoal (square-shaped soft)
Box of vine charcoal (you will be using charcoals a lot for gesture drawings)
Charcoal Pencils
Conte (various colours)
Colour Pencils
Oil pastels if using vellum
Watercolour paints
Inks (Black and various colours)
Brushes fine to large (for water- based media)
Chinese brushes, various sizes for ink
Masking tape wide and narrow (a couple of rolls)

**Paper:**

**Notes on Papers:**
Newsprint Pads or Mayfair for sketches (no smaller than 22x30”)

Good quality drawing papers are required during class and for the home assignment. Consider the following good quality papers for your projects, Stonehenge, Arches, Carlyle Japan, BFK, Somerset. Other quality drawing papers are acceptable. Mixed media or watercolour paper such as Stonehenge, Fabriano Studio Watercolour paper, Legion Rag Multimedia, Above Ground All-Media Rag, Canson Dessin 200 paper, Stonemill Multimedia paper.

**Please purchase ten sheets of good quality drawing paper at the beginning of term for your class work. Look for papers 22” x 30” or larger.**

**Academic Policies / Information**

The Senate Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy Committee (ASCP) provides a Student Information Sheet that includes:

- York's Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures / Academic Integrity Web site
- Access/Disability
- Ethics Review Process for Research Involving Human Participants
- Religious Observance Accommodation
- Student Code of Conduct

[http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/files/CourseInformationForStudentsAugust20121.pdf](http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/files/CourseInformationForStudentsAugust20121.pdf)

Additional information:

- Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities
- Alternate Exam and Test Scheduling
- Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy

The Senate Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy stipulates that (a) the grading scheme (i.e. kinds and weights of assignments, essays, exams, etc.) be announced, and be available in writing, within the first two weeks of class, and that, (b) under normal circumstances, graded feedback worth at least 15% of the final grade for Fall, Winter or Summer Term, and 30% for ‘full year’ courses offered in the Fall/Winter Term be received by students in all courses prior to the final withdrawal date from a course without receiving a grade.

- Important University Sessional Dates (you will find classes and exams start/end dates, reading/co-curricular week, add/drop deadlines, holidays, University closings and more.
  [http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/index.htm](http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/index.htm)

- Manage my Academic record
  [http://macademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/](http://macademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/)

- "20% Rule"

No examinations or tests collectively worth more than 20% of the final grade in a course will be given during the final 14 calendar days of classes in a term. The exceptions to the rule are classes which regularly meet Friday evenings or on Saturday and/or Sunday at any time, and courses offered in the compressed summer terms.

Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles.

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Many courses utilize Moodle, York University’s course website system. If your course is using Moodle, click here to access it.

Moodle @ York University