

# DRAWING I

Kenyon College, ARTS 102/01

Professor Read Baldwin/office hours: TR 11-12, 4-5, or by appointment

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*“An image lives by companionship, expanding and quickening in the eyes of the sensitive observer. It dies by the same token. It is therefore a risky act to send it out into the world.” -- Mark Rothko*

Bravery is one of the most important characteristics of being an artist. It is also one of the most important aspects of being a successful art student. To conceive and produce truly powerful artwork is extremely difficult, and it most likely will not happen for all of you on every assignment. But without striving to create an image capable of moving people by engaging them emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, and intellectually, you will have failed from the outset.

By definition, creativity is the act of bringing into the world something new. Part of what makes this such a “risky act”, as Rothko says, is that it is just as new for you, the creator, as it is for the rest of us, your audience. You may not feel you have made something “good” until you hear your colleagues’ praise; and conversely, you may think you have created a masterpiece that receives only a lukewarm response from the class.

But evaluating art in the classroom should not really be a “thumbs-up/thumbs-down” process. It is far more complex than that. When I evaluate your work, and when you evaluate each other’s work, you will engage in an analytical deliberation and consideration of what the next best step should be for that individual. Or perhaps you will feel there is something missing from the art work, that it is incomplete or unresolved, and you will need to explore why the artist may not have detected it him /herself. I need each of you to think of the projects in this class as part of a larger process—in part, a process of self-discovery: how you think about yourself, how you think about the world, as well as a process of articulating your artistic interests, curiosities and passions.

As a visual artist you will employ a particular vocabulary to express ideas that cannot be fully articulated by any other means. This course should serve two functions in your development as an artist. On the one hand, there is *drawing*: that form of expression that I think of as being absolutely *essential*, or primal. It reflects the movement of the hand, and the need or desire to record an image as a fundamental form of communication. It is not a day-to-day communication, but a conveyance of an understanding of the world, or a vision, that elevates and enriches us all. The fact that what you make here involves your own experience as well as reflection and thoughtfulness about the world you live in is what distinguishes this activity of art making. The ingredients that make up good drawing are as straightforward as mark making and line creation, and as complex as multiple pattern use and the depiction of forms in space. The second component of the class involves elements of *visual structure*. Visual Structure is not limited to drawing: its principles are found in all forms of creative endeavors: drawing, painting, installation, video, etc, as well as

literature, film and other time-based media. The principles of design that you will engage this semester should enhance your ability to decipher the structural encoding of many forms of art.

***You may be learning a new language in both the realms of drawing and structure. In order to do that successfully you have to keep an open-mind at all times, using the kind of intellectual approach you might have if you were setting out to learn a foreign language.***

**Materials:** *You will need a pad of moderate quality drawing paper, 18x24". The six major projects will require high quality paper—Arches Watercolor HOT Press recommended. Compressed charcoal, pencils of varying "darkness", kneaded eraser, ink and pastels will be our primary tools. Various collage materials may also be incorporated. You will need a three-ring binder to keep all handouts, assignments, and grade forms.*

**Grading:** *A sample assignment grade sheet is included with this syllabus. Your final grade will be comprised of the six project grades (which will be weighted more heavily toward the end of the semester), one artist presentation grade, and a double grade for portfolios, critiques participation and class discussion.*

**Attendance:** *In accordance with my colleagues in the department I have a fairly rigorous attendance policy. Regular attendance in art classes is vital to the integrity of the class as well as to your own learning process. You will benefit immeasurably from witnessing the process of what your colleagues are creating, as well as the discussion that surrounds the art making of others. **Therefore, if you have more than two unexcused absences your final grade will be docked a third of a grade. Each late arrival to class counts as one half of an absence. It is mandatory that you be present for critiques, and that your work be completed on time.** If you cannot attend a critique for some reason, you must discuss this with me ahead of time. You also need to communicate with me regarding any missed classes.*

**Disabilities:** *If you have any disabilities that may affect your performance in this class, be sure to communicate this to me so that I can make any adjustments possible that will enable you to succeed at your highest level.*

**Commitment:** *Most likely some of you will excel at certain tasks more than others. Observational skills and spatial relations will play a role in how well you are able to communicate through drawing, but the breadth of your visual imagination will play an equally large role. In constructing the curriculum for this course, I have attempted to find a balance between the technical and the imaginative. In the end it will be your time and commitment to both of these aspects of art making, the craft and the concept, that will determine your success in the class.*

***Schedule of Events:***

***Week 1 –Aug 28:*** introduction to line, value, and composition: small object studies

***Week 2 –Sept 2,4: Project #1:*** objects in an indeterminate space, due Sept 9.

***Week 3 –Sept 9, 11:*** depicting light and space: still-life/interior space study

***Week 4 –Sept 16, 18: Project #2:*** invented space with the surreal object, due Sept 22.

***Week 5 –Sept 23, 25:*** cross-hatching, patterning, introduction to the figure

***Week 6 –Sept 30, Oct 2: Project #3:*** the self-image as a social construct, due Oct 7.

***October Reading Days***

***Week 7 –Oct 14, 16 :*** continue figure studies: face, hands, feet, etc.

***Week 8 -Oct 21,23:*** studies for the psychological/narrative figure

***Week 9 –Oct 28, 30: Project #4:*** the figure as narrative metaphor, due Nov 4.

***Week 10 –Nov 4, 6:*** process, abstraction, and collage

***Week 11 –Nov 11, 13: Project #5:*** the culture of fragmentation.

***Week 12 –April 18, 20:*** external landscape, internal landscape, due Nov 20.

***Thanksgiving Break***

***Week 13 –Dec 2, 4:*** conceiving the final project: developing a unified aesthetic-- the personal and the universal

***Week 14 –Dec 9, 11:*** final project progress critiques

***Project #6 due Dec 11.***