## PAINTING BASICS & FUNDAMENTALS /SUMMER 2022

**PROFESSOR CHRISTIAN CURIEL**

[**www.christiancuriel.com**](http://www.christiancuriel.com)

[**christian.curie@gmail.com**](mailto:christian.curie@gmail.com)

**(best to contact me through CANVAS. I tend to be more responsive)**

This course is an introduction to traditional representational painting. In the western tradition, representational painting is based on conceptual systems that organize complex visual information: linear perspective (both mechanical and perceptual); carefully manipulated proportion; geometric simplification of organic forms; color and value relationships; and light logic. Through a series of directed assignments, students will begin to understand these concepts and learn to apply them to observed visual phenomena. By doing so, they will begin to develop the ability to create the illusion of complex volumes and structures existing in a clearly articulated perspective space. In addition, students will be asked to consider some of the many ways illusionistic elements can be composed on a two-dimensional surface; heavy emphasis will be placed on reconciling the illusion of volumes and structures with the design of the two-dimensional picture plane.

The course will concentrate on careful work from still-lives and other inanimate objects: students will study accurate proportion, convincing perceptual perspective, and the representation of volume, light, and space through carefully manipulated color, and tone. The course will move from extremely simple to more complex set-ups and situations.

Students enrolled in this class should be willing to participate in a rigorous, technique driven course of study.

***I reserve the right to alter the syllabus as the needs of the class or scheduling requirements change. I will try to give adequate notice of changes.***

***Grading:*** You will receive one grade for in-class dedication and participation; another based on the finished paintings handed in; and a third for homework. The average of the three is your final grade. I assign a numerical equivalent to each of your grades in order to calculate your average. The numerical equivalents are as follows:

A+: 98 A: 95 A-: 92 B+: 88 B: 85 B-: 82

C+: 78 C: 75 C-: 72 D+: 68 D: 65 F: 0

**Meaning of Grades:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A+** | Work of the highest quality possible: virtually indistinguishable from work produced by a professional working in the field. Shows full understanding of concepts, and fully developed ability to display that knowledge in a completely resolved, conceptually complex, beautifully executed work of art. A grade of A+ is virtually never achieved. |
| **A** | Work of the highest quality that can be expected of an undergraduate student. Shows full mastery of concepts and a highly developed ability to display those concepts in a beautifully executed, convincing work of art. A grade of A is very rare. |
| **A-** | Similar to above, but with some minor flaws. Also rarely achieved. |
| **B+** | Very good work. Shows near full mastery of concepts and ability to execute those concepts. Even though some flaws are present, a student achieving a B+ shows strong evidence of being able to succeed as an artist working at an advanced level. |
| **B** | Good work. Shows some mastery of concepts and ability to execute those concepts. Even though some flaws are present, a student achieving a B shows evidence of being able to succeed as an artist working at an advanced level. |
| **B-** | Good work, although has some weaknesses. Shows some understanding of concepts and ability to execute those concepts. Even though some flaws are present, a student achieving a B- shows evidence of being able to succeed as an artist working at an advanced level. |
| **C+** | Passing work. Will get credit for course if student is an art major. But does not show strong ability in the field. Some significant weaknesses in the student’s grasp of concepts and ability to execute those concepts, or the students has shown a significant disregard for the work required to succeed in the class. |
| **C, C-** | Passing work but will not count as credits toward an art major. Does not show strong ability in the field. Considerable and significant weaknesses in the student’s grasp of concepts and ability to execute those concepts, or the students has shown a significant disregard for the work required to succeed in the class. |
| **D+, D** | Lowest passing grade possible. Weak grasp of concepts and little ability to display those concepts in a work of art. |
| **F** | Failure. |

The following indented entries also have an impact on your grade:

***Attendance*** is mandatory, although I allow one unexcused absence per semester. Each subsequent absence that is not accompanied by a doctor’s note or explained by another legitimate emergency will result in three points being deducted from the numerical equivalent of your “dedication and participation” grade. If you don’t have a doctor’s note, you are required to e-mail me by the end of the day if your absence is to be considered excused.

***Tardiness*** will negatively affect your grade. All students should be in studio and ready to work at the start of class. Attendance will be taken every day. If you are not here for attendance, you will be considered absent.

***Materials*** should be purchased *exactly* as described on this syllabus. You are required to have all those listed. *Not having them will considerably affect your “dedication and participation” grade*

* If financial or other impediments prevent you from purchasing materials, please speak to me privately*.*

***Painting Supports:*** Some assignments will require that you build your own support, which will be covered in class. For other assignments, a prefabricated support is fine.

***Preparedness:*** As implied by the three previous entries, you should be prepared to work at the beginning of class each day. Again, if you are not properly prepared, this will count against your “dedication and participation” grade.

***Group critiques and discussions*** may be scheduled throughout the semester. Students are required to participate.

***Homework*** will be assigned on Friday and will be due the following Friday, unless otherwise indicated. *I do not accept late homework assignments.*

***Technology Policy:*** Other than devices used by or for the entire class, the classroom is, with a few exceptions outlined below, a technology free zone.

* Cell phones should be silenced.
* When class is in session, students are not allowed to use cell phones, laptops, tablets, or any other screen-based technology for any purpose.
* If you must make or take a phone call, or if you need to send a text, please leave the classroom.
* Personal technological devices cannot be used for music.
* If an artist, term, or idea comes up that you are unfamiliar with, write the name down on a piece of paper and research the person outside of class time. If, for any reason, it is imperative that you do the research immediately, please consult the instructor before doing so.
* Note taking should be done with pen and paper.
* Failure to work within these technology expectations will result in a diminishment of your “Dedication and Participation” grade.

***If any student requires access to technology for an approved educational purpose, such as translation apps or assistive technology, please get the written permission from the proper administrative office.***

***No Eating in class.*** You can’t be concentrating on the work in class if you’re eating at the same time; it’s also a health hazard.

***Text Messages:*** I will ask for everybody’s cell phone number so that I can send out a group text in case of a last-minute change of plans. The only times I will do this are when class has to be cancelled, if I am running late for class, or something similar.But just so everybody’s privacy is respected, please do not text me for other reasons, and I won’t text you for reasons other than those just explained. Students do not need to text me when they are running late or have to miss class. An email is fine. And most communication with me should be done through my qc email.

**General Lesson Plan**

**Introduction, Slides**

**Grisaille Still-Life**

Using White and Blue/Black, paint a simple still life, carefully observing value relationships in order to create a convincing sense of volume and space.

**Warm/Cool Still Life**

Using White, Blue Black, and Earth Red, make a painting of a simple still life in which you begin to consider color by observing color temperature.

**Dead Palette Painting**

Working from plaster casts of human features, we will expand our palette by adding Yellow Ochre; we will attempt to suggest a full range of color with a limited palette.

**Color Wheels, Color Stars, and Color Mixing**

Make Color stars with dead palette primaries, traditional red/yellow/blue primaries, and Cyan/Magenta/Yellow primaries. Match perceptual color using both color wheel opposites and other color mixes.

**Demonstration**

Demonstrate constructing a stretcher and stretching and priming a canvas; priming a Masonite panel; mixing medium.

**Full Spectrum Still Life**

To our existing palette of White, Blue/Black (or Payne’s Gray,) Earth Red, and Yellow Ochre, we will add the following colors:

* The Traditional Primaries: Ultramarine Blue, Cadmium Red Deep, and Cadmium Yellow

and

* CMY primaries: Quinacridone Magenta, Cobalt Teal or Turquoise, and Cadmium Lemon

We will also use Viridian, Cobalt Blue, Pthalocyanine Blue, Aliziron Crimson, and possibly others. Using this full spectrum palette, we’ll make a painting of a more complex still life using a full range of color, in which students should be able to optically match value and perceptual color.

**Homework (1.)** Make a simplified, three-value copy of a representational masterpiece of your choice (must be a canonical painting) that emphasizes complex tonal composition. A Baroque period painting would be ideal (artists such as Peter Paul Rubens, Artemisia Gentileschi, Caravaggio, Vermeer, Rembrandt, etc.), although other periods could certainly work Painters from periods other than the Baroque include Titian, Veronese, Chardin, Fragonard, Degas, Henry Ossawa Tanner, Edward Hopper, Lisa Yuskavage, among many others. We will be using this painting as a basis for a composition of your choice, to be executed next week. (2.) Bring a painting support that is twice the size of your copy, and exactly the same proportion.

**Yale Art Gallery Field Trip**

**Borrowing a Composition**

Take the painting you copied last week. Make an original abstract painting using the major design elements in play from the source painting. Analyze the formal arrangement: take note of the linear rhythms; the relationship of the two-dimensional design to the movement of the volumes through space; of how lights and darks are arranged; of the relationships between color masses. Use these design properties so that they are discernible as coming from the original but in the service of your own composition.

**Oil Paint (I recommend Gamblin or Utrecht brand, except where noted):**

* White (Zinc, Titanium, Lead, Flake, Cremnitz, it doesn’t matter)
* Payne’s Grey
* Transparent Red Oxide
* Ultramarine Blue
* Yellow Ochre

4 Canvas Panels, 12X16” or thereabouts

Canvas Pad, 9X12” or thereabouts

White Acrylic Gesso, 1 pint or quart

**Brushes, *Bristle Brushes*, either synthetic or authentic hog’s hair bristle:**

* 3 Flats or Filberts: #2, #4, #8,
* 2 Rounds: #1, #4
* 2” bristle house painting brush

**Rags:** rags can be purchased at places like Home Depot, but old t-shirts are best. A roll of paper towels will also work.

**Paper Towels**

**Bar of Soap in a soap dish**, or a pump bottle of soap

A picture containing wall, indoor, lined, several

Description automatically generated

Examples of a Trowel Shaped Palette Knife and Authentic Hogs Hair Bristle Brushes