

Introduction to Printmaking

ART243-011

Fall 2015, MW 3:30 – 5:25

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Course Description:

This course will provide an introduction to a number of printmaking techniques. It is important to understand at the outset that printmaking is not simply a means of reproducing existing images, but is a means of creating original works by transferring ink from a *matrix* onto a *substrate*. Matrices range from potatoes to copper plates to silk screens. Substrates are usually paper, but can be just about anything, as long as it's more or less flat. Students in printmaking courses often feel that the focus is only on technique, which is understandable since just learning the craft involved is a significant task in its own right. But in the 21st Century, an introduction to printmaking needs to discuss more than the practice of putting ink on paper. We increasingly live in a world of mass-multiplied imagery and mediated life; our experience of the world is filtered through various media - iPhones, Google Maps, or recorded audio. While some might argue that the existence of home inkjet printers and image-sharing apps makes the study of printmaking obsolete, I believe the ongoing potential of printmaking as a means of artistic expression lies precisely in its ability to engage those issues.

I will place priority on teaching you the processes by which you will be able to create effective prints, but a goal of every art class should be to encourage and challenge your artistic practice and vision. To that end, we will discuss the questions raised by the study of physical art printmaking in a digital world. How does our changing technology change us as people? How does it change the way we see the world? What art will we make in response to that world, or that awareness, and what form will it take? And who is the audience for that work?

With that in mind, this course will serve as an introduction to printmaking and contemporary print media, as well as the surrounding ideas and theories.

Course Objectives:

This is an introductory course to acquaint the student with application of the basic principles of plate making and ink transfer, the basic techniques of color registration, the traditions and terminology of original print production and how these may be applied to the development of personal work. The contributions to graphic tradition of major artists from Rembrandt to Murakami will be discussed in the context of a working understanding of printmaking based on traditional and contemporary concepts, techniques, vocabulary, and materials. Lecture, demonstration, critique, and slideshows will expose students to terms and concepts to be applied to their own work. A variety of

exercises and techniques will be demonstrated and practiced. The sequence of assignments is designed to increase the student's ability to control the visual relationships in many forms of printmaking related to a personal choice of imagery and subject matter.

Upon completion of this course, students should demonstrate an ability to:

1. Create editions of prints utilizing one or more print techniques that demonstrate both technical and conceptual consideration.
2. Learn and apply different printmaking techniques and processes with proficiency.
3. Analyze and evaluate their own work and that of other students through the process of critique using terms and concepts appropriate to the medium.
4. Understand the history of printmaking as a distinctive form of art production.
5. Engage with the community of printmakers and work collaboratively toward the above objectives

Attendance:

I take attendance seriously. Please be present and on time. Three unexcused absences will drop your overall grade one full letter. Four unexcused absences will result in the student failing the class. If you have extenuating circumstances, the Office of Academic Affairs handles excusing absences. I am a very understanding person, but it is not my place to determine which of your various crises and emergencies should be excused and which are the result of poor planning or general malarkey.

Additionally, since there will be many demos and much of the work will be done during class time you may want to consider carefully the ramifications of missing a class. If you miss a demo due to absence I will be extremely reluctant to repeat it for your benefit. If you believe you have a valid reason to miss a demo or a critique, let me know *in advance* and maybe we can work it out. **Taking notes is essential.**

Work days are not optional attendance days. If you believe you have completed the assignment, work in your journal. If you are ahead of the class, I am willing to show you an additional technique or help you expand your project.

Studio Etiquette & Expectations:

Showing up to class and completing the assignments is not enough. Students are expected to:

- Come to class prepared, equipped to print and participate
- Read the syllabus and online announcements. Know what is going on!
- Be aware of announced due dates and have work ready for them
- Properly dispose of trash
- Clean work areas after using them, and as needed
- Exhibit good work ethics, sound craftsmanship, and consistency of effort
- Challenge your skill development, show initiative and improvement
- Check your email! I will communicate notes, reminders, clarifications, and addendums through email. UD email is official communication, and I expect you to read it.

Schedule 15-30 minutes of clean-up time at the end of every printing session. **If you leave a mess in the printshop that someone else has to clean up, you will lose a letter grade (10 points) off the current assignment.** Also, everyone will think you're a slob.

Assignments & Grading:

Projects will be assigned in class and will be summarized in Sakai, along with due dates and individual grading rubrics. To assess the assignments, in addition to the designated criteria and goals set forth in the Assignment, the student has/has not:

- Produced a neatly, carefully and thoughtfully executed artwork.
- Visually conveyed an idea central to the student's interests.
- Demonstrated an understanding of the elements and principles of art.
- Explored the media used in the creation of the artwork.
- Produced a consistent edition as appropriate for the project.
- Understood the role of paper selection in producing the final image.
- Practiced safety procedures and safe handling of cutting tools, knives and solvents.

There is no extra credit available for this class. In the interest of learning, any assignment may be redone and submitted for a new grade. If it was late the first time, it's still late. Redoing a project is no guarantee of a higher grade, but resubmitted projects will be assessed fairly and on the same rubric as the original assignment. The opportunity to assess a failure and to improve upon it is an extremely rewarding and effective learning experience.

Assigned printmaking projects may require 5-15 hours outside of class each week to complete. Plan accordingly. Names must appear clearly on work. **Edition prints in pencil only.** Late assignments will be accepted grudgingly, and will be penalized one full grade letter for each class session they are late. Sketchbooks will be reviewed at midterm and at the end of the session.

Mid-term evaluations are given as a gauge for final grades and as an indicator of problems. If you encounter problems that keep you from successfully completing the class see the instructor. *Incompletes* are given in extreme situations and only if already

passing.

Final Grades will be determined using the following formula:

- 5% Sketchbook
- 5% Quizzes
- 5% Final Presentation
- 10% Participation (Studio etiquette, critiques)
- 75% Assignments

Supplies:

There is a \$95 art consumables fee for this class. That fee covers the purchase of most basic printmaking supplies required for this class, including paper, ink, and ongoing shop needs like solvents and tools. There are a few items you should plan on supplying for yourselves:

- blue painter's tape
- an X-acto knife w/ replacement blades
- a wooden spoon or other smooth flat object for hand rubbing prints (don't spend a lot on this. Goodwill or the dollar store will do fine)
- drawing materials: pencil, a few pens in more than one color, permanent markers in black and at least 2 other colors
- a couple cheap small brushes, 1" or less (I like the crappy wooden ones at Lowe's, they're a buck or two)

Print Shop Hours:

We will have work time during class hours, but the shops will also be open for the inevitable time needed outside of class to complete your projects. Shop hours and policies will be communicated to you shortly after the start of the semester. When working in the shops outside of class, you must defer to the monitor on duty.

Instructor:

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns, or comments. If you are unsure about something, email me. If you are having trouble, email me. If I don't hear from you, I will assume everything is going fine. My office hours are Monday and Wednesday afternoons, by appointment.

Health & Safety:

Some of the materials used in this class have potential hazards; their safe use and

handling is important. If you have, or develop, sensitivity to any materials, contact the instructor immediately. Please be careful, and *never work alone!*

Appropriation:

The appropriation of published artwork may be acceptable for some projects. Appropriated work must be changed or critiqued in some way. Directly copying work and re-presenting it as your own is plagiarism. Work derived from any published source must be given credit and include the following information: artist's name, title, date, publication source and date of publication.

ADA statement:

Any student, who, because of a disabling condition, may require assistance in the event of an emergency or may require some special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements, should discuss with the instructor the nature of their disability and needs so that the necessary accommodations can be made.

Abandoned Work:

Artwork that is abandoned or uncollected at the end of the term will have to, unfortunately, be thrown out. If this is a concern for you at any point, you only need email me to find a solution.