Course Title: Introduction to Calligraphy and Letterform: Methods, Models, History, and Practice  
Course Code: Art 50  
Course Dates: October 13 - November 17 | 6 weeks  
Instructor: Ann Miller, AB, AM | www.pennib.com

Course Summary:

The purpose of this six-week survey course is to awaken the student to the art of calligraphy and to provide a broad foundation for exploring techniques and skills in formal lettering.

In this digital age, when it is rare to visit paper, pen, and ink, we may lose touch not just with the physical act of writing but with the power of the written voice. The contemporary field of text art has been steadily growing and its effect is felt worldwide. This class offers the student a means to reignite the physical connection with letters and enable a more fluid relationship between the voice in our head and the voice on paper. This is a highly interactive class, with exercises throughout. Due to the degree of focus required by formal lettering, calligraphy is often considered a martial art, since it is highly organized, strategic, and target oriented.

The first session lays the groundwork for making the letterform with accuracy and the second session explores the organic moving, continuous line of cursive script. The following three sessions cover specific hands such as Uncial, Blackletter, and Italic, and include time for practice as well as for doing small creative assignment projects. There will be several options for fun projects described in class including a comprehensive final project. Exercises are designed to deepen visual perception and improve understanding of letterform design and the rhythms of writing. What you learn in this class will be applicable to the wider realms of design requiring creative visual judgment such as in painting, printmaking, and the graphic and book arts.

Each session includes verbal explanation of the assignment, live demonstration of technique, and time for feedback. The Canvas area online contains extensive resources for asynchronous reference, detailed critiques, and support for your ongoing individual work. Be prepared for at least 4-6 hours homework per week as we take a deep look into the major areas of calligraphy design and begin to understand and create meaningful letters, words, and text.

The class is designed for anyone who enjoys letters, from beginners to advanced calligraphers. You may want to update your daily handwriting, make a single carefully
designed letterform, or enjoy practicing the historic scripts. As you spend quality time with the process of making letters, new ideas for creative design will naturally occur.

Grade Options and Requirements:

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - Students must attend and/or watch at least 5 class sessions and complete at least 3 required assignments.
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
  - Students must attend and/or watch at least 5 class sessions and complete all 5 required session assignments. There will be an introductory assignment prior to the first session, which would ideally be completed before class convenes, and there will be many optional or alternative exercises.

*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.

Zoom Schedule:

These class sessions will be recorded, but live attendance is required. Given the amount and diversity of the materials presented and the scope of work that is required to fully participate in this learning experience, students who miss more than one class session will not be eligible for a letter grade without permission from the instructor.

Class meets each Wednesday from 7:00pm to 8:50pm starting on October 13, 2021 and continuing for 6 weeks. Sign in a few minutes early as sessions will begin promptly.

Materials:

Students are encouraged to assemble their supplies prior to the first day of class. All are available through Blick at dickblick.com, but extensive materials specifically for calligraphers are available through paperinkarts.com or johnnealbooks.com. A fully updated supply list will be available in Canvas at beginning of course, and the first session requires only a marker tool plus the copies provided. We will discuss tools and media at length in the first session.

SUPPLIES YOU WILL NEED FOR SESSION 1
Printouts on copy paper from the PDF file for Session 1 assignment (4 sheets)
Medium sized marker (large tip of Mono Twin permanent marker) or pen and ink if you have it on hand.

**REQUIRED**
- Drawing paper - 9 x 12 pad - Blick Sketch Pad or Strathmore Drawing 400 (better quality makes a big difference for practice)
- Tracing paper - a small pad or several sheets
- #2 pencil or mechanical pencil for guidelines
- Speedball Calligraphy Kit: C-1, C-2 and C-3 – with ink and holder (the least expensive choice for beginners, though you may order individual nibs from [www.paperinkarts.com](http://www.paperinkarts.com))
- Speedball monoline nibs B-0 and B-3 (need one large and one a couple of sizes smaller; these come in sets of two and will fit regular Speedball holder)
- Markers - Tombow Lettering Set, contains the following items:
  - 2 Tombow Dual Brush pens (Black and Gray)
  - 1 Fudenosuke calligraphy pen
  - 1 Mono Twin permanent marker
  - 1 Mono drawing pencil
  - 1 Mono eraser
  - Instruction guide
- Non-waterproof black ink (such as Yasutomo Liquid Sumi Ink - 6 oz, water resistant)
  NOTE: the C series Speedball lettering kit above contains India ink, which is not suitable for calligraphy unless it is well-diluted, so a non-waterproof ink is required for this class.
- Standard tool kit: water bowl, small ink containers, lint-free wipes, xacto blade, scissors, T-square, ruler

**RECOMMENDED/OPTIONAL**
- The Aquabee SuperDeluxe Sketchbook is somewhat expensive but is great for formal artwork.
- Pilot Parallel Pen 3.8mm. Portable screw top fountain pen style (6mm nib size is useful for large Gothic scripts)
- Walnut ink - if you like to work with earth tones; lightfast, semi-permanent ink from crystals, just mix with water ([https://www.johnnealbooks.com/product/walnut-ink-crystals](https://www.johnnealbooks.com/product/walnut-ink-crystals)) not expensive
- A tube of gouache for color accent: Burnt Sienna or Carmine (Holbein or Winsor & Newton)

**Tentative Weekly Outline:**

**Prior to Session 1**
Get ready. Organize your workspace and gather tools and supplies. Read the introductory material and do an informal lettering exercise (1/2 hr) to introduce ourselves, set the stage for making letters, and begin our conversation.

**Week 1 - Romans**
Introductions: Post results from the introductory exercise and discuss
Demo: Workspace and tools, mark-making basics, parts of the letter
Demo on Letter Construction: Skeleton Roman capitals and minuscules
Grid and Page Layout: Method, spacing and basic rules of the page
Reading: Know the terms for the parts of the letterform

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Assignments: Get to know the structure of skeleton Romans, majuscule and minuscule. Rule up a practice page.
(4 hrs homework)

Week 2 - Freehand Writing
Freehand Writing: What is its history?
Demo: Cursive letterform styles and forms
Demo: Modular elements of script and specifics of form — slant, interval, spacing, connectors, pressure/release, continuous line
Practice: Techniques and models, warmups and writing rhythms
Layout: The pangram or alphabetic sentence
Assignments: Letterform practice, tools exploration and stroke character, pangram artwork
(4-6 hrs homework)

Week 3 - Upright Hands
Uuncial Hand and Humanist Minuscule: History, models, and discussion
Broad-edged Pen Demo: practice modes and models
Demo: Assignment instruction - page layout, pen angle, spacing, margins, counters
Demo: Making a Cola Pen, with optional exercise
Assignments: One word, a group of words using broad edged pen, and a design using monoline pen, capitals, and connected design
(5-6 hrs homework)

Week 4 - Gothic Scripts
Blackletter Scripts: History, models, and discussion
Demo: Forms, spacing, pen angles, entry and exit strokes, variants
Demo: How to make an accurate historical copy using an illuminated capital
Assignments: Full page pangram or alphabetic sentence
Critique of selected work from weeks 1-3
(6 hrs homework)

Week 5 - Slanted Scripts
Italic Script: History, models, and discussion
Demo: Page layout, spacing, flourishing
Practice: Italic models, capitals and minuscules
Assignments: Weathergram haiku; Italic with grayscale and spatial overlap
Critique of work from Week 4
(6 hrs homework)

Week 6 - Text Design and Contemporary Usage
Demo: Notan, dark/light exercises, B nib or large marker, in-class work.
Presentation of Final Project: Broadside, booklet, or similar optional piece.
Critique/wrapup/questions and comments