Beginning Drawing

Syllabus

“In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert’s mind there are few.”
– Shunryu Suzuki, Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind

Course Objectives

• To become familiar with the basic methods, techniques & tools of drawing
• To take part in a community of artists
• To enjoy the challenging and nuanced process of drawing

Course Methods

• Practice & repetition
• Experimentation & play
• Observation (inner & outer)
• Creative synthesis
• Mutual support & feedback

Course Requirements/Grading/Guidelines

Please make a commitment to the work we’re going to do together. Students who want to get the most out of this class should be on time, have regular attendance, and complete all assignments.

Grading options:

• No Grade Requested: Default option
• Letter Grades: Not offered
• Credit/No Credit: No more than two absences and completion of all assignments and active participation in discussions is required

Guidelines:

• Do actively participate in discussions
• Do listen to the instructor and fellow students and follow directions
• Do complete all projects, including home assignments
• Do not talk while the instructor or a fellow student is speaking
• Do not use a digital device in class (make calls outside)
• Do not be mean, rude, or disrespectful to anyone in the class
• Students who cannot follow the rules or instructions of the teacher might be asked to leave
Course Structure
We’ll be drawing the majority of the time, but there will also be slide lectures, demos, class discussions, and short writing projects. At the start of most classes we will have a warm-up before the main project. You’ll receive info via email before each class that explains what we’ll be doing that week, which materials to bring, and what to work on at home.

Course Materials
For the first class you will need:
- **Work Clothing:** Always wear old clothes or a smock/apron that can get dirty.
- **Drawing Pad:** A large, inexpensive sketchpad with “light weight” (50 lb.) sketch paper (size 18 x 24 in. or similar size that fits your drawing board). Common brands are Strathmore, Canson, etc.
- **Drawing Board:** A drawing board with clips, cut-out handle and rubber-band large enough to accommodate your big pad (or other type of drawing board).
- **Pencils:** Assortment that should include at least one middle-range (HB or #2), one hard (H5), and one soft (B5) pencil.
- **Eraser & Sharpener:** An eraser (pink or white) and a small, portable pencil sharpener.

Later you will need:
- **Charcoal & Conté:** A small package (5-10 sticks) of vine or willow charcoal, a small package (2-4 sticks) of compressed charcoal, a small package (1-2 sticks) of white Conté crayons and one “kneaded rubber” eraser.
- **Pens:** Your choice of three or more different types of pen (ballpoint, rollerball, felt, fountain, brush, paint, gel, parallel, technical, etc.).
- **Sumi Ink & Brush:** A bottle of Japanese liquid black sumi ink (*do not substitute other types of ink!* and a small or medium-sized Asian-style calligraphy brush. Also one or two mixing cups/jars/containers.
- **Collage Supplies:** Glue (white, stick, rubber, etc.), masking tape, scissors and/or utility knife.
- **OPTIONAL:** Ruler, water spray bottle, gloves, colored pencils, crayons, pastels, good quality paper (140 lb. or greater watercolor or printmaking, such as Arches, BFK Rives, etc.).

**Portable Art Kit (PAK):**
- A PAK is a small, portable container with supplies and a small sketchbook. The key aspect of the PAK is that it is truly portable—it must fit in a backpack, pocket, or purse. Use it to write down ideas, plan a piece, sketch on the fly, and brainstorm freely without judgment.
- For your PAK you need:
  - **Sketchbook:** Must be 5” x 7” or smaller.
  - **Pencils and/or Pens:** A small assortment of your choosing.
  - **Container:** A small and portable box/bag for supplies.

Where to buy supplies:
- Accent Arts (PA): 392 California Ave. @ Ash St.
- University Art (Redwood City): 2550 El Camino Real @ Center St.
- University Art (SJ): 456 Meridian Ave. @ Saddle Rack St.
- Michael’s (Sunnyvale): 818 W El Camino Real @ S. Pastoria Ave.
- Michael’s (Mountain View): 2415 Charleston Rd @ Independence Ave.
- Michael’s (Cupertino): 20640 Homestead Rd @ Forge Way
- Michael’s (San Mateo): 1750 S Delaware St. near Concar Dr.
- Maido Fine Stationery & Gifts (SJ): 378 Santana Row, St. 1125, @ Olsen Dr.

Course Outline

Day 1:
- Introductions, syllabus & materials
- Class objectives & prior experience
- Demo: Location, position, set-up & gesture
- Project #1: Anatomy of a Drawing
- Project #2: Big Head & Crazy Stick!
- Home Fun: 1) Get PAK & other supplies. 2) What’s your definition of drawing? 3) Bring landscape photos.

Day 2:
- Slide lecture (Landscapes)
- Discuss: Definitions of drawing
- Demo: Starting a drawing, atmospheric perspective & gestural drawing
- Project: Landscape (Photo)
- Home Fun: Do a plein-air landscape.

Day 3:
- Demo: Composition, shading, gradation & contrast
- Project: Landscape #2 (Photo or Plein-air)
- Home Fun: 1) Finish Landscape drawings. 2) Bring small objects for De-Stilled Life. 3) Bring drawings for a discussion.

Day 4:
- Discuss: First three projects
- Slide lecture (Still Lifes)
- Demo: Crosshatching
- Project: Still Life
- Home Fun: 1) Two or more gestural drawings of objects in PAK. 2) Bring small objects for De-Stilled Life #2.

Day 5:
- Demo: Sumi ink & brush
- Project: Still Life #2

Day 6:
- Slide lecture (Abstraction)
- Demo: The world of pens & abstraction
- Project: Abstract
- Home Fun: 1) Bring last three drawings for a discussion. 2) Bring various materials & choose subject matter for Abstract #2 (Mixed Media) project.
Day 7:

- **Discuss:** Last three projects
- Slide lecture
- **Demo:** Mixing media, found materials & collage
- **Project:** Abstract #2 (Mixed Media)
- **Home Fun:** 1) Finish Abstract drawings. 2) Gestural drawings of people in your PAK.

Day 8:

- **Demo:** Foreshortening & finding mass/tension
- **Project:** Figurative Gestures (we’ll have a model)
- **Home Project:** Foreshortened sketches in PAK.

Day 9:

- **Demo:** Measuring
- **Project:** Figurative Gestures #2 (we’ll have a model)
- **Home Project:** Carry your PAK off into the sunset…