

**BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY**  
**FINE ARTS**  
**ARTS 372 – LIFE DRAWING**  
**SYLLABUS**

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**Classroom: 214**  
**Tues./Thurs. 10:05 – 1:05 pm**  
**Office Hours**  
**by Appointment**

## **Course Description**

A figure drawing workshop with a perspectival outlook upon figure/body and its necessary grounding in structure, theory and history. Lectures and practice engage the interaction of anatomical structural analyses with social, cultural and historical theory as they form contemporary expression. Format: Integration of concept and practice is the focus and these possibilities as drawing are interpreted through the viewing of slides and the reading of texts of historical and contemporary artists, writers, philosophers and critics. Portfolio requirement is classroom work from the model, a journal and some outside assignments. Books: To be determined Prerequisite: ARTS 171 Note: A fee of \$50 is associated with this course to cover cost of supplies, equipment and other related materials. Basic summary of class assignments (expect variations)

## **Philosophy on learning the Art of Drawing**

### **MAN IS THE MEASURE OF ALL THINGS**

Drawing and learning the Art of Drawing is the basic bedrock and corner stone of making all visual art. Learning to draw is an alternative way of learning. The word drawing is understood to mean to design. It does not matter if you are observing, planning or doing architecture, sculpture, graphic design, industrial or fashion design, painting or anything else that ask for visualizations..... then drawing is helpful and in some cases necessary. Drawing can alter ones perceptual abilities. To learn to make use of the visual language through drawing, and then learning how to plan, to process, to use critical thinking, and to manage creating order in a drawing is the foundation of art training.

Drawing helps us to learn to ‘**see**’ ( I do not mean merely just looking at things), but to ‘see’ beyond the simple material facts of things observed. *To see* into the significance of all things observed. Drawing can help to encourage a greater ability at observation and a better sympathy toward the world outside ourselves. Drawing is an intellectual act. Learning to draw can help one to expand a greater imagination, and to encourage a

sensitive, perceptual, and penetrating ability toward our personal *subjective* and *objective* analytical abilities. Improving on your visual abilities through drawing, can provide a wider reality to the world around us. Learning to draw is an cerebral act, and it can in fact extend our intellectual scope, open knowledge of history, encourage research, enlighten, develop organizational skills, as well as improving ones dexterity.

Learning to ‘**SEE**’ is not merely a matter of carelessly looking at things, and identifying ‘things’. Rather, drawing helps you to learn to understand how things belong together, how they fit, and how they *relate to each other*. Expanding observational skills helps to encourage a deeper meaning beyond the basic *material facts*, and opens one up to what I like to call *in-sight-full-ness*. To learn ‘how to draw’, you must develop and establish a method of utilizing in your ability to organize, and to search and find some kind of order out of chaos. Once again..... drawing is truly an intellectual act. If one can develop in their ability to ‘see’, and to ‘see’ with discernment, the student will gain a greater knowledge from visualization toward a greater ideational growth. Drawing can help to substantiate a greater sympathy about all things around us . Drawing is really an abstract way of learning, that leads us to a imaginary way of edification.

***Anyone can draw!.....***

***What you See is What you Think, and What you Think is What you See!***

***Man is the measure of all things***

This course is not designed specifically for the art major. It is my hope to communicate and to find success with students from a broad spectrum of interests, and disciplines. I welcome all individuals from other majors, or the uncommitted with a lively interest in the arts. I wish this course to be a total engagement of mind, with eyes, hands, body, and emotions. These are the genuine qualities that will make learning to draw a precise creative act (...and not just an emotive expressive activity), for good drawing takes into account conceptualization, reason, history, and communication consideration. Developed skills in drawing will contribute to the students abilities at sound judgment which is essential to artistic growth and enlightened connoisseurship.

I understand that many think of this ability (skill at drawing) as unique only to certain individuals, and that these individuals are either blessed by the ‘gods’, or have inherited some uncanny and unnatural ability. This notion couldn’t be farther from the truth. Simply said .....**if you have the ability to script out your name on paper and with a pencil or pen, then you have enough coordination and hand and eye control to draw.** AND.....not only draw, but draw skillfully. Drawing is a language, and you need to practice this language just as you would a piano, or math, or the art of writing. I am sure that you already know, if you were to practice a musical instrument everyday, even just a little bit, you will eventually learn to play guitar ( for example) or learn to composed. As the old saying goes....”Practice makes perfect’.

## ***What you See is What you Think, and What you Think is What you See!***

The thought that is very important, or maybe even better said ...the thing that is necessary to learn to how to draw, is that you..... *must want to draw*. Have some faith in what I am telling you.

You must listen, and you must be willing to take advice,

***you must fight against any preconceptions,***

***you must not draw like you think you are suppose to draw.***

***You must stop saying to yourself ‘I can’t, or I have no talent’,***

***you must be clear headed and keep advice and all suggestions in mind while drawing.***

***You must think things out clearly and not just work intuitively.***

***You must understand that learning to draw is just like learning math or anything else that is both abstract and conceptual....again .....drawing is an intellectual act.***

***You must not attempt to finish and to seek out details before you’ve begun.***

***You must develop an orderly process and method of organization,***

***You must ‘see’ well,***

***You must measure,***

***and you must practice and do the assignments.***

## **Man is the Measure of All Things**

### **What You See is What You Think!**

Undoubtedly there are some in this class that have more experience or skill than some others, but please do not let this either distract or discourage you. These individuals have had some experience along the way. Many of you stopped drawing and put down your pencils or crayons in or about the fourth grade. Everything progressive or any advancement at that particular point in time caused any growth to stop. Schools often do not teach visual literacy, and perspective. At that point in time (4th grade) your skill no longer progressed. However..... the good news is that it will not take eight, or ten years of exercise in order to catch up or make up for all of that lost time. As I said before drawing is more about learning how to ‘see’ and but how to learn to ‘**see in a certain way**’. This ‘certain way’ is where I (as the teacher) come into play. I will attempt to be as helpful as possible to contribute to this (seeing) skill. Once you start learning ‘to see in the certain way’ your drawing will vastly improve immediately. If you follow my instructions, listen, try and do the assignments you will be absolutely amazed by the end of the semester as to how much your work will improve. Additionally you will also become convinced about all the things that I am telling you.

### **About Drawing:**

It should be understood that if drawing is taught and is taught well, then drawing can establish an ability that is fundamental toward human expression. Learning to draw will also contribute toward a greater understanding of all of the visual arts. Drawing teaches balance and order. The developed habit of looking, or seeing well, and then of expressing one’s perception in a graphic way will enlarge your awareness and your perceptions of

the world around you. Learning to draw with a certain discernment will improve your critical ability to evaluate all things that surround you. With developing a greater skill at observation, will also establish a greater conceptual and critical ability. Drawing helps to find order from chaos. Additionally, your abilities to evaluate other works of art, regardless of the type or style ( other works of art,..... fine art, any design, architecture, fashion, mechanical, etc.) will be vastly improved. Drawing is done with the **elements of line, value, texture, space, atmosphere, solidity, fluidity and color** (even if you are only working with black and white). We call these elements in any work of art **‘Form’**. Good drawing is about good ‘form’ and seeing good relationships! These aforementioned abstract things (line, value, texture, shape, space, etc.) is what drawing is really about. Drawing is always abstract. Drawing is not about description, however description (detail) can be considered as a ‘formal element’ but not an entity. If description alone was what drawing was all about, then illustrations in dictionaries, or photographs could accomplish this feat of describing things extremely well. No,..... **drawing is about design and composition, it is learned by organizing and putting together the abstract ingredients in a sensible way.....making order out of chaos.**

## Grading policy:

Drawing and the Study in the Visual Arts is not an exact science. There is nothing precise, absolute, preconceived, conclusive, or correct in any work of art. There is no particularized *right* or *wrong, or good* or *bad*, when work is being judged. However there are principles in good *‘form’* to used for evaluation, and yet all things must be judged on a relative level. Some students might have great native facility and or technical ability, while others resolve problems with some creative ingenuity. Some work very hard and their work improves. Therefore this is the criterion, and yardstick of how I grade.....;

**Growth**

**Effort**

**Attendance (classroom participation)**

### 1. Growth:

(a) There is nothing mystical about this being demonstrated and seen both by myself and the student. I will have you all do a drawing on the very first class and save that drawing until the very end of the semester. Each individual in the class will be asked to verbalize (critique) the growth and difference between the first and the last drawing.

(b) I will attempt to meet with everyone individually around the middle of the semester to attempt to give you an account as to how you are doing along the lines of growth?

(c) Periodically I will collect your work and place a marking system on your drawings of a *check, check plus, or check minus*.

(d) These checks should help to guide you. If in fact you receive check minus’ then you should contact me for additional help. Asking for help would be judged as *effort*.

## **2. Effort:**

Again nothing mystical about demonstrating who has been working hard. First, effort will be accountable and demonstrated by the amount of work inside your final portfolio, and the completion of all of the assignments both inside and outside of class. If you work hard and complete your task your work will in fact grow.

## **3. Attendance (classroom participation):**

(a) I take attendance in each and every class. It is understood that everyone will undoubtedly miss two or three classes. If you miss more than three classes this will begin to have an adverse effect reflected in your final grade.

(b) Expected contributions in classroom critiques.

(c) When I make reference to a particular artist in history I want you to do some research of this artist, and go to the library, bring in book, or read articles.

***Each final portfolio will be examined on a Individualistic & Relative level.***

1. I will look at what each individual has accomplished from the beginning of the semester, and then compare what you accomplished at the semesters end. **This is growth!** I will account for the quantity and intent of the work done.

2. Simply filling the 'folio' with mere scrapes of studies, brief sketches will not equate with a serious effort. **This is Effort!**

3. I will look at attendance sheet, your research, your asking for help, and recall your contributions in classroom critiques. **This is Classroom Participation!**