

MSU Painting: Structure/Expression

Instructor: Zach Koch (pronounced like Coke)

Email: zdk26@msstate.edu or zdkoch@indiana.edu

Office: #101 Stafford Hall

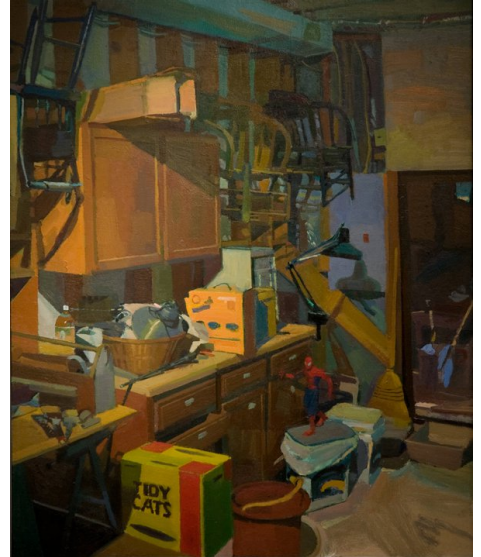
Office Hours: MW 1-2pm or by appointment (please e-mail in advance)

“Trying to paint or draw exactly as I see, I am thrown among contradictions.”

-Norman Turner, American Painter (1939-)

“Painting possesses fundamental laws. These laws are dictated by fundamental perceptions. One of these perceptions is the picture plane. The essence of the picture plane is its two-dimensionality. The first law is then derived: the picture plane must be preserved in its two-dimensionality throughout the whole process of creation until it reaches its final transformation in the completed picture. And this leads to the second law: the picture must achieve a three-dimensional effect, distinct from illusion, by means of the creative process. These two laws apply to color and to form.”

-Hans Hofmann, German-born American abstract expressionist artist and teacher (1880-1966)



“Beautiful and bright it should be on the surface, feather and evanescent, one colour melting into another like the colours on a butterfly’s wings; but beneath the fabric must be clamped together with bolts of iron.”

Virginia Woolf, British Modernist Author (1882-1941)

“What Color is, is order, it’s a spiritual-emotional ordering of elements in the painting. What is painting? Painting is putting things in order like that...It’s putting everything in its place.”

Leland Bell, American painter (1922-1991)

'And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music'

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900)

“Everything that you can see in the world around you, presents itself to your eyes only as an arrangement of patches of different colours...”

John Ruskin, British painter (1819-1900)

“Don’t think of things as objects, think of them as spots of color coming one against another.”

Charles Hawthorne, American painter (1872-1930)

“In visual perception a color is almost never seen as it really is—as it physically is. This fact makes color the most relative medium in art. To use color effectively it is necessary to recognize that color deceives continually. That one and the same color evokes innumerable readings. The aim of study is to develop—through experience—by trial and error—an eye for color. This means, specifically, seeing color action as well as feeling color relatedness. As a general training it means development of observation and articulation.”

Josef Albers, German-born American Artist and Educator (1888-1976)

“There is one thing I think realism is definitely not, though it is often confused with it, and that is a technique. Technique is a skill you can learn so you don’t have to respond to what you are looking at, you don’t have to be inquisitive about it. If something is real to you, the question becomes, not How do I do that, but What is this phenomenon I’m perceiving?”

Rackstraw Downes, American painter (1939-)

“The effort to see things without distortion takes something like courage and this courage is essential to the artist, who has to look at everything as though he saw it for the first time.”

Henri Matisse (1869-1954)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To develop a working understanding of the **VOCABULARY** of painting, to find the place where structure, perception, and invention coincide, all the while holding onto the essential **magic** of painting.
- To (further) explore the **Formal Language**: line, shape, color, value, gesture, composition, color theory.
- To explore the possibilities for the plastic **organization** of color.
- To learn about various **strategies** for making believable spatial structures and to become more knowledgeable about historical antecedents for these strategies---PROCESS!
- TO LEARN TO SEE**: perceptual color through color relationships. To paint what you SEE, not what you KNOW (Responsive over Conceptual).

- **To think and respond like a PAINTER:** Dealing with Painting Issues, and finding a personal self-expression through Form: Color, Value, Mood, Brushstroke, Pace, Gesture, Rhythm, Weight, Contrast, Tension, Vibrancy, Figuration/Abstraction, Attack (agitated, quiet), Feeling for and Response to *Color* and *Planes* (Art for Art's Sake).
- **To marry the Responsive to the Constructive** to create formally expressive works
- **To work with focus and intensity towards developing a painterly 'eye' and creating a body of work**, ranging from smaller, quicker works to larger, slower (sustained and developed) paintings. Drawings (studies) will also be important. The body of the class will involve working from Still-Life, Figure in Space, Interior Spaces, and Self-Portraiture.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This painting course will deal with the language of painting (the formal language) and its potential as meaningful expression (Form and Abstraction). We will deal with traditional painting problems: Drawing (Gesture and Pictorial Dynamic), Value, Tone, Color Mixing, Color (Theoretical and Perceived), Creating Light, Composition, Process (the building and construction from both a formal and material standpoint), Materials and Techniques. The unifying factor to our approach will be a focus on LANGUAGE.

The painting problems that we will investigate are at once foundational and intermediate. Each problem introduced will be bound by specific restrictions and guidelines yet will be open enough to address individual development, needs, and concerns.

METHODS OF EVALUATION AND STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT

A typical day in class consists of introducing new concepts, experimenting and working on in-class exercises related to these concepts while working on drawings that stretch throughout each class period. Each week I assign a homework drawing project that is graded out of 100 points. We typically critique these at the beginning of the week. Critiques are the equivalent to a test which means that your drawing is completed to the standards outlined in class and your participation in critiquing others reinforces the concepts we learn. If you miss a critique it is the equivalent to missing a test and your grade is negatively effected by losing a letter grade for lack of participation in addition to a late penalty on top of that.

You will have a mid-term drawing that will test your ability to sight and measure that is weighted more heavily than regular homework grades, and a final project that consists of three long-duration drawings centered around an approved concept of your choice.

Also, part of your grade is dependent upon participation. Your class participation is graded upon an amalgam of your attendance (including tardies), preparedness in-class, participation in critiques/class discussions, engagement with concepts and material, and time/effort put into course-work. Expanding upon the last point, students must work diligently during and outside of class time (expect to spend at least 6 hours a week outside of class working on homework and finishing classwork).

Grading is based on:

- Degree of Involvement: Performance
- Grasp of introduced Concepts (as evidenced by the work)
- Progress and Improvement
- How well the work fulfills the Assignment
- Use of Imagination and Invention
- Use of the Formal Language (over descriptive illustration)
- Self-discipline
- Completion of All Assignments (paintings and drawings), including Homework (includes completing the necessary time spent (required minimum hours on homework and extended in-class paintings)
- Participation in discussion and critiques (includes one-on-one dialogue, asking questions)
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Palette Maintenance and Organization
- Completion of all required readings and response papers

Student Requirements:

- Attend every scheduled class (including scheduled talks and openings).
- Complete every assignment (in-class and homework), spend allotted time on the work as required.
- Maintain an Organized, Clean Palette.
- Prepare surfaces in a timely and appropriate manner (stretching and gessoing canvasses, etc.)
- Present a portfolio of work at both midterm and end of the semester for review.
- Make-up time missed class time as necessary.
- Be prepared for every class (materials, readings, and attitude).
- Replenish materials as necessary (paint, mineral spirits, etc.)
- Keep an organized and functioning work space.
- Clean up after yourself at the end of each class. Clean Palette and Brushes, properly dispose of all waste (dirty towels and dirty turpentine).
- Take care of completed works (paintings and drawings).
- TAKE RISKS. Be open to working outside of your comfort zone. Be willing to Fail. Try.
- IF you are unclear about an assignment in ANY way, including the overall relevance of it, ASK me about it!

- Ask (me) questions. Open up a dialogue. Talk to the subject, the painting, the instructor, your peers, the library, online resources, past and contemporary painters.

CLASS POLICY

- No Cell phones, laptops, or headphones of any kind. Phones should be turned off.
- No excessive chatter, especially that which is unrelated to class topics.
- No text messaging.
- No food in class.
- Have all materials at every class.
- Be ready to work at the start of each class.
- Good work ethic, attitude, and effort.
- Be willing to experiment and take risks.
- Participate in critiques.
- Show respect for classmates, instructor.
- Clean up studio at end of class.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is crucial. This is a ~3-hour long studio class, which means the lessons are taught orally or demonstrated in class, not from a textbook. We'll move through a lot of information quickly and missing a day places you significantly behind the rest of your class-mates.

At the beginning of each class, I record attendance. If you are not present by the time I record your attendance you are considered absent. However, if you are late I count you as tardy.

***3 tardies equal 1 absence**

Each semester, you are allotted 2 unexcused absences. Each subsequent absence after 2 reduces your final grade by 5%.

*For example, if your final grade for the semester is an 80% B-, and you have three unexcused absences, your final grade will be a 75% C. If you have four unexcused absences, your grade will be lowered to a 70% C-, and so on.

***6 total unexcused absences is an unconditional failure of the course.**

For an absence to be considered excused the student must provide satisfactory evidence to the instructor to substantiate the reason for absence (doctor's notes, obituaries, etc). The student is also responsible for making arrangements that are satisfactory to the instructor in regard to work missed. These arrangements should be made prior to the absence when possible. The reasons absences are considered excused are the following: Participation in an authorized university activity, a death or major illness in a student's immediate family, or a religious holy day

Additionally, a student with perfect attendance and no tardiness will receive an additional half letter grade to his/her final grade. For example an 85% B turns into a 90% A-.

MISSING/LATE WORK

Late work is deducted -10% for the first offense, -20% for the second, -30% for the third, and so on (unless you have sufficient excused absence documentation that prevents you from being able to make the project deadline). Late work must also be given to me in a timely manner, otherwise it is counted as a zero. In addition, you must e-mail me with all project information, dates turned in, location, etc. so I have accurate documentation in writing and we're all on the same page.

Painting Supports:

---1 Canvas Pad, 12x16" (Ten Sheets)

The Canvas Pad will be used from weeks 3-6: 8 Sheets. One sheet will be used for the Color Chart HW assignment, leaving one spare sheet. NOTE: It is required that most/all sheets of canvas pad be prepared with a warm grey ground (acrylic paint). This may be done ahead of time, and BEFORE class begins (but NOT afterwards!).

---Stretched Canvas:

3 Stretched Canvasses will be required: Two 16x20" and One 18x24" (or similar). No Square Canvasses or Pre-Stretched Canvasses will be allowed. Each Canvas MUST be prepared with a MINIMUM of 3 coats of Gesso. The final coat MUST be applied NO EARLIER than the previous night before class. No gessoing before class!

---Sketchbooks: pencil/ballpoint pen, eraser. 9x12, 11x14", or similar. Not used as a painting support, but will be used for HW as well as for Compositional warm-up studies before beginning many painting problems.

Palette Requirements:

We will be working on glass palettes in this class. These must be *glass*, 15x20", backed with grey foam board, or similar. Keeping the Palette Ordered and Clean is very important. (note: some minor variations in the palette req's MAY be possible, check with me first (size and grey backing, specifically).

- Palettes must be arranged with a certain order (the colors/paints that we will be using). Colors must be laid along the edges of the palette surface, preferably along the top. A specific, regular order must be used REGULARLY (so as to create consistency). I recommend placing White paint in the middle, with Warmer Colors moving out from the left of the white (Yellows to Oranges to Reds (right to left from middle), and Cooler Colors moving to the right of the white (Blues to Greens to Violets). BLACK will only be used for an early specific problem/project, and must otherwise be left off of the palette!
- Palettes must be cleaned regularly. This involves scraping up leftover mixtures first with a palette knife, then with a razor scraper (at the end of each painting session). Palettes should then be wiped with a cloth, using a small splash of CLEAN turpentine in order to remove all residues.
- Process: Colors should be mixed in a controlled fashion. Do not mix new mixtures over dried mixtures. Strive to create order among your color mixtures as you work. Mix different colors anew as much as possible, rather than mixing 'out of' earlier mixtures. This helps in creating clean nuanced color. Don't make mud.

Recommended Resources:

Charles Hawthorne "Hawthorne on Painting"

Ralph Mayer "The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques"

www.powersofobservation.com

Robert Henri "The Art Spirit"

Hans Hofmann "Search for the Real"

www.midwest-paint-group.org

Painting Schedule (subject to change):

Week 1: **Intro:** Supplies, Syllabus, DRAWING: "Erasure with Line" and/or "Awkward Drawing"

HW: Readings (Enstice & Peters, Maslen & Southern)

After completing Readings: **Draw** 'Beautiful Drawing, Complete Statement' 3 Hours. Fruit. DUE on SECOND day of class on Week 2.

Week 2: **Drawing Project: Spatial Still Life** (Roundtable): Gesture, Space, Response.

HW: 3+ Hours on Spatial Still Life Drawing

Week 3: 1: Drawing/Painting (**Value**, Acrylic and Collage).

2: Unstructured **Primary** Painting ("Living" Still Life)

Week 4: **Painting: Value** (Black and White). **Color** Discussion.

Week 5: Painting with **Complements** (Note: **Primary-Build-Up** Painting (for Second-Timers))

Week 6: **Full Palette**, Extended Painting, Complex Space: Primaries and Secondaries.

Week 7: Full Palette Painting, Continued. **GROUP CRITIQUE**.

Week 8: **Spring Break**

Week 9: Canvas (Stretching and Priming), **Self Portrait Transcription** (Drawing and Color Study)

Week 10: Self Portrait Transcription. 16 x 20" Canvas. (Color, Composition, Mark and Touch, Feeling)

Week 11: **Self Portrait (Head in Space)**. 16 x 20" Canvas.

Week 12: Self Portrait, continued.

Week 13: **Landscape (Campus) Project:** One Day Paintings (In Class and Homework)

Week 14: **Large Landscape Painting**, 18x24" Canvas (Four Sessions)

Week 15: Final Projects (Reflect and Resolve), **FINAL CRITIQUE**

Week 16: Studio Clean Up

MISSISSIPPI STATE STUDENT HONOR CODE

Mississippi State has an approved Honor Code that applies to all students. The code is as follows: “As a Mississippi State University student, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.” Upon accepting admission to Mississippi State University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor Code. Student will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the MSU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor Code. For additional information, please visit: <http://honorcode.msstate.edu/policy>.

****Title IX**

MSU is committed to complying with Title IX, a federal law that prohibits discrimination, including violence and harassment, based on sex. This means that MSU’s educational programs and activities must be free from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know has experienced sex discrimination, sexual violence and/or harassment by any member of the University community, you are encouraged to report the conduct to MSU’s Director of Title IX/EEO Programs at 325-8124 or by e-mail to titleix@msstate.edu. Additional resources are available at <http://www.msstate.edu/web/security/title9-12.pdf>, or at <http://students.msstate.edu/sexualmisconduct/> .

Support Services

Students who need academic accommodations based on a disability should visit the Office of Student Support Services, 01 Montgomery Hall, call 662-325-3335, or visit the website at www.sss.msstate.edu.

Campus Resources

*indicates a required area under AOP 13.03 – Faculty Responsibilities in Instruction and Curriculum.

This policy also requires that the syllabus be available on the first day of classes and there will be no variation.

***statement required by General Counsel, effective Jan. 8, 2015.*
