

# AP<sup>®</sup> Studio Art: 2D

## Syllabus 1

### Course Description

During the first week of school, the course is outlined to the students. The individual sections of each portfolio—Quality, Concentration and Breadth—are discussed in detail. [C1] The majority of the students have taken the AP<sup>®</sup> Studio Art: Drawing course and are quite familiar with these requirements. I show extensive slide examples from both the College Board and past students' work that correspond to each section of the portfolio—with special emphasis on the distinctions between the Drawing Portfolio and the 2-D Design Portfolio. Additionally, the students review the images and instructions from the AP Studio Art Poster. [C1]

**C1**—The course promotes a sustained investigation of all three aspects of portfolio development—Quality, Concentration, and Breadth—as outlined in the Course Description or Studio Art poster throughout the duration of the course. (Note: The body of work submitted for the portfolio can include art created prior to and outside of the AP Studio Art course.)

### Summer Assignment

**Instructions:** You are to complete at least five of the following assignments over the summer for the AP 2-D Design class; it is also recommended that you be working in a personal sketchbook/visual journal/altered book. These pieces will be due at the beginning of the third week of school. Your outside work will constitute 50% of your grade throughout the year in AP. Consequently, if you do not do this work, you will not pass the first six-week period. I also want you to take time over the summer to think about ideas that you may want to pursue as a concentration. Please return with a list of 20 potential ideas to be discussed with the class during the second week of school.

Each of the pieces needs to be done on an 18 x 24 surface—nothing larger, nothing smaller. You may choose the type of surface to work on—paper, cardboard, canvas board, plywood, mat board, etc.

Please keep in mind that although drawing does involve design, the emphasis in this studio is on design—the formal elements and principles (elements: line, color, texture, space, value, shape, and form; principles: unity, balance, contrast, repetition, variety, dominance, etc.). Concept/idea, craftsmanship, and the creation of a visually successful design will all be components of every grade. You will develop mastery in concept, composition, as well as execution of 2D design elements and principles. As you approach the requirements for this course, you will be expected to use a variety of concepts and approaches to demonstrate your ideas and abilities. [C2] Versatility of techniques is also emphasized as you develop ideation and solutions to your problems. [C4]

**C2**—The course enables students to develop mastery (i.e., quality) in concept, composition, and execution of drawing, 2-D design, or 3-D design.

- Do a portrait, self-portrait, landscape, or still-life in the style of another artist in which formal aspects of design are emphasized—i.e. Monet/ Impressionism, Matisse/Fauvism, Picasso/Cubism, Warhol/Pop, Dali/Surrealism, Van Gogh/Postimpressionism, etc. You may have to do a bit of research to understand the stylistic tendencies of these artists/movements.

**C4**—The course teaches students a variety of concepts and approaches in drawing, 2-D design, or 3-D design so that the student is able to demonstrate a range of abilities and versatility with technique, problem-solving, and ideation (i.e., breadth). Such conceptual variety can be demonstrated through either the use of one or the use of several media.

- Do a self-portrait, or several different ones, that expresses a specific mood/emotion—e.g., anger/rage, melancholy/loneliness, happiness/joy, etc. Manipulate light and color to enhance the psychological atmosphere. Also, consider the development of the environment/setting.
- Do some exploration with mixed media. Do a piece (portrait, self-portrait, landscape, or stilllife) in which you use at least three different media—i.e., a wet medium, a dry medium and some collage element.
- Do a portrait, self-portrait, stilllife, or landscape using either a complementary, analogous, or split-complementary color scheme (you may use black and white as well as shades and tints of the chosen hues).
- Do a drawing of a futuristic cityscape—e.g., Dallas in the year 2050 (keep in mind rules of one-, two-, and three-point perspective).
- Divide a page, canvas, board—i.e. the working surface—into three equal inset spaces. Do three views of one landscape. Limit yourself to a specific color scheme.
- Do a graphite drawing of a still-life arrangement that consists of reflective objects—your goal is to convey a convincing representation with a full range of values. To add interest to the composition, you might also want to render yourself being reflected in the objects.
- Do a drawing of an unusual interior—for instance, looking inside a closet, cabinet, refrigerator, inside your car... use your imagination!
- Do a drawing of your worldly treasures arranged in an interesting still-life composition.
- Do a drawing of your worldly treasures as they come to life—animate them.
- Do a drawing of your hands arranged in a variety of poses. You must carefully plan your composition in order for the separate units to work together visually.
- Do a color rendering of a still-life arrangement consisting of your family member's shoes—try to convey some "sense" of each of your individual family member's distinct personalities in your piece.

The following assignments are from the text *Painting As A Language: Material, Technique, Form, Content*, by Jean Robertson and Craig McDaniel (2000, Wadsworth Publishing).

- Create a self-portrait of yourself engaged in some imagined activity that holds special personal meaning.

- Think of all the places you have lived or visited, and make a list of the significant landscape features you recall. Include features you remember with fear or distaste as well as those you loved. Make sketches of those features from memory. After you have assembled a number of images, combine them together in a finished piece.
- Paint an invented interior from your imagination. Attempt to create spatial and color relationships that enhance a connection between the physical and psychic structure of the interior. Use the painting as an opportunity to express or explore some of your thoughts about the issue of public versus private space.
- Adhere/attach (paste, sew, staple, gesso, or gloss medium) a selection of collage elements of varying thickness onto several painting supports—i.e., stretched canvas, canvas board, masonite, plywood, cardboard, matboard, pegboard, etc. Make figure studies across the surface of the painting and collage materials. After completing the figure studies, continue working on each artwork attempting to build “bridges” that link collage material within structure of each overall composition, paying attention to formal elements of line, shape, value, and texture. For example, can a pattern found in a collaged fragment of a newspaper be made to flow into a painted pattern?

The following assignments are from the text *Art Synectics*, by Nicholas Roukes (1984, Davis Publications).

- **Developing a Composition that Shows Progressive Magnification of a Subject:** Select either an organic or inorganic object to draw. Divide a large piece of drawing paper into nine equal sections. Starting in the top-left box, draw a representational, overall view of the object as accurately as you can. In the next box to the right, imagine that you have a camera with a zoom lens and draw a close-up portion of the object in accurate detail. In the remaining sections, continue zooming in on the object and enlarging finer details. The last frame should be an enlarged detail created with the aid of a magnifying glass or microscope.
- **“Redoing” an Old Masterpiece:** Select a painting, sculpture, or well-known image from art history for interpretation. Redo the work . . . update it, or change colors, media, characters, etc.
- **Creating an Architectural Myth with Photomontage:** Collect photographs/photocopies of city skylines, landscapes, and seascapes. Also collect photos/copies of household and technical objects—e.g., egg beater, toothbrush, toaster, electric fan, automobile grill, etc. Carefully implant the photo of the technical gadget within the photo of the environment to create a surreal cityscape or landscape. (You might want to look at the work of the artist Max Ernst who took printed images and recombined them to create hybrid forms).

- **Making a Nonverbal Book:** Using a three-ring binder with three-inch rings to serve as book cover and spine for the book. Cut out three to five pieces of cardboard to serve as pages. Punch holes to accommodate the binder rings. Select a title for your book based on an emotion: *The Fear Book*, *The Happy Book*, *The Book of Rage*, *The Book of Angst*, etc. Used mixed media to render the designs on each page (incorporate both two- and three-dimensional components such as photographs, relatively flat objects, yarn, string, collage papers, drawings. Also, design a cover for the book.
- **Creating a Mythological Event:** Think up a story involving the imaginary revolt of one of the following: domestic animals, computers, machines, kitchen appliances, elevators, flowers, etc. Visualize your idea by making a convincing illustration of the event.
- **Stimulating Imaginative Fantasy:** Can you visualize the following situations and create a dialogue for them...(a) Old shoes are waiting for repair in a cobbler's shop. What do they have to say when the cobbler isn't around? (b) Cigarette butts in an ashtray have a conversation after a party. What do they say? (c) Wrecked autos in a junkyard talk to each other. What do they say? (d) An artist leaves his studio for a coffee break. While the artist is gone, the brushes, paints, canvas, and shop tools in the studio start a conversation. What do they say? Think of your own situations . . . Make a drawing or cartoon of one of the scenarios.
- **Creating New Symbolic Inferences by Switching Images and Photo Captions:** Cut out selected photographs from newspapers and magazines. Also cut out the accompanying caption, along with captions and headlines from other articles that are completely unrelated. Mix and match . . . paste the new headlines or captions under the photos to create new symbolic inferences.
- **Strengthening Intuitive Creativity:** Arbitrarily cut out one to four lines of text from a magazine article (a provocative statement or portion of dialogue). Make a collage . . . seek out black-and-white photographs and designs from magazines that you intuitively feel support the text. Use a gluestick and attach images to a sheet of white drawing paper. Add lines, shapes, tone, and color with pencil, ink, and/or felt-tip pens to heighten the emotional effect and to unify the composition. (Note: Transparent decals or transparencies can be made from magazine images and superimposed over each other to achieve multiple images.) You may also do a gloss medium transfer of a photocopied image. (Apply gloss medium to surface you are working on. Let dry thoroughly. Take photocopied image and coat it with gloss medium. While it is still wet, place it on the area of your working surface that you have already treated with the gloss medium [face down]. Apply water to the back of the image and rub the paper away.)

- **Creating Symbols that Portray Our Lifestyle:** Create a symbolic message using graphic designs and images to be carried aboard a spaceship and directed to other forms of intelligent life in the universe. Use the symbols to tell such things as who we are, what we look like, what we do, the things we have created, the places we live in, the technology, science, games, inventions, sports, transportation systems, dances, and so on, that are part of our world.

## Course Schedule

Modified block scheduling is used. Classes meet every other day for 80 minutes, with the exception of a “flex period”—a one hour class that meets every day. The course focuses on both sections of the portfolio (Breadth and Concentration) throughout the year, with the best art work selected for use in the Quality section of the AP Studio Art portfolio. [C1] The Breadth work is generally teacher driven. As I am (very much) against a formulaic response to the completion of the AP Portfolio, I try to vary assignments from year to year, and encourage individual and unique responses to all work. [C4,C5] The assignments made are based on a variety of collected problems commonly encountered in college-level 2D design courses. The students have specific in-class and out-of-class assignments; they also are expected to complete some in-class work out of class, depending on the schedule of assignments.

The following is a list of assignments I regularly use:

- Cut-paper self-portraits, interiors, landscapes.
- Distorted interiors.
- Gridded and distorted self-portraits.
- Illustrations of imaginary places.
- Visual puns.
- Leger- or futurist-inspired drawing of an engine or the inside of a mechanical object.
- Pop-inspired pieces working with personal symbols or words (Robert Indiana, Ed Ruscha).
- Piece that combines photocopied body parts (face, hands, feet) with anatomical drawings.
- Acrylic painting using analogous or complementary color scheme.
- Piece inspired by the “fortune” from a fortune cookie.
- Metaphorical or symbolic self-portrait superimposed on top of an incised surface that is mounted to a backing board, resulting in a “textured” background. (I generally have the student cut away eight contour self-portraits. They decide how they will arrange the eight incised areas and whether to bring the images out in the final piece or let them remain as phantom images/areas of underlying texture.)

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**C5**—The course emphasizes making art as an ongoing process that involves the student in informed and critical decision making.

- Funky portrait of classmate in environment using thick bold outlines/ contours, and areas of flat color (David Bates).
- Social commentary piece involving experimentation with acetone transfers and gloss medium transfers to be further developed with text and imagery—literal, metaphorical, or symbolic.
- Text and image piece in which student is asked to physically write (soft graphite pencil such as Ebony, 4B, 6B, 8B) across a surface that has been coated with undiluted gesso an excerpt from an account of a most memorable moment—good, bad, horrific, terrifying. The direction and spacing of the text are up to the student. Within a rectangular (inset) area that has been masked off with drafting tape, the student is instructed to gesso out all text and then superimpose imagery within the space that is invoked by the story—literal, symbolic, or metaphorical.
- Compositions that involve the use of inset imagery (image within image such as details/close up views).
- Compositions on shaped surfaces.
- Compositions arranged radially.
- Color studies with torn pieces of paper (mosaic).
- Compositions that combine illusionary space with flat space.
- Drawing composition that alternates from a simple contour drawing into a fully rendered drawing at student-designated focal points.
- Three-part piece inspired by work of Jim Dine: In the first piece the students are asked to render an ordinary object or tool, bigger than actual size, making it the dominant aspect of the composition. The students are also directed to blur the distinction between positive shape and negative space. In the second piece, on a larger surface, the students are to create three distinct images of the object, while making the whole piece work. In the third piece, the students have to include an actual object, though it does not have to be the object they have been working with. It can be a different object that is related to it—literally, metaphorically, or symbolically.
- A composition that denies the boundaries of surface edges—compositions that could extend indefinitely beyond edges (Jackson Pollock, Vija Celmins).
- Compositions that rely on a grid as an organizing principle.
- Composition in which the students use various neutral tones of torn papers (with a variety of textures) collaged on a surface to define areas of a still life. The piece is further refined as the student superimposes a linear drawing upon the collage with black, sanguine, or white conté.

In the past I have also used assignments from the summer list—especially those that the students avoided attempting. Additionally, students may bring in work from other classes such as photography, printmaking, and computer graphics that will fit in the 2D Design Breadth category if they feel it is stronger than their class work. Pages from altered books and visual journals are often used as examples in 2D Breadth. (The altered book involves the student working in the pages of an old printed book. As the white page of the sketchbook is often intimidating, the students seem less afraid to experiment when working over the text and images within a book. Students are encouraged to gesso over areas, collage, write, and draw to recreate the book.)

The students are encouraged from the beginning of the class to formulate ideas for their Concentrations and, where allowable, to start working on those ideas in their studio classes. The concept of working in a series or on a concentration is not foreign to our juniors and seniors. The freshmen are required to complete three pieces that are related for their end of the year portfolio submission the sophomores complete four pieces. This idea is also emphasized in the studio courses as well. and obviously, the student coming out of AP Studio Art: Drawing is very familiar with the idea. Consequently, by the senior year, many of the AP 2D Design students have already begun an in-depth exploration/personal investigation in a particular studio that can be further pursued in the AP class. [C3]

The following are examples of past concentrations that would be feasible for the 2D Design Portfolio: [C3]

- A mother's illness investigated in a variety of graphic forms including the use of actual x-rays combined into other imagery as well as prints and pages of a visual journal.
- A series of interiors simplified to contour lines that served as the basis for a process of investigation of other elements, most predominately color and space (the assertion and negation of space).
- A series of works done with encaustic, printmaking, and a variety of other media, concerned with different approaches to the picture plane as discussed in the text *Drawing: A Contemporary Approach* (Claudia Betti and Teel Sale 2004, Wadsworth).
- A series of works done in graphite, colored pencil, and Adobe PhotoShop illustrating aspects of the subject "Roller Coaster." The investigation increasingly moved away from illustrative renderings to bold, graphic symbols.
- A series of works done in 2D and low relief as a response to slide discussion on the work of Jim Dine. The student investigated a tool (hammer) in a body of work done in a variety of media, with a variety of techniques as well as processes. Investigation combined interest in imagery developed from direct observation as well as engaged in issues of formal design.
- An illustrated story, "A Boy and A Frog."

**C3**—The course enables students to develop a body of work investigating a strong underlying visual idea in drawing, 2-D design, or 3-D design that grows out of a coherent plan of action or investigation (i.e., a concentration).

- A photographic and illustrative investigation into the subject “My Little Brother.” The student produced a number of photographs that were strong in composition as well as technical (processing) ability. He furthered his investigation into the specific subject by producing a series of illustrations showing his brother engaged in various pursuits.
- A series of works based on the subject “Skateboards.” The student began painting random pictures of (cartoonish) characters on broken/discarded skateboards—two were brought in as summer assignment work. I encouraged the student to pursue the idea, but to paint images that were more relevant to the idea of “skateboard” or his experiences as a skateboarder.
- A series of works from a student’s visual journal. Sophisticated in terms of development, the book included text, personal photographs, collage items—ticket stubs, product labels, fortunes (fortune cookies), netting, bubble wrap. Student enhanced the compositions with intimate illustrations, many figurative and/or based on human anatomy.
- A series of black-and-white photos that showed strong evidence of investigation into a number of design elements and principles. Examples included works showing repeating shapes/patterns, geometric division of space, and balance.
- A series of photos related by subject—such as portraits, self-portraits, landscapes, architectural details, a family history.
- A series of mixed media pieces based on childhood memories using collaged and layered imagery that incorporated text
- A series of illustrations based on the “Seven Deadly Sins.”
- A series of work based on the life of the graffiti artist.
- A digital self-portrait series that incorporate digital photos with text.
- A digital series that juxtaposed incongruent imagery—based on Surrealism and the work of photographer Jerry Ulseman.
- A series of invitations, program covers, and poster designs created with Adobe PhotoShop.

At present, the goal for the first semester is to complete about eight Breadth pieces and four Concentration pieces. This may vary from year to year depending on the amount of time spent on specific Breadth assignments. If the students were successful on all the work they produced for their summer work, they may have enough work to complete the Breadth section by the end of the first semester. In that (rare) case, the students might not be expected to do any additional assignments for Breadth and may be allowed to focus on their Concentration.

The second semester is then devoted to completion of the Breadth and Concentration. As the Portfolios have been due at the end of the first week of May, we generally try to schedule the last due date for work around the third week of April—thus allowing time for photographing the work. This date may be pushed forward a week, with the AP Exams being moved up a week.

## Critiques

Critiques are an integral part of all classes. All students are brought together for critiques at regular intervals—generally when they have major assignments due. Each student must show his or her work and briefly discuss his or her intent. The class is then expected to provide positive feedback and offer suggestions for improvement. All students participate. The vocabulary of art is introduced through the foundation classes and is reinforced through the verbal and written critique and show reviews. We have class critiques on the days work is due. These generally take the entire class to complete, sometimes more than one class period. I do very little of the talking during these sessions—other than beginning the process with a recapping of the criteria for the project and a reminder to students to address the criteria as part of their discussion. I will only interject when I feel that there is something that has not been addressed or have an idea about a possible solution or suggestion for a next piece. In many instances, after I take the work up to grade it, I provide the student with brief written commentary. For grading purposes, I use a simplified rubric based on the actual AP Scoring Guidelines for Studio Art. I think it is important for AP students to be familiar with the rubric that will be used to score the work in their portfolios. Additionally, there is ongoing dialogue with students on an individual basis during class time. As well, the students dialogue with each other about their work. [C5,C6]

**C5**—The course emphasizes making art as an ongoing process that involves the student in informed and critical decision making.

**C6**—The course includes group and individual student critiques and instructional conversations with the teacher, enabling students to learn to analyze and discuss their own artworks and those of their peers.

## Copyright

Students are not allowed to work from published photographs or other copyrighted work in the foundation drawing courses—those classes being based on drawing from direct observation. Many students will come into the program with the idea that there is nothing wrong with drawing from photographs, and many of them are quite accomplished at it. Nonetheless, it is a practice that we do not allow in any class and strongly discourage out of class. Even if they take their own photographs, as the resultant image has a distinctly flat and stiff look about it. Copyright issues are discussed with the students early on—they are made aware of the legal issues involved with working from someone's published work. In the AP 2-D class a lot of work is done with the use of transferred images. In these instances, the students know that the work must be significantly altered and only a small component of their individual creation. As well, there are specific things that the student could only reference through a photograph (such as certain animals). Again, in these instances the students thoroughly understand that the image must become part of their larger individual expression. [C7]

**C7**—The course teaches students to understand artistic integrity as well as what constitutes plagiarism. If students produce work that makes use of photographs, published images, and/or other artists' works, the course teaches students how to develop their own work so that it moves beyond duplication.

## Selecting and Preparing Section I Pieces

After spring break the students are instructed to identify the pieces to be submitted for the Quality section of the portfolio. Simply put, they are to pick their very best examples that are 18 x 24 or less. I stress variety if they have it—variety of subject, media, technique or process—though variety is not a requirement for Quality work. The students have a strong understanding of quality, as it has been exemplified in critiques, portfolio evaluations, and in in-house and out-of-school competitions since their freshman year. [C2]

**C2**—The course enables students to develop mastery (i.e., quality) in concept, composition, and execution of drawing, 2-D design, or 3-D design.

Preparation of these pieces begins before the actual portfolios arrive. In the past we have used either X-Board or cardboard as a mounting support attaching the work to the support with doublestick tape. If the work is delicate, a paper overlay is used to protect the surface. This may be newsprint or brown paper that is taped to the top on the back of the support board

## Keeping Track

Students may choose to include work in their portfolios from previous studio or design classes. Consequently, each individual student will have a very individual portfolio. This can be trying when dealing with large classes. In order to keep up with individual progress, a file folder is established for each student that is kept in the filing cabinet in the room. The folder contains an inventory sheet that lists all completed work by category, including the size of the piece and the medium, a statement about their Concentration idea, and slide sheets that are updated as each piece is photographed. These folders are necessary so that I can keep an overview of each student's progress in mind.