

## **ART 331: Intermediate Painting**

Fall 2020

T, TH 12:30-3:00 Taylor Hall 203

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Office Hours: By Appointment

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*Catalogue Description: Identifying and exploring ideas through the development of critical awareness of contemporary painting issues and structures. Emphasis on directed conceptual problems and a variety of materials. PREREQ: ART231 or ART236.*

**Course Description and Objectives:** This intermediate course will focus primarily on the study of pictorial manipulation through color and design principles. The primary goal is to strengthen the individual students' awareness of the history and techniques of painting while exposing the student to contemporary methods and ideas about painting. The course is designed to aid in the development of skills in dealing with color, form, space and concept. The student will concentrate on the essential conditions of painting. The structure of this course is centered around a series of five problems that will prepare the student for higher levels of problem solving, increase their self-discipline, and develop an understanding of the articulation of brushwork, composition and color.

**Course Goals:** The main goal of this course is to consider the language of paint and painting, and to find ways of attaching those conditions to broader meanings and ideas. In this course the student will be introduced to art techniques, media, terminology, and historical and contemporary art issues. During the course, the student will be exposed to the lexicon of visual language and is expected to arrive at creative solutions to the problems presented. Students should advance their ability to employ the elements of art and the principles of design in creating successful pieces of original art. Additional goals of this course are to • Establish a positive work ethic • Strengthen skills in seeing and thinking • Participate in critiques and begin to understand the role of dialogue in the creative process • Research Artists and Art Movements • Demonstrate an understanding of value, line, texture, form, color and composition • Present and defend work and ideas in written and oral forms • Understand appropriate craftsmanship

**Classroom Procedures:** This course meets twice a week for a total of 5 hours and is worth 3 credit hours. We will probably do a combination of face-to-face and some online meetings where I will do slideshows etc. Much of the work to successfully complete this course will have to be executed outside of class time. For each hour of work performed inside the class meeting time students are expected to work a minimum of one hour outside of class on assigned problems in preparation for class. The student must always have the materials and supplies on hand that were assigned during the prior class meeting. Each class will begin with a brief lecture/demonstration and/or slide presentation. This lecture/demonstration will not be repeated for tardy students. The student must always clean-up after themselves at the end of each class meeting: put away materials (including lockers, solvent containers, palettes, drawing boards, and paintings) throw away scraps of paper, pencil shavings, soda cans, etc. Out of respect to the other students and the instructor mobile phones *must not* be used during class.

### *The Safety of Our Learning Environment*

Student learning can only occur when students and their instructors feel safe, respected, and supported by each other. On the first in-person class session of the semester you will select your seat/desk. This will become your assigned seat for the entire semester. To ensure that our learning environment is as safe as possible, and in keeping with CDC guidelines to slow the transmission of COVID-19, our in-person class sessions will adhere to the practice of physical distancing. This means that you:

- Should avoid congregating in groups outside of the classroom before and after class
- Return to your assigned area for the entirety of the semester
- Upon entering the classroom, wipe down your seat and easel/desk
- May not move your chairs/desks from their designated positions at any time
- Must remain at least 6 feet apart from your classmates, Teaching Assistants, and instructors at all times
- Must wear a cloth mask that covers your nose and mouth

As necessary, the University may announce modifications to these practices. In that event, these guidelines will be updated to reflect those modifications.

**Course Requirements:** During this course there will be several formal critiques of finished work presented in a professional fashion. It is expected that the student will have work ready to discuss at all of these points in the semester. In addition to the weekly group critiques and discussions this course will accommodate “one-on-one” critiques every two weeks, or at the discretion of the instructor. Students should keep all work created in this class for the assessment of their development. The final digital portfolio, which will be turned in to the instructor at the close of the semester, will be the primary determination of the final grade for this course; it will highlight specific assignments that will be detailed later in the semester.

A sketchbook is required for this course and will be worth 25% of the final grade, the sketchbook will be checked periodically to aid in the assessment of the student’s progress. In addition to specific outside assignments, the sketchbook should contain thumbnails, color notes, studies for final projects, xerox copies of other artist’s works, color reproductions, written ideas and self-critiques of projects and initial ideas, etc. Student must complete at least 3 studies in their sketchbook before starting on final paintings.

In addition to the studio requirements for this course, each student will complete a research paper focusing on a single contemporary artist of particular interest to them and their work. The final paper should be between 3-5 pages in length, and should include illustrations when applicable. This assignment will count towards 5% of the final grade.

**Projects** will be due on scheduled critique days. Your discussion in the critique constitutes a part of each project and, therefore, will impact your grade. Projects will each be graded on a scale of 0-4.0 (4.0=A, 3.0=B, 2.0=C, 1.0=D). Work not submitted on the designated due date will be considered late. Project grades will decrease by one full grade for each class the project is late.

Final grades will be based upon the average of your project grades, successful investigation in your sketchbook, attendance, and weighted for effort and class participation. Please be aware that we will have class critiques in which work is shared and discussed. By being part of this class, we each agree to address other people and their work with respect.

**Attendance:** Attendance is usually mandatory, but currently I am going to have to ask you to be honest and flexible. I have to presume that you are here to learn and develop, and that you are not here to take advantage of a terrible global situation. That being said, it would be best if you came to class as consistently as possible, and I do not plan to double up each class to be part online- however, what I have to ask of you is that you please NOT come to class if you are not feeling well. I will happily catch up with you individually to cover anything missed during an absence. So, where does that leave us? If you do not attend class or complete your projects I cannot pass you

**Suggested Supply List:** There are no required supplies for this course, each student is encouraged to experiment with a variety of materials and methods. The list I sent earlier in the summer was intended to be cost effective and mobile if our campus studio situation changes.

\* You may want to build on the supplies you purchased in ART 231. You will need to have some type of water-based media for used in your sketchbook.

### **Required Assignments/Problems**

**1. Mark-making: Building to Color** Make a full color painting using only pure marks of red, yellow, and blue. Build to complicated color by considering the amounts and types of marks that occur next to each other. What, about the direction, scale, gesture, etc. can help to create meaning/experience within the painting?

Questions: Mark making is one of the primary constructs of a painting. Can the way a mark is made be a meaningful component of a painting? Since the Expressionists took the Impressionists breaking up of color and moved it away from optics towards personal expression, painters have been trying to make the construction of a painting a greater and greater part of its "content," culminating in the pure brushwork, or even drip-work, of Abstract Expressionism. Can a mark depict slow/fast, gentle/aggressive, calm/anxious, gestalt through a space, etc.?

Impressionists, Expressionists, Abstract Expressionists, Horace Pippin, Jasper Johns, Jean-Michael Basquiat, Faith Ringgold, Cecily Brown, Robert Colescott,

**2. Textural Binaries: A Study in Extremes** When one thinks of textural binaries, or opposite states of the larger subset of texture, immediately adjectives such as thick/thin, smooth/rough, shiny/dull, soft/hard, prickly/soft or polished/crude come to mind. The main objective of this assignment is to explore the diametrically opposed states of impasto, or heavy texture, with thin diaphanous films or even stains of paint by direct juxtaposition. The challenge of this assignment is to construct a painting that is proportionally symmetrical or balanced by employing the two furthest points imaginable on the continuum of texture possible in painting, while not simply reaching a 50%-50% solution. How can you use 10%, 5% or even 1% of heavy impasto, or thin stains and still have a formally balanced composition?

Paintings are often made with paint; a pigment contained in a binder. Paint is liquid color that becomes solid and is a substance that can come in many different viscosities, from water color to oil paint, and in many different opacities, from translucent to completely opaque. Make a painting that tests the extremes of these conditions, working to create a vast range between thin washes and thick impasto.

Questions: Can you use the materiality of the paint itself to create meaningful/experiential conditions of a painting? What are the potential uses/meanings embedded in the viscosity of paint? Can it be used as liquid color subject to gravity (the drip), as a stain, as a skin, as an object? How can the range of surfaces be used, scraped through, subject to pallet knives, other brushes, other tools? What type, if any, of subject matter might best lend itself to thick/thin?

***Artists to Research and Consider:** Albert Pinkham Ryder, Chaim Soutine, Frank Auerbach, Hilary Wilder, Francis Bacon, Jasper Johns, Kelly Walker, Graham Parks, Laura Owens, Kristen Baker, Jim Wright, Fabian Marcaccio, Albert Oehlen, Wendell Gladstone, Carrie Moyer, Elise Richman, Charline von Heyl, Summer Wheat, Rene Holm, Adrian Ghenie, Trenton Doyle Hancock*

**3. An Exploration of Subtlety: The Monochrome** This exercise must incorporate a minimum of 7 distinct tonal, temperate and chromatic variations of a single color. The color shift between the hues must be gradual and subtle while remaining detectable. On first glance this painting should appear to be all one color with only surface variation being the key compositional element in the painting. This painting should be subtle yet still visually (or haptically) interesting.

Now that we have explored the viscosity of paint, how could we remove color(s) from a painting in order to treat painting as more of an (often) unique object that needs to be experienced by a body in space; something sometimes described as the haptic- where we understand texture not through touch, but through vision. For this painting I want you to use nuances of a single color to try to create a painting that the viewer comes to very slowly, and possibly through texture instead of color, or through extremely small shifts in a single color.

Questions- How can you use a single color to create a field which only reveals itself under certain conditions of light/shadow, movement, at a certain speed? How can you take what you have learned about the substance/surface of paint, issues of glossy/flat, the most subtle tints, thick/thin, smooth/choppy, sprayed/brushed/rolled, etc., to create meaning/experience from the monochrome? What does it mean to arrive at something slowly? To have to see something in person? To take in information across senses? What type of scale might be best for the experience? How object or un-object-like should the painting be?

**Artists to Research and Consider:** Robert Ryman, Ad Reinhardt, Kazimir Malevich, Maaike Schoorel, Kara Walker, Glen Ligon, James Lee Byers, Leonard Drew

**4. Color Passage/Color Transition** The optical effect of colors disseminating into one another to create spatial illusion or evoke spiritual or atmospheric associations is a long-standing convention. This effect can be used to create spaces that pulsate from shallow to immense, convey shifting light effects, and act as a formal element to unite to disparate sections of a composition. The objective of this assignment is to employ the subtle strength of seamless color passage in key places of your painting to make the entire composition cohesive.

How can Alla prima, or wet into wet, painting be used to speak to the construction of a painting, towards the creation of light in a painting, or create a sense of space and atmosphere in a painting? How do contemporary painters use the transition of color to speak to the current visual world? What does the color passage signify to you? Is it natural/unnatural, technological- what are the places where you find the transition of color?

**Artists to Research and Consider:** Martin Johnson-Heade, Frederick Edwin Church, Georgia O'Keefe, Susan Rothenberg, Mark Rothko, Helen Frankenthaler, Gerhardt Richter, Tauba Auerbach, Jack Whitten

**5. Planar color: Investigation of "Push-Pull"** One way in which we conceive of pictorial space is as a series of planes that overlap each other as they recede into depth. We even have names for such planes; the rearmost one we call the ground or background, the nearest one to us is called the foreground, and those in-between are called the middle ground. Pictorial space is created by many factors; overlapping of forms, changes of size or position, linear and/or atmospheric perspective, etc. Color is also an important factor in contributing to the spatial matters inside the picture plane. Colors have an inherent spatial dynamic created by the degree of contrast they make with each other. On a monochromatic background, any group of different colors will take up different spatial positions. Some will seem to progress towards us, while other will retreat towards the ground. Hans Hoffman, an influential teacher of painting in the twentieth century, referred to this progression and recession of colors as, "push-pull." Forms may be made to advance or recede by changing their color contrast with their surroundings.

What is Abstract- abstraction has been an important conversation in painting since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many contemporary painters work abstractly, meaning that they are not painting something, but instead working with the conditions of paint (color, gesture, visual space, etc.) to create objects/images that do not reference anything but themselves. For this project I would like you to look at the history of abstraction to ask how artist moved from representation to abstraction. Thinking about the planer and visual space I want you to look at an architectural space and to ask

yourself how you understand depth of field and how you might translate that to a purely abstract painting that still has a sense of visual depth, using only planes (this can be loosely) and color.

Questions- how do painters arrive at abstraction? What does abstract painting do that representational painting cannot? How might the removal of traditional “content” open up the experience of the visual for a viewer. How does abstract painting respond to the changing conditions of the contemporary world? How would you describe the things that make “meaning” in abstract painting?

**Artists to Research and Consider:** Hans Hoffman, Vassily Kandinsky, Jacob Lawrence, Frank Stella, David Reed, Elizabeth Murray, Mondrian, Helen Frankenthaler, Richard Diebenkorn, Mark Rothko, Inka Essenhigh, Beatriz Milhazes, Franz Ackerman, Grace Hartigan, Dana Schutz, Paul Behnke, Amy Sillman, Jules De Balincourt, Hernan Bas, Stephen Bush, Nicole Eisenman, Chris Johanson, Mickalene Thomas, Julie Mehretu,

### Tentative Schedule

T 9/1	Introduction to course, requirements, supplies (Watch “Gerhardt Richter Painting”)
TH 9/3	Discuss Problem 1- Video: Mark Bradford, Eddie Martinez (from <i>Art21: Artists in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</i> )
T 9/8	Workday
TH 9/10	Discuss Problem 2 - Video: Ellen Gallagher, Trenton Doyle Hancock (from <i>Art21: Artists in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</i> )
T 9/15	Workday
TH 9/17	Workday
T 9/22	Critique Problem 1
TH 9/24	Sketchbook due
T 9/29	Discuss Problems 3 and 4 - Video: Glen Ligon, Susan Rothenberg (from <i>Art21: Artists in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</i> )
TH 10/1	Workday
T 10/6	Workday
TH 10/8	Workday
T 10/13	Critique Problems 2 and 3
TH 10/15	Sketchbook due
T 10/27	Discuss Problem 5 – Video: Julie Mehretu, Shahzia Sikander (From <i>Art 21: Artists in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</i> )
TH 10/29	Workday
T 11/3	Workday
TH 11/5	Critique Problem 4
T 11/10	Workday
TH 11/12	Workday
T 11/17	Workday
TH 11/19	Workday

T 11/24	BREAK
TH 11/26	BREAK
T 12/1	Virtual Workday- Individual Meetings
TH 12/3	Virtual Workday- Individual Meetings
T 12/8	Virtual Workday
TH 12/10	Critique Problem 5