

VA 203 Language of Drawing I | Fall 24-25

Mon 14:40-16:30 & Wed 14:40-16:30

Kerem Ozan Bayraktar
keremozan.bayraktar@sabanciuniv.edu

This studio course provides an introduction to drawing as practice as a fundamental artistic and communicative form. Students will develop basic drawing skills, explore various approaches to observation and representation, and discover the expressive potential of the medium in a contemporary context. Through practical exercises, individual projects and group critiques, students will develop a dynamic and personal relationship with drawing that can be utilized across a range of disciplines.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Establish a foundation for competence in basic drawing techniques including line control, basic perspective and composition.
- Apply observational skills to depict a range of subjects.
- Experiment with a variety of drawing media to explore their characteristics and expressive qualities.
- Understand the basic concepts of spatial representation and translate three-dimensional forms into two dimensions.
- Begin to analyze and discuss works of art, developing visual literacy and critical thinking skills.
- Experiment with various materials and approaches, expanding their understanding of what drawing can be.
- Present and discuss their work in a supportive and constructive group critique environment.
- Engage in self-reflection to analyze personal creative choices and motivations.

Course Outline

This course is divided into three modules to be completed in three projects. Each module covers related topics and practices.

Module 1: Fundamentals: Body, Time, Space



Zhao Mengfu, Twin Pines, Level Distance, ca. 1310

I. Line: Exploration of line weight, quality, and expressive potential through various exercises with pencil, charcoal, graphite, and ink on diverse surfaces.

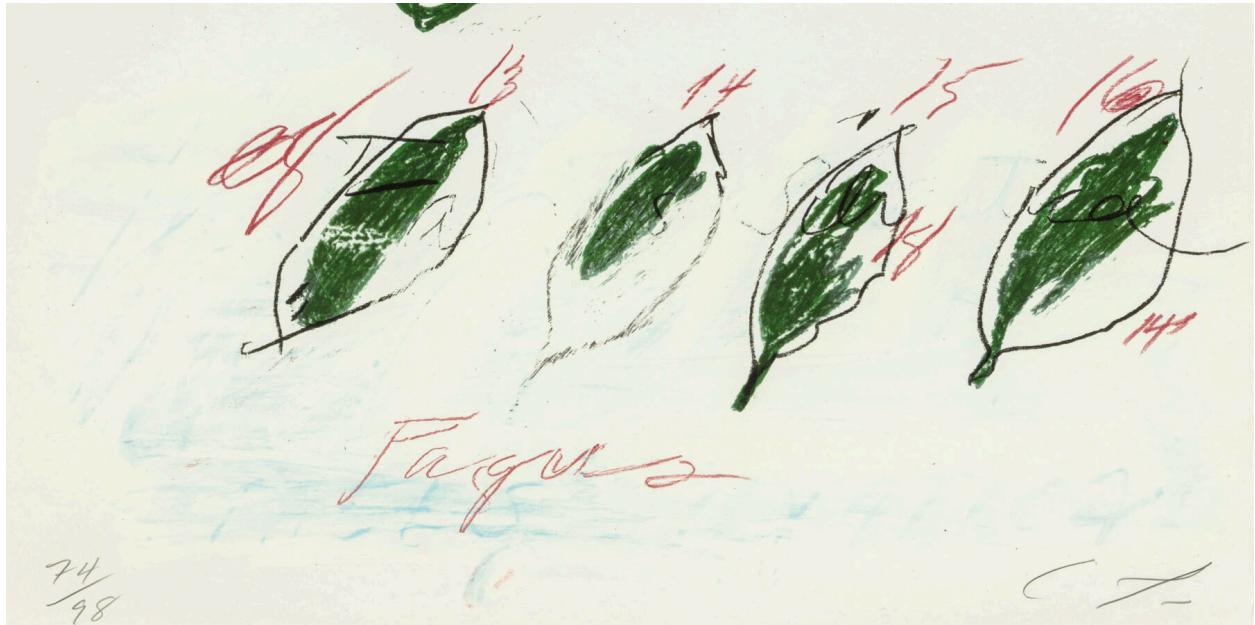
II. Time, Movement, and the Trace: Investigating the temporal dimension of drawing through gesture, intensity, speed, and mark-making as a record of movement. Exercises in timed drawing, continuous line work, and discussions on intuition in art.

III. Embodied Mark-Making: Connecting body and drawing through exercises in scale, gravity and movement on large surfaces, developing kinesthetic awareness.

IV. Perspective as Worldmaking: Perspective as both technical skill and conceptual framework. One-point and two-point perspective exercises, analysis of historical examples, and discussions on how perspective shapes perception.

V. Machines and Their Images: Introduction to orthographic projection, emphasizing accuracy in technical representation.

Module 2: Observing Systems, Life in Detail



Cy Twombly, dLaurus Nobilis, from: Natural History, Part II, Some Trees of Italy, 1975-1976

VI. Seeing & Translating: Intensive observation and quick sketching of complex objects to capture form, structure, and spatial relationships.

VII. Composition Through Observation: Composing and executing a still life drawing using a variety of objects, focusing on representing form while considering compositional elements.

VIII. Life of Others: Observation and drawing of non-human life forms (plants, insects, animals), focusing on depicting forms, textures, and structural details.

VIX. Motion, Behavior, and Essence: Capturing the vitality of living subjects through drawing, focusing on movement, behavior, and a sense of life and energy.

Module 3: Expanding the Field: Materiality, Concept, Installation



Sarah Sze: 'Cave Painting,' at the Nasher Sculpture Center, 2024

X. The Agency of Materials: Expanding the definition of drawing tools and materials. Experimentation with found objects, natural materials, and unconventional mark-making techniques to discover new expressive possibilities.

XI. Drawing the Invisible: Beyond Representation: Utilizing drawing to represent the abstract, intangible, and unseen. Exploring themes of emotion, memory, sound, and energy through line, form, and materiality.

XII. Visual Communication: Drawing as Language: Exploring drawing's use in diagrams, maps, and data visualization.

XIII. Drawing as Inquiry: Research & Personal Exploration: Developing individual research questions and utilize drawing as a tool for investigation and translation, culminating in a final project presentation.

Projects

To complete the course, you are required to work on three separate projects in each module. Information about these projects will be provided in the corresponding lessons. To complete these projects, you should set up a work schedule outside of class and use the studio or your own personal workspace during these hours.

Example Project 1: Drawing the Discarded

Students select discarded objects and create a finished drawing, focusing on observation, composition, and expressive mark-making.

Example Project 2: Drawing Change and Relationship

Students select a subject with a defined life cycle, internal mechanism, or complex relationship (a plant, a machine, a social dynamic) and create a series of drawings that, when viewed together, tell a story about the subject's nature.

Example Project 3: Data Body, Spatialised

Students present drafts of a personal research project using drawing, materials and spatial organization.


Lesson Structure

Pre-Class Preparation

- Weekly assignments
- Short videos introducing key techniques and artists
- Continued project work

In-Class Structure (100 min - Monday)

1. Silent Studio (30 min.)

- Every Monday for 30 min, a free style drawing, awareness, thinking activity is held where all communication tools and entrances and exits are closed. In this section the instructor also remains silent and does not comment on your work. [Details](#) 

2. Break (10 min.)

3. Studio Practice (60 min.)

- Drawing activities with discussions, comments, exercises and group work. These activities can also take place in other areas within the school, depending on the subject matter of the lesson.

In-Class Structure (90 min - Wednesday)

1. Studio Practice (45 min.)

2. Break (10 min.)

3. Studio Practice (45 min.)

Course Materials

Basic drawing materials and papers required for the course are provided in the classes.

Sketchbook: Practicing drawing outside of class is crucial for enhancing your skills. Therefore, each student should obtain a sketchbook in the size and format they prefer. Make sure to use the sketchbook regularly.

Optional: It is advisable to buy your own drawing materials to broaden your experience.

Here are some suggested materials to consider purchasing:

- **Graphite Pencils:** A range of hardness from 2H to 8B for various shading and line qualities.
- **Charcoal:** Compressed and vine charcoal for bold, expressive lines and shading.
- **Colored Pencils:** A set of high-quality colored pencils for color drawing and mixed media work.
- **Ink Pens:** Fine liners or brush pens for detailed line work and ink wash techniques.
- **Erasers:**
 - Kneaded eraser for lightening areas and soft edges.
 - Vinyl or plastic eraser for precise erasing and clean lines.
- **Blending Stumps or Tortillons:** For blending and smoothing graphite or charcoal.
- **Drawing Paper:**
 - Sketch pads for quick studies and practice.
 - Heavyweight drawing paper or bristol board for finished work.
- **Pastels:** Soft pastels or oil pastels for experimenting with color and texture.
- **Watercolor Pencils:** Pencils that can be used dry or with water for a variety of effects.

- **Fixative Spray:** To protect your drawings from smudging, particularly charcoal and pastel.
- **Ruler:** For precise measurements and geometric drawings.
- **Masking Tape:** For securing paper to a drawing board and creating clean edges.
- **Brushes:** A selection of brushes for ink work or watercolor pencils.
- **Sharpener:** A good-quality pencil sharpener or knife for maintaining pencil points.

Presence and Participation

- Participating in drawing sessions is most effective and enjoyable in a group setting. Individual projects, in-class exercises, and collaborative activities are particularly affected by absences and cannot be replicated.
- For up to two classes, you can make up an absence by:
 - Submitting a sketch that reflects your interpretation and response to the day's assignment or activity.
- Arriving 15 minutes or more late to a class will be considered an absence.

Grading Scheme

Category	% of course letter grade	Notes
Participation & Engagement	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active involvement in class discussions and activities • Consistent attendance and punctuality • Contribution to a collaborative environment • up to 2 can be made up with alternative work • Arrival >15 mins late counts as an absence
Weekly Assignments	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of weekly tasks and exercises • Demonstration of effort and improvement over time • Adherence to assignment guidelines and deadlines • All components must be submitted on time
Project I	20%	Technical Skill (Line Control, Composition): 25% Observational Accuracy and Detail: 25% Creativity and Expression: 25% Presentation: 25% All components must be submitted on time
Project II	20%	Research, Observation, and Concept Development: 25% Exploration of Multiple Viewpoints and Techniques: 25% Effective Visual Communication of Subject's Nature: 25% Presentation: 25%
Project III	25%	Concept Development and Research: 20% Creative and Effective Use of Materials: 20% Successful Translation of Ideas into a Spatial Experience: 20% Craftsmanship, Installation, and Documentation: 20% Presentation and Statement: 20%

Course Privacy Statement

Students may not audio or video record class meetings without permission from the instructor (and guest speakers, when applicable). If the instructor grants permission or if the teaching team posts videos themselves, students may keep recordings only for personal use and may not post recordings on the Internet, or otherwise distribute them. These policies protect the privacy rights of instructors and students, and the intellectual property and other rights of the university.

Class Resources

Anania, Katie. *Out of Paper: Drawing, Environment, and the Body in 1960s America*. Yale University Press, 2024.

Anderson-Tempini, Gemma, and John Dupré. *Drawing Processes of Life: Molecules, Cells, Organisms*. 2023.

Arnheim, Rudolf. *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye*. Univ of California Press, 1954.

Arnold, Dana. *Architecture and Ekphrasis: Space, Time, and the Embodied Description of the Past*. Manchester University Press, 2020.

Chorpening, Kelly, and Rebecca Fortnum. *A Companion to Contemporary Drawing*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2020.

Crary, Jonathan. *Techniques of the Observer*. MIT Press, 1990.

Davidson, Margaret. *Contemporary Drawing: Key Concepts and Techniques*. Watson-Guption, 2011.

Butler, Cornelia H. *Afterimage: Drawing Through Process*. MIT Press, 1999.

Kantrowitz, Andrea. *Drawing Thought: How Drawing Helps Us Observe, Discover, and Invent*. MIT Press, 2022.

Kentridge, William. *Six Drawing Lessons*. Harvard University Press, 2014.

Kinsella, Karl. *God's Own Language: Architectural Drawing in the Twelfth Century*. MIT Press, 2023.

Marshall, Russell, and Phil Sawdon, eds. *Hyperdrawing: Beyond the Lines of Contemporary Art*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Pleasure in Drawing*. Fordham University Press, 2013.

Rawson, Philip. *Drawing*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.

Ruskin, John. *The Elements of Drawing*. Courier Corporation, 1971.

Scolari, Massimo, and Jenny Condie Palandri. *Oblique Drawing: A History of Anti-Perspective*. MIT Press, 2012.

Seligman, Isabel, and Hugo Chapman. *Pushing Paper: Contemporary Drawing from 1970 to Now*. Thames & Hudson, 2019.

Witt, Andrew. *Formulations: Architecture, Mathematics, Culture*. MIT Press, 2022.