

Ben Cressy

Art 7A Beginning Drawing: Spring 2026. Monday and Wednesday

Contact: email: bcressy@santarosa.edu (please put class name and time in subject + your note)

Office hours: Immediately before and after class

Important Dates:

- January 19th MLK holiday, no class
- February 1st Last day to drop a class without "W" symbol
- February 16th Presidents holiday, no class
- March 16,18 Spring break, no class
- April 19th Last day to drop a class with "W" symbol
- May 18 or 20th Final (Required!)

Catalog Description:

A basic course in drawing and composition to develop a student's ability to perceive and define shape, mass, contour, volume, space, and light, using a variety of graphic media and subject matter.

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Develop an understanding of perspective and apply to drawing skills.
2. Synthesize pictorial elements such as shape, form, value, line and texture in drawing.
3. Recognize diverse points of view in respect to systems of perspective and composition.
4. Combine risk-taking and experimentation with disciplined work habits as an aspect of the creative process.
5. Experiment with and distinguish between black and white drawing media: ink, pencil, charcoal, conte crayon and various drawing surfaces.
6. Define basic drawing and design terminology.
7. Analyze and identify master techniques in drawing.
8. Develop drawings from general to specific.
9. Appraise relationships of positive and negative space in a composition.
10. Evaluate their work and the work of others in verbal critiques.
11. Analyze the proportions of a single object and analyze proportional relationships between objects.

We will be primarily drawing from observation of the natural world to develop skills. There will also be a few abstract exercises to demonstrate specific concepts. Students will develop confidence and ability to create drawings from observation, memory and concept.

Studio procedures:

- Turn off and put away cellphones and tablets. No Headphones.
- Clear your table of all items except for the paper and drawing materials.
- Presentations of concepts, review of homework, demonstrations and slide shows will be held at the start of the session. Please be on time.
- Start cleaning up 15 minutes before the end of class. Dispose of eraser pilings, pencil shavings and charcoal dust into the garbage cans using a dustpan. ***Wipe down your table.***

General Rules:

No eating or Drinking. No cell phone use, no headphones. Avoid excessive off topic talking. It is distracting to others. If you must communicate with the outside world during class, wait until the break. We work hard to build a positive and encouraging learning environment. You will learn as much or more from your peers as you will from your instructors.

We are here to talk about drawing.

Health and Safety:

Most of the materials used in drawing are considered non toxic except for spray fixative. Use fixative in a well ventilated (outside) area and be considerate of which way the wind is blowing.

Homework:

Assignments of about 3 hrs/week will be assigned on Wednesday and is due on the following Monday.

Homework turned in later than one week is graded accordingly. Better late than never.

Assignments allow you time to build upon concepts discussed in class, as well let you dictate more personal subject matter.

If you don't hear the assignment, contact me via email (better for images than canvas) and/or make a friend in the class to get the assignment. Remember that while it takes time, it will also be fun/relaxing. Getting started is the most difficult part.

Sketchbook:

Keep your pages organized chronologically (avoid skipping around the book). Date the pages.

Try to develop a personal drawing habit or routine. Make a point of doing some doodling, experiments and practice ideas for the fun of it.

Some quotes, just because

"We all have 10,000 bad drawings in us. The sooner we get them out the better."

— **Walt Stanchfield**

"It is better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation."

— **Herman Melville**

"We must take great care who we pretend we are, because that is who we will become."

— **Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.**

"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up."

— **Pablo Picasso**

"Don't think about making art, just get it done. Let everyone else decide if it's good or bad, whether they love it or hate it. While they are deciding, make even more art."

— **Andy Warhol**

Grading Policy

As with anything, you get out what you put in. Making art isn't easy. This class can be taken for credit/no credit if you request it at the Registrar's Office before the deadline.

An A student attends all classes, and does all the homework on time, pursuing each project with intensity and curiosity. Their sketchbook is filled with explorations of different ideas and possibilities of each assignment, as well as independent ideas.

Grading is based primarily on completion of assignments, effort, involvement, and attendance.

100– 90% = A, 80 – 89% = B, 70 – 79% = C, 60 – 69% = D, < 60% = F

Attendance and development of class projects: 60%

Attendance is essential as each session builds upon the concepts of the previous class. Missing more three classes *may* result in the loss of a letter grade. If you know that you are going to be absent, please let me know beforehand to arrange make up work. Make up work must be completed within 1 week of the absence.

Punctuality is also essential as assignments and demonstrations are discussed at the beginning of class. 3 late arrivals, early departures, or extended breaks equal 1 full absence.

Homework is assigned and explained during class.

Homework and Portfolio 25%

Your portfolio consists of class projects and homework assignments. There should be evident growth of understanding within the cumulative body of work that you create.

The grading of your work is based on:

- Understand and complete the assignment on time
- Come up with creative solutions to the assignments
- Consideration of aesthetic and material presentation
- Push to expand your capabilities- not just doing what worked in previous pieces
- The Final Projects will be heavily weighted for determining borderline grades.

Class participation and contribution to critiques: 15%

Your involvement will determine how well you do in general. Pay attention to demonstrations and ask questions when you don't understand. Being tuned out on a device counts against your participation.

Critiques are a chance to step back from your work and that of your classmates to recognize what is working, why it's working, as well as ideas for possible improvements. You will develop of a vocabulary over time, but don't let not having the right words stop you from trying to express the visual. Your participation helps create a positive and enriching environment for all, and you will learn much through conversations about drawing with your peers.

*As a general observation, most people do well until the end of the semester and then fade out. Attendance and involvement are essential elements in learning art.

Materials:

Art stores often have their best sales at the beginning of the semester. Look for coupons and use your student discount. (20% off at Riley Street)

Riley Street has a supply kit for the class. (approx. \$75)

Some supplies can be cheaper at a hardware store or 99cent stores.

Many of the supplies are also used in other classes.

SRJC Bookstore

Riley Street Art Supplies, rileystreet.com 103 Maxwell Ct, Santa Rosa, or 1138 4th st. San Rafael

Art & Soul of Sebastopol, 755 Petaluma Ave Sebastopol

Blick Art – dickblick.com, 811 University Ave, Berkeley, or Market Street and Van Ness, San Francisco.

Case for carrying materials (toolbox, tackle/organizer box)

Portfolio Case – Plastic/nylon last longer.

Masonite Drawing Board (optional but recommended for homework)

Sketchbook 9x12

Drawing pad 14 x17

Optional – Glassine several sheets – protects unfixed drawings

Soft pencils (2b, 4b, 6b or ebony)

Graphite stick 4b or 6b

Pencil sharpener (needs to capture shavings)

Blending stump (for fine tuned blending)

1 Chamois (soft fuzzy leather – or imitation leather car dryer)

1 large box of Vine Charcoal (6-9 sticks medium or soft –not hard!)

“Char-kole” soft charcoal / pastel sticks (3-6)

Optional: Charcoal pencil

Erasers (Sanford plastic, pink pearl, kneaded)

Optional: pencil eraser (for fine tune erasing)

Pentel Oil pastels 24 or 16 color (chalk pastel is less preferable but can be used)

18” or 24” straight edge

Artist tape ½”

Workable spray fixative (liquid pump version)

Pens felt tip and ballpoint etc (black ink)

Recommended: fingernail brush for cleaning hands.