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2020

### Introduction to Illustration

Nathan P. Sensel  
*CUNY City College*

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**City College of New York  
ART 29520  
Illustration I**

FALL 2020  
Thursdays 2:00-4:50  
Compton Goethals, CG 118

Adjunct Instructor: Nathan Sensel  
email: nsensel@ccny.cuny.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment



**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*Illustration* is a visual interpretation of the world around us and is meant to communicate ideas in a clear and creative manner. The illustrator uses many different tools to convey their perspective, including painting and drawing, photography, digital media, printmaking and more.

This course is an introduction to the analog, non-digital, handmade 2-dimensional techniques and materials that illustrators use and the messages they are attempting to convey. Throughout the course, you will be asked to describe and analyze different techniques and apply them to your own work. As with any other skill, warming up, exercising and practicing are essential components of being able to illustrate well. Class-time will be structured with this in mind -- I will provide time for students to warm up not just hands but also minds; I will introduce elements and principles of illustration, show examples and demonstrate ways to use them; ask students to interpret the meaning of images; and judge the effectiveness of the approaches that illustrators use.

The course is built around 6 in-depth projects designed to engage student passions, opinions and ideas about the world we all live in. Because we will be interpreting current events and the people who play a large role in these events, it is necessary that we develop a safe and tolerant environment in which to share ideas. I will encourage open-ended and wide-ranging discussions. Students will be asked to help develop this trusting, respectful, yet critical setting -- a skill that will prepare them for working in a professional environment in the future.

I will also provide ample time in class to get down to the business of illustrating. We will focus on elements: shape, line, texture, form, size, color relationships, pattern; as well as techniques: cropping, overlapping, foreshortening, perspective, figure/ground, contrast, complements, harmony, focus, and more. This requires students to come prepared for each class. Though the school will provide some materials, I have included here a supply list outlining the materials that could be purchased to complete the assignments.

**LEARNING GOALS**

- Begin to or continue to develop the skill of thinking critically about the role that illustration plays in interpreting our world.
- Learn about, practice using, and apply common strategies and techniques of illustration in the work.
- Participate in critique of illustration techniques and encourage others to think critically about the work shown in the class.
- Demonstrate the ability to problem solve and think creatively about the topics presented.
- Complete work in a professional, creative, and original manner.

## **SUPPLY LIST**

### Included with class registration:

- 1 Large sketchbook, at least 8.5 x 11, spiral bound or hardbound preferred
- 7 boards 20 x 30 inch hot press illustration board
- 1 small container black Sumi ink
- 1 pad Bristol board pad of paper
- 1 pad Watercolor of paper
- 1 pad Tracing paper

### Supplied by the student:

- 1 basic set of color inks
- watercolor and ink brushes -- synthetic brushes are good, sizes 2 - 10
- water containers (recycled yogurt containers, jars, etc)
- 1 bottle of rubber cement or spray adhesive
- graphite drawing Pencils (2H, H, HB, 2B, 6B)
- Waterproof liner pens, Faber Castell, 0, 1, F
- straight edge (ruler), french curve
- paper towels, rags
- 1-inch blue painters tape
- 1 nylon eraser
- paint tray = a palette to mix colors and inks, could be styrofoam, glass, metal, plastic

## **SEMESTER SCHEDULE**

WEEK 1 August 27: Introduction to Drawing as a Tool for Visual Literacy. Where did it come from? Why did it stick around?

WEEK 2 September 3: Elements and Principles of Illustration and 2D Design  
Begin work on Project 1: Portraits

WEEK 3 September 10: Presentation of Project 1

WEEK 4 September 17: Illustration techniques and concepts, Surrealism  
Begin work on Project 2: Surreal Figure Drawing illustration

WEEK 5 September 24: Presentation of Project 2, focus on line-work and presentation

WEEK 6 October 1: Introduction to Narrative and storytelling, Editorial Illustration  
Begin work on Project 3: Day in the Life Serial Illustration

WEEK 7 October 8: Presentation of Project 3, Introduction to Lettering

WEEK 8 October 15: Investigate lettering style, Idea generation  
Begin work on Project 4: Movie Poster Transformation

WEEK 9 October 22: Presentation of Project 4, Intro to composition and style and book arts and text/image relationships

WEEK 10 October 29: Ink techniques, focus on shading, hatching and stippling  
Begin work on Project 5: Illustrate a path to City College

WEEK 11 November 5: Presentation of Project 5, Intro to activist art and icon development

WEEK 12 November 12: Begin work on design of icon related to specific issue

WEEK 13 November 19: In class work on Project 6, stencilling

WEEK 14 December 3: Individual Presentations of Project 6

WEEK 15 December 10: READING DAY -- NO CLASS

WEEK 15 December 17: Final Portfolio Review

## PROJECTS

You will be required to complete 6 in-depth projects and present the final version of these projects during the portfolio review at finals week. Each project requires you to employ different strategies and techniques in the initial planning and preparation of the final work. Mini-assignments (or exercises) will be due at the beginning of each class -- these are designed to help you problem-solve and complete the final project in the most thoughtful and creative manner. Listed below are the overall project descriptions:

### 1. Due September 10

Cult of Personality: Style and Presentation (Variation in a series)

Choose a person who you think is having an impact on the world around us and find or take a picture/image of that person. Recreate the portrait in 3 different styles to convey a specific sense of that person: playfulness, humor, seriousness, drama, vulnerability, confusion, etc.

- Focus: elements of design and how they can be used to effectively communicate an idea
- Presentation: 3 illustrations on heavy paper, 14 x 17 inch mounted on mat board

### 2. Due September 24

Figure/Ground: Surreal Figure Drawing

Create a finished image of a figure in a landscape. The juxtaposition of the figure and landscape should create new, jarring image that creates a comment about the person referenced.

- Focus: Juxtaposition, context, surrealism
- Presentation: 1 illustration on heavy paper, 14 x 17 inch mounted on illustration board

### 3. Due October 8

Day in the Life: Narrative Portrait

Create a sequential, narrative drawing of a person as they navigate their day from waking to sleeping. Use dramatic moments as well as the boring ones to inform the viewer about the subject.

- Focus: sequencing, action, point of view,
- Presentation: 12 drawings (min) on 1 piece of heavy paper, 14 x 17 inch mounted on illustration board

### 4. Due October 22

Watch this: Movie Poster Transformation

Choose a problem to work on. Research the issues surrounding the problem and identify who is impacted most by this problem. Choose a movie poster that you could recreate to illustrate the problem or solution to the problem.

- Focus: Concept and image, research, audience perception
- Presentation: 1 illustration on heavy paper, 14 x 17 inch mounted on illustration board

### 5. Due November 5

Famous Views: Take a Walk

Illustrate a walk through the city. Choose any path you wish, perhaps one you take every day or choose a whole new path. Include as many details that will help tell a story about that walk.

- Focus: Storytelling, Audience Perception, Use of reference images
- Presentation: A minimum of six illustrations presented in sequence, accordion book style on heavy paper

### 6. Due December 3

### **ACTION!: Public Art and Activism**

Create an "icon", an illustration that employs iconography designed to raise people's awareness about an issue that you think is having an impact on our world. The final piece can include text and image.

Final presentation should include:

- the icon stenciled in your sketchbook
- application of the icon in whatever form it takes -- poster, sticker, projection, 3D object, etc.
- evidence of the piece out in the public. This could be presented as a video or photos, but show people reacting to the piece.

### **FINAL PORTFOLIO**

The final Portfolio due the last week of class will contain all of the work that you have completed during the semester. Essentially, you will be *re-submitting* the Projects, assignments and any other supplemental materials that you've completed to be *re-evaluated*. This is an opportunity for you to correct any work that you felt was not sufficient the first time you turned it in, or to re-do a piece of work for reconsideration. This is an opportunity for me to see your work overall and to consider the growth you've made during the course of the semester. I will take this into account when assigning grades.

### **GRADES**

Students will be awarded grades based on the number of points they earn. A maximum total of 240 points can be earned during the semester.

### **PROJECTS**

A maximum of 30 Points will be awarded for each of the 6 in-depth projects assigned -- the details of which will be given in class two weeks before the assignment is due. In general, however, these projects will be evaluated on five things: (1) Professionalism in presentation, (2) Use of specific illustration techniques, (3) Creative or critical problem-solving, (4) Communication, (5) Pre-planning and research. A total of 180 Points total are possible.

### **PARTICIPATION AND WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS**

A maximum of 60 Points will be awarded for participation in class discussions and completion of weekly exercises. Points can be earned based on the following:

2 points per class for active participation = thoughtfulness about issues and ideas; dedication to inquiry and exploration in all aspects of class work; willingness and ability to learn with and from others in the class.

2 points for completion of weekly assignments = depth, structure, and attention to detail in assignments; on time submission; organization and thoughtfulness in preparation of materials for class; clearly-articulated ideas connected to illustration techniques.

Slides used in class will be made available on Blackboard. However, lectures and demos cannot be repeated. Please contact a classmate for missed information.

To earn an A in this course, you must:

- participate in class discussions
- meet all deadlines
- have no more than 2 absences
- be on time to class and do not leave early
- be prepared for each class
- take notes and or sketch lecture materials
- create exceptional quality work or demonstrate an increase in skill and conceptual abilities

Points to percentage to letter grade breakdown:

240 - 216 points = 100 - 90% = A+, A, A-, Exceptional

215 - 192 points = 90 - 80% = B+, B, B-, Good

191 - 168 points = 80 - 70% = C+, C, C-, Satisfactory  
167 - 144 points = 70 - 60% = D+, D, D-, Passing  
143 points and below = 60% and below = Let's talk

### LIST OF HELPFUL BOOKS

*Little Book of Lettering* by Emily Gregory. Chronicle Books, 2012.  
*How to Create a Portfolio and Get Hired* by Fig Taylor. Laurence King Publishing, 2012.  
*The Pen & Ink Book* by Joseph Smith. Watson-Guption Publications, 1992.  
*Drawing Lessons from the Great Masters* by Robert Beverly Hale. Watson-Guption Publications, 1964.

### ONLINE RESOURCES TO CHECK OUT

#### TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES

<https://illustrationage.com/>  
<http://businessofillustration.com/>  
<http://drawingacademy.com/drawing-lessons/muscles-in-human-body>  
<http://www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/how-to/ink/554/12-tips-when-using-inks>  
<http://www.instructables.com/id/Sketching-Drawing-Lessons/>  
<https://designschool.canva.com/design-elements-principles/>  
<http://paletton.com/#uid=34W0z0klllzpberfghfrqp9yvs>

#### IDEAS

<http://www.designorate.com/a-guide-to-the-scanner-technique-for-creative-thinking/>  
<http://www.creativeblog.com/computer-arts/stefan-sagmeister-humility-happiness-and-handmade-51411833>  
<http://www.n8w.com/blog/3242>

#### ARTWORK EXAMPLES

<http://illustrationfriday.com/blog/>  
<http://www.itsnicethat.com/features>  
<http://www.pvuk.com/>  
<http://www.brainpickings.org/>

### ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Missing a class session means missing out on the participation and weekly assignment points, which will result in a lower grade. Excessive lateness (more than three sessions) will also negatively impact a student's grade.

### CLASS CONDUCT

Mutual respect for all at all times is required. Technology use, such as cell phone, tablet and computer, is permitted if it is relevant to the class. Coffee, water and other beverages are permitted. Please clean up after yourself, especially when eating -- you will be given sufficient time to clean up at the end of class. Students are responsible for thoroughly cleaning up their work area, which includes wiping up excess paint, disposing of garbage, making sure the floor is dry, etc.

### CUNY STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The CUNY Policy on plagiarism says the following:

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own. The following are some examples of plagiarism, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

1. Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source.
2. Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source.
3. Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the source.
4. Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments.

5. Internet plagiarism includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source, and “cutting and pasting” from various sources without proper attribution.

The City College Faculty Senate has approved a procedure for addressing violations of academic integrity.

### **DISABILITY STATEMENT**

In compliance with CCNY policy and equal access laws, appropriate academic accommodations are offered for students with disabilities. Students must register with The AccessAbility Center for reasonable academic accommodations. The AccessAbility Center is located in the North Academic Center, Room 1/218.

Telephone: 212.650.5913. Under The Americans with Disability Act, an individual with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. If you have any such issues, I encourage you to visit the AccessAbility Center to determine which services may be appropriate for you.

In April 2012, the AccessAbility Center provided the following statement: “Qualified students with disabilities will be provided reasonable academic accommodations if determined eligible by the AccessAbility Center (AAC). Prior to granting disability accommodations in this course, the instructor must receive written verification of a student’s eligibility from the AAC, which is located in NAC 1/218. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate contact with the AAC and to follow the established procedures for having the accommodation notice sent to the instructor.”