Art 201: Watercolor

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth A. Ford
Office
Office Hours TH: 12:30-2
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For appointments make 24 hrs. in advance by email-I'll confirm

Texts:
Readings, handouts, and videos make up our course texts.

Course Description:
Wonders can happen when your mind, eye, arm, hand, brush, paint, water, and paper are aligned. This basic watercolor course will help students of all skill levels strive for those moments, working with composition, color, and design as constants. We'll examine old and new watercolor masterworks, learn and practice watercolor techniques, and explore the possibilities of mining everyday objects, experiences, and surroundings for inspiration.

Course Outcomes:
By the end of this course a student should
  a. Be able to “read’ and critique watercolors by other artists with more understanding and more sophisticated language.
  b. Know and be able to demonstrate core watercolor techniques.
  c. Demonstrate improved skills in completed projects.

Assignments/Projects:
Class time will be used for learning and practicing watercolor techniques, looking at watercolor paintings, working on ideas, and completing exercises. Work we do in class leads up to four graded projects. These class assignments include exercises, sketches, journal entries, etc. Class time will be devoted to preliminary work for, and some work on, the 4 required projects. You will need to use out-of-class time on each of the projects.

Topics and Techniques:
The importance of color and value.
Building strong compositions.
Washes, glazes, textures, line-basic watercolor techniques.

Studio Etiquette
Studies and common supplies are for course work only. Students are not permitted to use the facilities or supplies for extra-curricular organizations. Students are expected to maintain their work and storage areas. Common areas are to be kept clean. Shared class materials must be returned to their storage locations. Abuse of the space or materials will result in your course grade being lowered a full grade.
Critiques, Participation

Critique means discussion of artwork using specialized language. You’ll critique your own works and the works of other students. Your participation in this analysis, both verbal and written, is built into your grade in the required projects.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes. You are allowed two “missed” days; this means you may have two excused absences. After this, your grade will be lowered 2 pts. per absence, unless you can submit verifiable proof of illness or emergency circumstances. Sporting events are excused if your coach notifies faculty. Practices are not excused. Do not email me to ask about missed work; email me to make an appointment to discuss making it up in person.

Readiness

On the first day of class, you must appear with materials, ready to work.

Grading

There are no bonus points or extra credit work in this class. Your grade is your grade.

4 Projects. Each 25% of grade

Each project includes varying preliminary work including: studies, sketches, ideas, written critiques. Some of these are journal entries leading up to projects (marked* on your syllabus). You will receive a project sheet detailing the preliminary work required to consider each project complete.

GRADE RANGE

A 100-93%, A- 92-90%, B+ 89-87%, B 86-83%, B- 82-80 %, C+ 79-77%, C 76-73%, C- 72-70%, D+ 69-67%, D 66-63%, D- 62-60%, F 59%

A to A- Clear and complete understanding of the concepts introduced through the assignment. Exceptionally creative thinking and production with unique applications of concepts in solving problems. Sensitive use of materials and tools. Excellent craftsmanship. Extensive participation in class discussions. Excellent work habits.

B+ to B- Good understanding of specific concepts introduced through the assignment. Creative application of these concepts in solving problems. Good use or materials, (good craftsmanship). Shows some improvement, but most areas could all be improved with more effort or paying closer attention to instructions. Strong participation in class discussions and critiques. Good work habits.

C+ to C- Average understanding of the concepts. Acceptable application of these concepts in solving problems. Some understanding of materials and tools. Repeating design or technical errors that have been pointed out in general or individually. Frequent or repeated use of clichés after they have been pointed. Little personal/aesthetic growth. Average craftsmanship with obvious flaws. Content with
“good enough”. Limited participation in class discussions and critiques. Quality of contribution is low and or inappropriate.

**D+ to D** Incomplete work, incorrect methods per assignment, or little understanding (or lack of interest in learning or improving), concepts in problems. Unimaginative and poor application of these concepts in solving problems. Standard and sloppy use of materials and tools. Little or no class participation. Continual use of clichés in work and discussions. No personal or aesthetic growth.

**Assessment:**
Each project handout lists the requirements of that assignment. After you complete each project, I will return a grade sheet with comments on each of those requirements.

**Your grade will be lowered if:**
1. You turn in work late. Expect one full letter grade drop for each day the project is late. (No grade reduction only if you have a verifiable excuse).
2. You copy someone’s ideas or work. This is PLAGIARISM. As it does in all disciplines, plagiarism results in a failing grade for the project.
3. You ask someone else to do your work. Any work not completed by your hand, alone, results in a failing project grade and a report to the Dean of Students.
4. You try to turn in work done for other courses. Work done for other courses will not be accepted.

**Accessibility**
Westminster College actively strives for the full inclusion of all our students. Students with disabilities, who require access solutions for environmental or curricular barriers, should contact the Director of Disability Resources, located in 209 Thompson-Clark. phone: 724-946-7192

*Students are responsible for maintaining their supplies. If you run low, expect to purchase replacements at local Art supply stores. Westminster College is not responsible for lost or damaged items.*

This course meets Intellectual Perspective requirement
Daily classwork plans are subject to change.

**August**
29 Intro to class/review syllabus. Together, we paint a really bad watercolor painting. Take journal notes on the process.

*Towards Project I - still life*
31 **Project I handout.** Why still life? Examples from history. If we have time, making marks, painting washes, making textures— watercolor technique. *Read “The Frisbee of Art” by James McMullen*—do exercise in journal

**September**
5 Discuss “Frisbee”. Continue “making marks.” Using journal notes from bad watercolor, we begin a better still life, together, from in-class set up. Consider issues of color.
7 We finish still life. You do quick object studies studies-ink. *Read “Hatching the Pot” by McMullan and do exercise.***

12 Shading—discuss McMullan. Object study, color.
14 How can your still life be a time capsule? In journal, work on ink or color sketch— from in class set-ups—plus bring two plans for your personal still life-photo and pencil sketch I can look at.

19 Work in class on your still life from objects/photo
21 Same as above. *Watch Timothy Clark “The Artist on the Beach” for critique tips.*

26 **PROJECT I DUE**
In class critique of finished work, I’ll critique mine, first, and we’ll establish critique guidelines. You critique your own. **Project II handout.**

*Towards Project II - landscape*

**October**
3 Examples from history: elements of landscape. Landscape as time capsule. In class mini landscape/city scape demos. *Read “Mother Nature Decoded” by McMullan
5 In class mini landscape demos. On your own time wander local area for ideas/photos.

10 Plein air if weather permits. If rain-work from photo or leaves
12 Plein air, if weather permits. Bring sketch for your landscape.

17 Work in class on your landscape from printed photo.

19 **PROJECT II DUE** *Critique-written critique - Project III Handout*

**MID-BREAK OCTOBER 21-24**

*Towards Project III - figurative painting*
Over break take photos of friends and family
*Read “The Chain of Energy by McMullan” and try no less than three sketches.

26 Discuss McMullan. Gesture drawings. Drawing for energy and movement.

31 The human figure-Examples from history: Portraits and genre paintings. More practice sketching.

**November**
2 Guest/bring ideas/sketches for Project III. Watch Youtube: Mary Whyte: A Portrait of Us.

7 Work in class on Project III.
9 Work in class on Project III

14 **Project III Due.** *Critique- written critique. Handout for Project IV*
16 Ideas for Project IV. Rethink a previous subject, or come up with something new. Examples: what will you choose?

21 In class: different papers mini-demo. You try it too.

**Thanksgiving Break: Work on your idea for final project. Bring two possibilities back to school.** Watch Youtube mini demo by Alvaro Castagnet for urban landscape.

28 Conference on ideas-one half class
30 Conference on ideas-other half class

**December**
5 Work on Project IV
7 Work on Project IV

**Final Period-Project IV due.**