**ASPT 1300 Introduction to Studio Painting**  
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**The Ethos of the Course**

“Every person is a special kind of artist.”  
— Ad Reinhardt (American painter, 1913-1967)

**Aims & Outcomes**

The aim of this course is to introduce you to the basic techniques of painting, principally using water-based media.

You will also become familiar with some of the most significant techniques employed by artists engaged with the medium.

You will learn how to talk about painting using accepted technical terms and how to assess a painting’s quality using criteria and concepts drawn from aesthetics, art theory, and artist’s writings.

This basic techniques and processes of painting covered by this introductory course include: color mixing and color theory, preparation of a painting ground, using various substrates such as paper and canvas, and a range of historical and contemporary painting techniques. These include:

- *a la prima* — Italian, literally “at first try” — meaning wet-on-wet painting.

- monotype — a basic mechanical reproduction technique for the production of a single copy from a painted image which may then be reworked and revised as an original work of art, and

- stain painting on unprimed canvas.

Your studio practice will be supported by an exploration of modes of representation in art — realism, but principally abstraction from nature, non-imagistic abstraction, and works that emphasize the material properties of paint and pigment.

Throughout the course, we will learn from the example of contemporary artists whose works are available to view through (a) bibliographic research, and (b) in person during visits to Dallas area museums and galleries. (Note: given the time constraints of this course, field visits to museums will be conducted on an independent basis by the student.)
This course will provide you with the basic technical and conceptual “tools” to create and assess a work of art produced using the medium of paint to create abstract and semi-abstract works that interpret a number of painting genres (still life, the portrait, and landscape).

Through your studio practice work you will exercise and demonstrate competency in appropriate manual skills, apply creative concepts, and make aesthetic judgments relative to your own work and the work of your peers.

All assignments have an aspect of choice; this is aimed to assist you in your development as an independent learner. Through this aspect of your assignments you will enjoy the freedom to develop and interpret themes employing the subject matter and technique of your own choosing.

The course will also consist of critiques after each project and two group exhibitions. A studio critique is the opportunity to exhibit and discuss your experience with the basic studio techniques under review.

**Coursework Requirements**

We will aim to complete the studio assignment according to the timetable, below. Our course is structured to allow you the maximum studio time under my supervision. However, please expect to do a portion of work outside timetabled hours (evenings or weekends). This is possible, as the studios will be available until 11pm.

Coursework assignments will differ in complexity as the May Term progresses. You will be involved increasingly with planning, the mastery of new skills, and the organization of several steps to complete fully each assignment. These will necessarily take a proportionately longer period of time to complete, but in all cases you will have adequate time and supervision to do your best.

You will be expected to complete all coursework and participate in studio discussions, critiques, and the two group exhibitions.

Good painting skills can only be developed through focused, organized work and through employing safe studio habits. At the same time, I will be encouraging you to take risks and to experiment with the possibilities of painting as an expressive medium.

Studio cleanup and maintenance is part of the experience of being a painter and an artist, so this too, will form a portion of your final grade.

A journal/diary recording your thoughts on painting, art, sketches of ideas, etc. will be required for this class, and it must be available for inspection at each exhibition or review.

**Attendance**

Class attendance and punctuality is required, particularly since this is a condensed and intensive experience over a limited period of time.

More than one (1) unexcused absence will negatively affect your grade, each absence thereafter leading to a drop of one letter grade. Three (3) unexcused absences will result in a failure.
Electronic Devices and Other Guidelines for Best Studio Practice

In general, no cell phones, tablets, or laptops should be in use during instruction.

During free working periods, or at other times at the discretion of the instructor, you may use headphones or ear buds to listen to music while you are working.

The studio is a smoke-free zone and no eating is permitted. Drinks in covered containers only are permitted.

You should wear an apron or clothing that you won’t mind getting soiled; always wear Nitrile gloves when working with paints or dry pigments.

You can learn about the hazards of studio practice by consulting one of the following widely-used reference guides for artists, Ralph Mayer’s Handbook of Materials and Techniques or Margaret Krug, An Artist’s Handbook: Materials and Techniques.

Materials

• I strongly advise you to purchase your art supplies in advance using the online site of Dick Blick Art Supplies (http://www.dickblick.com/) or Utrecht Art Supplies (http://www.utrechtart.com/).

• Avoid arts & crafts shops like “Michael’s” or “Hobby Lobby”, as their range of products is narrower and their prices will be higher than online suppliers.

• If you must have an item immediately, buy it at Asel Art Supply, 2701 Cedar Springs Roads, Dallas, TX 75201 (http://www.aselart.com/)

• Supplies you must have on the first day of class:

  • **Nitrile Gloves:** essential supply for safe studio practice! Enough for a semester’s worth of work. **These may be purchased online at Amazon.com, or in Dallas at Home Depot, Target, CVS or Walgreens.**

  • **Sketchbook** (9 x 12 inches min., wire bound):

  • **Paper Towels**

  • **Push Pins**

  • **Acrylic Paints:** Recommended brands are Aquatec, Liquitex, Windsor, Newton, Golden Fluid Acrylics (more expensive), Atelier Interactive (from Utrecht Art Supplies) or the Blick proprietary studio acrylics, found at: http://www.dickblick.com/products/blick-
The colors you will need in 8oz. (250ml) tubes (or squeeze bottles in the case of Golden Fluid Acrylics) are: Burnt Sienna, Cadmium Red Deep, Cadmium Yellow Light, Ultramarine Blue, Pthalo Blue, Ivory Black, and Titanium White.


- **Acrylic Flow Release Medium:** Golden brand, 8 oz., used to increase the flow or liquidity of the paint: [http://www.dickblick.com/products/golden-acrylic-mediums/](http://www.dickblick.com/products/golden-acrylic-mediums/)

- **Acrylic Retarder:** Golden brand, 8 oz., used to decrease the drying time of the paint: [http://www.dickblick.com/products/golden-acrylic-retarder/](http://www.dickblick.com/products/golden-acrylic-retarder/)


- **Pencils** (HB, 2B), Kneaded eraser, and a pencil sharpener.

- **Masking tape** (beige or blue, one roll; purchase this at Home Depot or similar store)

- **Ruler** (12-inch minimum, metal or wood with metal edge)

- **Plastic triangle** (30-60-90°)

- **Carry Case for your paints, brushes, medium, etc.** (an ArtBin, small toolbox, or backpack): for example: Art Bin: [http://www.dickblick.com/items/03241-5060/](http://www.dickblick.com/items/03241-5060/)

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*The following supplies are required by the second week of the May term (May 23)*

- **2-inch wide Paintbrush for Water-based Paint** *(may be purchased online or at Home Depot or Lowe’s)*

- **Transfer Paper:** 8-1/2 x 11 inches, 6 sheets (also known as carbon paper): you may be able to find this at a stationary store; if not, go online.

These supplies are recommended:

- **Colored pencils**: assortment of 12 for sketching
- **Colored markers**: Sharpies are good; fine tip or medium tip, assortment of 10-12 colors for color sketching
- **Pint and half-pint jars with lids** (glass or plastic) for storing mixed paints and for water. Get these at home, in your kitchen or, if you want to spend more money, buy them from Target.

Course Calendar (May be subject to revision)

The techniques, principles, and scope of each project will be defined and demonstrated for each project.

**Thursday, May 17:**
Introduce **Project 0**. Basic studio techniques and organization for a painter: using your tools safely, effectively, and creatively

**Friday, May 18:**
Introduce **Project 1**. The monochrome: basic color theory, perception, and the semantics of color in art.

**Monday, May 21:**
1) Review Project 1.
2) Introduce **Project 2**. “Reverse” Palette paintings: the experience of “native” color & “expressive” color in the environment.

**Tuesday, May 22:**
1) Continue Project 2.

**Wednesday, May 23:**
1) Review Project 2
2) Continue Project 3

**Thursday, May 24:**
1) Introduce **Planning an Exhibition**: measuring the exhibition space, creating scale-drawings, photographing work, creating a hanging plan, collecting hardware & gallery lighting.
2) Completion of Project 3
3) Introduce **Project 4**: Color Wheels & Color Solids
Friday, May 25:
1) Installation of work in Doolin Gallery.
2) “MID TERM REVIEW” (Projects 1 – 3) (with Guest visiting artist)
3) Continue work on Project 4
4) Lecture & Introduction of Project 5, Part 1: Is there such a thing as a “picture” about nothing? “Painting” about nothing? Creating a visual argument.

* MEMORIAL DAY BREAK: No Class on Monday, May 28 *

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Tuesday, May 29:
2) Review work of Project 5, Part 1, last 30 minutes of session.
3) Introduce Project 5, Part 2: The Monoprint Technique. Note: this project entails the creation of multiple works and therefore involves the most studio time.

Wednesday, May 30
1) Continue work on Project 5, Part 2.

Thursday, May 31
1) Continue work on Project 5, Part 2.
2) Progress review, Project 5, Part 2.

Friday, June 1
1) Presentation of installation plans & hanging works in Doolin Gallery.
2) FINAL REVIEW (Projects 4 & 5 (Parts 1 & 2). (with Guest visiting artist)

Assessment & Grades

Each project will be assessed individually based on a number of criteria:

(1) Did you follow the assignment? (15%)

(2) Does your work demonstrate technical proficiency (depending on the assignment, it will range from 50 - 60%), and

(3) Can you provide evidence — in the form of sketches, plans, and multiple versions of the assigned project — of active exploration of the medium? (depending on the assignment, it will range from 20 – 50%).

Work submitted after deadline will be penalized 10% for every day it is late.

Dangerous or careless studio practice (failure to observe studio guidelines or to clean up) will not go unnoticed.

Your final grade will be calculated on the basis of your coursework (the assignments), plus (1)
your participation in critiques and discussions (10%), (2) the submission of your sketchbook/journal (10%), and (3) attendance (see notes, above, on this factor).

Letter grades (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F, W, or I) will be assigned based on the sums of scores of the relevant factors, above.

Your improvement over time will figure in your final grade. Those who have a slow start may improve their grades with hard work and a demonstrated mastery of the course content.