

ASSC 1300: Intro to Sculpture, Jan Term 2020

Class meets M-F
Meet in Room Owen Fine Arts Center B617 (basement)

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Office hours: by appointment scheduled in person or via email

Course Description:

This intro course is designed to give students a fundamental understanding of object making, both technically and conceptually. Through hands on assignments and exercises, demonstrations and collaborative projects, we will explore basic additive and reductive building methods and construction processes, simple mold-making and casting techniques and gain a rudimentary understanding of sculpture in the contemporary art landscape.

Along with sculpture assignments, students will begin to develop and strengthen their critical thinking skills within a critique discussion format, helping to bring a unique voice and individual language to their own work and the work of their peers. Once this course is completed, students from all skill levels and backgrounds will have an ample command of sculptural processes both conceptual and technical, adding these new skills to their arsenal of creative thinking and problem solving tools.

The objectives for the course will be carried out over 15 weeks with 4 major project assignments each with a 1-hour critique and various presentations and short exercises. Throughout the semester, we will see slide presentations on artists, demonstrations of sculptural techniques, and meet individually to discuss student work progression.

Assignments:

- Four project assignments
- In class discussion topics/questions
- 1 paper - Immediate response after field trip
- Artist presentations

Aims & Learning Outcomes:

- Familiarize students with the technical aspects and challenges of various building processes.
- Understand the ways in which the “sculptural eye” can embed deeper meaning into their individual work and help inform ways of observing the three-dimensional world.
- Upon completion of this course, students will have a primary physical and mental capability to understand the concepts of object making.
- Through a series of demonstrations, short exercises, and 5 assignments, students will acquire basic knowledge around the object making process, gradually working towards more advanced techniques and concepts.

Keep an open mind. Don't be afraid to fail. Usually the 5th time works the best. And remember, the greatest tool of a sculptor is the ability to troubleshoot.

**This Syllabus is a flexible and evolving document with subject to change –
All changes will be updated on Canvas.*

REQUIRED from you:

- **Course Materials/Supplies:** In this course, some tools/materials will be provided by the course fee but students are required to purchase their own materials as they see fit for their individual assignments (see chart).
- **TOOLBOX:** In this course, keeping your individual supplies in a tool box is highly recommended!! Some useful items to purchase: Tape measure, level, pliers, multi-bit screwdriver set, work gloves and safety goggles.
- **1 Sketchbook** (at least 8"x12") for notes and sketches - get something that inspires you to use it! The sketchbook is the most important tool used in class. It is your handbook, your encyclopedia, and your mirror. Use it liberally. It should include: Visual and written materials, concepts, ideas, notes, scraps, clippings, material samples, class handouts, research notes and reference images, notes from class lectures/demos and discussions, sketches for projects.

Art supplies in Dallas:

Asel Art Supply - basic art supplies	2701 Cedar Springs Rd, Dallas, TX 75201
Michael's - basic art supplies	5500 Greenville Ave, Ste 700 Dallas, TX 75206
Reynolds Advanced Materials - mold making materials	13700 Diplomat Dr, Farmers Branch, TX 75234
Home Depot - construction/hardware materials	Various locations in Dallas
Harbor Freight Tools- cheap hardware store	Various locations in Dallas
Online:	
Blick Art Supply	https://www.dickblick.com/
Jerry's Artarama	https://www.jerrysartarama.com/
Amazon.com	
Uline - packing and utility materials	uline.com

- **Attendance:** Taken at the beginning of each class and is mandatory and crucial to your success in this course. Often the most important information/discussion happens at the beginning of the class and will not be able to be repeated so don't be late! Showing up to class late 3 times = 1 unexcused absence. 3 unexcused absences and drop in letter grade.
- **Critique Attendance:** Attendance at a critique is a MUST - do not miss or arrive late even if you have not finished your project. Unexcused absence from or late arrival to crit will result in a minimum two letter grade reduction on that assignment. No extra credit will be offered to offset this penalty.
- **Completing all assignments on the DUE date**
- **Participating in class discussions and group critiques.**
- **Classroom courtesy:** Do not be late, leave early or be loud and/or disruptive during class. Bring a sense of respect to class and your peers as well as the equipment/resources provided. Recognize and act on opportunities to extend yourself in positive ways. Help others, clean as you go and make thoughtful contributions to class discussion. Classroom courtesy will impact your overall grade. Don't be a jerk.
- **Phones, tables, laptops, music:** Phones, tablets, laptops are allowed in class, but talking, texting, or unrelated web surfing IS NOT. During studio work hours (not during lecture, demo or critiques), music is allowed with headphones ONLY during allocated work time (unless otherwise indicated). I will not remind you of these policies, but know that when observed, inappropriate use will affect your grade.
- **Email/Canvas contact:** Make sure that you have enabled your account to receive Canvas notifications including messages, about this course to your email. Also check your smu.edu email account regularly. All assignments, reports, and field trip exercises should be uploaded to Canvas.

Class Assignments and Grading:

Assignment #1: Cardboard Structure = 10 pts

For this assignment, students will use *ONLY CARDBOARD* to create a chair that can hold their weight. Each student will get three words as a starting point to help the formation of their chair take shape. The term "chair" can be pushed into many areas; architectural, domestic, personal, functional/non functional, abstract, narrative, minimal, or performative. Your final piece must be at least half your height (no smaller!) The quality of the cardboard should be pushed and expanded - textures, corners, edges should all be considered. You can glue, tape, hinge, knotch, etc. the cardboard in any way to create your structure.

Assignment #2: Collaborative inflatables = 20 pts

For this assignment, students will use the Ant Farm's *Inflatable Cookbook, 1971* as a starting point to construct their own inflatable sculptures. Working in teams of two, each group will use plastic sheets to create a large-scale sculpture that can "contain" both students.

Assignment #3: Plaster 3 ways = 20 pts

Jasper Johns once (famously) wrote instructions to himself in his sketchbook: "Take an object. Do something to it. Do something else to it."

This project is inspired by Johns' quote. You will DO SOMETHING, DO SOMETHING TO THAT, AND THEN DO SOMETHING TO THAT. The project, therefore, will be divided into three steps. Each step should be a learning experience and an opportunity to better understand the material - it is ok to not have a clear idea of your end product when you start. This will bring the working process to the forefront of your aesthetic research, and will hopefully lead to some interesting innovations as you move forward. There are no right or wrong answers to this assignment; there are only interesting ones and uninteresting ones. Keep an open mind. Do not be afraid to take risks, make mistakes, or "go with your gut." After completion of this assignment, you will harness the ability to understand all the working methods and techniques of plaster and be able to describe, discuss and provide analysis of the project outcomes for yourself and your peers.

Assignment #4: Final self portrait assemblage = 20 pts

At this point in the semester, students have obtained basic construction techniques, elementary plaster and mold-making skills and a grasp of installation and site-specific concepts. For the final project, students will each create their version of a "sculptural self portrait". Each student will use wood (found or new) to build a box at least 2' x 2' x 6" - inside this structure, students will fabricate their self portrait assemblage. The interior of the box should contain a variety of objects, surfaces and textures and must include something from one of the previous assignments. Once this final project is complete, students will be able to demonstrate a thorough and in depth understanding of sculptural practices and basic object-making techniques along with a fundamental language to discuss the concepts presented for the final critique.

Artist Presentation = 10 pts

Choose a contemporary/visual artist that uses sculptural processes in their work. Each student will give a 10 minute presentation to the class on their chosen artist.

Immediate Responses (post museum visit) = 10 pts

Students will conduct these responses while viewing work in the Nasher Sculpture Center. You will begin with carefully looking. Write a very detailed description of what you see. Consider the work in front of you as a neutral object, not a work of art. Write your description as if you are trying to convey an image of the work to someone who cannot see it. Consider material, process (if evident), scale, texture, color, composition, proportion, and the relationship of the work to the space. Do this for 1 work - one page description.

In class participation/attendance = 10 pts

Total = 100 pts

Individual Project Grading: Each assignment/project will be graded using the following rubric:

Follow parameters of the assignment	2 pts
Creativity, ambition, risk-taking	4 pts
Craft, skill, attention to detail	3 pts
Effort, revision, perseverance, planning	4 pts
Fabrication Report	2 pts
Total	15 pts

Grade Descriptions and Evaluation:

Grades in this course will be based on the following grading scale and descriptions:

A	(93-100)	Work of exceptional quality, high level understanding of concepts
A-	(90-92)	Work of high quality, ample understanding of concepts
B+	(87-98)	Work of good quality, which reflects higher than average abilities
B	(83-86)	Very good work that satisfies goals of the course
B-	(80-82)	Slightly above average work that satisfies the goals of the course
C+	(77-79)	Average work, which reflects an understanding of course material
C	(73-76)	Adequate work; passable
C-	(70-72)	Passing work but below good academic standing

A = EXTRAordinary performance with thoughtful and robust participation in critiques and class discussions. This student's work goes ABOVE AND BEYOND what is required for class. This student sets goals and surpasses them. This student follows up on all suggestions for both technical and conceptual development, does good research and revisits work if needed.

B = Good performance, good solid work that develops steadily with intermittent but intelligent participation in critiques and class discussion. This student keeps pace with assignments but does not necessarily excel in them (medium effort as opposed to superior effort). The student sets goals and meets them. They follow up on some of the suggestions given - including technical and conceptual development and research - and revisits work if needed.

C = Lackluster performance, attendance issues, not much work being produced in and out of class and presents work that reflects limited effort and thinking. This student rarely participates in class discussions and critiques and shows little evidence in keeping up with assignments (turned in late or completed the night before, yes I can tell). It means not thinking about your goals, and not meeting them.

**** Communication is A VITAL component of this course – please communicate any questions, concerns and issues (personal or class related) to the Instructor and/or TA. The earlier the better, do not wait till the last minute.**

Studio management:

CLEAN AS YOU GO!

Students are responsible to clean & wipe down tables, counters, sinks, & community tools after each use. Studio clean-up is particularly important for reviews. Studio & gallery clean-up is a part of the final grade. While each individual is solely responsible for their projects, we work together to enjoy the class and keep it clean. The studio & gallery are clean and empty at the beginning of the semester and we will work to have them clean and empty at the end of the semester. In the meantime, please take advantage of the studio & fill it with as many drawings as you can make.

Classroom storage is limited to the drawers assigned to each student. Please do not have friends visit during class meetings. The studio is available for student use whenever the building is open, except when another class is in session (Monday/Wednesday, 3pm-5.50pm; Tuesday/Thursday, 12.30pm-3.20pm & 6.30pm-9.20pm). Building hours are 7am-12am weekdays, 8am-12am Saturdays, & 9am-12am Sundays. Seek holiday building hours from the Meadows Facilities Office. The Division of Art policy is to not permit food in the studios. This is true except for treats the students bring for everybody ☺

SMU Policies:

Academic Honesty and Misconduct:

You are bound by the Honor Code and the SMU Student Code of Conduct. For complete details, see:

http://smu.edu/studentlife/studenthandbook/PCL_05_HC.asp &
http://smu.edu/studentlife/studenthandbook/PCL_03_Conduct_Code.asp

Religious Observance:

Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:

Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS & SUCCESS STRATEGIES

WHAT WE DO

DASS coordinates the provision of classroom accommodations and disability access on campus. As part of the Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center (A-LEC), DASS operates under the University Provost's office. The DASS team:

- reviews documentation to determine eligibility for services;
- creates accommodation letters for students to use with faculty;
- facilitates test proctoring services when faculty are unable to provide this;
- offers disability awareness training for campus departments;
- provides academic coaching for students with learning differences;
- refers students to on and off-campus support.

Please review our website for more details, and read our faculty newsletter, the DASS Insider, which comes out by email twice a semester and can be found on our website.

WHERE WE ARE

Team Offices and Student Support

The DASS team is located within the Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center (A-LEC) at: **202 Loyd Ctr. or 5800 Ownby Dr.**

Entrance to our building is adjacent to Gate 3 of Ford Stadium. Take the elevator to the 2nd floor. Parking for faculty/staff is behind and under the Meadows Museum.

Test Proctoring Services

We strongly encourage students and faculty members to work out test accommodations themselves. In the event that a faculty member is not able to provide the accommodations, DASS serves as a back up (at a cost to the University). Our administrative assistant coordinates this process with faculty and students. Please contact our office for more details, or review the information on our website under "Test Proctoring."

WHO WE ARE

Associate Director:

Alexa Taylor – 202D
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Learning Specialist:

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Accommodations Coordinators:

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&

Karen Turbeville – 202W
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Administrative Assistant: Candy Brown – 202M

Some TAM TRUISMS:

I have compiled this short list truisms. Some are my own, others borrowed from colleagues and professors in the field. Dean Synder was my primary inspiration for this with his legendary, “Dean’s Dharma”

- Never arrive on time for this class...**Arrive early and appear busy!** This is your studio time to learn and fail and start over in a safe space - what else matters?
- If you aren’t the most excited about making art at this moment in your life, choose another career.
- Questions are the best starting point for work.
- Ideas are ubiquitous, and a dime a dozen, choose with intelligence.
- If you have only one idea, or no ideas, you are in trouble; *steal some or just remake things others have done before.
- *GIVE CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE.
- Beware of the “craft trap”, you can love a thing to death.
- Using high-tech, or expensive traditional materials will not improve bad ideas.
- Speak up in critiques, take every chance to express in *your* words what you see with *your* eyes.
- Get to the heart of the matter using your own voice, Avoid art jargon.
- Always do the hard work first. Attempting improvisation without fluent method(s) and a sophisticated visual vocabulary is not only futile, it’s embarrassing.
- If you are reading this, at the end of the term if you send me an email with the word “TRUISMS” I will give extra credit.
- Greatness always appears effortless. This is due to years of hard work - The goal is to conceal effort.
- Hard work must accompany thought to produce anything worth sustained viewing.
- On its own “*hard work*” has no visual or moral value in art so don’t count on anyone giving a damn about it.
- If there are no more rules in art, what is it that is always being broken or bent?
- Breaking rules is also easy and boring. Bending requires studious effort and persistence.
- Always work toward the *sensation* of an idea, not in service of it. Art without an emotion at its origin serves no human purpose
- Doubt is fundamental to having a vibrant line of inquiry in your work.
- Doubt is also the gateway to nuanced questions, avoid skepticism as it is dismissive
- In a work of art, *like cuisine, there can only be an elite handful of elements that may coexist before the palette and the mind start canceling them out.
- Italian cooking is good for a reason; good tomatoes, good cheese, good olive oil. It’s not fussy.
- Selection of materials and processes in sculpture is **the** central scholarly decision in our field - choose well. What an object is made of pre-determines the dialogue it has with the world.
- Try making a one-liner last longer than one line. This is incredibly difficult.



Above: Peter Fischli David Weiss, How to Work Better, 1991. Presented by Public Art Fund. On view at Houston and Mott St, NYC. 2016

Photo: Jason Wyche, courtesy Public Art Fund, NY