

Zach Cramer

Teaching Portfolio

Fall 2015

Teaching Philosophy

I discovered art making later than some of my colleagues. I haven't "always known" or felt I had some "talent," however it only took one influential professor and mentor to solidify my artistic endeavor. The purpose of this path has continually been to explore my own curiosities to their fullest extent, whether it be painting, drawing, or printmaking. Within the visual arts a tradition of craft, deep intellectual curiosity, and experimental making are key components to the ever-changing field. Many of these concepts and ideas can be passed on orally and through self-guided study. In order for these goals to be met, it is imperative that students find themselves in a non-competitive learning environment; where experimentation, scholarship, and ingenuity are encouraged. These tenets propel my artistic practices and have inspired me to pursue teaching.

Effective teaching takes sensitivity and understanding of both subject and student. I've been fortunate to have had a number of extraordinary teachers throughout my education. They understood that teaching meant mentorship, and that it is important to step away from the lectern and engage students in conversation, questions, and promote contemplation to continue learning outside the classroom. My mentors that have the greatest impact, have been encouraging and sincerely invested in my personal development through individual discussions, posing reflective questions, and caring agitation. This is an environment where I learn best and an environment I cultivate in my courses. There is an inherent bond formed in the classroom, I enjoy providing the tools for that experience.

I am continuously working on honing my pedagogical practice. I have obtained experience in collegiate pedagogy through my studies at Rhode Island School of Design and discussing teaching with my peers and faculty. I have experience working with undergraduate students in both studio and seminar courses, as well as individual teaching sessions and have found classes are most successful when there is encouragement and different types of learning with regular critiques, individual meetings, and readings for discussion to establish a beneficial experience and compassionate classroom dynamic. For *Field Notes: Drawing as Language*, I organized research trips to the RISD Museum's Print Room to facilitate cross referential learning. The simple shift of the classroom location can remind teachers and students that learning functions as a muscle and needs variety to strengthen. Providing encouragement, immersion, and room to grow is important in fostering a clear method in how I conduct conversation and lessons. It is important that the students engage in a shared set of knowledge as they embark on their own paths, in hopes of nourishing a cooperative working environment that allows for student to student mentorship and interaction. This is an effective method of teaching; by first developing a contextual understanding of any artistic medium. This is done by providing students with historical and theoretical discussions through assigned readings and student led presentations of individual artists and movements, posing key questions from original objects, copying master works, while also encouraging individual project proposal and student led critiques as their work develops throughout the class.

My goals are to inspire inquiry, analytic investigation, and engage students to challenge themselves to uncover an artistic language they wish to explore further. My objectives reinforce the learning and artistic aspirations of each student. I encourage them to have their own goals and expectations of what they want from their time spent in the studio. I am committed to providing a non-competitive studio environment for students to work and learn in ways that confront, challenge, and nurture.

Proposed Course - Rhode Island School of Design

PRINT 1800-01

Printing without a Computer: Intaglio Processes

3 Credits

Intaglio printmaking is highly versatile medium utilized by artists in all fields as an increasingly direct process that encourages a rich variety of marks, tonal surfaces, and layer interaction. This course will demonstrate various intaglio techniques and processes for executing small fine art editions. Additionally, students are encouraged to experiment and utilize the intaglio processes meaningfully in relation to their own imagery, as well as investigate methods of combining intaglio processes and approaches with their respective studio practice.

Processes covered will include; line etching, engraving, aquatint, and other etched tones. the *Magical Secrets*, series published by Crown Point Press, will be our guide to terms, troubleshooting, and alternative processes not covered in the syllabus.

Group and individual critiques will offer feedback and discussions of technical application, further refinement of process, and allow for analysis and inquiry of imagery and content. Weekly assignments will consist of small editions of covered techniques, which will comprise a mid-term portfolio. At the completion of the course, each student is required to propose, assemble, and present a final project that illustrates their understanding of the medium within the context of their practice.

Major elective; Studio Arts majors only / non majors by permission of instructor

Prerequisite: ART 1130 - Drawing

Fee: \$200 (SPRING)

Proposed Course - Rhode Island School of Design

PRINT 3860-01

Field Notes: Drawing as Language (Lithography)

3 Credits

Consider drawing and language, each are fundamental and unique to humans as an animal. Both are representational systems used to communicate concepts. However, dissimilar to language, we consider it normal for people not to learn to draw. Why do we consider drawing to be so different from language? How can we communicate without alphanumerical symbols? In this course, students are encouraged to express concepts, information, and concept exclusively through visual/graphical means.

Through daily exercises, interpretive copying, and self-guided research students will begin to present and explain complex notions exclusively through drawing. Weekly assignments are geared towards each student's relative research as drawing as language and critiqued by the group as to how the work demonstrates the artist's intention. Each student is encouraged to develop, propose, and present an ambitious semester project for successful completion of the course.

Major elective; Studio Arts junior and seniors only / all others by permission of instructor

Prerequisite:

Fee: \$100 (SPRING)

Proposed Course - Rhode Island School of Design

PRINT 2300-01

Graphic Workshop: Letterpress

3 Credit

Ctrl-P and you're printing. Easy, right? Well... uh, right, but it wasn't always that way! For most of the last 500 years printing alpha numeric information was predominantly set by hand and printed on a press. Throughout this course you will investigate and discover the joys of handset type printed on the Vandercook proofing press. Students will learn to operate and troubleshoot the Vandercook press, as well as handset metal and wood type, and create polymer plates for images printing. This historic craft will help you develop skills that will be transformed into contemporary results. Assignments include experimentations in form, counterform, repetition, texture, color, and transparency. Assignments will result in projects such as postcards, broadsides, or small book. Paper types, coatings, and sizing will be discussed.

Major elective; Studio Arts majors only / all others by permission of instructor

Prerequisite:

Fee: \$80 (FALL/SPRING)

Proposed Course Syllabus - Rhode Island School of Design

Field Notes: Drawing as Language (Lithography)

PRINT 4529-01

UG Elective, Open to Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors, Prerequisite- Drawing 101

Benson Hall: Room 202

Instructor: Zachary Cramer, zcramer@risd.edu

Course Lab Fee- \$ 300.00

Misc. Student costs - \$ 1.00-200.00

Maximum Students Enrolled-14

Credits- 3 CEUs

Academic Level- Undergraduate

Open to all disciplines in undergraduate and graduate levels

Course Description:

Consider drawing and language, each are fundamental and unique to humans as an animal. Both are representational systems used to communicate concepts. However, dissimilar to language, we consider it normal for people not to learn to draw. Why do we consider drawing to be so different from language? How can we communicate without alphanumeric symbols? In this course, students are encouraged to express concepts, information, and content exclusively through hand drawn and lithographic means. Utilizing both free hand printmaking methods, drawings can quickly increase in complexity, scale, and multiplicity.

Lithography offers one of the most direct forms of printmaking, reproducing the artist's drawn marks with remarkable sensitivity and fidelity. In this course, students will begin by drawing directly on aluminum plates or transfer daily exercise drawings to stones, and will learn the chemistry of processing, inking, and printing. Photolithography will also be covered, allowing students to reproduce photographic, digitally produced, or hand-drawn images on aluminum plates. Guidance will be given to impart a strong technical understanding of this challenging and rewarding medium.

Through daily exercises, interpretive copying, and self-guided research students will begin to present and explain complex notions exclusively through drawing. Weekly assignments are geared towards each student's relative research as drawing as language and critiqued by the group as to how the work demonstrates the artist's intention. Each student is encouraged to develop, propose, and present an ambitious semester project for successful completion of the course.

Course Aims and Goals:

- To create a large, un-edited body of work that is thematically non-precious.
- To apply an approach that differs from how you typically make.
- To self-assess your own ideas about quality.
- To gauge and understand your classmates' ideas about art and making.

Course Objectives and Outcomes:

15+ refined, sustained drawings/prints/collage	- 10%
Work prolifically in a short timespan.	- 15%
Recognize the benefits of non-editing/collage.	- 15%
Understanding the dichotomy between self-assessment and group assessment.	- 30%
Open a context for group discussion on ideas about quality in art.	- 40%

Assessment and Grading:

This course by nature involves high levels of energy and participation. Each student is expected to contribute thoughtful and wholehearted contributions to the class. This kind of contribution is shown through the work produced, investment in studio production, engagement in the class assignments, and thoughtful participation in class discussions and critiques.

Grading formula:

Edition of 5 prints & counter etched proofs and critical contributions:	- 20%
WTF?!? (Holy Hell) Class project and critical contributions:	- 20%
Midterm Project work and critical contributions:	- 20%
Final Project work, final artist statement, and critical contributions:	- 30%
Class conduct and cleanliness:	- 10%

Critique Statement:

Critique is another form of creative thinking and can be a generative process to approach, synthesize, and comment on another person's work. As artist we are called to respond, untangle, connect, and question what is in front of us, both of our own work and of the work of our peers. Active and effective participation in critiques is fundamental to fostering a longevity in studio practice because it builds the artist's ability to participate in a community of critical thinkers which sustains making on a long term bases. Throughout the term, we will be practicing various forms of critiques, some of which may be new to you. I ask for a willingness to try various forms of critique, so that we may be inclusive of the different needs and skill-sets among the class. I hope to create an environment of making that fosters the leaps of faith necessary to advance our work. This is collective effort that I hope you can share in.

Requirements:

Attendance to every class and class participation is essential. Bring a sketchbook to every class with a writing implement to keep detailed notes of all discussions and demonstrations of processes.

Textbook:

Tamarind Book of Lithography; Art and Techniques. Antresian and Adams. Tamarind Workshop, LA, Abrams, New York, 1971.

Nicolaides, Kimon. *The Natural Way to Draw: A Working Plan for Art Study*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969.

Class Schedule:

Week 1: Friday, September 11

- Review of Course Syllabus
- Trip to Print & Drawing Study to view drawings and lithographs that express information and systems through graphical means. Julie Mehretu, *Local Calm*, 2005 will be the primary object of our visit.

Assignment:

1. Prepare a 5 minute presentation about your work to present in class next week.
2. Choose one work from the Print & Drawing study visit, and write a short (250 word) response evaluating its intentions and how well it may/or may not embody them. Present in class next week.

Week 2: Friday, September 18

- An introduction to stones, stone graining, attention to edges (filing), and preparation, traditional drawing materials, processing, ink and roller preparation, and proofing. Selection of stones.
- Student Presentations
- Discussion of Responses

Assignment:

1. Daily Entries in Field Notes Journal
2. Grain stone, draw on it, and process your drawing in preparation for roll-up.

Week 3: Friday, September 25

- Drawing Exercises from *The Natural Way to Draw*
- Roll up, stabilize, and proof first images. Fountain solutions, felting solutions, Sponge-gumming.
- Description of Midterm Project

Assignment:

1. Midterm Project Proposal Draft (Email before Oct. 2)
2. Daily Entries in Field Notes Journal
3. Class Project - WTF?!? (Holy Hell)

Week 4: Friday, October 2

- Individual Meeting times regarding Class Project - WTF?!? (Holy Hell) and Midterm Project Proposal.

Assignment:

1. Begin Midterm Project
2. Daily Entries in Field Notes Journal
3. Print edition of 5 of your first lithograph

Learning Outcome for Week 1-4:

Accumulation of course goals/expectations & identifying personal goals and prioritizing student outcomes through self-designed projects, primary object research, and Field Notes Journal. Develop working knowledge of basic lithographic drawing, etching, and proofing principles.

Week 5: Friday, October 9

- Drawing Exercises from *The Natural Way to Draw*
- Counter Etching the stone, corrections, acid-tinting, reworking.

Assignment:

1. Daily Entries in Field Notes Journal
2. 3 proofs of counter etched image

Week 6: Friday, October 16

- Class Project - WTF?!? (Holy Hell) Presentations and Discussions
- Printing paper, preparing a damp pack, paper handling, Chine Collé. Presentation of image worked in two states.
- Individual Meetings

Assignment:

1. Daily Entries in Field Notes Journal
2. Midterm Project due Oct. 23

Week 7: Friday, October 23

- **Midterm Project Critique / Potluck**
- Visiting Critic Genevieve Lowe

Learning Outcome for Week 4-7:

Investigation and practice of new methods / integration of refined skills within the lithographic process. Engage with classmates in critical dialogue / develop a language with which to self-asses your work.

Week 8: Friday, October 30

- Drawing Exercises from *The Natural Way to Draw*
- Inks, ink modifiers, color printing, viscosity.
- Open Studio (Attendance Mandatory)

Assignment:

1. Daily Entries in Field Notes Journal
2. Final Project Proposal Draft (Email before Nov. 6)

Week 9: Friday, November 6

- Drawing Exercises from *The Natural Way to Draw*
- Aluminum plates & Photoplates. The lacquer base. Reversal process.
- Open Studio (Attendance Mandatory)

Assignment:

3. Daily Entries in Field Notes Journal
4. Final Project Proposal Draft (Email before Nov. 6)

Week 10: Friday, November 13

- Proper matrix storage, print handling and documentation
- Open Studio (Attendance Mandatory)

Assignment:

5. Daily Entries in Field Notes Journal

Week 11: Friday, November 20

- Open Studio (Attendance Mandatory)

Assignment:

6. Daily Entries in Field Notes Journal

Week 12: Friday, December 4

- **Final Critique / Potluck**
- **Hand in Field Notes Journal**
- Visiting Critic Andrew Raftery / Brian Shure

Health and Safety:

I seek an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the RISD. In my class, it is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is, respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, guests and friends of RISD; and that do not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the college community.

As a RISD student, you are expected adhere to Standards of Conduct. To review the Student Conduct Code, please refer to: http://www.risd.edu/Policies/Code_of_Student_Conduct/Standards_of_Conduct/. All other departmental and RISD guidelines for campus and classroom health and safety expectations are to be followed for this course. For additional policies on health and safety, please refer to: <http://www.risd.edu/Policies/Health+Safety/>.

Field Notes: Drawing as Language
Week 3: Friday, Sept. 25

Class Project - WTF?!? (Holy Hell)

Most ideas that are successful are ludicrously simple. Successful ideas generally have the appearance of simplicity because they seem inevitable. In terms of idea the artist is free to even surprise himself. Ideas are discovered by intuition.

- Sol Lewitt

How can we work simply and intuitively? Does limitation lead to invention?. For this project everyone will receive a packet of 100 sheets of copy paper and four No. 2 pencils. You are required to make a drawing on each of the 100 sheets of paper over the next three-weeks in response to the drawing prompt (below), using only the supplied materials. No. 2 pencil must be used as the main drawing implement, but can be altered by secondary means. No sheet of paper will be discarded, added, or substituted from the original packet of paper. One week from today (10/2) we will meet individually during class time to discuss your progress, please bring 30 completed drawings.

At the completion of the assignment you will make a selection of 4 drawings that meet the following criteria:

1. One drawing you like and think is good.
 2. One drawing you don't like and don't think is good.
 3. One drawing you like, but suspect might not be good.
 4. One drawing you don't like, but have to admit is good.
- Present and discuss your choices with the group on Week 6: Oct. 16

Prompt: Make a series of drawings that are guaranteed to make the viewer say “WTF?!?”

Making art does not always need to rely on strenuous efforts towards a precisely predetermined goal. Often applying new approaches without judgement can offer weird and/or interesting results. Take a chance to aim low and possibly ask yourself, “WTF?!?”

Goals:

To create a large, un-edited body of work that is thematically non-precious.

To apply an approach that differs from how you typically make.

To self-asses your own ideas about quality.

To gauge your classmates ideas about art.

Outcomes:

100 drawings	- 10%
Work prolifically in a short timespan.	- 15%
Recognize the benefits of non-editing.	- 15%
Understanding the dichotomy between self-assessment and group assessment.	- 30%
Open a context for group discussion on ideas about quality in art.	- 40%

Assessment:

Basic-Competency: All elements are completed: Drawings are created, selections are made and presented to the class for further discussion.

Advanced-Competency: All elements are completed and presented to the class with clear and thoughtful explanations for each selection that is made; as well as demonstrated understanding of the assignment goals through participation in class discussion that follows each presentation. Surprising elements are visible within the 100 drawings that exhibit accumulated growth.

This is not a collaborative assignment and should be done individually.

Midterm Feedback Form

Field Notes: Drawing as Language objectives:

To create a large, un-edited body of work

To apply an approach that differs from how you typically work

To define your content more perceptively

To self-assess your own ideas about quality

To cultivate an active dialogue with classmates about art

In order to improve, reflect, critique, and discuss the course thus far; and in order to direct our collective attention for the second half of the semester please use the prompts below:

Please rate: (1 = Lowest/disagree 5=Highest/agree)

The professor is approachable and prepared for class.

(strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

The class time and materials are well organized.

(strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

I understand the course requirements and how I am assessed.

(strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

Adequate time is given for completion of projects.

(strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

I am encouraged to participate and feel my opinions are valued.

(strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

I feel the concepts, techniques, and discussions are relevant to my practice.

(strongly disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (strongly agree)

Please respond to the following questions:

Why have you chosen *this* course?

Are *your* course expectations being met? (If no, explain)

What course aspects *require* improvement?

What *topics, ideas, or concepts* would be helpful to review?

Name: _____(optional)

Field Notes: Drawing as Language objectives:

Course Assessment Form

Addresses Coourse Criteria	Conceptual/Ideation/Content	Integration/Form	Initiative/Craft
0 Does not address project criteria. Unable to transpose assignment parameters into actual studio work.	0 Concept / idea is not clear. Multiple opposing ideas or weak attempts at clarity.	0 Integration, form, content not clear.	0 Demonstrates low level aims and craft. No proven motive to develop craft.
1 Emerging: Project criteria is considered, but minimal engagement shown.	1 Emerging: Not focused, simplistic or needs further development.	1 Emerging: Form and content of work are not carefully considered.	1 Emerging: Work demonstrates basic competency, but further development is needed.
2 Developing: All project criteria is addressed and demonstrates initiative and reflection.	2 Developing: Ideas have been established, but not explored at length.	2 Developing: The technical/formal aspects of the work and ideas are related.	2 Developing: Comfortable in the medium, and is technically proficient.
3 Advanced: All criteria is addressed, demonstrates initiative, aims far beyond project criteria. Is able to examine complex ZachCramer-TeachingPortfolioDRAFT (1)methods within the criteria.	3 Advanced: Ideas are well developed, work demonstrates complexity and reflection.	3 Advanced: The work demonstrates a full integration of ideas and form. Unique outcome and surprising relationships and a sense of discovery exhibited in work.	3 Advanced: Utilizes medium at a high level, all technical aspects are carefully considered.

12=A+ 11=A 10=A- 9=B+ 8=B 7=B-
 6=C+ 5=C 4=C- 3=D+ 2=D 1=D-