

Teaching Portfolio

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Table of Contents

Teaching Philosophy	3
Inclusivity Statement	5
Proposed Course Description	6
Sample Class Project	8
Critique Experience	10
Proposed Syllabus	11
Mid-term Evaluation Form	15
Rubric	16

Teaching philosophy

My passion of being an educator was coming spontaneously through my engagement with the community around me, and it was not until during my residency at Lillstreet Art Center in Chicago made me realize that this is the path that I would like to pursue.

As a freshman during my undergraduate study at Indiana University Bloomington, I took various classes during my first year and tried to figure out what interests me the most, and with the mindset of who I want to be in the future. I often admired my peers who have clear career paths to pursue and unlike me, I was still in the pool of searching. I quickly realized that I enjoyed the experience of community engagement and then I declared my major in Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management. Did I ever think that I want to be an educator at that time? The answer was no, and I wasn't even though my paths will come across with the contemporary jewelry field. With the encouragement from the instructor of my first and second jewelry classes, I realized this is what I want to pursue. At that time, I didn't think that I would be capable of working in the art field. All of these concerns gradually disappear because of the encouragement and mentorship that I received from all my professors at Indiana University.

I took on a year-long residency at Lillstreet Art Center after my undergraduate to continue creating works that I am passionate about. I also started teaching at Lillstreet Art Center, and I realized it is also a unique way for myself to have a new interpretation of the skill sets that I have learned from my undergraduate. How to visually make them accessible to my students in the class and how to help them master these tools better are some questions that I consistently have in mind. Although my students are coming from various backgrounds in education, occupation, culture, and ethnicity, they all met in the same art classes, and were trying to learn something new and different.

Being an educator is to respect the individuality of each student, and helping them to build up their technical skills in the respective classes, and most importantly to helping them to find their own artistic voices. It is a privilege to witness the students having that “spark” moment in class, and to share their joy, accomplishment and confidence that it built.

Inclusivity statement

The experience of being an international student studying abroad in the US has taught me about inclusivity, especially in the academic setting. Although not all the experiences are 100% positive, in most cases, I was fully supported by all the faculty that I studied with. The mentorship that I received from during my undergraduate study inspired me to be an educator.

I have taught classes to students coming from various backgrounds in education, occupation, culture, and ethnicity during my residency in Chicago. I always make sure all my students feel supported, understood and safe to express themselves in the mutual respective way. It is important to learn from each other, and keep an open-minded perspective to engage the conversation and discussion in the classroom.

As an educator, I pledge to create a positive and welcoming environment, respect the individuality of each student, and encourage students to share their background and experiences to the class as well as through their projects. It is important to recognize when students are in need, and accommodate them as much as we can through the supporting facilities and classroom settings. Perceiving the value of diversity among students, and empowered them to speak up in the classroom when they have questions.

While students are learning how to build up their technical tool box in class, I will always be supportive and available to help them to reach their full potential.

Illustration in Enameling
3 Credit, Wintersession 2021
Time and Days: TBD
Location: TBD
Instructor: Danni Xu (dxu02@risd.edu)
TA: TBD
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description:

This course introduces various enameling techniques to create imagery. Enamel is a technique fusing fine powder glass to a metal surface. Whether your inspirations are from nostalgic memories or your favorite novels, you will jump into the illustrative world of enameling and start building the skills necessary to translate your imagery with glass on metal. The course will begin with the basic process of sifting enamel onto copper, and then expand to explore a variety of techniques such as cloisonné, champlevé and China paint. Fundamental jewelry techniques will be introduced to support the creation of samples and finished works. Students will be encouraged to introduce their individual approach to making and respond to influences from their studio practice to create unique imagery. Students will leave this class with a handful of working samples, some finished enameled works and basic metal fabrication skills.

Goals:

- to acquire and develop vocabulary specific to various enameling processes
- to transfer visual inspiration into realized enamel works
- to understand basic metalsmithing skills such as piercing, soldering, and stone setting techniques
- to demonstrate proficiency in enameling processes through samples and finished projects
- to combine students' own artistic skills and interests with enameling techniques

Outcomes:

- Students will be able to create multiple enameled samples for each demonstrated technique, and exhibit proficiency in different enameling techniques in each project.
- Students will be able to use various enameling techniques, such as sifting, cloisonné, champlevé and China paint.
- Students will be able to build problem-solving skills through the technical learning process.
- Students will learn how to use enamel related tools, equipment while following safety protocols and exercising healthy studio practices.

Introduction to Jewelry- Creating Narrative Jewelry

3 Credit, Wintersession 2021

Time and Days: TBD

Location: TBD

Instructor: Danni Xu (dxu02@risd.edu)

TA: TBD

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description:

Learn the fundamentals of traditional jewelry and metalsmithing techniques. Through a series of demonstrations and projects, students will learn basic metalworking skills including sawing, filing, soldering, forming and finishing while becoming familiar with a specific set of hand tools. Taking into account historical and contemporary references, students will design and fabricate small scale three-dimensional objects and will address issues related to function, wearability and adornment. This course consists of presentation, demonstrations, in-class work time, projects, class critiques and group discussions.

Goals:

- To develop proficiency in basic jewelry fabrication techniques
- To translate ideas into art forms
- To develop an individual approach to the techniques, materials and subject matter of jewelry
- To learn technical terminology common to jewelry making through in-class demonstrations and contemporary jewelry critical vocabulary through critical discussion

Outcomes:

- Students will develop a foundation in jewelry fabrication and metalsmithing, such as sawing, texturing, cold-connection, and solder.
- Students will have a basic knowledge of terms, techniques, historical/cultural background, materials and concepts used in metalsmithing and jewelry design.
- Students will learn how to document processes, ideas, and research relevant to jewelry design through sketchbook.
- Students will work to develop and refine technical skills related to small-scale art objects.
- Students will complete a final project that exhibits a comprehension of technical and conceptual understanding of metalsmithing and jewelry.

Project 1: Broaching YOUR Brooch

Brooch, [brohch, brooch], noun: a clasp or ornament having a pin at the back for passing through the clothing and a catch for securing the point of the pin.

Broach, [brohch], noun: machinery

verb: to mention or suggest for the first time

Brooch is a format of jewelry while broach is used as a verb to introduce topics. Consider this project as a way to introduce yourself to your fellow classmates. You will learn how to fabricate functional pinback mechanisms, chains and clasps. Integrating these new techniques to create a narrative brooch. The inspiration of this includes, but not limited to your hobby, background, or even your covid experience!

Students will use prior skills learned in class including but not limited to - hollow construction, riveting, patinas, bending and scoring.

New techniques observed:

Pinstems and brooch mechanisms, chains, clasps

Potential materials:

Copper, brass, NuGold, sterling silver, found objects

Goals of the Project:

- To understand a piece of jewelry can be expressive, and has potential to be a communication tool
- To expand the technical skill set in metalsmithing fabrication
- To gain knowledge of historical background of narrative jewelry

Learning Outcome of the Project:

- A finished brooch which could serve as conversation starter
- The ability to incorporate narrative elements into a piece of jewelry
- The ability to fabricate functional pinback mechanisms
- The ability to create handmade chains and clasps

Requirements:

- Good craftsmanship: work is well-finished, consistent and well thought out
- At least one soldered element
- At least one cold connection (rivet, tabs, etc)
- Functional pinstem and brooch mechanism
- 10 + sketches, and 3 models

Project Plan:

Sketch Critique: this is an **informal critique**. Students are expected to bring detailed technical drawings of project ideas and paper models, both of which should clearly describe the idea. Students are required to bring 10+sketches and 3 paper models.

Project 2 Critique: project critique is more **formal** and will utilize a large portion of class time. Unfinished work will not be critiqued. Project will be evaluated by technical execution, ambition, progress, and concept. Unfinished work will not be critiqued.

Due Dates:

Sketch Critique: TBD

Project 1 Critique: TBD

Critique Experience

Intro to Jewelry / Studio Art Class cri:

The instructors will participate in the critique by asking questions, mediating the student's discussion, and encouraging students who have not yet spoken to participate. Advice may be given on how a piece can be improved technically or formally. Students are expected to guide most of the discussions themselves.

In-person Critique

- Have student prepare a 150~200 words work statement
- The first part of the critique would be ask all the students to blindread of the works represent in the room, write down questions or key words relate to each of the piece
- Individual student would then take turn to introduce their project to the class and start the discussion

Hybrid Critique

- Have student prepare a 150~200 words work statement
- Students are required to take photographs of their projects, this included but not limited to top, front and side view of the projects. Students may introduce other formats such as video to demonstrate their projects. Composed these material to a slideshow

Transition Profile and Practice
3 Credit, Wintersession 2021
Time and Days: TBD
Location: TBD
Instructor: Danni Xu (dxu02@risd.edu)
TA: TBD
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This is an interactive lecture course. A series of lectures will discuss the professional development in fine arts, including but not limited to individual studio practice, gallery connection, non-profit opportunities, curatorial and residency prospects. Prominent working artists, educators and curators will be invited to give lectures to share their practices and insight throughout the course. Students will first take a case study with the concentrated area, and will be asked to take a professional interview with an artist, educator or curator of their choice and share the specific focus area with the class.

Course Goals:

- To understand professional development and business standards in various career pathways, such as individual studio practice, non-profit opportunities, and residency prospects.
- To develop a clear understanding of professional standards of communication and networking skills
- To learn how to use SWOT analysis to evaluate different opportunities in the professional practice

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to present themselves and their practice with a professional standards
- Students will complete a blueprint of their resume and CV
- Students will learn how to take initiative to establish connections with the visiting artists, and perspective interviewee in a professional manner
- Students will be able to develop professional interview skills through the hand-on project.
- Students will learn how to analyze career opportunities effectively and be able to vision how to build a clear career path

Course Requirements

Visiting Artist Series

A series of working artists, educators and curators will be invited to give lectures to share their practices and insight throughout the course. Students are expected to be prepared for and participate in the discussion during the presentation.

Jason Arnone, Career Advisor at RISD Career Services

Sandra Wilson, Professor at University of Dundee

Mia Hall, Director at Penland School of Craft

Pam Robinson, Director of Education at The Furniture Society

Emily Stoehrer, Museum Curator at MFA Boston

Projects

- Case Study
- Professional Interview Presentation
- Professional Interview Report
- Resume / CVs

Assessment

Case Study 15%

Post lecture reflections 15%

Professional Interview Presentation 20%

Professional Interview Report 20%

Resume 15%

Class Participation & Discussion 15%

Course Plan

Course Schedule	In-Class	Assignment
Day 1	Introduction of the course	
<p>Emerging Learning Outcomes: Students will understand the expectation and learning outcome of the course by actively participating in class.</p>		
Day 2	Resume & CV Workshop	Research presenter and compose five relevant questions. Resume & CV
Day 3	Visiting Artist Series: Pam Robinson, Director of Education at The Furniture Society, following by 15min Q&A discussion	Write 300 words of reflection of the lecture, and post 2 questions that you have.
Day 4	Career Services Visit by Jason Arnone Career Advisor at RISD: Group discussion of career goal	Research presenter and compose five relevant questions.
Day 5	Visiting Artist Series: Mia Hall, director at Penland School of Craft, following by 15min Q&A discussion	Write 300 words of reflection of the lecture, and post 2 questions that you have.
Day 6	SWOT analysis	Research presenter and compose five relevant questions. SWOT analysis
<p>Developing Learning Outcomes: Students will learn how to take initiative to establish connections with the visiting artists by hosting the lecture rotationally with their assigned groups, and be able to analyze career opportunities effectively.</p>		
Day 7	Visiting Artist Series: Professor Sandra Wilson at University of Dundee, following by 15min Q&A discussion	Write 300 words of reflection of the lecture, and post 2 questions that you have.

Day 8	Individual meeting to review Resume & CV, and SWOT analysis.	
Day 9	Individual meeting to review Resume & CV, and SWOT analysis.	Research presenter and compose five relevant questions.
Day 10	Visiting Artist Series: Emily Stoehrer, Museum Curator at MFA Boston, following by 15min Q&A discussion	Write 300 words of reflection of the lecture, and post 2 questions that you have
Day 11	Presentation of Professional Interview	
Day 12	Presentation of Professional Interview	
<p>Advanced Learning Outcomes: Students will have a clear understanding of professional development and business standards in various career pathways, and to develop a clear understanding of professional standards of communication and networking skills related to their field of study.</p>		

Mid-term Feedback Form

This questionnaire is intended to help me understand what you've learned so far, and how I could improve the class setting to give you a better learning experience possible. Your feedback is anonymous.

Please evaluate the following questions on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being poor, 5 being excellent), and circle the number which best indicates your opinions.

Course Goals:

- To understand professional development and business standards in various career pathways, such as individual studio practice, non-profit opportunities, and residency prospects.
- To develop a clear understanding of professional standards of communication and networking skills
- To learn how to use SWOT analysis to evaluate different opportunities in the professional practice

Course Goals:

Clarity of Assignment	1	2	3	4	5
In-class demonstrations	1	2	3	4	5
Slideshow/ lecture	1	2	3	4	5
Critique	1	2	3	4	5

What do you feel you have learned in this class?

What's your favorite and least favorite part of this class?

How effectively do you feel class time has been used (e.g. demonstration, in-class discussion, lecture, critique) ?

What changes could improve your learning experience?

Do you have any suggestions for the instructor?

Other comments:

Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (A)	Proficient (B)	Satisfactory (C)	Poor (Below D)
Understanding (25%)	Student fully understood the parameters of the project and designed a project to meet and exceed requirements. Each of the projects is intentionally finished.	Student understood the project and designed a project which meets expectations and requirements.	Student partially understood the project and attempted to engage with it, but not at a high level.	Student made little attempt to understand the project's meaning and parameters.
Technical Skill (25%)	Utilized, understood and demonstrated all techniques required for the project. Final result is intentionally crafted.	General understanding of techniques required although substantial problems exist in execution.	Student made a noticeable attempt to effectively construct and finish the project, but was unsuccessful in the completion.	Piece is constructed in an inefficient way. Little to no understanding of techniques. Some finishing attempts were made, but were not fully carried out.
Participation (25%)	Actively participates in the one on one and group discussions, Excellent preparation of class material. Arrives with all requirements completed.	Time was well-used, and student was committed to the project. Student asked questions and was engaged during class time and in critiques.	Student did the work only in order to fulfill the assignment. Student did not manage their time well. Student participated in class and/or critiques, but only at the bare minimum.	Student managed their time poorly and did not take advantage of class time. Student was unresponsive in class and/or critique.
Creativity/ Concept (10%)	Very well thought out concept comes through in the final project and fits well with parameters of assignment.	Concept is well thought out but there is slight difficulty reading ideas in the final product or contract was not met.	Project design does bare minimum to fulfill the assignment and/or does not effectively communicate the student's ideas.	Concept is derivative and/or unoriginal. Student puts very little effort into designing an engaging piece.
Ambition and Initiative (15%)	Project explored complex multi-step techniques. Student challenged themselves well above the basic requirements for the assignment.	Project undertook a level of challenge above basic requirements. Students challenged themselves by utilizing multiple techniques.	Project met assignment parameters. There is little to no attempt at conveying a concept in the piece.	Student made minimal effort to design and complete a successful project.