

Schedule: Friday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Location: S101

Credits: 3.00

Instructor: Abraham Evensen Tena

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Email: aevensentena@massart.edu

Office Hours: Thursday 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm (right after class)

Class Objectives

The Advanced Human Figure - Character Design class has two main objectives:

- I. **To provide you with drawing techniques that improve your authority over the human figure:** focusing on proportions, gesture, perspective, and form, we will strive to command naturalistic figure drawing. This will allow you to distort, exaggerate and accentuate different character traits in the service of narrative. It is the premise of this class that, as artists, we need to know nature in order to alter it, and that all styles of drawing can benefit from solid observational skills. Whether you wish to draw something as it appears in nature (“realistic”), or distort it for opinion (“stylized”), solid figure drawing will only increase your options in character design.
- II. **To further your ability to communicate your personal voice through character design:** exploring symbolism, distortion, shape syntax, and narrative statements, we will strive for clarity of opinion in your character designs. You will build a toolset of design variables that will allow you to create characters that drive narratives. You will develop images that challenge your self-awareness, with the goal of stating your personal views on an array of subjects. This class proposes that it is the active observation of your daily life that will inform your design: you will find the ways in which people, objects, and places around you strengthen your stories.

Class Structure

Class time will be dedicated to drawing the model, exploring design techniques, reviewing assignments, and discussing topics brought up by the instructor. You are required to show your artwork for critique, and actively participate in class discussion. Given the subject of the class, you are encouraged to voice your opinions and be respectful of others. We must develop a vocabulary of character design that allows us to discuss complicated topics while remaining constructive and engaged.

The instructor will demonstrate techniques, show examples using a projector, and evaluate the class' progress. You are encouraged to bring up questions and concerns during class. Office hours and contact by email are also available. Every student will have a one-on-one meeting with the instructor mid-semester. Remember that personal goals are as important as course goals.

Consistent with other classes, more than two unexcused absences will result in failure of the course. Out of respect for the model and other students, you will not be admitted into the classroom if you are 15 minutes late. There will be short breaks during the drawing sessions. It will be important to return from these on time. Drawing requires concentration and focus, please do not break it by being late.

Sketchbook and Assignments

Each week you will be tasked with research in the form of writing and sketches. Although these do not have to be developed into finished illustrations, they must clearly address the questions and ideas requested by the instructor. You will show your sketchbook to the class, and your findings will be part of the class discussion. Some of the topics requested deal with issues such as color, texture and composition. Therefore, it is recommended that you obtain a sketchbook that can withstand a variety of media.

In addition to your sketchbook, during the semester you will illustrate assignments that deal with character design and personal voice. Some will have strict specifications (such as technique and format), and will be graded not only in their final presentation, but also in their process. You will be required to bring to class all the preparatory work, including sketches, color comps and references.

Grading

Three primary elements will inform your final grade: work and participation in class, sketchbook homework, and character design assignments. Your class work will be measured by your progress in figure drawing and your ability to implement the techniques provided by the instructor. Your sketchbook assignments will be reviewed every week, and will inform a general sketchbook grade. They will be graded by your ability to implement the techniques, and follow the requirements, requested by the instructor. As stated above, at least once during the semester, you will meet one-on-one with the instructor to check your progress.

Illustration assignments are larger projects that require preparation and class critique. These assignments will have specific requirements or rules. It is mandatory that you bring process work and final illustrations on the due date requested, and that you participate in their critique. Please contact your instructor if you have any questions or concerns regarding your assignment, or if you missed class.

This is how your final grade will be divided:

Construction:

Shape Design	10%
Perspective Design	10%
Layer Drawings	10%
Sculpture	20%

Design:

Cast Design Sheet	10%
Final Illustration	20%
Sketchbook/Research	10%
Attendance and Participation	10%

While the instructor will provide feedback and a grade for every assignment, it is your responsibility to keep track of your progress during the semester. The instructor keeps a record of every assignment and attendance, so do contact him with any questions or concerns. You may receive an academic warning at mid-semester due to absences, poor performance, and/or lack of professionalism (late assignments, no communication, class disruption.) Reach out to your instructor as soon as possible with any question or concern.

At different points during the semester, the instructor may require that you work outside of the classroom and come back with your results. Likewise, visits to the museum and field work may happen at any point, so bring your ID for every session. Keep in mind that the instructor will pass attendance at the beginning and end of the class, so be sure to be back on time from any break or off-class assignment.

Finally, here is an explanation of the meaning of each letter grade:

- A** Professional level, or uniquely insightful work.
- A -** Outstanding development, comprehension and quality
- B +** Very good development, comprehension and quality
- B** Good development, comprehension and quality
- B -** Average development, comprehension and quality
- C +** Marginal development, comprehension and quality
- C** Unclear development, comprehension and quality
- C -** Lacking any development, comprehension and quality
- D** Not acceptable/did not follow direction
- F** Not attempted and/or missed Project/Critique

Supplies and Required Reading

For every class, you are required to bring a large drawing pad (the largest you can find and transport), soft and hard charcoal, graphite sticks or pencil, a black marker and a variety of erasers. There

will be sessions in which you will work with color, cut paper, or other materials. The instructor will let you know in advance if any special supplies are required for next class.

Some assignments require that you read specified texts. When possible, the instructor will provide copies and/or links to such text, but it is your responsibility to obtain and read the material on time.

Classroom Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Massachusetts College of Art and Design is committed to fostering the academic, personal, and professional growth of our students. We are especially committed to ensuring that students with documented disabilities, as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), are provided equal access to all campus resources and opportunities. If you believe you have a disability that may warrant accommodations, I urge you to contact the Academic Resource Center (ARC) at arc@massart.edu or 617-879-7280. The ARC is located in the Tower Building, Rm 811. The Academic Resource Center provides academic support to all matriculated MassArt students through access to academic advisors, a learning specialist, academic coaches, professional writing and subject tutors, and training on assistive technology.

SAMPLE

Assignment Description

(1) Shape Design:

- Make 16 shape sketches of your main 4 characters (4 per character) using reference, which can include favorite representations of Frankenstein's creature, but also models, animals and any other you like. Think about your research and the emotions you wish to convey regarding the creature!
- Remember: Graphic statements are about simplicity and directness. We will have time to delve into detailed anatomy and complex perspective. For now, you are looking for a silhouette that is readable and communicates what the creature means to you.

(2) Perspective Design:

- Start 12 character portraits (3 for each of the 4 characters,) with different expressions each. The outcome should be 4 portfolio quality character expression sheets (due 10/10.)
- I suggest you expand from just the face and include the entire head and torso (bust composition.) Research actors and animals images for reference!

(3) Layer Drawings:

- Pick a solid narrative pose for your 4 characters. Draw their anatomy using a construction technique of your choice. Research different construction methods and photo-reference and study them through your drawing: have them at hand while you draw, and see which one fits your character best.
- Using a layered technique, solidify your construction in an drawing that focuses on their most important physical traits.
- In a new layer, sketch out their clothing or costuming, considering the volition discussion we had in class.
- In one last layer, add any props or tools based on the volition discussion. Be imaginative: a sword may be ok, but what else can give your character volition?

(4) Sculpture: Create a full body sculpture of your version of "The Creature," based on Shelley's Frankenstein. The sculpture should be at least 7 inches tall. Please consider the following aspects:

- A Whole Body sculpture should include everything, from top to bottom, left to right.
- While the size limitations may prevent you from detailing the portrait to a high degree, special attention should be put on the expressiveness of the pose.
- Acknowledge the masses of the body: Head, torso, hips, muscles for extremities, construction blocks for hands and feet. Even if your character is simplified or stylized, build the character from inside out.

(5) Cast Design Sheet and Final Illustration: Find the theme (moral argument) and communicate it with personal voice: What is your take on Frankenstein's theme? How are you going to make it clear to your viewers? While the technical considerations are important, what will matter the most for this assignment is your personal take on Shelley's book.

- Work for a specific production type or venue: think of the way in which the viewer will experience your version of Frankenstein. Is it a movie? A graphic novel? A children's book? a video game? Your designs and final illustration must find a place in the production (book cover, movie poster, Box art, etc)
- Consider these portfolio-quality pieces: unlike the multiple sketches we did before the sculpture, there're two specific, high quality images you must create by the end of the semester:
- Victor, The Creature and Two other characters in a lineup
- Final Illustration (in context, based on the production you want to work for.)
- Progress and presentation: I will check on your progress in the next weeks, but I won't grade the work until the end of the semester. Each new discovery should make you reconsider previous designs, so focus on nailing down your designs in the remaining weeks of the semester.

Calendar

Date	Class	Research	Homework
9/6	Intro/supplies	Shelly and her novel	Initial sketches
9/13	Shape	Genre and Theme	Shape inventory
9/20	Shape and depth	Genre and Theme	Shape inventory
9/27	Form and perspective	Myths of creator and created	Perspective Drawing
10/4	Portraits in perspective	Myths of creator and created	Perspective Drawing
10/11	Proportion and anatomy	Proteanism and science	Layers and Orthographic
10/18	Construction methods	Proteanism and science	Layers and Orthographic
10/25	Sculpture demo	Gender and Monstrosity	Sculpture
11/1	Gesture and force	Gender and Monstrosity	Sculpture
11/8	Theme principle	Intelligence and Consciousness	Sculpture
11/15	Empathic trade and appeal	Intelligence and Consciousness	Cast and illustration
11/22		NO CLASS	
11/29	Style and personal voice	Why Frankenstein now?	Cast and illustration
12/6	WIP and critique	Why Frankenstein now?	Cast and illustration
12/13	Final critique	Final critique	Final critique

Note: the instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus at any point during the semester. If that is the case, the instructor will outline the changes and provide you with the proper replacement documentation.

End of semester reviews are mandatory for all Illustration majors.