

Course Title
Figure Structures

Term offered: Fall semester
Course Level: 200, 300, 400
Credit Hours: 6 hrs/wk

Jamie Adams
Associate Professor of Art
Office: Bixby 205
314-303-6947

Figure Structures

Course Description

A rigorous drawing course focusing on human anatomy (muscular and skeletal systems), various proportional systems (da Vinci, Durer, Richer, Pythagoras, Vitruvius, Le Corbusier, Calatrava) as well as bio/psycho/socio/political conditions having influenced figural representations and architectural forms. Drawing, 2D and 3D solutions (Course Pre-requisite: Sam Fox Foundations studios)

Art/Architecture Relevancy

The human figure has always been a common subject (image/structure) of art and architecture. Some of the earliest representations of the body can be found in paleolithic cave paintings throughout Europe and Africa. Made from rudimentary tools of wood and stone and other organic commodities, these primordial productions seem to suggest a most urgent need to record communication, ritual, ceremony. Throughout history, different cultures and civilizations have chosen to portray the figure according to their own cultural imperatives and values. In addition the human body's image and design has served as the basis for the formation of language, symbology, and deity. In Tantric thought the human body is perceived to embody the entirety of all universal truth. The humanist project of the Italian Renaissance is widely known to have been influenced by Pythagorean and Neo-Platonic ideals. One of its central tenets was built around the representation of the human form through 'ideal' proportioning (Vitruvian Man). Based on ancient divine ratios and sacred geometries, this served as a visual metaphor for God, moral perfection, and the cosmic order.

In the built environment, the human body's design offers physical examples of innumerable engineering and mechanical systems and devices. For instance, the human head and its cranial suturing is an obvious reference for the dome structure, the eye/nose T-shape for basic arch/column supports, and the flattened glabellar elevation (in between the eye orbits) functioning as both keystone and skew back arch. Dynamic systems of weightbearing, counter-balance, suspension, joint, and leverage—all intrinsic to the body's function as an erect being, are most readily comprehended through close observation of the figure in motion.

Drawing in this course will be the primary means of research—visual exploration and investigation of the design and architecture of the human body. Extensive sketchbook activity will promote the study of anatomy, structure, and proportion. Students will access visual and structural data from a range of perspectives: direct observation, schematic and diagrammatic drawings, photography, sculpture, memory, etc... Numerous model sessions and outside projects allow for more extended renderings of ideas. More extended outside projects are designed to challenge students in terms of the relationship between material/process/idea.

Figure Structures

Course schedule

(Weeks 1-8) class sessions/projects focus on anatomy via lectures, handouts, or student presentations followed by working studio time with individual instruction.

(Weeks 9-16) class sessions focus on figural representations from art/architectural history.

WEEK 1

Wednesday

Lecture: Syllabus; Overview of skeleton
Proportional systems
In-class work: Draw from skeleton
Sketchbook: 20 drawings/skeleton

WEEK 2

Monday (No Class--Labor Day)

Wednesday

Lecture: Head/Neck; anatomy, art/arch examples
In-class work: Draw from skeleton/wet media.
Outside project: SKELETONS AT PLAY
Sketchbook: 20 skull and spine drawings

WEEK 3

Monday

Lecture/Discuss: Spine/Ribcage; anatomy, art/arch
In-class work: Draw from skeleton/wet media

Wednesday

In-class work: Work on outside project.
Sketchbook: 20 ribcage and shoulder girdle drawings
Critique: In-process conversations.

WEEK 4

Monday

Lecture: Shoulder girdle; anatomy, art/arch examples
In-class work: model w/skeleton

Wednesday

Group Critique: SKELETONS AT PLAY
Outside Project: FIGURE FLOATING FALLING

WEEK 5

Monday

Lecture/Discussion: Pelvis/Thigh; anatomy, art/arch
In-class work: Sculpt pelvis
Sketchbook: 20 drawings of pelvis and upper leg

Wednesday

Lecture/Discuss: Lower leg/Foot; anatomy, art/arch
In-class work: Sculpt pelvis, 2nd session
Critique: In-process critique.

WEEK 6

Monday

Lecture/Discuss: Upper Arm; anatomy, art/arch
In-class work: Model
Sketchbook: 20 drawings of lower leg and foot

Wednesday

Group Critique: FIGURE FLOATING FALLING
Outside Project: MASTER ECORCHE

WEEK 7

Monday

Lecture/Discuss: Lower arm/Hand
anatomy, art/arch examples
In-class work: Model

Wednesday

Lecture/Discussion:
In-class work: Model

WEEK 8 MID-TERM

Monday

Individual Midterm Reviews
In-class work: Model

Wednesday

Individual Midterm Reviews
In-class work: Model

WEEK 9

Monday

Group Critique: MASTER ECORCHE

Outside Project: ANIMAN or BODY/BUILDING

Wednesday

Lecture: Head/Face; anatomy, art/arch examples

In-class work: Model

WEEK 10

Monday

Outside work: ANIMAN or BODY/BUILDING

(10 drawings of upper body)

Wednesday

Lecture/Discussion: Movement/Montage

In-class work: MODEL

large newsprint, dry media

WEEK 11

Monday

Lecture/Discussion: Transformation

Analysis of art/arch

Bring large newsprint dry media/ anatomy books

In-class work: ANIMAN initial discussions

Wednesday

Travel to PAD dance class to draw

Sketchbook: Lower extremity progression drawings

Progression drawings: Upper extremity--

analytical/descriptive renderings/shoulder girdle

WEEK 12

Monday

Lecture/Discussion: Location/dislocation

Analysis of art/arch

In-class work: MODEL--2

Bring large newsprint dry media/ anatomy books

Wednesday

Lecture/Discussion: Memory; Analysis of art/arch

Critique: In-process group Critique

ANIMAN or BODY/BUILDING

minimum--1 work completed/1 in progress

WEEK 13

Monday

In-class work: MODEL--3

Memory drawings

Sketchbook: Progression drawings: Upper extremity

10 skeleton action drawings from memory/life

Wednesday (Thanksgiving Break)

WEEK 14

Monday

Final Group Critique/ANIMAN or BODY/BUILDING

Wednesday

Lecture/Discussion: Student presentations

Analysis of art/arch

In-class work: Adjustments/improvements

Outside work:

Sketchbook: 10 skeleton action drawings from

memory/life

10 ecorche action drawings from memory/life

WEEK 15

Monday

Lecture/Discussion: Student presentations

Analysis of art/arch

In-class work: Adjustments/improvements

Wednesday

In Class Work: Clean-up studio/return work

WEEK 16**Final Presentations/Reviews**

Monday

Wednesday

Figure Structures

Sample Project: Figure Floating Falling

Project Description: Students create a life size, full length figure emphasizing the vertical dynamic of weightlessness, gravitational pull, or both in a recognizable interior space.

Background: This project is introduced through review and discussion of other artist's works such as Lucian Freud's *Naked Man, Back View*. Here Freud's close proximity to the subject sets up a vertically rotating point of view. As a result, an inversion of perspective occurs, creating strong gravitational pull.

Objectives: Students are encouraged to examine how their location, relative to the subject, impacts their cone of vision and perception of the perspectival field.

Media: Mixed media on paper

