

Creative Practice example for first year 300 level illustration course with external mentors.

Course: ART 389: Illustration: Mentorship

1. Course Overview:

Course description: Students will interface with pre-arranged illustrators, art directors and editors who will supervise, guide, and encourage the development of professional quality work, creative vision, and career preparation. Offered fall semester. Prerequisite: ART 281.

2. Evaluation of taxonomy for 8 quality elements

ART 389: Existing Course	ART 389- Illustration: Mentorship
Characteristic	Examples where your course aligns with this characteristic as a high-impact practice (e.g. column 2 or beyond)?
<p>Appropriately high performance expectations</p>	<p>Expectations throughout the course are communicated in several ways and students are mentored to reach the expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations for the course are clearly outlined in the syllabus. This is posted and available on Blackboard before the first day of class. In addition, a summary of each class, including assignment sheets, rubrics, deadline reminders, etc. is posted no later than the next day to Blackboard. • Students create their own wiki on Blackboard to post process work and collect their in-progress projects and archive finished work. Wikis are visible to all members of the class. This allows self-accountability as well as peer accountability.
<p>Significant investment of time/effort by students over extended time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students work on four assignments with four different mentors, which vary from year to year. The expectation is four finished projects, similar to other studio classes within VMA. Each mentor guides the students through one project, which allows specific professional expertise in a specific area of illustration. This allows about 4-5 weeks of investment from the students in each project, with some overlap. • Students are held accountable for their investment by a one-on-one critique at the end of the project with each mentor, as well as process critiques from their professor and peers.
<p>Faculty/peer interactions regarding substantive matters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class size is capped at 15. This allows for more peer interaction as well as more substantive time with the professor and mentors during class time. • Mentors typically meet with the class via Zoom during class time. Some mentors in the past have been in-person for the duration of the project or for the final critique, depending on geographic location and availability.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peers engage in small groups for critiques, brainstorming and process feedback, as well as in large class-wide final critiques. • Course instructor engages with students at every class meeting providing immediate one-on-one feedback on technique and course content.
<p>Experiences with diversity Definition: engage in activities and inquiry regarding diverse communities, cultures, and/or ideas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mentors come from a wide variety of professions within illustration. They often are from different geographical and cultural backgrounds. The students have the chance to see how personal vision and unique worldviews can be applied to professional projects and work. • Students must work to create a sense of community within the classroom that is welcome to new ideas, concepts and approaches. Creating a space in which to create, where peers feel heard and safe, is paramount to creating personal, powerful work.
<p>Frequent, timely, and constructive feedback All milestones assume that feedback is frequent, timely, and constructive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This course is dependent on frequent and constructive feedback. Students receive this from their peers, their instructor and their mentor(s). • Students begin by creating a wiki page via Blackboard that all members of the class, including mentors, have access to. This allows direct virtual feedback in the form of written comments, voice recordings, draw-overs and visual examples (suggested reference, inspiration, etc.) from peers and faculty. • Students go through a process of ideation that is appropriate for each project (e.g. creating visual mood boards and reference gathering for character design, reading and reflecting on written articles for editorial illustration), then a process of visual brainstorming (thumbnails, sketching). Feedback happens at each of these stages as a series of smaller benchmark deadlines. This is similar to professional methodology in a client-based environment. • Students further learn how to properly critique their own work and their peers' work. Critique must be constructive and take into consideration the foundations of visual art (composition, color, value, balance, contrast, etc.) and the overall goals of the illustration project. • In a group critique environment, students learn not only from the comments on their own work, but from the comments their peers receive as well. • Mentors provide feedback throughout the project and at the final project critique, providing insight from their own professional experience.

<p>Periodic & structured opportunities to reflect & integrate learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students share their work to peers in small groups throughout the project's duration. They must also present their work to the instructor and mentor. • During final critique, the student must present and explain their creative choices. They have the opportunity to reflect on and defend their work throughout the critique in response to other students, the instructor and the mentor. • Students complete a strategic plan in preparation for each project, detailing audience, intended message, and their own project parameters and goals. Upon completion, they have the opportunity to reflect on the plan and determine if the completed illustration met their initial goals. • Students can then take what they learned from their experience with the mentor and apply it to future projects/pieces.
<p>Opportunities to discover relevance of learning through real-world applications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since they are working directly with professionals in various capacities, they not only create a new piece of work, but they get a direct understanding of the professional practice of being an illustrator. Some of the mentors work in a direction-oriented role, such as art director, art editor, or creative director. This is extremely beneficial as these are people directly responsible for hiring artists and illustrators. The students get a clear understanding of what these professionals look for in the artists they employ.
<p>Public demonstration of competence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work created in this class often ends up in the students' portfolios, posted to social media and/or disseminated in other ways. • Students also have the opportunity to participate in Student Scholars' Day exhibits, or to exhibit the work in the Padnos Student Gallery within Calder Art Center.