

ILLU 442

Freelance Illustration

Model contributed by Ivan Brunetti

This course combines analysis and personal expression to convey ideas via illustration. Content includes traditional and non-traditional methods and materials. Students apply previously learned skills and techniques to solve visual problems, as in a professional environment.

Class schedule and format

Eighteen (18) students will be split into two cohorts of 9 each (odd and even numbered weeks). Students attend F2F one week and online the next week.

Set aside one week as a "floating day" (as we typically do, as a contingency), and the cohorts will be split evenly (i.e., 7 weeks F2F, 7 weeks online). This floating day would be an online workday, perhaps mid-semester, and could be used as a catch-up day if necessary. In any case, it would allow for some flexibility or act as a buffer in the hybrid structure and any unforeseen circumstances (e.g., if the instructor becomes ill).

Course-specific organization, examples and dates

Week 0: Since it will not be possible for the entire class to meet in person on the first day, some preparatory work by the students will help get the class off on the best footing. The instructor should upload as much information as possible about the course, at least one week before the first day of class. The instructor should email the students ahead of this first day, and ask them to review the syllabus, especially the weekly calendar, materials/supplies, required texts, and the overall structure in terms of hybridity: expectations for the course, and how the bifurcated/hybrid structure will function, in terms of the face-to-face (F2F) and web components.

This info will be reviewed on the first F2F day with each cohort. Instructor should also post on Canvas a summary of key points/take-aways regarding the syllabus and hybrid structure. Students should take note of any question they have and email instructor before first day of class, if possible. Instructor can create a Canvas module for an FAQ list (i.e., with questions from students and answers from the teacher). This can be updated as needed throughout the semester, and it will be a great help the following semester if we are still in hybrid mode.

Students should be subdivided into 6 groups. For a class of 18, 6 groups would make most sense (3 students per group). These could be named A, B, C, D, E, and F, with students divided alphabetically by surname, or via whatever system the instructor prefers. Half of the class (Cohort 1, consisting of A, B, and C, for example) could be taught F2F one week, and the other half (Cohort 2, consisting of D, E, F) could be taught F2F on the following week. That way, half the class meets F2F on any given week, while the other half works remotely (and vice versa). The students would all post their work online in discussion forums in canvas.

Critiques would happen both online and F2F. The F2F groups would always critique each other in the classroom. In addition, they also would critique the other students that were working remotely, by posting critiques on Canvas. To avoid massively long discussion threads, the instructor could have each group critique another group on Canvas. For example, on Canvas, group A critiques group D, group B critiques group E, and group C critiques group F. These groupings could be switched around from week

to week so that students hear critiques from different groups. Of course, there could be additional comments offered, as this would simply be the minimum required. The goal is to have both F2F critiques and Canvas comments from all students, with a good mix but without massively long threads. Everyone would be required to post comments for at least 3 classmates every week. Students will always post their work, even if there is an F2F critique, so that the online cohort for that week can view and comment on the pieces that were in the F2F critique. Again, the goal is that the two cohorts can view each other's work and be allowed to offer feedback.

The 5 Projects in this class vary in length/scope. Projects 1 and 2 might each be two weeks long, Project 3 and 4 might each be three weeks long, with Project 5 being 4 weeks long. As the course is based on the freelance workflow, the instructor can post all requirements and specifications on Canvas, as well as their comments and critiques. This actually approximates the freelance workflow and communication pretty well.

Since much of freelance work is divided into rough sketches, tight sketches, final artwork, and sometimes revisions, there are many opportunities to post work in progress and get feedback from fellow students and the instructor at different stages of each project. This also allows some of the process to be done remotely and posted to Canvas, while the other groups work F2F (switching back and forth so all groups get some F2F time). Most projects would also have a preliminary exercise component. Sometimes these would be done F2F, and sometimes remotely. Since the projects vary in length, this allows for some staggering and a variety of workflow from week to week, with more equity in terms of getting F2F time with the instructor, and without one group getting too far ahead of the others.

Instructor should devise exercises for both the F2F and online sessions and be prepared to have students work online at any given time (in case of illness or other contingencies). The challenge will be to make sure the two cohorts end up relatively equal in terms of the amount of F2F classroom activities and exercises.