ART4905c Sec 17GG, Sculpture: Materials and Methods Individual Study, and ART5930c Sculpture: Materials and Methods

Alison McNulty, Visiting Assistant Professor
University of Florida, Fall 2013
Meeting Time: TBA
Office Hours: Tues. 11:30-12:30, or by appointment
3 Credits

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

Materials and Methods is a studio course investigating sculptural form through materiality and process in the study of wood, plaster, and textiles. While the class will consider the history and traditional uses of these materials in art, craft, and building, as well as evolving attributes, technologies, and uses over time, we will focus on examples of expanded usages, and conceptualizing the use of the materials in contemporary art. The course will introduce traditional skills and non-traditional methods of working with wood and wood-like materials, plaster and cement, and textiles and fibers through demonstrations, exercises, readings, illustrated lectures, written responses, and discussions touching on the relevant cross-over of these materials in contemporary art practice with other disciplines such as architecture, earth sciences, and design. Primary importance will be placed on safe practices and playful, rigorous experimentation in a materials workshop environment, alongside a widening conceptual grasp of the materials and methods. We will explore the relevance of skill, chance, and performativity in order to identify the specificity and intentionality of our actions in processing materials, and to learn the physical attributes, characteristics, capabilities, structural properties, and resonance of the materials. For each of three sections of the course, successful students will produce documentation of processes used and a project proposal with the goal of creating a project strategically conceptualized through the alignment or entwinement of material, process, and form.

COURSE TOPICS:

1. Wood and Wood-like Materials
   Students will learn about various types of wood, how to plan, purchase, and prepare wood for a project, and how to safely use a variety of power and hand tools in the wood shop. Demos will also cover some joints, additive and subtractive methods, and wood finishing skills as time permits. Readings, lecture, and discussions will introduce 20th century works and ‘movements’ such as Arte Povera, as well as various contemporary artists using wood, and explore the cycles of which wood is a part, the information embedded in woods, and expanded conceptions and uses of wood-like materials. Students will make a joint, several sketches, a preparatory drawing, a maquette, and a project using wood or a wood-like material such as bamboo. Projects will explore the nature of wood through analogy or metaphor, and inspiration may stem from concepts, which will be unpacked in class, such as: life cycles/cyclical time: continuity and disruption, natural/unnatural/organic/processed, constructing/deconstructing, revealing and concealing...

2. Plaster and Cement
   Students will be introduced to plaster and cement, strategies for exploring them, and several methods of working with them. Demos, handouts, and discussions may introduce varieties of the materials, properties, and composition, proper mixing techniques, mold-making and casting, additives, surfaces, direct plaster, and non-traditional uses as time permits. Exercises for the plaster project will emphasize the verb: students will be asked to act on the materials in various states, and to rigorously explore form as a record of action or rest (which is also a verb). Through process, play, and experimentation, students will form a body of haptic knowledge engaging the changing materiality, physical properties, versatility, and capabilities of plaster. Alongside readings and illustrated lectures covering Process Art and contemporary artists using the materials, students will conceive, plan, propose, and...
produce a project using plaster, in which they investigate concepts of memory, trace, residue, history, absence, index, capture...

3. TEXTILES AND FIBERS
The textile project will introduce a broad spectrum of textiles and fibers from art and design history as well as contemporary technologically-advanced fibrous materials and concepts, and varied investigations of textiles in Modern and Contemporary art practice. Demos may include spinning, carding, weaving, knitting, and felting. The class will consider the nature, culture, technology, history, and processes surrounding textiles, in tandem with exploring the etymology of the word, and associated words, such as texture, fabric, textus, weave, architecture, context, and text, as well as combinations of these words which express their underlying cross-disciplinary nature and possible theorization with emerging technologies, such as textuality and architexture. Students will use this research to initiate material tests exploring process and structure with a variety of fibers with the goal of activating an interconnectedness of fiber, structure, and thought. These experiments will consider folds, wraps, patterns, rips, mesh, interlacing, lines, repetition, grids, layers, skins, walls, scars, surfaces, knots, networks as physical phenomena embedded in terms, narratives, and structures. Successful final projects will process fibers and fibrous materials, engaging textile-making as a simultaneous act of reading, writing, and building.

CRITICAL DATES:

Project and reading requirements with a schedule of due dates will be provided when we begin each project. Critiques are tentatively scheduled for W Sept. 25, M Nov 4, and W Dec. 11.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

ATTENDANCE (AND MAKE-UP POLICY): Attendance is required at all class meetings, discussions, outings, lectures, work days, and critiques. Special circumstances and valid absences (see full UF absence policy link below) should be dealt with individually and prior to the missed class. An absence does not constitute an extension of an assignment. Students must meet individually with instructor if a class is missed. Students are expected to work on projects during class time. Working at home is not considered attendance. Unexcused absences after two will result in the lowering of the final semester grade by one letter, since we will generally only meet once per week. The grade will continue to drop with each successive absence. Arriving late or leaving early two times counts as an absence. Attendance at critiques is mandatory and cannot be made up.

PARTICIPATION: In addition to the requirements listed above and below, participation means that you come, that you care, that you show investment and preparation, that you make the best use of the time and resources available to you, that you commit fully to making the best work possible for our critiques, and that you grow in your ability to conceive, discuss, and make art. In means you are dedicated to being an integral member of our community of artists and a better, more skilled, and more informed artist with each class meeting.

DEMOS AND EXERCISES: Demos are set up once during class and cannot be repeated or made up. Exercises must be completed by the deadline for informal mid-project crits and will not be graded if late.

READINGS, WRITTEN RESPONSES, PRESENTATIONS, AND LECTURES: It is important that you complete the readings on time and come prepared for discussion. Readings will accompany each section of the course and will be available to students as pdfs online. Students must PRINT OUT the readings for discussion. It is also imperative that students play an active role in discussion by sharing their thoughts and responding to others’ comments. This is an important part of your participation grade. Writing responses will be accepted until the proposal due date, but will receive a lowered grade for each day after the deadline. Presentations and lectures cannot be made up and will not be repeated.

PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS: Project and proposal due dates may only be changed for the class as a whole, not for individuals. Proposals turned in late will receive a lowered grade commensurate with the reason and extent of lateness. Proposals must always be turned in before the project is due. Projects that do not follow an approved
proposal cannot receive an A grade. **Projects that are not begun in class and worked on during allotted work days cannot receive an A grade. Late projects will not be critiqued and will receive a letter grade lower each day late.

**Critiques**: active, thoughtful, vocal participation is required of every student in critiques: you will be graded on the quality and consistency of your participation. Participation in critique should speak to your understanding of the course content and the context of the project as it was introduced in lecture and discussion as well as your close observation and reflection on the work. It also speaks to your investment in being an artist and working as part of a community. Work must be ready and installed for critique before the start of class, and you must be present. Critiques cannot be made up.

**Process Books**: Student will make a process book, dedicated solely to this course, that documents the material and conceptual research and experimentation surrounding each project. Process books will include demo notes, handouts, exercises, sketches, photos and clippings, material samples, project proposals, critique notes, and other information (written, visual, material, or digital) that document process, product(s), and reflection on each project. Generally, if you are keeping up with and organizing the other requirements for the course in one place, your process book will take care of itself.

**Lectures**: Notice will be given as events are scheduled when students are required to attend guest lectures.

**Materials**: See attached list of required materials and tools and places to get them. Additionally, students will be expected to obtain, individually, the specific materials they choose to work with for each project. While material costs can vary greatly depending on student choices for the projects, I suggest you set aside some funds early on, expecting you will need to buy materials for each project.

**Evaluation Criteria**: Your work will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:
1) Fulfillment of project objectives and course expectations outlined above and on each project sheet
2) Conceptual rigor
3) Material inventiveness, risk-taking, experimentation
4) Research and documentation of the process, growth of the concept
5) Physical investment and appropriate craftsmanship, effective presentation strategies
6) Overall quality of the work and conflation of formal strategies, materials, and content

**Grading Format**:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goes well beyond all the requirements and expectations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets all of the requirements and expectations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets most of the requirements and expectations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets very few of the requirements and expectations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets virtually none of the requirements or expectations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Final Semester Grades** will be averaged as follows:

- Three projects: #1 20%, #2 20%, #3 20% 60%
- Overall participation: critiques, discussions, reading responses, use of work time 20%
- Overall quality of exercises, process, sketches, and proposal (process book) 20%

**Policies**:

**UF Policy on Grades and Grade Points**:
https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx

**University of Florida Absence Policy**:
https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx#absences

**Academic Honesty Policy**:
The University’s policies regarding academic honesty, the honor code, and student conduct will be enforced.

Academic Honesty: http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html#honesty
Honor Code: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php
Student Conduct: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
The instructor will assist any student to make appropriate accommodations for a disability. Please make an appointment to discuss how to request classroom accommodation by registering with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation that you can provide to the Instructor to obtain appropriate accommodations. You may also directly contact the Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office:
email: accessuf@dso.ufl.edu  office: 0001 Building 0020 (Reid Hall)

UF COUNSELING AND WELLNESS SERVICES:
University Counseling & Wellness Center 3190 Radio Road P.O. Box 112662, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-4100 Phone: 352-392-1575  Web: http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/

CLASS DEMEANOR POLICIES:
- Inappropriate or disrespectful behavior in the class areas shall result, minimally, in a request to leave class.
- No cell phones in the classroom and sculpture shops. No headphones during class or in the sculpture shops.
- Laptops, smart phones, tablets may only be used for class-related research and class projects. Students using laptops for other purposes will lose the privilege of having a laptop in class. None of these devices should be used when working in the shop.
- Students are required to use their ufl.edu email for all course electronic communication. Students are required to check and maintain their ufl.edu account. Students will be held responsible for all updates, announcements, and other communications sent to their ufl.edu accounts.
- The instructor, the Art Department, and UF assume no responsibility for student work or materials left in any sculpture areas after the course has ended. Students are responsible for getting all materials, tools, and projects out of the sculpture area by the end of our final meeting. Student grades may be withheld for failure to do so.
- Projects/materials are to be stored in assigned places only. Projects and related materials must be removed from the sculpture area directly following each critique. Finished projects may not be stored in the sculpture area. Projects must be de-installed from exhibition spaces before the deadline and during allocated times, or grades may be reduced.
- Each student is responsible for ensuring that his/her projects and materials are safely stored, displayed, and installed as if for public exhibition. Projects that are not installed in a safe and secure manner will be taken down. Projects must be set up and removed at the times and spaces designated for each project. Since other classes share the classroom, and other artists are counting on the exhibition spaces, it is important that students respectfully install and remove work in the time allotted for each critique and repair alterations to the spaces promptly.
- Please address your concerns, problems, and questions regarding this class to the instructor. Outside class, I am available during office hours, by making an appointment a couple of days in advance, or through email. If you need help or have concerns, or if you are having trouble keeping up, please arrange a meeting to discuss the issue.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND RESPONSIBILITY:
1. Informed, environmentally-aware practices and material choice and use are an important concern of contemporary art practice and this course.
2. The goal of the SA+AH Health and Safety Program is to protect the health and welfare of all faculty, staff, and students and to cooperate with the University of Florida’s Department of Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S). The SA+AH Health & Safety Policy and Handbook website gives all policies and training information regarding health and safety in the art studios. All students must follow the policies in the handbook, receive proper training, sign the signature page, and submit the signature page to the SA+AH Director of Operations, FA Bldg C, Room 103, no later than the third meeting date of the course.
3. SA+AH H&S policy and handbook http://www.arts.ufl.edu/art/healthandsafety
4. See attached forms for sculpture area rules, regulations, best practices, and inherent hazards.