

COURSE INFORMATION

Special Studies / SPRING 2026 / ART 3339 / CRN: 28325

Class Meetings / Location: Prospect RM #218

Class Hours: Independent study, bi-weekly meetings to be determined individually

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Manuel Guerra

Office: Fox Fine Arts Building (FOXA) Room 260A

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 11:30 – 1:00 pm

Office phone: 915-747-5181

E-mail address: gmanuel@utep.edu

INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTION

Manuel Guerra is your instructor for this course. He holds three degrees including an Associate of Arts degree from El Paso Community College, a B.F.A degree from the University of Texas- El Paso and an M.F.A from the State University of New York-Albany. His work has been shown throughout the United States, Mexico, and Europe. His drawings and prints are included mutually in museums and private collections.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Special studies allow the student the opportunity to propose an individual course of study and develop a consistent body of work exhibiting a high level of achievement. This body of work will be art related. The proposed project will be discussed at the beginning of the semester, as well as a bi-weekly schedule that best serves the students' needs and schedule. Students taking the class are expected to work with a high degree of focus, proficiency, and independence. Students enrolling in this course are expected to be committed to exploring their project and its possibilities, and are willing to invest the necessary time, effort, and attention in meeting these goals. Students should expect to devote eight hours of work per week to successfully completing the quantity and quality of the proposed project.

The instructor's role is as a guide, coach and reasonably questioning audience. Excellent visual imagery will be expected for art production, and a finished version of the chosen approach will be expected at semester's end. A more detailed plan will be discussed in person. However, this plan is only to maintain some order in what will be a highly improvised, self-directed course.

Students will keep a sketchbook as a tool for developing images and concepts. Critiques will be held for comparative evaluation and critical feedback regarding in-progress and finished work. Communication is important! Your work and participation are required at each critique.

COURSE PREREQUISITE INFORMATION

Students taking ART3339 are required to have instructor approval.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Students in ART 3339 can expect to produce a consistent body of work exhibiting a high level of aesthetic, conceptual, and technical achievement, along with further refinement and maturing of the ability to critically assess works of art. Expansion of the student's knowledge of contemporary art and artists, with the ability to place their work within that context.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete this course can expect to:

- have created a body of work that shows consistency of image, concept, and technical development at a high level of achievement.
- have developed an expansive knowledge of contemporary and historical artists and issues relevant to their proposed project.
- have elevated their critical skills relevant to the discussion and analysis of artworks.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The proposed project will be reviewed and graded throughout the semester. The number of works submitted must show evidence as agreed upon in their proposal. Students are responsible for keeping me up to date with the project they are working on outside of class. I won't accept work done exclusively outside of class unless I have seen evidence of the work in progress. Artist proposal / statement is due before the start of their project.

COURSE EVALUATION AND GRADING

The proposed project will be reviewed and graded throughout the semester. Proposed project will be graded on the overall quality and quantity of work agreed upon, as well as on progress made with content and execution.

Proposed project grades will be based on:

1. Aesthetic/visual strength of your work: visual interest, artistic skills, compositional decisions, choice and use of materials, etc.
2. Conceptual strength of the work: originality, creativity, self-reliance, awareness of contemporary art issues.
3. Degree of growth, effort, experimentation, and ambition.
4. Thoroughness of execution to include use of materials, craftsmanship, and presentation.
5. Artist Proposal / Statement.
6. Amount of work completed.
7. Completion of work on time.
8. Presentation of ideas, sources, and influences through sketchbook work and research.
9. Work ethic throughout the semester. Includes the amount of time devoted to the proposed project and being prepared with ideas.
10. Critique participation*

*Participation means arriving prepared and on time for critiques and contributing insightful comments to the conversation.

Course Grading:

Plagiarism and/or cheating will result in a failing grade for this course and disciplinary action.

Relative to studio artwork, direct copying of another artist's image and passing it off as your own original work is plagiarism, and if the original artwork has a copyright, it may be illegal. Do not submit work under your name that you did not do yourself. **In addition, you may not submit work for this class that you completed for another class.**

A: 90-100%, B: 80-89%, C: 70-79%, D: 60-69%, and F: Below 60%.

COURSE POLICIES

It is the student's responsibility to fulfill the proposed project agreement to the best of their ability. If a student is unclear about any aspect of the syllabus, they should seek clarification from the instructor.

Your regular bi-weekly attendance is required, and you must be prepared with in-depth work and ideas for each meeting. Attendance will be taken. It is essential that you attend every meeting, arrive on time, and have work set up for review.

- Students are allowed 3 unexcused absences during the semester without penalty. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to notify me. Please contact me via email ASAP to obtain any pertinent information you may have missed.
- After 3 unexcused absences, your final grade will be lowered one letter grade per additional absence. For example, a final grade of "A" becomes a "B" with 4 absences, a "C" with 5 absences, a "D" with 6 absences, and so on. Students with more than 5 unexcused absences should consider dropping the course and retaking it when they can commit proper attention.
- Absences may be excused with proper notification for documented serious illness, death in the immediate family, or university-sanctioned events.
- Scheduled appointments, transportation problems, and job demands are not excused absences.
- It should be noted that accumulating 6 or more absences, regardless of whether your absences are excused or unexcused, is still considered excessive and may result in you receiving a "D" or "F" in the course. At this point, you have missed valuable meetings, and I can't justify giving you a higher grade. Dropping or retaking the course may be the best option for you.
- Excessive tardies can also affect your grade in the course. Arriving to meetings late, and not having work set up to be reviewed – all count as tardy.
- How much your tardies affect your grade will be up to the instructor, but accumulating excessive tardies is equivalent to being absent, as you are consistently missing valuable meetings. This situation can mean the difference between an "A" and a "B".
- If you are late, it may result in you not being able to critique that day and/or receiving a reduced grade for that meeting.

ILLNESS PRECAUTIONS

Please stay home if you have symptoms of a communicable illness. If you are feeling unwell, please notify me as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate accommodations.

When absent, a student must stay current with missed work and stay in contact with the instructor regarding health status, recovery, and anticipated return to class. Please use your UTEP email account and email me at gumanuel@utep.edu to stay in touch.

COURSE DROP POLICY

I will not drop you from the course. However, if you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the [Registrar's Office](#) to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an "F" for the course.

INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY

Incompletes or "I" grades will be considered for students completing satisfactory or better work and having serious legitimate situations beyond their control requiring additional time to complete the course requirements. All "I" grades are at the discretion of the instructor and the approval of the Departmental Chair.

ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students who become pregnant may also request reasonable accommodations, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy. Accommodations that constitute undue hardship are not reasonable. To make a request, please register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact CASS at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person without giving sufficient credit, taking an examination for another person, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit <https://www.utep.edu/studentaffairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html> or <https://www.utep.edu/hoop/section2/student-conduct-and-discipline.html>

Relative to studio artwork, direct copying of another artist's image and passing it off as your own original work is plagiarism, and if the original artwork has a copyright, it may be illegal. Do not submit work under your name that you did not do yourself. **In addition, you may not submit work for this class that you completed for another class.**

GUIDANCE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly AI art generators, is only allowed with approval from the instructor BEFORE being used. **Without permission, you will be expected to think creatively and critically to complete proposed project without assistance from these tools.**

With permission, the AI art generator can be used for inspiration during the brainstorming stages of the proposed art project, and for occasional reference, but may not be used solely on its own, or repeatedly, to generate your artwork throughout the semester. Keep in mind that AI-generated ideas are not your own and may hinder your ability to think critically and creatively about a problem. Use sparingly, and if given permission to use any of these tools, students must properly cite and give full credit to the program used upon submission of the assignment and during critiques with their classmates.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support. Please refer to the QR code below for a listing of campus resources or visit https://www.utep.edu/advising/student_resources/student-successresource-hub.html



RUBIN CENTER

The Rubin Center for the Visual Arts is UTEP's contemporary art gallery; each semester, the Rubin features exhibitions of contemporary art by artists from around the world, working in diverse media. The Rubin also hosts family days, visiting artist workshops, public programs, and the annual student exhibition and biennial faculty exhibition for DoArt faculty. Every Rubin Center program and exhibition is free and open to the public. The Rubin also employs up to 10 paid student interns, most of whom are DoArt majors. The Rubin is located between Fox Fine Arts and the UTEP Miners' stadium, just beside the Sun Bowl Garage. Updates about exhibitions and programs can be found on the website: <https://www.utep.edu/rubin/> or on the center's Instagram page @el.rubincenter. Paid student internships at the Rubin Center are posted on the university's Handshake page.

Hours are:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, 10 am to 5 pm

Thursday, 10 am to 7 pm

Saturday, 11 am to 3 pm (except on home football game days)

COURSE SUPPLIES

Proposed project work done on basic drawing pad sheets or on newsprint are not acceptable for finished work and use of them will affect your grade. Additionally, you should always have a sketchbook with you for every meeting.

You should also have a portfolio or a sturdy tube large enough to hold your work without folding or bending it. In most cases, the student will choose the materials and surfaces, although works on basic drawing pad sheets or newsprint will not be accepted as finished work. Some assigned work may require specific materials.

Art supplies can be bought at Hobby Lobby, Michaels, Dick Blick (dickblick.com), or Art Center & Signs (show your ID for a discount). Other online art stores are Utrecht Art Supplies (utrechtart.com) and Jerry's Artarama (jerrysartarama.com). For online paper sources, look to Acuity Papers (acuitypapers.com), including Hiromi Paper (hiromipaper.com), Legion Paper (legionpaper.com), Takach Paper (takachpaper.com), and Washi Arts (washiart.com).

Syllabus acknowledgement and course contract acceptance

Special Studies 3339 • CRN 28325 • Spring 2026

I have received and reviewed the attached syllabus for this course. I understand the course structure, grading / attendance policies, as well as the active role in my own learning. I have had the opportunity to ask questions for clarification and I understand and agree with the conditions of this syllabus.

Name (print) _____

UTEP Student ID# _____

Signature _____

Date _____