

COURSE INFORMATION

Special Problems in Drawing / SPRING 2026 / DRAW 4328 / CRN: 20898

Class Location: Fox Fine Arts Center, Room A453

Class Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 4:30 PM-7:20 PM

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Marianna Olague

E-mail: mtolague@utep.edu

Office Hours: MW 11:30 AM-12:30 PM. Best by appointment.

Office Location: Fox Fine Arts Center, Room A453

Virtual Office: Zoom via Blackboard. By appointment only.

INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTION

Marianna Olague holds an MFA in Painting from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. She received her BA in Drawing from UTEP. Olague has exhibited in museums and galleries across the United States, including Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and Washington, DC. Her work is included in numerous private and public collections, notably the El Paso Museum of Art and Cranbrook Art Museum. Olague's painting, *Customer Service Representative, 2020*, was included in the *Outwin 2022, American Portraiture Today* exhibition, which opened at the Smithsonian Museum's National Portrait Gallery and traveled through 2024. Olague recently served as the inaugural Artist-in-Residence at the El Paso Mexican American Cultural Center in 2025. She was also awarded a Chinati Foundation Residency in Marfa, TX, in 2021. Olague currently exhibits with David Klein Gallery in Ferndale, Michigan. Find her at mariannaolague.com or on Instagram @marianna.olague.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Special Problems in Drawing allows advanced drawing students the opportunity to propose an individual course of study and develop a consistent body of work that demonstrates a high level of achievement. Students in 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 the possibilities within the drawing discipline and willing to invest the necessary time, effort, and attention to meet these goals.

To successfully complete the quantity and quality of drawings expected for this course, students should expect to devote a minimum of six hours of work per week, outside of class, in addition to our in-class studio time. The hours outside of class should be spent obtaining drawing supplies, doing prep work and research, sketching, and working on drawings for your portfolio.

Course grades will be based on two portfolios of work and writing assignments designed to acquaint students with well-known artists, developments in contemporary art and drawing, and their artistic practice. Students will keep a sketchbook as a tool for developing images and concepts. Slide lectures will be presented to provide examples, ideas, and influences. Critiques will be held for comparative evaluation and critical feedback regarding in-progress and finished work. Your work and participation are required at each critique.

COURSE PREREQUISITE INFORMATION

DRAW 4318 or instructor approval.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Students in DRAW 4328 can expect to produce a consistent body of work that demonstrates a high level of aesthetic, conceptual, and technical achievement, along with further refinement and maturation of the ability to critically assess works of art. They will also expand their knowledge of contemporary art and artists and learn 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 the drawing discipline.
- have elevated their critical skills relevant to the discussion and analyzing of artworks.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Two portfolios will be reviewed and graded during the semester. The number of drawings required for each portfolio must demonstrate 6-7 weeks' worth of work (depending on the class schedule) and at least 12 hours of work (in and out of class) per week. You will also use Blackboard to submit your writing assignments and images of your completed portfolios for review and grading. Students are responsible for keeping me up to date with drawings they are working on outside of class. I won't accept portfolios containing work done exclusively outside of class unless I have seen evidence of the work in progress. The first portfolio will be due around the midterm, and the second portfolio will be due the last week of classes. Writing assignments will be due every 3-4 weeks throughout the semester.

As mentioned, each portfolio must be submitted on Blackboard. To do this, please compile high-resolution images of your work into a single PDF for easy viewing. One image per drawing is required, though additional images are welcome. Even if I have seen your work in class and during critiques, it must still be uploaded to Blackboard by the deadline for grading. When photographing your artwork, make sure the visible edges of the paper or piece are included, and photograph your work against a white background only.

COURSE EVALUATION AND GRADING

Individual drawings will not be graded. Instead, portfolios will be graded on the overall quality and quantity of work completed, as well as on progress made with content and execution.

Your portfolio grades will be based on:

1. Aesthetic/visual strength of your work: visual interest, drawing 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 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 in class. Includes the amount of time devoted to drawing, staying off your phone, class conduct, and being prepared with materials and ideas.

10. Critique participation*

*Participation means arriving prepared and on time for critiques, staying attentive (like staying off your phone), and contributing insightful comments to the conversation.

Along with two portfolios, several writing assignments will be given during the semester. Details for each writing assignment will be provided on Blackboard and graded on an A, B, C, D, F scale.

Course Grading:

Midterm Portfolio 40%

Final Portfolio 40%

Writing Assignments 20% combined

Doubling students, please note that on each portfolio due date, you will be submitting two separate portfolios, each containing an appropriate amount of work, and for portfolio critiques, you will be showing two separate groups of work (one for each class). Also, each time you are assigned a writing assignment, you must complete 2, corresponding to each course or portfolio.

Late portfolio and writing submissions on Blackboard will incur a penalty of -20 points each day the work is late. If you miss the midterm critique or the final critique, -50 points will be removed from the final grade for each day the student is missing from the critique. Adjustments to the final grade will be made, if necessary, to reflect the student's attendance record. Plagiarism and/or cheating will result in a failing grade for this course and disciplinary action.

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 all class requirements to the best of their ability. If a student is unclear about any aspect of the syllabus, they should seek clarification from the instructor.

You are being graded not just on the work submitted in your portfolio, but also on your work ethic in class. Therefore, your regular attendance is required, and you must be prepared with ideas and materials for each class. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. It is impossible to make up information presented in slide lectures, critiques, demonstrations, and other class activities, so it is essential that you attend every class, arrive on time, and stay until the end.

- 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 course 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 class and lecture time, 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 class late (after roll is taken), leaving early, or being late from break – 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 class time. Being late to every class, or every other class, can mean the difference between an “A” and a “B”.
- Coming to class without the necessary materials or not working while attending class is also considered absent.

- In addition to requiring your attention during critiques, you must also be on time for each critique session. If you are late, it may result in you not being able to critique that day and/or receiving a reduced grade on the assignment. This policy also applies if you are seen using your phone during the critique.
- Absolutely no texting or social media during class time. If a student is found violating this policy, a verbal warning will be given at first; if found violating the policy a second time, a ½ absence will be recorded for the day.
- Do not stream video content while working, either, as it can be distracting to you and those around you.
- Music is not allowed during any instruction, lecture, or critique, but students may listen to music while working/drawing. The music should be played at a low volume with headphones (preferably one earbud only) so as not to disturb other students.

- No food is allowed in the drawing studio.
- Students are allowed one 15-minute break per class session at the halfway point. Everyone must take their break at the same time.
- Help keep the drawing studio clean by cleaning up after yourself at the end of each class session.

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.

It is the student's sole responsibility to catch up on information missed during an absence. When absent, a student must stay current with missed work and assignments 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 mtolague@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/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html> or <https://www.utep.edu/hoop/section-2/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 assignments without assistance from these tools.

With permission, the AI art generator can be used for inspiration during the brainstorming stages of an 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-success-resource-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

Students should have a portfolio or a sturdy tube large enough to hold their work without folding or bending it. It is strongly recommended that each student have a variety of black, white, and colored drawing materials, along with an assortment of papers for experimentation. Other materials to bring to class include scissors, rulers, an X-acto knife, adhesives, masking tape, erasers, and more. Each student must have their own set of materials; borrowing from others is not allowed. Appropriate materials are required at each class session. Drawings done on basic drawing pad sheets or on newsprint are not acceptable for finished work, and their use will affect your portfolio grade. Additionally, you should always have a sketchbook with you for every class.

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 include 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). Dick Blick is also a good place to purchase paper.

Suggested text: *Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art Series*

COURSE CALENDAR

The course schedule is subject to change. Class days are devoted to studio work, slide lectures, critiques, and/or demos unless noted otherwise. Due date changes for assigned work, in-progress work, and additional critiques may be added to the calendar.

JANUARY

Week 1

Tues, Jan 20	Classes begin. Review the syllabus. Getting started.
Thur, Jan 22	Class and studio workday.
Week 2	
Tues, Jan 27	Class and studio workday.
Thur, Jan 29	Class and studio workday. <u>Writing Assignment 1 due.</u>
FEBRUARY	
Week 3	
Tues, Feb 3	Class and studio workday.
Thur, Feb 5	Class and studio workday.
Week 4	
Tues, Feb 10	Class and studio workday.
Thur, Feb 12	Class and studio workday.
Week 5	
Tues, Feb 17	Class and studio workday.
Thur, Feb 19	Workday. <u>Writing Assignment 2 due.</u>
Week 6	
Tues, Feb 24	Class and studio workday.
Thur, Feb 26	Class and studio workday.
MARCH	
Week 7	
Tues, Mar 3	<u>Midterm Portfolio due for critique</u>
Thur, Mar 5	<u>Midterm Portfolio due for critique</u>
Week 8	
Tues, Mar 10	Class and studio workday.
Thur, Mar 12	Class and studio workday.
Week 9	
Mon, Mar 16-20	Spring Break.
Week 10	
Tues, Mar 24	Class and studio workday.
Thur, Mar 26	Class and studio workday.
Week 11	
Tues, Mar 31	Class and studio workday.
Thur, Apr 2	Class and studio workday. Spring drop deadline is Thurs, April 2 nd .
APRIL	
Week 12	
Tues, Apr 7	Class and studio workday.
Thur, Apr 9	Class and studio workday. <u>Writing Assignment 3 due.</u>
Week 13	
Tues, Apr 14	Class and studio workday.
Thur, Apr 16	Class and studio workday.
Week 14	
Tues, Apr 21	Class and studio workday.
Thur, Apr 23	Class and studio workday.
Week 15	
Tues, Apr 28	Class and studio workday.
Thur, Apr 30	Class and studio workday.
MAY	
Week 16	
Tues, May 5	<u>Final Portfolio due for critique. Writing Assignment 4 due by midnight.</u>
Thur, May 7	<u>Final Portfolio due for critique.</u> Last day of class.
Week 17	
May 11 – 15	Spring Final Exams week. No class meetings. Final Portfolio critique & submission is your final exam.