

# USCRoski ART 314 - Illustration for Art and Design

Spring 2022  
Location: WAH 118 or online  
Friday 12-2:40 PM PST Units: 2  
Class Requirements: None

Instructor: Sam Alden  
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Office hours by appointment, Saturday and Sunday

Attribution note:

This curriculum was originally designed by Angie Wang, and much of the following content and language are reproduced (with permission) from her syllabus in an effort to replicate the success of her wonderful Illustration for Art and Design class. Take any class from her that you can!

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of this class is to provide the space and guidance for each student to develop a personal voice and a basic technical ability in the narrative visual art of illustration. Each student will finish the class with a grasp on the fundamentals of visual communication, composition, drafting, color theory, and other skills inherent to the illustration medium, as well as the confidence to use those tools to make work which is personally significant to them, and the practical and professional knowledge to pursue further illustration work. Materially, each student will produce 7-10 completed illustrations.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- An internet connection and a computer capable of running Zoom.
- Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required
- Since all homework assignments will be delivered digitally as high resolution TIFs, PSDs, MP4s, or GIFs, a computer or tablet (iPad Pro, Surface Pro, etc) and basic knowledge of Adobe Photoshop, Procreate, Adobe Illustrator, and/or equivalents (GIMP, Clip Studio) will be necessary. If students choose to work on the assignments using traditional media, some familiarity with scanning at high resolutions or taking photographs will be needed. Since we will be using magmastudio.io for interactive lectures over Zoom, a tablet or equivalent hardware for digital drawing is strongly recommended.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Co-Requisites:** none

**Concurrent Enrollment:** None

**Recommended preparation:** Any drawing, painting, graphic design, creative writing or other visual/allegorical classes or personal practice.

## ASSIGNMENTS

This is subject to change but generally, I'll assign a new illustration on a theme each Friday. You'll have until **Thursday at 5pm the following week to turn in finished artwork**. Occasionally, I'll ask for sketches and in-progress work to be brought before the class for discussion before going to final.

For the **midterm project**, you will make a full illustration on a theme to be determined by the entire class. We will discuss the midterm topic at around the halfway point of the semester. Everyone in the class will participate in brainstorming potential topics. I'll narrow it down to several options, and we will all vote on the topic that will be the

theme for everyone in class to interpret. This should be an exercise in approaching a theme in a way that resonates for yourself while maintaining a sense of personal ownership and agency over the illustration.

The **final project** is a chance for you to create a completely self-directed illustration project. We will begin brainstorming towards the end of class and we'll spend class time working on it until the last class. It could be a capstone piece for your portfolio to be used in promo materials you send out, a small illustrated zine about all the cars you've ever loved, a pitch with sample spreads for a children's book you want to create, a 5-second looping animated GIF about your experiences with meditation, scientific illustrations of an imaginary creature, several key Major Arcana tarot card designs, a website exploring LGBTQ+ history, a faux-tapestry of your original characters exploring an alien landscape, a visual encapsulation of the feeling of summer... anything. Be ambitious, but have fun. Once you have your idea, I will give feedback and/or the green light. During the sketch stage, you will also receive input from the class at the large group critique. The final versions will be due over email. We will hold an exhibition of all the finished projects in our last class (during final exam week).

## CLASS STRUCTURE

Generally, we'll begin each class with a short discussion, workshop or lecture related to the theme of the week. Then, as often as possible, we'll have a work period. Sometimes I'll hand out assignments that you can start in-class and finish throughout the week, and sometimes we'll have exercises designed to be finished in-class either individually or as a group.



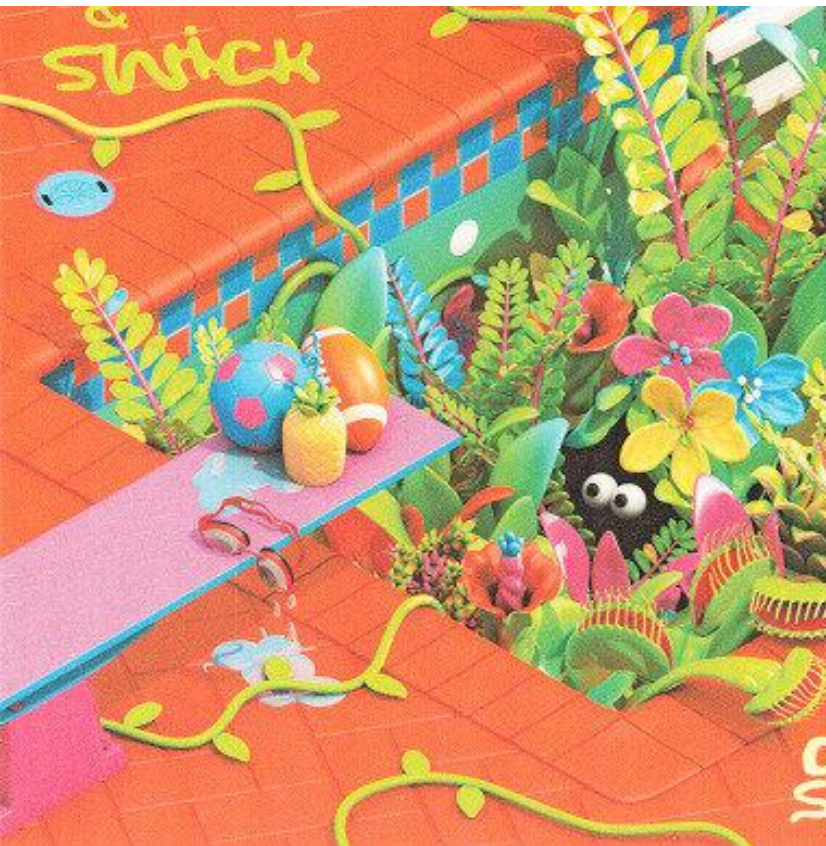
## MATERIALS

Unless the assignment explicitly states otherwise, you can make your illustrations using any media, materials or processes that you like. Many illustrators still work in pen, pencil, ink, watercolor, gouache, and paint– and as daunting as it may seem to work without an undo button, there are honestly many advantages to learning these methods. Some illustrators prefer the state of mind that comes from working in physical media– and you are guaranteed an organic, unique line and texture that 3 decades of technological advance are still simply unable to replicate. Many first-time illustrators may have a hard time using digital tools to create the texture, depth, and warmth that’s already baked-into physical media.

But! It would be dishonest to pretend that Photoshop, Procreate, Astropad, and Illustrator aren’t equally joyful, freeing tools in their own way, and even traditional illustrators still need a working knowledge of digital drawing tools. I encourage you to make illustrations in whatever way seems like a fun challenge, and to not fear experimentation.



Just as an example, here's a piece by Kelly Pousette that was made by cutting paper collage dioramas out of watercolor paintings—



And here's a piece by Jordan Speer that was modeled and painted in 3D software, printed out using a cheap Laserjet printer, and then painted over with water to create a hand-made texture. All this is to say: don't be afraid to play around and find a process that works for you.

# CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

Please show up for class on time– I prefer to wait for everyone to arrive before moving the show along, so it eats into everyone else’s schedule when people are late. If you are unable to make it to class because of extenuating circumstances– including mental health and any number of things that can go wrong– just send me an email before class begins saying that you won’t be able to make it. I don’t need to hear your reasons and won’t ask for them– I trust that if you need that time off, you need it. However, you will ultimately be responsible for catching up on reading or assignments that you may have missed that day.

This class is meant to be a welcoming and respectful environment, so please keep all criticism constructive and respectful. Avoid making assumptions about your classmates’ backgrounds, histories and perspectives, and do your best to give people the benefit of the doubt when engaging on sensitive topics.

Everyone’s correct names and pronouns will be respected. Of course, racist, homophobic, sexist, ableist, transphobic or otherwise discriminatory remarks or work will not be allowed. If you behave in a way I judge to be rude or harmful I’ll assume good faith, but we’ll have a talk, and I reserve the right to call a situation as I see it. Repeated, willful hurtful actions will be considered fair grounds for expulsion from the class. **Be cool!**

Plagiarism is obviously forbidden. I’ll be encouraging everyone to use visual reference, but if you’re turning in someone else’s artwork as your own, it’s plagiarism and will affect your grade. If you’re in doubt– just ask.

Here’s USC’s official language:

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

# SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

When turning in sketches for review, a clean, legible photo of physical art is perfectly acceptable (although a scan is preferable if you have the equipment). **For final artwork, a clean scan at 300dpi or higher is required.** Final art must be TIFFs, PNGs or equivalent (smaller formats like JPEG end up very lossy, especially when turning in high-contrast ink artwork). If you will need help scanning your work or finding access to a scanner, just reach out.

When uploading pieces please follow this format:

Sam\_Sketches01.jpg  
Sam\_Final01.tiff

**Assignments must be in your Google Drive by 5pm the day they are due.** This is a hard deadline and if you miss it, I won't be giving feedback on that piece, and will automatically dock your grade by 5%. I'm copying Angie's language on this issue because she puts it really precisely:

"It is of critical importance to be on time with your illustrations. In the working world, magazine issues close, books have production schedules and printing deadlines, TV shows need the art so they can send it to Korea for animation and the production coordinator can go home to her family, art directors stay late panicking and trying to find a photo to replace your late illustration in the newspaper, or the client pays rush fees to the printer because your late illustration delayed everything. It costs other professionals money, time, and stress when you're late."

"I don't do this because I love arbitrary rules and hate you. The deductions from your grade stand as representations of the quiet professional black marks against you in the real world for being late--the clients that don't complain but don't come back, the reputation that spreads when art directors or other artists discuss you, the shrinking of work opportunities, etc"

## GRADING

I will be grading based on personal growth and effort, rather than comparing your performance to others in the class. If you can demonstrate that you're trying your best, you'll be fine.

Grading Breakdown:  
15% participation  
60% weekly assignments  
10% Midterm  
15% Final

Grading scale:  
A Minimum 95%  
A- Minimum 90%  
B+ Minimum 87%  
B Minimum 83%  
B- Minimum 80%  
C+ Minimum 77%

C Minimum 73%  
C- Minimum 70%  
D+ Minimum 67%  
D Minimum 60%  
F Below 60%

## RESOURCES

I'm including a list of links and resources provided by either USC or another organization, which I mostly copied from Keith Mayerson's syllabus. Please also feel free to send me an email if there's anything that I can do to help manage the class.

### **Counseling and Mental Health**

(213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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### **Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services**

(RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

### **Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)**

(213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

### **Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment**

(213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](http://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

### **The Office of Disability Services and Programs**

(213) 740-0776

[dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

[campussupport.usc.edu](http://campussupport.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic



issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

### **Diversity at USC**

(213) 740-2101

[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

### **USC Emergency**

UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

### **Crisis Text Line (USA-only)**

Text HOME to 741741

[Crisistextline.org](http://Crisistextline.org)

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Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the United States, anytime. Crisis Text Line is here for any crisis. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds, all from our secure online platform. The volunteer Crisis Counselor will help you move from a hot moment to a cool moment.

### **The Warmline (California-only)**

(855)845-7415 (call)

[www.mentalhealthsf.org/peer-run-warmline](http://www.mentalhealthsf.org/peer-run-warmline)

The Peer-Run Warm Line is a non-emergency resource for anyone in California seeking mental and emotional support. We provide assistance via phone and web chat on a nondiscriminatory basis to anyone in need. Some concerns callers share are challenges with interpersonal relationships, anxiety, pain, depression, finances, alcohol/drug use, Etc.

# SCHEDULE

<p><b>Week 1</b> F 1/14</p>	<p>Introductions, orientation</p> <p>Skill: Researching, brainstorming and mind maps</p> <p>Exercise: Illustration from start to finish</p>
<p><b>Week 2</b> S 1/21</p>	<p>Skill: technique analysis, taking sketches to final, rendering</p> <p>Exercise: 6 shapes</p>
<p><b>Week 3</b> F 2/4</p>	<p>Skill: Advanced brainstorming and conceptualization part I (basic principles of visual metaphor)</p> <p>Exercise: 50 thumbnails</p>
<p><b>Week 4</b> F 2/11</p>	<p>Skill: Advanced brainstorming and conceptualization part II (rendering complex subjects with sensitivity)</p> <p>Exercise: Sensitive topic illustration</p>
<p><b>Week 5</b> W 2/18</p>	<p>Skill: Advanced rendering (analysis and breakdown of techniques using instructor inspiration)</p> <p>Exercise: Illustration 2 ways, part 1</p> <p>Discussion: Midterm Topic</p> <p>breakdown of techniques using student inspiration)</p> <p>Exercise: Illustration 2 ways, part 2</p> <p>Small group critique: Midterm sketches</p>
<p><b>Week 6</b> F 2/25</p>	<p>Skill: Advanced rendering part II (analysis and</p>

<p><b>Week 7</b> F 3/4</p>	<p>Class critique: Midterm finals</p>
<p><b>Week 8</b> F 3/11</p>	<p>Skill: Abstraction, markmaking, emotion</p>

<p><b>Week 9</b> F 3/18</p>	<p><b>NO CLASS - SPRING RECESS</b></p>
<p><b>Week 10</b> F 3/25</p>	<p>Skill: Voice development and focus Discussion: Write down themes in your work and then discuss in small group</p>
<p><b>Week 11</b> F 4/1</p>	<p>Skill: Voice experimentation Discussion: How do you want to evolve your work?</p>
<p><b>Week 12</b> F 4/8</p>	<p>Discussion: Career day! Ethics/responsibility, community, labor, illustration in the world</p>
<p><b>Week 13</b> F 4/15</p>	<p>Exercise: The worst drawing ever Workshop: Final project brainstorm, ideation, thumbnails, sketches</p>
<p><b>Week 14</b> F 4/22</p>	
<p><b>Week 15</b> F 4/29</p>	<p>Workshop: WIP finals Last day of class!</p>
<p><b>FINAL</b> Date and time TBD</p>	<p>Final project class critique &amp; exhibition</p>