

COMIC + SEQUENTIAL ART (SA) | Ryder Windham, Certificate Advisor

This program provides students with the opportunity to explore the history, scholarship and assembly of words and pictures that combine to become compelling visual narratives. With core lessons in drawing, story-telling and computer-based workflow, the program allows for the creation of an eye-catching portfolio that will entice editors and publishers. Whether you call them strips, comic books or graphic novels, you will learn the creative and technical aspects of this unique art form that has become an undeniable presence in contemporary popular culture.

ADVISOR BIO:

Ryder Windham: BFA, Illustration/Graphic Design, UMass/Dartmouth. A former comic book editor, freelance illustrator and graphic designer, Windham is the author of more than 70 published books, including many *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* titles. His clients include Dark Horse Comics, DK Publishing, Scholastic and Del Rey.

REQUIRED COURSES	PREREQUISITES	SEMESTER	HOURS
Foundation Level			
Drawing I	None	All	36
Introduction to Illustration	None	F	18
Two-Dimensional Design	None	All	36
Level One			
Designing Character	Foundation Level	W, SU	18
Creating Worlds	Foundation Level	W, SU	18
Writing + Drawing Comics I	Introduction to Illustration	SP	36
Digital Tools for Print Design	None	All	36
Level Two			
Adobe Photoshop I	Digital Tools for Print Design	All	36
Writing + Drawing Comics II	Level One	F	36
Digital Illustration Techniques	Adobe Photoshop I	W	18
Preliminary Portfolio Review	All above courses	*	
Professional Practices			
Professional Practices for the Visual Arts	None	W, SU	18
Portfolio			
Final Projects Studio: Comic + Sequential Art	All above courses	SP	36
Final Portfolio Review	All above courses	SP	
Electives			
Courses designated SA-E (varies by semester) totaling 90 contact hours	Level one	All	90

total contact hours: **432**

* Individually scheduled.

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FOUNDATION LEVEL

Drawing I

FOUND-2214

For amateur and professional alike, drawing skills are fundamental to the artist's visual education. Through guided practice, beginning students sharpen their powers of observation as they learn to translate what they see into drawings. Using basic tools and materials, students develop their drawing skills by exploring concepts such as line, form, value, proportion, perspective and composition. Through a series of graduated exercises, students learn to draw the figure, still lifes and the environment with confidence and prepare for further work in a variety of art media.

Introduction to Illustration

ILUS-3580

From Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* to Audubon's naturalist watercolors, to Mike Mignola's *Hellboy* creation, illustration encompasses many approaches to making pictures tell stories. This course introduces the fascinating relationship between image and text, and investigates the multi-faceted process of interpreting and translating words into pictures. Projects are designed to ignite the imagination, help students gain skills and gather information they need to begin illustrating. With a focus on children's books, comic books and natural science applications, students are able to tailor projects to their specific interests, and considerations of composition, medium, personal style and ways to draw and hold viewers' attention are part of the discussion. Additionally, the business side of illustration, including the art of marketing and pitching your work to publishing houses, is addressed.

Two-Dimensional Design

FOUND-1815

Design is the discipline underlying all forms of visual expression, and an understanding of two-dimensional design principles is the basis for all 2D art forms. This course introduces students to the formal elements of design: line, shape, pattern, value, texture, color and space. Working through a variety of challenging exercises, students use these elements to solve problems of visual organization. The placement of visual elements into an organized whole is the basis of composition, and skills acquired in this class have direct applications to anyone working in two-dimensional media, from advertising art directors to illustrators, interior designers and painters.

LEVEL ONE

Designing Character

ILUS-2202

How do you enhance a solid figure drawing and turn it into a wholly original character? This must-have course for illustrators of children's books, comics, animated cartoons and video games explores the techniques that illustrators and animators rely on to visualize a character from a script or narrative. Remember, Darth Vader started life as a verbal description before becoming a fully realized character. Beginning with an editorial description, students use historical, anatomic and cultural references to sketch their characters' identities as they invent and reinterpret both new and familiar concepts. Students review basic perspective techniques for background images as they become acquainted with the strict legal guidelines that govern all "licensed characters" (think the Grinch or Spider-Man), as well as with professional ethics surrounding work for hire.

Creating Worlds

ILUS-2292

Can you imagine Dorothy without the lure of Emerald City? Or Batman free of Gotham's gloomy alleys and rooftops? Setting is critical to the mood and pulse of a story, and this course introduces the importance of concept design to the environment that surrounds your hand-drawn characters. Here, students build on their existing knowledge of figure/ground relationships as they confidently render believable landscapes and interior spaces. Whether building these environments from observation or from photographic reference, students develop a renewed awareness for the ways that objects and space can contribute to compelling narratives. Animators, set designers and illustrators of all stripes stand to benefit from the lessons in perspective, scale and texture that are both fundamental to this class and critical in creating convincing, imagined worlds.

Writing + Drawing Comics I

ILUS-0924

Comics are no longer just for kids. Indeed, the medium can be used for almost any type of story, from humorous fables and genre fiction to biography and dream narratives. But how does a comic story – with all those panels of images and speech balloons – progress from concept to finished inks? Whether you are a visual artist with a tale to tell or a journalist who fills margins with doodles, this course offers the essentials of writing and drawing comics. Classes include a survey of selected comics, in-class demonstrations of scriptwriting and drawing techniques, individual guidance and group critiques, and homework assignments that encourage participants to develop original comic stories at their own pace. *Note: Basic drawing experience is helpful, but not required.*

Digital Tools for Print Design

DFOU-3543

This course helps novice users become more confident – and intermediate students more competent – with computer-based design. We introduce the Apple computer and its operating system along with Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign, and discuss the capture, transfer, manipulation and delivery of images. Proper digital workflow is revealed through class exercises and lecture, as students learn to output content for the printed page. Completion of this course provides you with valuable skill sets relied upon by all productive graphic designers, illustrators and draftsmen.

LEVEL TWO

Adobe Photoshop I

DFOU-2533

Whether images are scanned, photographed or digitally drawn, Adobe Photoshop is the industry-standard program for manipulating them. This introduction to Photoshop focuses on combining, retouching and modifying images through class exercises and projects in which students work with Photoshop tools like the airbrush, paintbrush, cloning and pattern stamps, eraser and crop tool. By the end of the course, students understand Photoshop's capabilities and are able to handle basic file formats and layers, combine images, and create effects using grayscale, color and filters.

Writing + Drawing Comics II

SEQ-2435

In this course, we examine the creation of longer-format comic art projects that go beyond the relatively few panels of a typical daily comic strip. We study continuity-oriented sequential art by individual authors, including *Barnaby* by Crockett Johnson, Hayao Miyazaki's *Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind*, *The Fun House* by Lynda Barry, *Bone* by Jeff Smith, *Quimby the Mouse* by Chris Ware, and Mike Mignola's *Hellboy*. As stylistically different as these works may be, the authors utilize a common visual language to create compelling page-turners. Pacing and rhythm are emphasized in support of a story arc that can expand from several strips to several issues. Experimentation with panel design and layout is also encouraged as students become familiar with a wide array of storytelling techniques and the professionals who employ them.

Digital Illustration Techniques

COMC-3569

All graphic artists need to accept the undeniable role that digital technology has assumed in the creation and delivery of illustrated works. Although never intended to replace pencil, ink, paper and paint, technology can introduce workflow options that complement those traditional tools. The Apple computer, scanner and printer are the primary components in this course in which students learn how a graphite drawing in a sketchbook can be transformed – with the deliberate use of Adobe Photoshop – into a dependable and transportable file. As the discussion of workflow unfolds, students are acquainted with the editorial judgments made by supervising art directors and publishers. It is a peek into both the technical process and the business decision-making needed by anyone accepting a contract to deliver a digital image.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Professional Practices for the Visual Arts

PRAC-2639

The practicing artist has no choice but to learn the survival skills necessary for a successful commercial art career. Specific topics covered in this six-session course include interacting with clients, financial planning and record keeping, billing and collections, copyrights, contracts and legal issues, marketing and promotion, and time management. Tax, accounting and legal experts serve as guest lecturers. The material covered is suitable for designers, illustrators, photographers, and all other commercial artists.

PORTFOLIO

Final Projects Studio: Comic + Sequential Art

ILUS-2436

Words plus pictures equals story, but the resulting narrative is far more than just the sum of its parts. Comics today are both art form and commodity; a commodity that is increasingly visible as grist for the media mill that includes animation, television productions, feature films and even children's toys. But before any notable success visits, you must first complete a compelling work of sequential art that embodies your skills and ideas. Hone your skills and add value to your training in comic art by understanding marketplace realities and the venues through which your work can be purchased, published and distributed. This final studio course combines generous advice and rigorous critiques from a practicing comics professional that will enhance your powers and prepare you to take the next bounding leap.