

**College of San Mateo**  
**Official Course Outline**

1. **COURSE ID:** ART 203    **TITLE:** Plein Air Painting

**Units:** 3.0 units    **Hours/Semester:** 24.0-27.0 Lecture hours; 72.0-81.0 Lab hours; and 48.0-54.0 Homework hours

**Method of Grading:** Grade Option (Letter Grade or P/NP)

**Recommended Preparation:**

Eligibility for ENGL 838 or ENGL 848

2. **COURSE DESIGNATION:**

**Degree Credit**

**Transfer credit:** CSU

3. **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:**

**Catalog Description:**

Students will learn the art of plein air by painting landscapes at various outdoor locations as well as attending lectures, demos and working on projects in the studio. All painting mediums are welcome. Students are responsible for their own transportation.

4. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME(S) (SLO'S):**

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:

1. Create plein air paintings based upon a strong understanding of studio art theory and techniques.
2. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of art history and how it relates to plein air painting, their own painting and various contemporary styles and movements.
3. Use painting as a critical thinking tool to examine, observe, discover and create what was previously unseen or unknown about themselves, art and their world.

5. **SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate skill in the use and technique of the painting media.
2. Analyze the landscape before them and create a composition from that scene, applying the basic elements of design and pictorial space.
3. Use color in a manner that is descriptive and works as part of a harmonious composition.
4. Execute a quick study in paint, (in one sitting) working outdoors in the landscape.

6. **COURSE CONTENT:**

**Lecture Content:**

1. Formal concepts of painting
  - A. Organize the illusion of space through the use of planes (foreground, middleground, deep space, etc) overlap, and both linear and atmospheric perspective.
  - B. Use grouping, value, texture, color and shape when composing the picture.
  - C. Color and value used to define form and to create light.
  - D. Use of line, shape, texture and pattern to simplify representational form.
2. Technique and Materials
  - A. Underpainting and use of tinted grounds.
  - B. Preparation, including the materials of painting and other gear necessary or useful for outdoor painting.
3. Choosing an appropriate location
  - A. Determining the subject of the painting
  - B. Choosing a composition and design that is expressive
  - C. Considerations of lighting and time of day, weather, etc.
4. Historical precedents
  - A. History of plein air painting
  - B. Plein aire painting in the SF bay area
  - C. Contemporary practitioners
5. Analyze and critique one's work and the work of others
  - A. Individual critiques by the instructor
  - B. Class critiques where students critique the work of their peers and discuss their own work

**Lab Content:**

1. Formal concepts of painting
2. Organizing the illusion of space through the use of planes (foreground, middleground, deep space, etc) overlap, and both linear and atmospheric perspective.
3. Use of grouping, value, texture, color and shape when composing the picture.
4. Color and value used to define form and to create light.
5. Use of line, shape, texture and pattern to simplify representational form.
6. Underpainting and use of tinted grounds.
7. Alla prima painting, wet on wet techniques.
8. Handling of materials, including brushes, painting knife, portable easel, paints, mediums and their applications.
9. Preparation, including the materials of painting and other gear necessary or useful for outdoor painting.
10. Choosing a location, a subject, the time of day, and lighting conditions.
11. Students will complete a minimum of twelve paintings, one from each location visited. These will include:
  - A. At least 1 sustained study, 16x20" or larger that was worked on at for two or more sittings.
  - B. At least 6 quick studies, of any size, executed in one sitting.

**7. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

Typical methods of instruction may include:

- A. Lecture
- B. Lab
- C. Activity
- D. Critique
- E. Discussion
- F. Field Trips
- G. Individualized Instruction
- H. Observation and Demonstration

**8. REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS**

Representative assignments in this course may include, but are not limited to the following:

**Writing Assignments:**

- A. Write a short paper of three to five pages explaining the main points emphasized in the text. Explain how your experience in painting outdoors has helped to make sense of these ideas. Also explain which concepts and/or techniques presented by the author have helped you most in your painting.
- B. Write an essay between 200 - 500 words explaining what you feel you have accomplished in this class and in what areas of plein air painting you feel that you need to improve on.
- C. Write a paper about your favorite style or movement in plein air painting and how your work fits into it.

**Reading Assignments:**

- A. Read the assigned chapters each week from the required text and take notes of those ideas that you feel you can use while painting.

**Other Outside Assignments:**

- A. Complete all paintings begun on location.
- B. Research the works of a favorite plein air painter (historical or contemporary) and incorporate at least one idea from their work into a painting. This can be a compositional idea, the use of color, the handling of paint, etc. Write a paper and present this orally to the class at one of the weekly class critiques. Include an example of the artist's work in your presentation, whether from a book, a print, or digital form.

**9. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF EVALUATION**

Representative methods of evaluation may include:

- A. Class Participation
- B. Class Work
- C. Field Trips
- D. Homework
- E. Lab Activities
- F. Oral Presentation
- G. Papers
- H. Portfolios
- I. Projects

J. Research Projects

10. **REPRESENTATIVE TEXT(S):**

Possible textbooks include:

- A. Vloothuis, J.. *Landscape Painting Essentials with Johannes Vloothuis: Lessons in Acrylic, Oil, Pastel and Watercolor* , 1 ed. North Light Books, 2015

**Origination Date:** November 2016

**Curriculum Committee Approval Date:** December 2016

**Effective Term:** Fall 2017

**Course Originator:** Rebecca Alex