



Temple of Vesta, Rome

J Tice



Owens House, Savannah, GA

J. Tice

### Arch 423/523 Media for Design Development: Watercolor Sketching

Instructor: Jim Tice

CRN: 30478, 30573

Credits: 3

Meeting times: Tuesday and Thursday ; 12:00 – 1:50

Location: 279 Lawrence

Prerequisite: Architecture Majors

Transparent watercolor is a painting technique that employs the white of the paper surface as an essential aspect of the painting. Either the white of the paper is “reserved,” meaning that it is simply not painted upon and thus left in its pure state, or it is allowed to reflect through one or more layers of watercolor pigments called washes achieving a luminosity that is highly valued and distinguishes this medium from other media. This approach can be contrasted with opaque painting methods where the medium is designed to cover the painted surface such as oils, gouache, and acrylics. In these latter methods highlights are APPLIED rather than RESERVED. The transparent watercolor technique is a highly prized method of painting requiring considerable skill that nonetheless has proven to be susceptible to sustained practice over time.

The transparent method is sometimes called the 'purist' approach to painting in that applications of white are discouraged (or strictly forbidden!). It has a long and distinguished history as evident in the work of the English Landscape School (J. M. W. Turner) where it was employed to capture fleeting, atmospheric effects and the more precise, articulated design tradition of the Beaux-Arts, where watercolor was used as a medium for design presentation and for documenting and accurately reconstructing historic monuments.

The primary reason for this course will be to develop transparent watercolor techniques as a design medium for architects and designers to both study and present architectural designs primarily through sketching. The course will explore means by which one can observe and document buildings and landscapes with a verisimilitude toward color and light. In the process we will strive to develop what Paul Klee calls the “thinking eye” which implies a knowing method of observation, documentation and design. Color and light will be the elements that will provide focus for our studies.

The course will be conducted as a series of workshops that will balance between in class studio painting and *en plein air* or out of door painting, weather permitting. Reviews will occur during most classes as a pin up at the end of the session. Students will be asked to bravely “bare their souls” for the criticism (and praise) of their fellow students

and instructor. In addition there will be regular weekly assignments/exercises. Student evaluations for the course will be based on both exercises for the duration of term and the class and homework assignments. At the end of the term students are required to submit a complete portfolio their work. Special consideration, and commendation, will be given to the improvement and growing finesse and accomplishment of individual work. It is hoped that the class work will result in a group exhibition for the final review.

Subjects that will be covered are:

Basic watercolor techniques: flat wash, graduated wash, variegated washes  
Methods: dry brush, wet on dry, wet on wet  
Field sketching and recording  
Some important presentation techniques

## **MATERIALS**

(a packet will be available at the campus bookstore in March that includes most of these materials at considerable cost reduction)

This list constitutes a basic working set of materials for your watercolor projects. You are encouraged to expand these materials as your personal watercolor interests develop.

Brushes	Flat 3/4" Round #8 and Round #1
Brush Holder	Inexpensive bamboo roll-up
Paint*	M. Graham & Co., 15 ml tubes or equivalent Alizarin Crimson Cadmium Red Aureolin Yellow Cadium Yellow Cobalt Blue Ultramarine Blue Viridian (Green) Optional: Cadmium Orange, Yellow Ochre, Burnt Siena, Rose Madder-Genuine

\*\*Paper: Canson Watercolor Paper Montval, cold pressed, 140 lb. 9"X12"

Sketch Pad	5"X7" (heavy weight desirable)
Palette	Inexpensive plastic palette supplemented with plastic sheet or butcher's enamel tray
Tape	Drafting Tape (NOT masking tape) 3/4"
Painting Surface	Masonite or Gator Board 17"X24"
Water Container	1/2 gallon plastic bucket for clear wash smaller plastic container for mixing (use clear or white containers so as to see colors clearly)
Sponge	Common house-hold sponge squares 2 or 3 pieces; smaller natural sponge the size of a golf ball
Pencils	#314 or equal with white eraser and kneaded gray eraser and sharpener
Carrying Kit	Any inexpensive plastic tool box or fabric carry-all with multiple pockets (diaper bags work well)
Lifting/Cleaner	Paper towels, tissues, cotton swabs
Plastic Freezer Bags	Useful to protect your work and keep dry
Spray bottle	Small plastic spray device for wetting and re-wetting surfaces
Folding Stool	REI, GI Joe's and other sports equipment stores have inexpensive stools for under \$15

\*Less expensive "student grade" watercolors typically reduce the pigment content making it less intense; cheaper watercolors can also have negative unexpected defects in that they may be "fugitive" meaning that they fade over time. The color blue is particularly vulnerable.

\*\* Good quality paper is essential! The Canson Montval is an excellent surface in that it can take considerable abuse with 'scrubbing out' paint and reworking which is a highly useful technique at times. This paper also absorbs the paint in a uniform manner but not so quickly that it is difficult to work with, especially on low humidity days or when using multiple washes.

## **GRADING AND EVALUATIONS**

Your grade will be determined as follows:

Quality and timely completion of work during in class exercises and out of class assignments  
Your overall progress and improvement as shown by the final portfolio and class review  
Your ability to respond to criticism from both instructor and class peer reviews

Your initiative to do more than the assigned work

**Final Review**

There will be a final review/exhibition of student work on Friday, June 12 at 8:00 AM. Students must be present for the entirety of the review to pass the course.

**REQUIRED TEXT**

*Watercolor Sketching*; by Paul Laseau, W. W. Norton, NY, 2012

**REFERENCES**

*Watercolor Painting Step-by-Step*, by Arthur Gupatil, ed. Susan Meyer, Watson Gupatil, NY, 1967

*Painting Solutions: House and Buildings*, by Hazel Harrison. Studio Vista

*Color: In sketching and Rendering*, by Gupatil. Reinhold

*Making Color Sing*, by Jeanne Dobie. Watson-Gupatil Publication, New York

*Watercolor School*, by Hazel Harrison. Reader's Digest Association Inc., Pleasantville, NY