

Plein Air Painting

NMAT-S 332

In the following outline, I've summarized the changes that were to be made to the course each semester it was offered. The brief synopsis can be used to contextualize the supporting evidence for this class.

Summer 2022:

In this course, students learned how to paint the landscape from direct observation while outdoors. Specifically, this class traveled to locations within the surrounding area to explore techniques and concepts pertaining to the timeless practice of translating the observed world through paint, either in acrylic or in oils.

Assessment:

In general, the outcome of the semester was quite successful, especially since this was the first time the course had been offered. Furthermore, I was a little concerned about if the weather was going to cooperate during our field sessions. Luckily, there was only one session where bad weather affected the schedule.

There are a few minor changes to the course that I would likely implement before the next time the class is offered. Specifically, find locations with greater variety. One of the comments that I received at the end of the term was that students painted a lot of green due to the rich vegetation in most of the parks.

In addition, I had one week where students were permitted to paint anywhere they wanted, as long as they checked in to Canvas and provided me with updates. Although most students checked in, I felt that the work produced was not as strong. Therefore, I will require that students stop by the Fine Arts Building briefly to receive in-person feedback on their work. This will enable me to still provide students with the freedom to develop work that is more distinctly their own, while also having the option to provide constructive feedback with their materials.

Summer 2023:

Although some of the locations for the course changed, the assignments and the structure of the course remained the same from the previous year.

However, the next time I teach this course, for the final assignment, students will be required to generate a small oil sketch on location and use that reference material, along with any photographic imagery, to develop a painting in the studio that is more controlled and resolved. This practice is in keeping with a methodology used by many landscape painters.