



# EAST TEXAS A&M

## UNIVERSITY

**ART490, O1H, Honors Thesis, 84210**

COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2025

EAST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Instructor: Josephine Durkin

Office Location: Sculpture Lab and A116

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays by Appointment

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### **Class Information**

Fall 2025: 8/25/2025 through 12/12/2025

Credits: 3.00

Meeting times: We will meet in the first week of the semester to determine a schedule that works for us. We will meet between 1 and 3 times a month, as needed, to discuss progress and project goals.

Location: Art Sculpture Lab (ASL 119) and zoom

**Preferred Form of Communication:** Email

**Response Time:** Usually 1 - 2 business days. Please make sure that you include (cc) my GA ([azhumageldi@leomail.tamuc.edu](mailto:azhumageldi@leomail.tamuc.edu)) on each email.

### **Course Description**

Students in this Honors Thesis course will meet with me between 1 - 3 times per month to share what they've made and provide updates on their progress and process. Work may evolve over time throughout the thinking and making process necessary for project production. Students in this course will have discussed the project with me

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before enrolling in this class, and will be required to keep a physical notebook (that they will then transfer) to an online journal. This is a progress journal that will document their thinking and making processes - various trials and errors - as they navigate through the learning (technically and conceptually) necessary to accomplish their objectives and explore options along the way.

In regard to their studio work, we will meet to discuss what they've learned from the making process(es), what their (latest) goals are, if and how they've evolved from meeting to meeting, and discuss questions, interests and concerns that come up throughout the process. Students must document their work via photos, drawings and writing each week - as a way to communicate their curiosities, research and creative process. At the end of each meeting, we will determine specific steps to take for the following week. This will continue throughout the semester - the student makes work, brings it in, we discuss it, and a new step or set of steps is determined for the following week based on that meeting. I encourage students to let their curiosities drive their practice, as this way of working often maximizes creative growth, technically and conceptually, regardless of media or subject matter.

Generally speaking, regardless of project specifics, this course focuses on material, technical, practical, conceptual and creative problem solving with attention to material choice, construction, installation, technical ability and advancement. Art history, the relationship, interaction and importance of surface, structure, space, movement and color, realism and abstraction, and the power of metaphor, among other foundational considerations, will be discussed and explored.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to:

- Utilize new skill sets as they apply to material and technical knowledge gained from the making of projects in this course. These skill sets will vary by student, project and project goals.
- Utilize advanced visual, physical and conceptual problem solving abilities gained from the research and creation of projects in this course.
- Understand how the particular media and tools used in the making of the student's work, is utilized in a variety of disciplines.

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- Understand the importance of craftsmanship and installation strategies, while learning how formal decisions impact the meaning of the work.
- Articulate how their work functions as a vehicle for meaning and expression, with the possibility of initiating introspection, conversation, awareness and change.
- Utilize creative thought processes and work habits gained from the creation of projects made in this course.
- Put their work in the context of other work, in particular, the context of work by a range of other contemporary artists, and other contexts as they apply to media, tools and techniques used. Discuss accessibility, labor, history of objects, design and fabrication - in and out of the gallery or museum context - as this relates to their projects and creative process.

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Textbooks, Technologies and Materials**

Textbook(s) Required: No textbook is required.

Software Required: You will need a camera or cell phone to take photographs (and possibly video) of your work. You will need to use either a free or paid for website host for your website. Options will be discussed. Please contact the instructor and GA if you have questions or concerns about using the technology.

#### **Suggested Text Books and Resources**

- Gallery and museum websites
- Art 21 (free, online videos)
- Other online research (technical and material)

#### **Required Materials**

Students will need to purchase and/or gather materials needed for their particular projects. This will vary depending on project needs. Some materials, such as cardboard and scrap wood, will be available to use in the Sculpture Lab. Students will have a plastic bin available, as well as limited shelving storage to use throughout the semester in the Sculpture Lab.

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**Write your name on all your tools and supplies. Make sure to label your materials and projects when storing them in the storage area.**

### **Instructional Methods**

This course is 16 weeks long. It will consist of:

**Individual meetings, discussions, demonstrations (as needed), individual research and studio time, and a final presentation of their work. Expectations:**

1. Working in and outside of class is required. Expect to spend at least 6 hours per week on your thesis project. Access to the studio at night and on weekends (with the exception of holidays) will be through the swipecard system.
2. Completion of required work by the critique dates is required.
3. Criticism and discussion are important aspects of artistic activity and development. Attendance and active, thoughtful verbal participation at all critiques is mandatory.
4. Participation in class activities, including installation, critique, meetings and clean- up is required. Making art often requires teamwork and group problem solving – both technically and conceptually!
5. Students are expected to engage in personal research, depending on project needs. If possible, it is in the best interest of each student to visit galleries and museums in the DFW area.
6. Students are expected to attend all exhibitions in The University Gallery as well as other events hosted by the Department of Art.
7. Thesis students must keep track of all due dates and deadlines from their Honors Thesis Program and college advisors, and then communicate with me and my GA. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that all deadlines are found and met to receive course credit. Make sure to give at least three business days notice should you need to meet with me or sign forms for the thesis.
8. General Studio Rules:

**Clean up your work in the shared work space after each studio session.**

**Specific safety rules will be given at the beginning of the semester. Grading**

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale: 90-100% A | 80-89% B | 70-79% C | 60-69% D | 0-59% F

**Assignment Grading Details:**

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Grading is based on a completion of course assignments, quality of individual technical and critical development, personal commitment and ability to work in a community studio setting. Personal commitment involves regular attendance, consistent effort, following demos and instructions, completion of work and participation in group critiques, as well as the willingness to try new things and take creative risks. This includes technical and material problem solving. In addition to learning from me, students learn from each other as well as outside of class, safely, on their own- through the process of learning by doing, trial and error. Successfully finding out what does and doesn't work is valuable – and should be shared with the group to add material and technical knowledge to our growing “toolboxes” .

Assignments: 80% Class participation: 20%

The number and type of assignments will vary depending on each student's interests, project needs and goals.

### **Late Work:**

Assignments may not be turned in late unless there is a legitimate documented emergency. You must contact me before the due date and ask for an extension. I will consider each request on a case-by-case basis. Late assignments will automatically lose 20% of the grade and must be submitted by the final critique.

### **Assignment Submission & Format:**

Work will need to be completed and appropriately installed for your final show or group exhibition. In-progress due dates will be discussed throughout the semester. This will vary depending on each student's project needs and goals.

**Images of your finished projects should be posted in the assignment in D2L, within a week of the critique, to receive full credit. Turning assignments in via D2L is not a substitute for turning them in in-person. Assignments will not be graded in D2L unless they are first turned in in-person. Due dates may change if needed.**

### **Assessments**

Projects will be graded as follows:

**A (Excellent)** will be given to ambitious projects that demonstrate superior conceptual, expressive, and technical abilities. A sustained and committed work ethic must be evident.

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**B (Good)** will be given to those projects that complete the requirements of the assignment in a creative manner, display a good level of technique, and in which a good work ethic is evident.

**C (Average)** is given to those projects that satisfy the specifications of the assignment on an adequate level. Reasonable effort has been demonstrated in order to complete the assignments.

**D (Passing - Minimum)** will be given to those projects which attempt to address the assignments but which fall short in understanding, creativity of solution, quality of technique, and effort.

**F (Failure)** is given to projects that show a complete lack of understanding, creativity, and effort.

Note: How-to, intro assignments will not be graded to reflect conceptual strength. They function as technical and material introductions to various processes and strategies.

## **Course Procedures and Policies**

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance is critical for your success in this course. Please contact the instructor and GA in advance of any absence. Should you need to miss a class meeting, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor with updates and questions.

### **Studio culture and cell phone usage**

We will be working together in a shared space. Each student is expected to treat other students, the instructor and GA with respect. Cell phones should either be turned off or muted. In the case that you are expecting a call related to a family emergency, please let me, as well as Assel know at the beginning of class. In this instance, you are expected to step outside of the class to take the call before answering it. Should you need to do online research for your current projects in this class, please let me and Assel know. Students are not permitted to engage in online research during lectures and demonstrations.

For the health and safety of everyone, please clean up your workspace, table, floor and all tools and equipment that you used before you leave the studio. Good life, very much appreciated, life rule of thumb: Always leave the studio (or any other space) cleaner than you found it!

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Headphones: You may wear headphones when working on your individual, long-term projects, but may not wear them during announcements, lectures, demos, discussions, clean-up, group set-up or critiques. This is a safety issue, and is necessary for your progress in this class.

Video and audio recording is prohibited during this class. In certain circumstances, please discuss and gain permission in advance (documenting certain projects and processes for reference and presentation).

### **Respect for Diversity**

Each student is welcome, and should also *feel* welcome in this class. Everyone is different, as well as embraced (gender, age, race, orientation, etc.), and offers their unique life experiences, perspectives and histories. This adds to our shared learning environment, as well as the work that we make and discuss! Should you have any concerns, please let me know so I can assist. I want to make sure that each student feels welcome, safe and valued in my class.

### **Safety**

Always wear closed-toe shoes and studio-appropriate clothes that you can work in. It is important that your body be protected from certain tools and materials. Athletic wear (shorts, crop tops, flip flops, crocs with holes, etc.) or other minimal clothing is not encouraged for safety reasons. Jeans, work pants, tennis shoes, work boots – clothes that provide coverage that you feel comfortable getting dirty (mold making and casting materials can be messy!) are important to wear. Aprons are great for protecting clothing, and you can also leave a set of studio clothes in your plastic tote should that work best for you.

### **Syllabus Change Policy**

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

### **Technology Requirements LMS**

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

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LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

[https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser\\_support.htm](https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm)

## **Access and Navigation**

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

**Note:** Should you have a personal computer issue, please problem solve as needed. This may include reaching out to a friend or family member to borrow a computer, using computers available at the local library or accessible computer labs on campus, accessing wifi at Starbucks or on campus, etc.

## **Communication and Support**

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor (and the GA).

## **Technical Support**

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

## **University Specific Procedures Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

### **ETAMU Attendance**

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

### **Academic Integrity**

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

### **Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among

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other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

East Texas A&M University  
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148  
Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)  
<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

### **Nondiscrimination Notice**

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### **Campus Concealed Carry Statement**

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

### **A&M-Commerce Supports Students 'Mental Health**

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit [www.tamuc.edu/counsel](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel)

**Department of Art, Health and Safety Guidelines:** All students enrolled in face-to-face art courses are required to comply with the procedures and policies of the Department of Art's Health and Safety Guidelines. The Guidelines cover activities in all East Texas A&M art facilities on both the main campus and off-campus sites. Please report any safety issues immediately to your instructor(s), per health and safety guidelines outlined, studio/lab assistant, or the Department of Art, studio technician & health/safety liaison.

[https://inside.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/art/documents/DOA\\_health\\_safety\\_handbook.pdf](https://inside.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/art/documents/DOA_health_safety_handbook.pdf)

Health and Safety Form (to be signed online by all students)

<https://dms.tamuc.edu/Forms/ArtLabPolicy>

Please, click on the following link to access East Texas A&M's Covid 19 Information,

<https://new.tamuc.edu/coronavirus/>

Course Calendar:

Our first meeting will take place in the first two weeks of classes. Please email the instructor to confirm and make any adjustments as needed.

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

Students will email an outline of their projects and anticipated due dates within the first two weeks of the course. This will vary depending on each student's project needs and goals.

Assignments are listed in the Activity / Assignment section of D2L. The main assignment will require a link to your (growing) project journal.