

Fine Arts

COURSE OUTLINE – Winter 2026

AR1201 (A3): Intro to Painting – 5 (2.5-0-2.5) 75 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR:

Jesse Garbe

OFFICE: C414

PHONE:

E-MAIL:

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OFFICE HOURS:

T R 1:20pm–

2:20pm

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of painting. Students will focus on basic paint handling, application, colour mixing, and support preparation for acrylic and water-mixable oil paint. Compositionally, students will focus on still lifes, landscape, abstraction, and portraiture. Students will further develop their knowledge of colour theory and learn pigment identification, tools, and studio protocols.

PREREQUISITE(s):

- AR1101 - 2D Fundamentals (3)
- AR1103 - Drawing I (3)



REQUIRED MATERIALS: A detailed material list will be provided and discussed in class.

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus: Lecture and Studio

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will:

1. **Apply advanced colour and tonal value** to create depth, visual harmony, and the effects of light.
2. **Demonstrate strong compositional skills**, including balance, spatial organization, and visual hierarchy.
3. **Use brushwork, edges, and texture intentionally** to communicate form, space, and expression.
4. **Represent observational subjects confidently**, including still life objects and the human figure.
5. **Solve technical and conceptual problems** in both representational and abstract painting.
6. **Develop and document artistic processes**, including research, sketches, experimentation, and reflection.
7. **Express clear artistic intent** through visual decisions, risk-taking, and personal visions.
8. **Present finished work professionally**, showing craftsmanship, clarity, and refinement.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.alberta.ca>.

**** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability.**

EVALUATIONS:

Course Grading Weights

Project 1: Still Life 30%

Project 2: Figure Painting 35 %

Project 3: Landscape and Abstraction 35 %

Grading Criteria Overview

- **Technical Skills (30%)** – Colour/value control, brushwork, edges, form, and spatial accuracy.
- **Composition & Visual Organization (25%)** – Balance, hierarchy, focal point, and arrangement of elements.
- **Artistic Intent & Creativity (20%)** – Concept clarity, personal voice, risk-taking, and creative problem-solving.
- **Process, Research & Documentation (15%)** – Sketches, studies, experimentation, planning, and reflection.
- **Presentation, Professionalism & Participation (10%)** – Craft, finish quality, completeness, studio conduct, and engagement.

DETAILED GRADING CRITERIA

1. Technical Skills (30%)

What is assessed:

- Control of colour, value, and light
- Effective brushwork, edges, and texture
- Accurate representation of form, space or content

Rubric:

Level	Description
Excellent (27–30)	Colour and value are highly controlled; form and space are convincing; brushwork and edges are deliberate and expressive.
Good (23–26)	Mostly consistent control of colour and value; form is clear; brushwork and edges support the image with minor inconsistencies.
Satisfactory (18–22)	Basic control is shown, but issues remain with value, light, or form; brushwork may be uneven.
Needs Improvement (<18)	Weak control of colour/value; unclear form; inconsistent or distracting paint application.

2. Composition & Visual Organization (25%)

What is assessed:

- Balance, hierarchy, and spatial organization
- Clear focal point and visual flow
- Effective arrangement of elements

Rubric:

Level	Description
Excellent (23–25)	Strong, intentional composition with clear hierarchy and flow; highly effective spatial structure.
Good (20–22)	Solid composition with mostly clear organization; minor weaknesses in balance or visual emphasis.
Satisfactory (16–19)	Composition is functional but lacks strong hierarchy or clarity; spatial issues may occur.



Level

Description

Needs Improvement (<16) Composition feels unclear, unbalanced, or confusing; little control of visual organization.

3. Artistic Intent & Creativity (20%)

What is assessed:

- Personal voice and/or conceptual clarity
- Risk-taking and creative problem-solving
- Integration of representational or abstract ideas

Rubric:

Level	Description
Excellent (18–20)	Artistic intent is clear and compelling; experimentation is thoughtful; strong creative decisions.
Good (15–17)	Intent is mostly clear; some creative choices; moderate risk-taking.
Satisfactory (12–14)	Concept or intent is present but underdeveloped; limited creative exploration.
Needs Improvement (<12)	Artistic intent unclear; minimal creativity or hesitation to explore ideas.

4. Process, Research & Documentation (15%)

What is assessed:

- Sketches, studies, and planning
- Research, experimentation, and development
- Reflective notes and analysis

Rubric:

Level	Description
Excellent (14–15)	Thorough visual and written process; clear experimentation and refinement; strong reflection.
Good (12–13)	Consistent process work; some experimentation; generally clear reflections.
Satisfactory (10–11)	Basic documentation; limited exploration; reflection is minimal.
Needs Improvement (<10)	Sparse or incomplete process work; little research or reflection.

5. Presentation, Professionalism & Participation – 10%

Craft, finish quality, completeness, professionalism, engagement, and studio conduct



Level	Description
Excellent	Clean, polished, fully complete; consistently engaged; positive studio conduct and strong participation.
Good	Presentable with minor roughness; generally engaged; good participation.
Satisfactory	Adequate but not refined; inconsistent engagement or minimal participation.
Needs Improvement	Unfinished or poorly presented; low engagement or poor participation.

Grading Chart for courses with Alpha Grading:

A+	4.0	95-100		C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94		C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84		C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79		D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76		D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72		F	0.0	00-49

Grades for this course will be assigned as a percentage. The minimum passing grade is 50%.

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE: A detailed Course Schedule and assignment timeline will be given during class.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Arrive prepared and set up before class; lectures and demos will not be repeated.
- If late, catch up with classmates; if absent, email the instructor within 24–48 hours.
- Maintain clean, respectful use of studio space, materials, and shared areas.
- Consult the technician if unsure about safety when the instructor is absent.
- Commit to at least **3 hours of outside work per week**.
- Headphones are allowed during work time, but you must still hear the instructor; no videos during class.
- No use of AI unless explicitly outlined in Project guidelines
- Check **email and MyClass regularly** for course communication.

Online Communication & Professionalism

- Communicate professionally in all course-related messages and treat peers, instructor and support staff with respect at all times.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/polytechnic-leadership/policies-directory>.

****Note:** all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

Additional Information:

Course Policies at a Glance

- **Late Work:** Late submissions (timestamped in MyClass) will lose **5% per day**.
- **Critique Setup:** Work must be hung at **56 inches to center** before class.
- **Attendance:**
 - Unexcused absence: **-5%**
 - Leaving early: **-5%** (unless arranged in advance)
- **Participation:** Deductions will be based on quality of engagement, lack of engagement, using phones during class discussions, demos, demonstrations and other class activities, not taking notes, etc.
- **Demos:** Please leave questions until the end. **Not repeated.** You must catch up from a classmate's notes or arrange for another student to take photos of the demo.
- **Plagiarism:** Serious misconduct and will be followed up through the Student Misconduct Office as required by University Policy
- **Class Notes and Visual Journals:** Include project briefs, demo notes, discussion points, reference images, image diary and critique notes.

Course Overview

A first-year painting course that builds essential skills, foundational knowledge, and artistic confidence/ critical thinking with paint.

Building and Advancing on Core Principles

- Elements of Art in Painting: line, shape, form, value, colour, texture, space
- Design Principles: composition, balance, contrast, unity, rhythm, movement
- Colour Theory: colour mixing in different contexts, hue/saturation/value, color schemes and the politics and psychology of colour
- Composition, Depth & Proportion

- Paint mediums (acrylic and oil)
- Archival paint layering and material usage
- Best practices around studio practice, health and cleanup
- Brushwork and edge control
- Building a stretcher and stretching canvas
- Surface preparation (e.g., gessoing canvas)

Practical Projects

- Still life
- Portrait/figure (basic sketches to more advanced finished works)
- Landscape/ Abstract exploration

Critical Thinking & Context

- Group critiques
- Introduction to artists, art history, and context
- Visual journals for planning and reflection