

**AUF***The American
University of Florence***SYLLABUS**Rev. 8
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Academic AffairsFormat revised 2025
Syllabus revised 2025

Florence University of the Arts (FUA) is an academic institution for study abroad in Florence, Italy. FUA collaborates with The American University of Florence (AUF), an international university offering US-style undergraduate and graduate degrees, in a cooperation to offer study abroad programs with a diverse breadth and depth of academic curriculum.

FUA study abroad programs may include AUF offerings, which are US-aligned in terms of higher education standards as per the university's institutional structure. Common courses offered by FUA and AUF have been jointly selected by both institutions as eligible for mutual recognition and delivery. As such, equal academic standards, credibility, and outcomes are vetted by the Academic Offices of the institutions for all courses and syllabi offered in the study abroad program.

SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING AND DRAWING
COURSE TITLE: FLORENCE SKETCHBOOK
COURSE CODE: FAPDFS225
3 semester credits

1. DESCRIPTION

3 semester credits. This course is designed to take full advantage of the student's unique experiences living and studying in the city of Florence. With on-site inspiration channeled into artistic creativity, students will draw on location at sites of historical significance and visual interest, ranging from architectural masterpieces, landscape vistas, and medieval streets to formal gardens, street markets, and Renaissance fountains. Course topics will document the rich history of how Florence and its environs have attracted and inspired visiting artists over the centuries. Students will develop individual sketchbooks with the aim of building up source material for future projects.

The classroom approach of this course is based on experiencing the city of Florence as the academic space for learning and engagement. Classes are not held in a traditional, frontal-style setting; each lesson is carefully mapped for curricular content and featured locations: lectures, observations, exercises, analysis, and reflections on presented topics are held in relevant sites that are accounted for in the academic planning, syllabus, and related course material. Coursework and submissions will be regularly assessed on the course website through daily assignments in addition to exams, papers, and projects. Learning through the on-site classroom approach fosters a deeper understanding of the cultural environment of Florence and how it is related to the subject of study represented by the course, and allows the overall experience to contribute to the students' academic and personal enrichment.

2. OBJECTIVES

The aim of this course is to enable students to develop their artistic capabilities while benefiting from the rich inspirational environment of Florence. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and sketch the most important sites of Florence.
- Recognize the significance of the outdoors as a site for continuous learning.
- Learn how to observe the city environment, and then transfer and translate this information through sketching.
- Interpret historical sites by differentiating textures, lighting, and hues, with different drawing techniques according to their peculiar features.
- Learn how to express their individual creativity through a range of techniques and styles central to the vocabulary of contemporary drawing.
- Develop fundamental critical skills in presenting the outcomes of your work in written form.
- Demonstrate greater oral skills after defending and explaining the content of their art for critiques.
- Organize a structured and effective portfolio of their own sketches and related projects.

3. REQUIREMENTS

there are no prerequisites for this course. A background in art history is preferable, but not mandatory.

4. METHOD

This course consists of lectures, discussions, and site visits within the local community. Mediums for instruction used will include, but are not limited to, interactive and hands-on activities which challenge thought processes, academic texts and studies, and experiential and/or field learning activities where applicable. As described in point 1, lessons are not held in traditional classroom settings but are based on the city of Florence as the academic space for learning and engagement. Please review the course description for the structural approach and method of coursework.

5. TEXTBOOK – FURTHER READINGS – RESOURCES

TEXTBOOK (Copy available at the university library):

CAMPANARIO, G. *The Urban Sketching Handbook*, 2 volumes. 2014 (1. Architecture and Cityscapes; 2. People and Motion).

The textbook is mandatory for course participation and completion. Where applicable additional materials may be provided by the instructor.

FURTHER READINGS

HARRISON H., *Art School How to Paint and Draw*, Hermes House, Singapore, 2001/2002
EDWARDS B., *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, Tarcher, Los Angeles, 1979
E.H. GOMBRICH., *Art and illusion*, Phaidon 2002
BARRET T., *Interpreting Art*, McGraw-Hill Education 2003
BORSI F. and S., *Paolo Uccello*, Abrams, 1994
CARROLL N., *Philosophy of art*, Routledge 1999
FARRAR L., *Ancient Roman Gardens*, Sutton Publishing, 2000
GOETHE J.W., *Theory of Colors*, Paperback, MIT Press, 1970
H.W. JANSON, ANTONY F. JANSON, *History of Art, The Western tradition*, Pearson 2003, Upper Saddle River NJ.
ITTEN J., *The Elements of Colour*, John Wiley & Sons, 1961
MYRONE M. (ed.), *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Gothic Imagination*, Tate Publishing, 2006
POZZANA M. C., *Gardens of Florence and Tuscany: A Complete Guide*, Giunti, 2001
SEYDL J., *Giambattista Tiepolo: Fifteen Oil Sketches*, Getty Publications, 2005
SMITH R., *The Artist's Handbook*, DK Adult, 2009
WITTKOWER R., MONTAGU J., CONNORS J., *Art and Architecture in Italy (vols. I II and III)*, Yale University Press, 1999

LIBRARY

Course participants may access the campus library. Please consult the library site for resources such as collections, borrowing, scanning and wifi connection, and research:

<https://www.auf-florence.org/Library/the-library/>

6. COURSE MATERIALS

Students must obtain the following materials for personal use (any materials that a student already has must be approved by the instructor):

- 3 Pencils: HB, 2B, 4B
- 2 Erasers: 1 white rubber, 1 soft kneaded eraser (gomma pane)
- Pencil sharpener
- At least 1 black fine-tip micro pen

- 1 hard-bound sketchbook – around 25x36 cm

These materials may be purchased at the following store: Salvini in Via degli Alfani 111r. A 15% discount is usually applied to the AUF students. Other recommended stores: Rigacci in Via dei Servi; Zecchi in Via dello Studio 19r; Lory in Piazza Frescobaldi 8r.

7. COURSE FEES

Course fees cover course-related field learning activities, visits, and support the instructor's teaching methodologies. Book costs are not included in the course fee. If this course requires a fee, the exact amount is communicated prior to enrollment.

8. GRADING AND EVALUATION & ATTENDANCE

10% Attendance

20% Participation and Assignments

20% Midterm Assessment

30% Final Album

20% Final Exam

The above grade breakdown percentages reflect the grading scale standards in the “Grading and Evaluation System” section of the catalog.

Attendance

Class participation is mandatory. Based on the hours defined in the Academic Catalog’s attendance policy, students may miss up to 2 class encounters delivered as lecture hours. A third absence constitutes a course failure.

Please note that absence hours may vary according to the learning methodology, as per the academic catalog policy on credit hours:

https://catalog.auf-florence.org/standard_regulation

9. EXAMS / PROJECTS / ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments, participation, readings count for 10% of the final grade. Remember that this class requires eight preparation hours per week.

Midterm Assessment requires students to produce a series of themed field sketches. This practical exercise is designed to rigorously assess how effectively students have absorbed the fundamental principles of observation, perspective, and quick rendering techniques taught in the first half of the course. Further specifics will be shared on MyAUF.

Final Exam: The exam counts for 20% of the final course grade. It will be composed by a series of open-ended and essay-based questions. The exam will be uploaded on the course website and are to be completed by the student at home under exam conditions. This means that:

- The exam must be taken completely alone. Showing it or discussing it with anybody is forbidden, including (but not limited to) the other students in the course in current or previous years.
- You may use any publicly available material you want, including books, the internet, etc. However,

you are NOT allowed to submit questions to internet discussion groups.

- Use your own words. If you find a solution of a question in a book or online, cite it in your submission and do not copy it as-is. Make changes that demonstrate you understand what you are writing. Plagiarism will be severely penalized.
- You may take as much time as you need to complete the exam. You may start the exam and return to it at a later stage. Note, you will no longer have access to the exam once the deadline has passed.

The solved exam must be uploaded on the course website before the deadline. Late submission will be penalized; technical problems will not be accepted as an excuse for late submissions. It is your responsibility to make sure that your computer and internet connection work properly and that the solved exam is uploaded on time.

Final Album:

The Final Album counts for 30% of the final course grade. You must hand in a digital copy of your album, complete with photos of your works, measurements, and techniques.

A weekly photographic documentation of your artworks (or steps towards the completion of the artworks) is crucial, so as to constantly check your improvements, and have the documentation available for the final album at the end of the semester.

Please take care when shooting your works: you should create a pleasant setting for the shooting, curate the lighting aspects, enlarge important details, and Photoshop the image if necessary for its legibility.

You will hand a final digital album in pdf. Your photos must be compressed with a pdf compressor, which can be found online.

The first page (or slide) has to have the following information:

- Name of the School, including logos.... (School of Fine Arts + AUF logo + School of Art and Science logo. Logo will be supplied by your professor)
- Department of Fine Arts
- Code and exact title of the course
- Name of the Professor (and head professor, as stated on the syllabus)
- Name of the Student
- Term and Academic Year

10. COURSE OUTLINE

Lesson 1

Meet	Piazza Santissima Annunziata
Lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of course and syllabus, materials and tools. • Introduction to line and mark. • City elements: school, street, hospital, theatre, library, shops etc. & the elaboration of an active gaze of the artist when walking within society.
Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencil.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the main practices and skills you will strengthen during the course. • Recognize the role of walking to gather dynamic information about the space. • Produce an initial sketch of a Florentine urban element.
Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via de Pucci (shops) - Via della Pergola (theatre) - Via Fiesolana - Liceo Classico Michelangelo (school) - Piazza de Ciompi: this part of the walk serves to elucidate the main points of this course; we will learn to walk with a specific gaze that catches light, architecture, urban context, and social fabric to then draw this later. • In Piazza de Ciompi, we will see how the urban texture amalgamates, with further focus on old and new constructions, greenery, lighting, and people (1 hour sketching session) • Via dell'Oriuolo - Santa Maria Nuova (hospital) - Biblioteca delle Oblate (<i>rain-spot</i>). Sketch in a section of choice of the Oblate library for 1 hour.
Readings/ Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: G. Campanario, The Urban Sketching Handbook I (Architecture and Cityscapes), pp. 59-67 ("Line") • Note: Materials will be purchased before the next class.

Lesson 2	
Meet	Piazza Santissima Annunziata
Lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tonal values. • Hatching and cross-hatching: how to use this approach successfully in different urban scenarios.
Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencil.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproduce the shape of an architectural object on paper, by assessing the range of tonal values. • Reduce complex views.
Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via dei Pecori - Piazza degli Antinori - Via de' Tornabuoni - Ponte Santa Trinita: this part of the walk serves to learn how to discern vanishing points and internalize tonal values when looking at the urban fabric. • San Frediano - Santa Rosa - Piazza del Carmine: this part of the walk serves to consolidate tonal values, the streets in fact become more narrow in the San Frediano area, whilst Piazza del Carmine allows for the exact opposite. • In Piazza del Carmine, seat on the stairs of the Church and draw for a 1.5-hours session, where you compare the tonal values of a tight place with those of an open space (canopy on the side of the Church is the <i>rain-spot</i>)
Readings/ Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment: Photograph an element of the city and sketch this with tonal values. • Reading: G. Campanario, The Urban Sketching Handbook I (Architecture and Cityscapes), pp. 49-58 ("Contrast")

Lesson 3	
Meet	Piazza Santissima Annunziata
Lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective: 1 or 2 vanishing points. • Sketching a city element from all of its sides.
Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencil.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sketch on-site in black/white while respecting the color transition. • Recognize and reproduce vanishing point perspective in a view. • Further reduce complex views.
Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via Portinari - Via del Proconsolo - Lungarno Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici - Ponte Vecchio: this part of the walk will place emphasis on color transitions and the recognition of 2 vanishing points. • At Ponte Vecchio: use the view to discuss vanishing points and color transition. Explore the panorama from all the possible perspectives, recognizing how different viewpoints allow for different color transitions. Sketch here for 1 hour (the Uffizi loggia is the <i>rain-spot</i>). • Ponte alle Grazie - 'Terzo Giardino - Porta San Niccolò - Piazza Poggi: find and document all the glimpses of the walk with 1 or 2 vanishing points. • In Piazza Poggi: 1 hour sketching session on the stairs, with particular focus on the impact the tower has on the views.
Readings/Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on a sketch incorporating perspectives. • Reading: G. Campanario, The Urban Sketching Handbook II ("Architecture and Cityscapes"), pp. 33-48 ("Depth")

Lesson 4	
Meet	Piazza Santissima Annunziata
Lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put a whole urban landscape into a thumbnail sketch.
Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencil.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to further reduce, focus, and add expression to your sketch. • Learn to focus and quickly sketch a whole urban landscape.
Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basilica San Lorenzo – Via dei Fossi - Lungarno Corsini - Via Montebello - Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino: this 35 minutes walk will allow you to notice the changing patterns of the urban fabric, from the inner city center to the outside of it, and realize how the artist's view has to change subsequently. • At the Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, also known as Nuovo Teatro dell'Opera (its loggia is the <i>rain-spot</i>): sketch with specific focus on the different perspectives of the new futuristic theatre and put it in a thumbnail sketch. Here sketch for the remaining time consolidating your knowledge of thumbnail sketching.
Readings/Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a fast-paced street possibly outside of the city center and produce a thumbnail sketch of it. • Reading: G. Campanario, The Urban Sketching Handbook I (Architecture and Cityscapes), pp. 23-32 ("Scale") <p>FINAL PROJECT OVERVIEW.</p>

Lesson 5

Meet	Piazza Santissima Annunziata
Lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sketch organic life on site (both still and in movement). • How can you encapsulate in a sketch people who move around?
Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencil, pen.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn how to interpret, connect, and sketch different types of organic life in an Italian context: the market.
Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mercato Centrale, focus on organic life. Take notes and pictures. • At Mercato Centrale (<i>rain-spot</i>), engage in a 1.5-hours analysis of organic life within, choose a complex scene and sketch it. • Via S. Egidio - Piazza Lorenzo Ghiberti - Mercato S. Ambrogio (<i>rain-spot</i>) / Mercato delle Pulci: in this walk, place focus on the parallelisms you can draw with the elements observed at Mercato Centrale and analyze how people move in the street and square.
Readings/ Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a sketch of organic life. • Reading: G. Campanario, The Urban Sketching Handbook II (People and Motion), pp. 29-54 (“Gesture”, “Expression”) <p>MIDTERM ASSESSMENT ASSIGNED, due prior to next class meet.</p>

Lesson 6	
Meet	Piazza Santissima Annunziata
Lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to sketch statues vs. people • Focusing on the human body: stillness and movement.
Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencil, pen.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn how to approach the complexity of the human body. • Learn how to approach an individual and the group.
Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via Calimala - Mercato di San Lorenzo (focus on Monumento a Giovanni delle Bande Nere): explore the differences between still clothed figure of the statue and the foot traffic, with focus on the market. • Piazza della Signoria and Loggia de’ Lanzi (<i>rain-spot</i>) and attribute focus on statues (take photos from different angles). Sketch here for 1 hour. • Then walk to Piazza Santissima Annunziata, seat on the stairs and engage in a full-fledged analysis of clothed figures in contraposition to the statues observed in the walk for 1 hour.
Readings/ Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment: Prepare for the Midterm Exam. • Sketch a statue of Florence with at least 2 techniques. • Reading: G. Campanario, The Urban Sketching Handbook II (People and Motion), pp. 11-27 (“Proportion”, “Contour”)

Lesson 7

Meet	Piazza Santissima Annunziata
Lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sketch different types of artworks. • How do artists experience museums and artworks?
Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencil, pen.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the main cues and points of analysis when facing artworks. • Recognize the dialogue of new with ancient art.
Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via Roma – Piazza della Repubblica - Palazzo Strozzi: in this part of the walk, gather and jot down the sensations of the outside world, and then juxtapose those to the sensations you will prove once inside the courtyard of Palazzo Strozzi. • Enter the courtyard of Palazzo Strozzi (<i>rain-spot</i>), analyze the central exhibition if present, or the architectural structure solely if not, nurturing an artist's gaze. Here, sketch for 1 hour. • Then Via Delle Belle Donne to Piazza Santa Maria Novella. Here analyze the Museo del Novecento structure and how it dialogues with the square, with emphasis on tabernacles and facades along the street (focus of choice). Sketch for 1 hour (<i>rain-spot</i> beneath its arches).
Readings/Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment: Visit a contemporary art gallery or museum of your choice and sketch there. • Reading: G. Campanario, The Urban Sketching Handbook II (People and Motion), pp. 55-69 (“Context”)

Lesson 8	
Meet	Piazza Santissima Annunziata
Lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complexity of Florentine monuments: details, scheme, and structure. • Details and density in sketches, how to find the balance.
Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencil, pen.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to identify and select relevant and interesting details for the final project. • Learn how to look at and represent monuments, attributing focus to geometries and details.
Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piazza San Marco - Via San Gallo (<i>Libri Liberi</i> library is <i>rain-spot</i>) - Piazza Libertà: in this part of the walk, focus on monuments such as San Marco's Church, Monumento al Generale Fanti, Palazzo Fenzi, Oratorio di Gesù Pellegrino, and Loggia dei Tessitori. • In Piazza Libertà (arches are the <i>rain-spot</i>): sketch Arco di Trionfo dei Lorena (1 hour) • Move to Piazza Savonarola (1 hour). Place further emphasis on details and geometries.
Readings/Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment: Within Florence, select a monument and sketch it with two different techniques, being attentive to the complex geometries and details of it. • Reading: G. Campanario, The Urban Sketching Handbook II (People and Motion), pp. 71-75 (“Likeness”)

Lesson 9

Meet	Piazza Santissima Annunziata
Lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sketch greenery. • Finding geometries in greenery whilst preserving the moving nature of it.
Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencil, pen.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to reduce the complicate texture of greenery into a geometrical structure. • Capture the life and movement of nature while tuning it to your individual sign. • Be able to incorporate the intersections of manufactured structures and natural elements.
Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via La Pira - Giardino dell'Orticultura (<i>rain-spot</i> is the arches structure inside) - Orti del Parnaso: here the garden allows for multiple walks within. The walk will include the exploration of the central garden, the glasshouse, the mezzanine, and the Parnaso.
Readings/ Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment: Select a green landscape of the Florentine area and sketch it on-site, with focus on the interrelation of manufactured structures and natural elements. • Reading: G. Campanario, The Urban Sketching Handbook I (Architecture and Cityscapes), pp. 69-75 ("Creativity") <p>FINAL PROJECT DUE</p>

Lesson 10	
Meet	Piazza Santissima Annunziata
Lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding expression and style in sketches
Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencil, pen.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become aware of your own personal expression and style. • Further strengthen the realization that walking represents a means to establish a personal gaze.
Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viale Don Minzoni - Piazza delle Cure - Ponte alle Riffe - Via Caracciolo - Via Maffei - Via Madonna della Querce: this walk will show you the changes of the urban fabric from the city center, to a trafficked boulevard, and ultimately to an old residential neighborhood, Le Cure. • The purpose of this walk is to create a meaningful experience within a real Florentine residential area where tourism does not occur, yet ancient atmospheres subsist. • While walking, take pictures and gather sensations that you will elaborate into sketches later. • Stop at the big stairs in Via del Lasca to engage in sketches of the walk (1.5 hours) and discuss the structure of your final project with classmates and teacher. [In Via Cavalcanti, there are arches as a <i>rain-spot</i>.]
Readings/ Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment: Sketch a non-central glimpse of Florence.

Lesson 11 Final Exam	
Meet	MyAUF
Lecture	FINAL EXAM