**WEEK 1: Living on the Edge: Drawing Contour Lines**

**INTRODUCTIONS and SYLLABUS**

**Presentation on Contour Lines**



Your lines provide the framework of your drawing. Whether complex or simple, every drawing can be broken down into lines and marks. It is the complexity of that arrangement, as well as the strength and character of those lines, which determine the impact those lines will have in a drawing. A **contour drawing** uses lines to describe the edges of an object. (After all, in reality there are no “outlines” around objects, but there are edges.) In a contour drawing, all detail is communicated through line only. There is no shading. But contour lines are not simply outlines or silhouettes. Contour lines seek to reveal a complete shape by defining the edges of the whole form, inside and out. We will look at various contour line drawings. As you study the examples provided, notice how the lines are used to describe the subject matter. Your instructor will provide drawing paper and graphite pencils/ink pens. You will become familiar with **blind and semi-blind contour drawings** and how each provides necessary visual information to describe form. Studying contour lines will help you to understand how effective a good strong line can be in your drawings. It also helps you train your hand to follow your eye, and forces you to slow down and really study your subject. It may be helpful to think of contour lines in terms of “lassoing” shapes.

**Activity A** Blind Contour Drawings of Object10 points

Your instructor will distribute objects from the classroom for you to draw. Using pencil or ink, you will divide one piece of drawing paper into four equal quadrants and render four blind contour line drawings of your object (four different views of the same object.) Carefully study the edges of your object as you draw; do not look at the page until each quadrant is completed. You can pick up your pencil or pen while you draw, but use caution because you won’t be certain where you are putting it back down again. Do not erase. Include inside detail as well as the outside edges of the object. (You will need to tape this page into your sketchbook once you purchase it.)

**Activity B** Semi-Blind Contour Drawing of Hand10 points

In this activity, you will create only one drawing, so draw large. Try to fill your page. (Your drawing should be life size or larger). Using pencil or ink, you will render one semi-blind contour line drawing of your hand on a sheet of drawing paper. Carefully study your hand as you draw. You can occasionally pause your pencil or pen to glance back at the page; however, all drawing should be done when you are not looking at the page. Do not erase. Include inside detail as well as the outside edges. Don’t forget fingernails, folds, wrinkles, hair, jewelry/watches, tattoos, bandages, etc. (You will need to tape this page into your sketchbook once you purchase it.)

***A Note about Realism***

*We all have our own sense of “style” when it comes to drawing. A drawing does not need to be photorealistic to be “good.” However, the shapes and forms you are creating do need to be somewhat recognizable, unless you are going for complete abstraction (which can be a beautiful art form, but doesn’t really work for most of the projects in this class). For this reason, as students you should always try to draw “from life” or use reference photos. Do not just draw “out of your head.” Once you have carefully studied your subject matter, then you can interpret it as you wish.*

**Assessment #1** Contour Drawing50 points

Using the contour drawings on pages 98, 116, 173 and 221 in your textbook as a guide, you will execute a contour line drawing of an interesting scene (indoors or out) using pencil or ink, or both. This is not a blind drawing; you can look at your page as you draw, and you can erase. Find an interesting point of view; don’t just sit down anywhere and start drawing. Examine your subject matter closely; take your time. Include inside details as well as outside edges of your objects. Remember, most objects are not flat; they have a thickness to them. This depth must be represented. This does not mean, however, that you must render each and every edge you encounter. Doing this may result in “flatness” in your drawing. Think about line quality by also considering the *absence* of line. You may want to drop out lines to suggest areas where the light source is strongest. **Note: this is not a “still life” drawing; don’t just arrange some objects on a desk and draw them. You should render a whole scene.**

You will be assessed on the following criteria:

• Assessment is complete at time of critique. (5 points)

• Lines are strong and well developed. There is **NO shading** and no “sketchy” lines. (5 points)

• Drawing captures an interesting point of view. (10 points)

• Detailed information is provided through the use of lines. (10 points)

• The entire page is utilized to capture a scene, not just render objects. (10 points)

• Drawing looks like a faithful representation of the original (but not necessarily photo realistic) and it is evident that considerable time was taken in the execution. (10 points)

**For Next Week:**

• Purchase supplies. You will need to bring your sketchbook and drawing supplies to every class unless otherwise noted.

• Tape your Activities from Week 1 into your sketchbook.

• Read Chapter 7 (Line) and Chapter 11 (Shape and Form) in your textbook. Be sure to read through the exercises in the chapters (but you do not have to draw them). You do not need to bring your book to class.

• Complete Assessment #1 (above) for the critique.

• Be sure to bring in a pencil and your Sharpie markers.

**Total Points Possible this Week 70 points**

**Before you leave today, please return any borrowed drawing supplies to the table in the front of class.**