

CAROLINE COVINGTON

carocov@gmail.com • 706.799.8187 • www.carolinecovington.com

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

As the basis for any course, I encourage the exploration of new materials, the examination of work within a spatial context, and the consideration of the audience, while students develop the fabrication and design skills elemental in balancing traditional object making with new mediums, such as installation and performance. I serve as resource for each student by setting goals, providing guidelines, offering suggestions, and facilitating training. By observing the culture and dynamics in each classroom, I adapt as an educator to foster self-discovery, divergent thinking, creative problem solving, and individual responses to problems. My priority in any situation becomes safety, and through repetitious reminders, visible signs, and accessible handouts, I impart the importance of proper handling of all materials and machinery. As I challenge students with creative projects, I root each assignment art historically through presentations, weekly readings, and online resources covering a wide-range of artists, artworks, materials, and time periods.

Most of my studio classes have between 15 and 20 students. I have found that in classes of this size it is not unusual for three or four students to do most of the talking; for 7 to 9 students to respond when directly engaged; and from 3 to 5 students to rarely, if ever, volunteer their thoughts. In order to distribute instruction and student input throughout the entire class, I call on students by name, enlist students in critiquing each other's work, both verbally and in writing, and offer one-on-one feedback during and after critiques. In critiques, particularly with freshman, students can at times say what they mean in ways that can be and have been taken personally by each other, so I have been learning how to capitalize on their openness and yet maintain an encouraging atmosphere for them to grow and learn. Throughout the term, I also require self-evaluations to examine strengths and weaknesses. Allowing students the opportunity to imagine how a piece might be remade, reworked, or represented encourages the same dynamic studio practice in the future.

There are two related practical skills that I learned after college and graduate school, respectively. After college, I learned how to work in a completely unstructured way, while balancing a life outside of academia. What I was unable to do then, but have since learned, was critically self-examine my work in order to move beyond stagnant repetition. What has given me the ability to do so after graduate school is the network of like-minded, serious young artists with whom I continue to be in touch, as well as the immersion in several vibrant fine arts communities including Knoxville and Chattanooga. Attending gallery openings, visiting professional artist's studios, and listening to lectures profoundly effected my development, and I will, in turn, provide my own students with the opportunities for professional and artistic growth through field trips, guest critics, and community engagement.

With enthusiasm and sincere investment in the success of each student, I encourage new connections, discoveries, and observations in art, the classroom, and in life.