

# Ce n'est pas un Programme

## Sculpture 1



# Sculpture 1

## Brian Davis

Email: [bdavis26@gmu.edu](mailto:bdavis26@gmu.edu)

Office Hours: TBA

Pronouns: He/Him

© Brian Davis

This is a syllabus, curriculum, course of study, program of study, educational program, course outline, timetable and schedule. It is whatever you need it to be.

# Table of Contents

PROLOGUE .....	5
1 INTRODUCTION.....	6
2 POLICIES .....	7
3 GRADES.....	12
4 HONORIFICS .....	16
5 DATES .....	18
6 SCHEDULE .....	20
7 OF IMPORTANCE.....	22

The information here (and more) can be found in the class Blackboard and at [atimidmule.org](http://atimidmule.org). All dates are tentative and any changes can be found on the class calendar.

**\*Note: This syllabus is subject to change upon Instructor’s discretion**

*“I force myself to contradict myself in order to avoid conforming to my own taste.”*

— Marcel Duchamp

# Prologue

**S**culpture I is a survey course that will introduce the student to a range of contemporary sculptural techniques, materials and conceptual issues. The class will consist of a series of assignments/problems designed to address specific aspects of sculptural practice. Class time will include technical demos, lectures, discussions and time to work on projects.

## **Objectives:**

- To learn to create meaning and function using space, structure, material, surface and context.
- To gain hands-on experience with sculptural techniques and brains-on experience with three-dimensional problem-solving skills.
- To develop an understanding of the relevance and relationship of sculpture to all the areas of art study.

# 1 Introduction

Too full of adventure to be briefly described

**H**ow to do well in this class. In order to make it through the semester, and have a good time while doing it, you will need to do a few things.

**Thing number one: read this document.** This document is your contract for the semester. I've attempted to anticipate any questions and needs you might have throughout the semester. All those things I've attempted to anticipate are in this document.

**Thing number two: get your supplies!** Can't make art without art making stuff. The supplies are essential for you to complete the projects and you need to get them at the beginning of the semester.

**Thing number three: make space to work,** both physical and mental. You can't do all the work for this course in your house or dorm room. Since we are back in the studio this semester, we have the luxury of a dedicated studio space in the art building. Use it! Making space includes mental space, this means setting aside some distraction free time to focus on your project.

**Thing number four: collaboration!** You are part of a cohort! You can use these folks for brainstorming, critiquing and emotional support, if you need that. The more you interact with your peers, the better you do in the class. Art is not made in a vacuum, contrary to romantic stereotypes. Art is almost always a collaborative effort in some way. So meet with, and get to know your group mates!

**Thing number five: questions!** Don't be afraid to ask questions. Ask the teacher, your group mates, or others in the art department. You can ask questions at any time: during class, office hours, or via email.

# 2 Policies

## Accuracy! Accuracy!! Accuracy!!!

“We have an opportunity in this class to hear from people with different viewpoints and open some lines of communication about difficult or emotional topics. All opinions are welcome, as long as they are grounded in the evidence and presented respectfully. I reserve the right to manage, intercede, side-line, or stop a conversation if it is leading us too far off track or if it is disrespectful to others.

Preferred Pronouns: My name is Brian Davis and I use the pronouns he, him and his. Pronouns are the parts of speech we use to refer to someone instead of their name. Using the right pronoun, like using someone’s correct name or title, is a way to show respect.”

**Anti-Racism Statement:**The School of Art plays integral role in building an educational environment that is committed to anti-racism and inclusive excellence. An anti-racist approach to higher education acknowledges the ways that individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural manifestations of racism against Black, Indigenous, and other people of color contribute to inequality and injustice in our classrooms, on our campuses, and in our communities. It strives to provide our community members with resources to interrupt cycles of racism so as to cultivate a more equitable, inclusive, and just environment for all of our students, staff, faculty, alumni, and friends, regardless of racial background.

An anti-racism approach is an active and ongoing, long-term process. In all our efforts, we uphold a commitment to creating honest, respectful, supportive, and healing spaces where members of our community can meaningfully dialogue and learn from each other's lived experiences for the betterment of our entire community.

**Land Acknowledgement:** Land acknowledgment engages all present in an ongoing indigenous protocol to enact meaningful, reciprocal relationships with ancestors and contemporary tribal nations. As a state university, we have a responsibility to include and support indigenous communities and sovereign tribes in our work. At the place George Mason University occupies, we give greetings and thanksgivings to these Potomac River life sources, to the Doeg ancestors, who Virginia annihilated in violent campaigns while ripping their lands apart with the brutal system of African American enslavement, to the recognized Virginia tribes who have lovingly stewarded these lands for millennia including the Rappahannock, Pamunkey, Upper Mattaponi, Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Nansemond, Monacan, Mattaponi, Patawomeck, and Nottaway, past, present, and future, and to the Piscataway tribes, who have lived on both sides of the river from time immemorial.

**AVT 497 Attendance:** Remember that attendance is essential to your success in this capstone class and missed classes will greatly compromise your development as an artist. If there are circumstances where you will have to miss a class, it is the students' responsibility to make up work outside of class. There is an expectation of engagement which means:

Attending class on time

Coming to class prepared

Making things with intentionality and thought

Engaging with your classmates and their work



Caring for yourself, your classmates, their work, this class , and your future.

Participation: Full engagement is imperative. Students are expected to actively participate in critiques, online discussions, and discussion board assignments. Active participation means: offering peers constructive criticism, utilizing a continually progressive art vocabulary, being attentive during synchronous classes, turning in assignments on time, and coming to class prepared.

Grading: F: Unsatisfactory work/ Did not meet criteria D: Below Average but passing/ Work is lacking C: Average/ Met requirements B: Above average/ exceeded requirements A: Superior/ greatly exceeded requirements

Miro: We will use Miro as online, collaborative whiteboard space to observe the making process, view works in progress that cannot travel, work through ideas, and move through class lessons. In addition to our classroom board, you will maintain your personal own board. This will be a visual diary of your time in this class. It will be a window into your studio process.

Email Etiquette: Please follow these simple rules when emailing your professors.

Subject that describes email content

Your full Name

The class you are taking

Include details about your questions

## Sample Email:

*Subject: Mixed Media Project 6*

*Hello Professor Soandso,*

*My name is Frida Kahlo and I am taking your Monday AVT 104 class at 10:30 AM. I am writing to ask about the Mixed Media Project 6. The project states that I must use different media. How many different types of media must I use? I was planning on using magazines cut outs and acrylic paint. Does that meet the requirements?*

*Thank you,*

*Frida Kahlo*

Technology Requirements: Note that this course requires/strongly recommends the use of Adobe Creative Cloud applications. With the suspension of in-person classes, CVPA computer labs will not be available to fulfill this requirement. If you do not already have an Adobe license and are interested in purchasing one or have an Adobe license and need to renew it, please visit <https://www.adobe.com/creativecloud/buy/students.html>. If you cannot afford an Adobe license, you may submit a request for funding to the Student Emergency Assistance Fund. Please visit <https://ulife.gmu.edu/student-emergency-assistance-funding-2-2/> to apply. Please note that the Adobe license agreement is on an annual basis.

The Collaborative Learning Hub Located in Johnson Center 311 (703-993-3141), the lab offers in-person one-on-one support for the Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, Blackboard, and a variety of other software. Dual monitor PCs make the lab ideal for collaborating on group projects, Macs are also available; as well as a digital recording space, collaborative tables, and a SMART Board. Reservations are strongly encouraged due to COVID-19 precautions and limited amounts of resources, but walk-ins will still be accepted so long as the

occupancy of the lab does not exceed the maximum of 16 people <https://its.gmu.edu/service/club/>

What to expect this semester:

Expect to spend a minimum of 6 hours of work outside of class per week

Expect to take clear, quality images of the work you created free from distracting elements

Expect to create a workspace conducive to accomplishing project goals

Expect to attend all scheduled classes (unless stated otherwise by instructor)

Expect to vocalize and articulate: Critique requires you to speak about your work

Expect to sketch or clearly illustrate your ideas

*“Dreams and reality are opposites. Action synthesizes them.”*

— Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*

# 3 Grades

**In Which the Plot, Behaving  
in Much the Manner Of a  
Soup to which Corn Starch  
Has been Added, Begins, at  
Last, to Thicken**

**G**rades function thusly:  
There will be several projects, writings, group meetings and projects, and various activities throughout the semester. Each assignment is worth a certain number of points. At the end of the semester, your points are added up and your grade is averaged. Some projects are worth more points than others. Grades always includes preliminary sketches and models. Each assignment will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria.

1. Fulfillment of the project objectives
2. Craftsmanship
3. Conceptual and material inventiveness
4. Physical investment: the sweat factor
5. Overall aesthetic and conceptual quality of the work

The overall breakdown of the final grade:  
Projects-50%

Tests-30%

Writings/postings-20%

Grading:

**A** Work is characterized by outstanding achievement and understanding of critical analysis as reflected in solutions to assignments, technical competence and the critique process. Student must display preparedness and efficient dedication to scheduled studio time. Adherence to attendance policy.

**B** Work is characterized by excellent competence and understanding of critical analysis as reflected in solutions to assignments, technical competence and the critique process. Student must display preparedness and dedication to scheduled studio time. Adherence to attendance policy.

**C** Work is characterized by basic competence and understanding of critical analysis as reflected in solutions to assignments, technical competence and the critique process. Student must display adequate preparedness and dedication to scheduled studio time. Adherence to attendance policy.

**D** Work is characterized by minimal effort and success. Lowest passing grade.

# Course Rubric

Project Criteria	Excellent: A+/A/A-	Good: B+/B//B-
<b>Technical Quality/ Quantity</b> <b>30%</b>	____ Work demonstrates complete control of medium and are nearly perfect on a technical level.	____ Work demonstrates high level of control of medium and are technically very good.
<b>Creative Process</b> <b>40%</b>	____ The formal, structural, or compositional aspects of project are clear, well-constructed, innovative, and support the concept of the project	____ The formal, structural, or compositional aspects of project are generally clear and appropriate, largely well-constructed, and more often than not support the concept of the project
<b>Conceptual Process</b> <b>30%</b>	____ Demonstrates ability to successfully produce high-quality work that creatively questions our preconceived notions of art.	____ Demonstrates ability to successfully produce above average-quality work that creatively questions our preconceived notions of art.
<b>Total Score =</b>		
<b>Score Calculation:</b>	A+ = 12	B+ = 9
	A = 11	B = 8
	A- = 10	B- = 7

<b>Needs Work: C+/C/C-</b>	<b>Poor: D+/D/D-</b>	<b>Failing: F</b>
<p>____ Work demonstrates average control of medium and are technically mediocre.</p>	<p>____ Work is messy and poorly considered, all work not turned in.</p>	<p>____ Final work quality is unacceptable and /or not turned in.</p>
<p>____ The formal, structural, or compositional aspects of project need work. Choices are not completely clear and are somewhat disconnected from the concept of the project</p>	<p>____ The formal, structural, or compositional aspects of project need a lot of work. Choices are fairly weak and bear little evidence of connecting to the concept of the project</p>	<p>____ Shows minimal or no attention to the formal, structural, or compositional aspects of project. Choices are very weak and bear no evidence of connecting to the concept of the project</p>
<p>____ Demonstrates ability to produce average-quality work that creatively questions our preconceived notions of art.</p>	<p>____ Demonstrates a minimum ability to produce work that creatively questions our preconceived notions or art.</p>	<p>____ Does not demonstrates even a minimum ability to produce work that creatively questions our preconceived notions of art.</p>
<p>C+ = 6</p>	<p>D+ = 3</p>	<p>F = 0</p>
<p>C = 5</p>	<p>D = 2</p>	
<p>C- = 4</p>	<p>D- = 1</p>	

# 4 Honorifics

## Upright, spirited, and dangerous

**Honor Code:** Students in this class are bound by the Honor Code, as stated in the George Mason University Catalog. The honor code requires that the work you do as an individual be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas. (This does not prohibit collaborative work when it is approved by your instructor.) As a faculty member, I have an obligation to refer the names of students who may have violated the Honor Code to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously. No grade is important enough to justify cheating, for which there are serious consequences that will follow you for the rest of your life. If you feel unusual pressure about your grade in this or any other course, please talk to me or to a member of the GMU Counseling Center staff.

Using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is plagiarism, a very serious Honor Code offense. It is very important to understand how to prevent committing plagiarism when using material from a source. If you wish to quote verbatim, you must use the exact words and punctuation just as the passage appears in the original and must use quotation marks and page numbers in your citation. If you want to paraphrase or summarize ideas from a source, you must put the ideas into your own words, and you must cite the source, using the APA or MLA format. (For assistance with documentation, I recommend Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*.) The exception to this rule is information termed general knowledge—information that is widely known and stated in a number of sources. Determining what is general knowledge can be complicated, so the wise course is, "When in doubt, cite."



Be especially careful when using the Internet for research. Not all Internet sources are equally reliable; some are just plain wrong. Also, since you can download text, it becomes very easy to inadvertently plagiarize. If you use an Internet source, you must cite the exact URL in your paper and include with it the last date that you successfully accessed the site.

**Responsible Employee Disclosure:** As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

**Statement on Ethics in Teaching and Practicing Art and Design:** As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the School of Art adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

**Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences:** If you have a diagnosed disability or learning difference and you need academic accommodations, please inform me at the beginning of the semester and contact the Disabilities Resource Center (SUB I room 234, 703-993-2474). You must provide me with a faculty contact sheet from that office outlining the accommodations needed for your disability or learning difference. All academic accommodations must be arranged in advance through the DRC.

*“Everything is raw material. Everything is relevant.  
Everything is usable. Everything feeds into my creativity.  
But without proper preparation, I cannot see it, retain it,  
and use it.”*

— Twyla Tharp

# 5 Dates

## I Begin Life On My Own Account, And Don't Like It

### Important Dates

Description	Full Semester
Degree Conferral Date	Sat. May 21
Dissertation/Thesis Deadline	Fri. May 6
Examination Period	Wed. May 11 - Wed. May 18
First Day of Spring Classes:	Mon. Jan 24
Incomplete Grade Changes from Fall 2021 Due to Registrar	April 1, 2022
Incomplete Work from Fall 2021 Due to Instructor	March 25, 2022
Last Day of Class	Sat. May 7
Last Day to Add: All Individual Sections Forms Due	Mon. Jan 31
Last Day to Drop: With 100% Tuition Refund	Mon. Feb 7
Last Day to Drop: With 50% Tuition Refund	Mon. Feb 14

Last Day to Submit Domicile Reclassification Application	Mon. Jan 24
<b>Mid-term Evaluation Period:</b> 100-200 level classes - Grades Available via PatriotWeb	Mon. Feb 21- Fri. Mar 25
<b>Reading Day(s):</b> Reading days provide students with additional study time for final examinations. Faculty may schedule optional study sessions, but regular classes or exams may not be held.	Mon. May 9 - Tues. May 10
Schedule of Classes Available in PatriotWeb	Mon. Oct 4
<b>Selective Withdrawal Period - Undergraduate Students Only (100% Tuition Liability)</b>	Wed. Mar 2 - Mon. Apr 11
<b>Spring Recess (no classes)</b>	Mon. Mar 14 - Sun. Mar 20
<b>University Commencement</b>	Fri. May 20
<b>Unrestricted Withdrawal Period: 100% Tuition Liability</b>	Tues. Feb 15 - Tues. Mar 1

# 6 Schedule

## In which we Begin Not to Understand

### Sculpture 1 Spring 2022

Week 1- 1/26	Intro to class Syllabus In-class exercise- Found Object	
Week 2 -2/2	Introduction to woodshop wood joint demo	Due-Breaking Video
Week 3 - 2/9	Intro to Balance and Movement in Wood project Wood Joints Workday	
Week 4 - 2/16	Balance and Movement in Wood project workday	Due- Wood Joints
Week 5 - 2/23	Balance and Movement in Wood project workday	
Week 6 -3/2	Balance and Movement in Wood project workday	
Week 7 -3/9	Balance and Movement in Wood Critique	Due-Balance and Movement Wood Project
3/16	SPRING BREAK-No Class	

## Sculpture 1 Spring 22

Week 8 -3/23	Intro to subtractive project Carving and cement demo	
Week 9 -3/30	Subtractive project workday	
Week 10 -4/6	Subtractive project workday Introduction to Final Project	
Week 11 -4/13	Subtractive project Critique	Due- Subtractive Project
Week 12 -4/20	Final Project Work Day	
Week 13 -4/27	Final Project Work Day	
Week 14 -5/4	Last Day of Regular Classes Final Project Work Day	
Week 15 -5/11	Tentative Final Exam Period Final Project Critique	Due-Final Project

# 7 Of Importance

## Digression in Praise of Digressions

**T**his class fulfills a **General Education Core requirement for Arts:** This class fulfills a Mason Core requirement for Arts. Mason courses in the film making, visual and performing arts stress generative, inquiry based learning through direct aesthetic and creative experience in the studio environment. Art history courses address the intrinsic relationship of personal and cultural creativity, and the manifestation of aesthetics, visual culture and visual narrative within historical contexts.

**Arts goal:** Courses aim to achieve a majority of the following learning outcomes: students will be able to identify and analyze the formal elements of a particular art form using vocabulary appropriate to that form; demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic technique and the expression of a work's underlying concept; analyze cultural productions using standards appropriate to the form and cultural context; analyze and interpret material or performance culture in its social, historical, and personal contexts; and engage in the artistic process, including conception, creation, and ongoing critical analysis.

**University and School of Art Policies:** In accordance with George Mason University policy, turn off all beepers, cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class. The instructor of the class will keep his/her cell phone active to assure receipt of any Mason Alerts in a timely fashion; or in the event that the instructor does not have a cell phone, he/she will designate one student to keep a cell phone active to receive such alerts.

**Commitment to Diversity:** This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes

the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran's status, or physical ability.

### **Anti-Racist Statement:**

I explicitly reject white supremacy and racism and am committed to equity, justice, and democracy in society, on campus, and within my classrooms. No matter the name or label, anti-Black and anti-Semitic, and racist thought and action are antithetical to my mission and values as an educator. I condemn the divisive and intimidating tactics of white supremacist views.

I recognize that systemic racism is pervasive within our society and institutions, and pledge to combat it through receiving critical feedback on how I can be more inclusive and being more self-aware of my privileged identities. Including the use of collective teaching, programming, scholarship, and service. I want you, Mason's students, to know that I am committed to fostering a classroom where everyone can learn without the chilling effects of bigoted views.

I am determined to uphold the University's mission, which states that, "We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards as educators, scholars, and professionals," and thus am committed to creating a culture of excellence, inclusion, and accessibility.

I welcome all members of our extended community regardless of their race, ethnicity, immigration status, religion, sexual identity, gender identity, socioeconomic status, political or institutional affiliation, and ability, and am fully dedicated to promoting a diversity of voices and views as an academic department.

*"Chaos is rejecting all you have learned. Chaos is being yourself."*

— Emil M. Cioran



## About the Author

Brian Davis is a husband, father, sculptor, and multimedia artist who responds to student email at [bdavis26@gmu.edu](mailto:bdavis26@gmu.edu) and can be found in the sculpture room, 3D studio and in the library. He keeps some stuff at [inadvisabledrain.com](http://inadvisabledrain.com) and [atimidmule.org](http://atimidmule.org)