

Sculpture I

ARTS-1840-501 Spring 2026

Monday- Wednesday 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm
Valencia Business & Technology 105
Professor: Erin Gould, elgould@unm.edu
Office Hours: 12-1 pm M/W, VABS 125

Course Description: This course introduces the student to a variety of fundamental concerns, mediums, and techniques used in the production of sculpture; along with the historic, conceptual, and aesthetic foundations of the sculptural process.

Conceptual and technical skills, and safe and appropriate use of tools and materials will be emphasized. Impact of material and technique upon form and content, and the physical and expressive possibilities of diverse materials will be explored. Historical and contemporary methods will provide a theoretical basis for our studio work.

This is a hands-on studio course where you will be challenged to engage material, craft, form, space, time, site, action, and context. During the course you will be exposed to a wealth of new images, ideas, and techniques. Rigorous research, thoughtfulness, invention, and imagination on your part are required as you begin to uncover the particular aspects of sculpture that impact and energize your work.

The course will be divided into four parts, each with a project that highlights and focuses on a different way to approach sculpture. Through these three class projects, you will learn practical problem-solving skills, and work with a range of materials and strategies of creating sculpture. We will work both materially and conceptually, with an aim to understand how form and context link-up within an artwork to produce meaning.

Structured by technical demonstrations, presentations, active work-time, readings, and group critiques, this class will provide a forum for the discussion and exploration of a diverse range of sculptural practices and the possibilities made available by such an expansive field. Workshops and demonstrations will familiarize you with a variety of equipment, with an emphasis on safety. We will explore different methods for developing your ideas and you will learn how to incorporate research into your projects. You will gain experience discussing your own work and the work of others. Critical dialogue will be introduced through group critiques.

We will consider the formal aspects of sculpture such as scale, positive/negative relationships, surface texture, structural elements, color, material choices, craftsmanship, presentation, and more, all in relation to meaning. Additionally, you will begin to consider the context for your work. How do things like duration (time), physical location, cultural expectations (audience), and historical precedence shape the meaning of your work? You will simultaneously focus on building a conceptual basis for your work and developing practical studio skills that you can use to manifest your ideas in three-dimensional space.

Class Objectives

- To provide an introduction to contemporary sculpture
- To learn basic construction techniques and gain a familiarity with traditional and non-traditional forms of making

- To challenge yourself conceptually as well as structurally
- To begin to understand how context and audience play a role in what you make
- To take risks with your work and begin to identify what makes it yours

MY COMMITMENTS

- The classroom should be a place of excitement, curiosity, and joy. I will do my best to keep boredom to a minimum.
- You have chosen to be here, therefore, I serve you and your learning. As your instructor, I will trust and respect you.
- My role is not to convince you of my opinions, but to help you form your own. Art is subjective! I will do my best to never speak over you or make you feel like I do not value your opinions.
- If following your interest in a project or assignment brings your work outside of the parameters of that assignment, your passions come before my guidelines. I will do my best to support your explorations and not penalize you for being creative.
- I will never ask you to compete against one another. There is no limit to how many As or Bs will be given, and differences of opinions are encouraged (as long as we respect and support each other).
- While it is important for you to learn the vocabulary of art and art making, I will never penalize the use of common language or references to popular culture. Art is made in the world, not above it.
- I will never force anyone to participate in ways that make them uncomfortable. I will do my best to make space and time for everyone to contribute in whatever way they need.
- I will never judge or criticize you for ways that you differ from me, whether that be race, gender, sexuality, religion, nationality, class, politics, or culture. I will do my best to not only respect, but encourage you to explore, share, and express any differences in your life.
- I am always learning and trying to be a better teacher. If you ever want to share with me any ways that I could make this learning experience better for you, I will greet that with gratitude!

REQUIREMENTS

Assignments

- Four (4) Project Assignments
- One (1) written assignment: Sculpture Scavenger Hunt completion
- Two (2) readings & responses
- Short Artist Presentation: Toward the end of the semester, each student will present a brief image presentation on an artist working in the third dimension. The presentation should include 20 images, a brief bio, and a description of the artist's sculptural practice.
- Sketchbook, including warm-up exercises, sketches, notes, and research
- Final Image Portfolio: Each project must be documented and presented in your final sculpture image portfolio at the end of the semester.

- Attendance: The percentage of your **unexcused absences** compared to the number of class days.

Grading

- Project Grades – 48 points (4 Main Projects @ 12 points each)

Participation accounts for $\frac{1}{4}$ of each of your Project Grades (which comes to 20% of your overall grade for course). This is gauged by active participation in critiques and discussion and overall level of craft and ambition. The other components of your project grades are divided between Technical Care, Material Use, and Conceptual Rigor (see attached sample rubric)

- Sketchbooks – 5 points
- Sculpture Scavenger Hunt– 10 points
- Artist Presentation – 10 points
- Readings & Responses – 12 points, 6 points each
- Final Image Portfolio – 10 points
- Attendance – 5 points

Grading scale:

98-100 A+ 93-97.99 A 90-92.99 A- 87-89.99 B+ 83-86.99 B 80-82.99 B

77-79.99 C+ 73-76.99 C 70-72.99 C- 67-69.99 D+ 63-66.99 D 60-62.99 D- Below 60 F

IMPORTANT: there will not be enough in-class time to develop and complete your sculptures. *You will be expected to work an additional 6 hours outside of class each week*, and this should be reflected in the sculptures you make. (You cannot cram for a sculpture critique the way you might cram for an exam – exercise good time management).

Students are encouraged to make conceptual leaps and work towards ambitious projects, both formally and conceptually, all the while paying close attention to themes and ideas that might run through the work. We will have one-on-one meetings throughout the semester to identify such themes and interests as well as discuss your progress and possible ways for improvement.

Material Costs: Materials will vary project to project, and with basic materials being supplied for most projects. Responsibility for paying for other materials for your work falls to each student, and that amount will vary dramatically depending on your personal explorations. Be creative to keep costs low if that is a priority for you. Students are encouraged to share resources, use free materials and recycle whenever possible. A sketchbook and a thumbdrive are required.

Attendance: You are required to attend each class and always be on time. More than 3 unexcused absences will automatically result in a grade drop. Being late or leaving class early 2 times counts as an absence. For an absence to be excused, the student must contact the professor PRIOR to the beginning of the missed class period. Coming to class without materials to work is considered being absent. If you cannot attend class, it is your responsibility to notify me ahead of time to let me know. If you miss class it is your responsibility to find out from another student what the assignment was and figure out

how you can make up the project and time. Attendance for critiques is mandatory--consider it equal to an exam.

Preparation: Come prepared to class. Plan ahead. Bring anything you might need to work on in-class assignments as well as completed projects to be critiqued. A work day without materials will be counted as an absence. No late projects will be accepted without a legitimate excuse. It is necessary to pass all projects in order to pass the class.

Sketchbook practice: Keep a book of sketches, ideas, criticisms, photos, collected materials, and inspirations during the semester. Everyone should bring their sketchbooks to every class day. Some projects will have specific required sketchbook work that will be outlined in the guidelines, but in general, during work sessions, no sketches, no discussion with me about your project — pictures are worth a thousand words! Plus, they are worth 5% of your grade.

Final Portfolios: A Final Portfolio of your work will be due at the end of the semester, documenting each project you completed in this course. You can take photos with your phone or with cameras made available through me. Compile these photographs into a folder throughout the semester, making sure that each image is well lit and without unnecessary visual distraction. This folder will be submitted on a thumbdrive.

Please keep all of your images in a folder titled: Last Name_ DigitalPortfolio, and use this naming format for your images: 01_Last Name_ProjectName.

Disclaimer: In this class, I reserve the right to show a broad range of course materials. Should you at any time in the course of the class feel offended or uncomfortable about something you have seen or heard, we would appreciate you staying and voicing your opinions within the class dialogue. If you feel that you cannot stay, remove yourself from the classroom as discreetly as possible. You may be asked to report on your response.

Academic integrity policy: The University Rules, including the Student Code of Conduct, and other documented policies of the department, college, and university related to academic integrity will be enforced. Any violation of these regulations, including acts of plagiarism or cheating, will be dealt with on an individual basis according to the severity of the misconduct.

Academic accommodations policy: In accordance with University Policy 2310 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as I am not legally permitted to inquire. Students who may require assistance in emergency evacuations should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow. Contact Accessibility Resource Center at 277-3506 for additional information.

If you need an accommodation based on how course requirements interact with the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format and requirements, anticipate the need for adjustments and explore potential accommodations.

Title IX Statement: Our classroom and our University should always be spaces of mutual respect, kindness, and support, without fear of discrimination, harassment, or violence. Should you ever need assistance or have concerns about incidents that violate this principle, please access the resources available to you on campus, especially the LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center and the support services listed on its website (<http://loborespect.unm.edu/>).

Please note that, because UNM faculty are considered "responsible employees" by the

Department of Education, any disclosure of gender discrimination (including sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual violence) made to a faculty member must be reported by that faculty member to the university's Title IX coordinator. For more information on the campus policy regarding sexual misconduct, please see: <https://policy.unm.edu/universitypolicies/2000/2740.html>.

Support for Undocumented Students: As an educator, I fully support the rights of undocumented students to an education and to live free from the fear of deportation. I pledge that I will not disclose the immigration status of any student who shares this information with me unless required by a judicial warrant, and I will work with students who require immigration-related accommodations.

Important: If you have questions or problems don't hesitate to ask, in or out of class.

Studio Guidelines:

- SAFETY FIRST. Remember to wear protection and to ask for help.
- Always dress ready for work days– closed toed shoes and legs fully covered is required. No dangly clothes/hair or flammable fabrics and be prepared to get dirty!
- No toxic materials may be used in the classroom.
- Be mindful of the tools and materials you use. Think of this as the beginning of a life-long relationship with art—you want to be around long enough to enjoy it all.
- Remember studio is a shared space: label your things clearly, clean up after yourself, don't move/touch anyone else's work without asking first.
- Limited cell phone use during class. You may use your phone for quick research or playing music during work time. No texting or social media, please.

Schedule

**This calendar may be adjusted as necessary and updated on Canvas*

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>In Class</i>	<i>Due</i>
10	Mon 3/24	Introductions Introduce Project 1	
10	Wed 3/26	Workday	
11	Mon 3/31	Discuss photographing sculpture Workday	
11	Wed 4/2	PROJECT 1 CRITIQUE	<i>Project 1 artwork</i>
12	Mon 4/7	Reading Discussion, Begin Project 2	<i>Reading Response 1, Bring Object</i>
12	Wed 4/9	Workday	
13	Mon 4/14	PROJECT 2 CRITIQUE	<i>Project 2 artwork</i>
13	Wed 4/16	Introduce Project 3, in-class exercise	
14	Mon 4/21	Workday	<i>Bring selected object to class</i>
14	Wed 4/23	Introduce Artist presentations Worktime	<i>Artist Selection by end of Class</i>

15	Mon 4/28	PROJECT 3 CRITIQUE	
15	Wed 4/30	Artist Presentations	<i>Artist presentations due on thumbdrive</i>
16	Mon 5/5	Introduce Project 4, Reading Discussion	<i>Reading Response 2</i>
16	Wed 5/7	Workday	<i>Sketchbooks</i>
17	Mon 5/12	Workday	<i>Sculpture Scavenger Hunt due on thumbdrive</i>
17	Finals Week	Final Critique	<i>Project 5 artwork, Digital portfolio on thumbdrive</i>

EXAMPLE GRADING RUBRIC Project A: Example Project 12 points total possible

MATERIAL USE 3 points/ CONCEPTUAL RIGOR 3 points/ TECHNICAL CARE 3 points/ OVERALL DEMONSTRATION OF EFFORT 3 points

MATERIAL USE

3-2.5: Thorough and creative exploration of material. Pushed through to find inventive, original, and thought provoking ways of using limited materials.

2.4-2: Creative exploration of material, though exploration or implementation could have been more rigorous, pushed further.

1.9-1.5: Used materials to complete the project assignment without bringing remarkable creativity to their inherent limitations.

1.4-1: Used materials without bringing remarkable creativity to their inherent limitations, but did not complete project assignments.

0.9-0: Failure to complete project assignment

CONCEPTUAL RIGOR

3-2.5: Produced a creative and intriguing conceptual foundation for sculpture. Sculpture provides thought provoking questions that - with time and engagement by the viewer - continue to unfold. 1.5: Produced a creative concept for sculpture.

2.4-1.6: Sculpture shows a lack of creative conceptual engagement beyond basic completion of assignment.

1.5-1: Project showed little to no conceptual engagement with subject or assignment.

0.9-0: Failure to complete project assignment.

TECHNICAL CARE

3-2.5: Careful construction and implementation OR a thorough and complete exploration of a method of construction. Final sculpture is undoubtedly "finished".

2.4-2: Good construction and implementation OR exploration of a method of

construction, with room to improve. Final sculpture could be more finished

3-2: Construction of sculptures needs more care: for example frayed edges, wrinkled tape, or lumpy surfaces are unintentional and group conversation concurs that final sculpture would be stronger without them.

2-1: Final sculpture showed little technical care in its construction.

0.9-0: Failure to complete project assignment

OVERALL DEMONSTRATION OF EFFORT

3-2.5: Showed rigorous dedication to all aspects of the project: excellent class-participation in conversations and work sessions, always/often accomplished work outside of class, and completed inventive and intriguing final sculpture.

2.4-2: Showed dedication to most aspects of the project: good class-participation in conversations and work sessions, sometimes/rarely accomplished work outside of class, and completed inventive final sculpture.

1.9-1.5: Showed just okay dedication to aspects of the project: minimally participated in conversations and work sessions, rarely accomplished work outside of class, completed final projects that fulfilled basic requirements of assignment.

1.4-0.6: Showed little dedication to aspects of the project: minimally participated in conversations and work sessions, never accomplished work outside of class, barely completed or did not fully complete basic requirements of assignment.

0.5-0: Failure to complete project assignment

YOUR GRADE FOR PROJECT A Example Project: /12