

## Course Information

Course Number:	VIZA 689
Course Title:	Art/Craft: Hands-on Global Histories of Materials, Techniques & Skilled Making
Section:	602
Time:	Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:30–2:10
Location:	LAAH 227
Credit Hours:	3

## Instructor Details

Instructor:	Dr. Tianna Uchacz
Office:	ARCC 104
Phone:	979.845.7073
E-Mail:	thu@tamu.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesdays, 11:00AM–12:00PM, and by appointment

## Course Description

This course investigates the materials, techniques, and meanings of craft through hands-on engagement with historical making practices. Classes combine seminar-style discussion of primary sources and contemporary scholarship with site visits and laboratory exercises in making skills, research skills, and writing skills. The course encourages students to consider relationships between making and thinking, nature and artifice, and art/craft and science by exploring issues related to textual, oral, and tacit knowledge, the significance of skill, and global histories of materials, tools, and practice.

**In Spring 2023, Art/Craft will focus on fibers and textiles as case-study materials.**

## Course Prerequisites

None.

## Special Course Designation

None.

## Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completing the course, students will be able to:

- assess materials and artifacts for their properties and affordances (i.e., demonstrate greater material literacy)
- demonstrate basic skills in several fundamental craft techniques (e.g., spinning, weaving, felting, mending, dye making, dyeing)

- understand how technique and skill transform natural materials into refined media and works of art, at both artisanal and industrial scales
- reflect critically on historical, cultural, and ethical issues in craft making
- argue how historically and culturally specific concepts (e.g., “art,” “craft,” “nature,” “knowledge,” “experiment,” “skill,” “improvisation,” etc.) affect our understanding of making practices and the value we ascribe to them
- develop a final project (e.g., animation, artwork, research essay, etc.) that applies key course themes to advance a personal art or research portfolio

### Textbook and/or Resource Materials

All readings will be made available on Canvas.

### Grading Policy

#### *Grading Scale*

A = 100%-90%; B = 89.9%-80%; C = 79.9%-70%; D = 69.9%-60%; F = below 60%

#### *Graded Components*

Participation 10%  
Reading Presentations 15%  
Reflection Assignments 15%  
Sample Book 25%  
Final Project 25%  
Final Project Presentations 10%

#### *Component Description*

##### *Participation*

In order to achieve full participation grades, students are required to come to class ready to engage in discussion and laboratory work, having completed any preparatory reading or making exercises. They must also make consistent efforts to engage with course concepts in lab assignments.

##### *Reading Presentations*

A pair of students will prepare a presentation on each of the readings for class at least 3 times. Students will sign up for these presentations in Week 2. The pair should work together to divide the task of reading, notetaking, and slide presentation building as appropriate. Each presentation should make use of slides and seek to summarize key points and catalyze class discussion through 1) critique of the reading and 2) posing of at least three questions for the class to consider. Student pairs should plan for their presentation and discussion leading to take around 10–15 minutes (3 min summary, 7–10 min discussion).



### *Reflection Assignments*

At the conclusion of each of the three major units, students will submit a 1,500-word reflection assignment based on a series of prompts. These papers will require students to draw on their notes and documentation from laboratory assignments and class discussions.

### *Course Journal and Sample Book*

Students will document coursework in a combination Journal and Sample Book. This book can be analog or digital. It should contain pinned-in or well-photographed samples from the lab assignments surrounded by notes and documentation about process and take-aways. It should also contain a section that documents reading assignments and class discussions, showing evidence that the student is preparing for discussions and taking notes in class based on the contributions of their peers. These books will be handed in after the summary discussion of each of the 3 units for instructor assessment and feedback. Journal & Sample Book grades for Unit 1 will be worth 5%, and those for Units 2 and 3 will be worth 10% each.

### *Final Project*

Students will work with the instructor to define a personalized final project that can contribute to an artistic or academic portfolio. A non-exhaustive list of potential topics will be introduced in class along with a grading rubric.

### *Final Project Presentations*

Students will give two presentations on their final project work. The first will be a 5-min presentation on work-in-progress followed by critique and feedback from their peers about the direction of their work. Second, over the final two days of class, students will give a formal presentation of the outcomes, challenges, and scope for future work that arose from their final projects. These will be evaluated by both peers and by the instructor.

## Late Work Policy

Late work is defined as any deliverable submitted after the established deadline. Work delayed because of an excused absence is not considered late. For policies surrounding excused absences, see [Student Rule 7](#).

To accommodate the inevitable technology / parking / printing snafus of modern existence, there will be a 30-minute grace period after established assignment deadlines during which all assignments can be submitted without incurring any penalty, whether they are uploaded to Canvas, submitted by email, or handed in as hard copies in class.

**Late work will be accepted up to 5 days after the deadline but will incur a penalty of 5% per day late.**

For example, consider an assignment due on Tuesday at 5 pm that merited a grade of 8.5/10. That same assignment, if handed in on Tuesday at 5:30 pm, would earn 8/10, if handed in on Saturday at 4:30 pm, would earn 6.5/10, and would not be accepted whatsoever after 5:00 pm on Sunday.

## Course Schedule

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Date	Unit	Class Theme	Lab Activity	Required Reading / Preparation	
Jan-17	Hands-on case study: weaving and textile	Course Introduction; weaving and history	warping your tiny loom; plain weave; verdigris kit distribution	Review the syllabus	
Jan-19		Weaving materials and tools I	<b>OFFSITE:</b> Loom tutorial with Kay McWilliams at Brazos Spinners & Weavers Guild	<b>read:</b> "Textus," in <i>Textile Terms: A Glossary</i> ; myth of Arachne <b>make:</b> plain weave sample, basket weave sample <b>prepare:</b> myth research & google slide <b>watch:</b> assigned videos	
Jan-24		Weaving materials and tools II	Exploring materials, tools, and process	<b>read:</b> Barber, "A Tradition with Reason" in <i>Women's Work</i> ; "Labor," in <i>Textile Terms: A Glossary</i> <b>make:</b> twill sample, satin weave sample, fifth sample <b>watch:</b> assigned videos	
Jan-26		Weaving in theory and practice I	Intro to backstrap weaving by Toni Wilson (BSWG); Thai and Peruvian traditions	<b>read:</b> Gordon, "The Hand of the Maker"; Young-Sanchez, "Andean Textile Traditions"	
Jan-27		Optional	Backstrap troubleshooting at Intersections (12:00-5:30 PM)		
Jan-28		Optional	Backstrap troubleshooting at Intersections (3:00-5:30 PM)		
Jan-31		Weaving in theory and practice II	Discussion & troubleshooting of ongoing backstrap weaving	<b>read:</b> Ingold, "Of String Bags and Birds' Nests" <b>make:</b> at least 6 inches of progress on your weaving	
Feb-2		Close Looking I	<b>On Campus:</b> Textile analysis, University Collections (Rudder & Stark Gallery visit)	<b>read:</b> Ingold, "On Weaving a Basket,"	
Feb-3		Optional	Backstrap troubleshooting at Intersections (12:00-5:30 PM)		
Feb-4		Optional	Backstrap troubleshooting at Intersections (3:00-5:30 PM)		
Feb-7		Fundamental Textile Techniques	<b>OFFSITE:</b> Felting with Helen Dewolf at Brazos Spinners and Weavers Guild	<b>read:</b> Elizabeth Barber, "Felt and Felting," in <i>Prehistoric Textiles</i> ; M. L. Eiland III, "Felting Between East and West," <i>Visual Anthropology</i> <b>flip through:</b> creations in <i>500 Felt Objects</i>	
Feb-9		Craft and Ethics	Presentation by Chesley Antoinette and "Tignon" exhibition visit, Wright Gallery	<b>read:</b> Gandhi, <i>Hind Swaraj</i> , excerpts; Chesley Antoinette's essays for "Tignon" exhibition	
Feb-10		Optional	Backstrap troubleshooting at Intersections (12:00-5:30 PM)		
Feb-11		Optional	Backstrap troubleshooting at Intersections (3:00-5:30 PM)		
Feb-14		Fiber futures	Presentation by Prof. Caleb Kicklighter on animating textiles; presentation by Ryan Applebee on his research project on modeling yarn & weave using procedural animation	<b>Read and watch</b> embedded videos on MIT Media Lab projects: 1. <a href="#">OmniFibers</a> and potential for breath regulating garments (!!) 2. <a href="#">Cillia</a> e-haptic fur 3. <a href="#">DefeXtiles</a> , 3D-printed quasi-woven cloth (also the linked scientific paper w details on how to do it on any 3D printer)	
Feb-16		Summary discussion	Summary discussion: weaving, technology, and skill	<b>read:</b> Polanyi, <i>The Tacit Dimension</i> , Ch. 1	
Feb-17		Sample Book with Reflection Paper 1 due February 17, 5:00 PM			
Feb-21		Final Project	Final Projects: idea discussion & preliminary project sign-up		



Feb-23	Materials and knowledge	Repositories of knowledge I	<b>On Campus:</b> Cushing visit	<b>read:</b> Kusakawa, <i>Picturing the Book of Nature</i> , "Introduction"		
Feb-28		Repositories of knowledge II	<b>OFFSITE:</b> Herbarium visit	<b>read:</b> Kimmerer, "Skywoman Falling" and "In the Footsteps of Nanabozho" in <i>Braiding Sweetgrass</i>		
Mar-2		Embodied Knowledge I	Intro to wool spinning by Debbie Gau (BSWG)	<b>Read:</b> Postrel, "Thread," in <i>The Fabric of Civilization</i>		
Mar-3		Optional	Spinning troubleshooting at Intersections (12:00–5:30 PM)			
Mar-4		Optional	Spinning troubleshooting at Intersections (3:00–5:30 PM)			
Mar-7		Embodied Knowledge II	Intro to cotton spinning by Laurie Schlitter (BSWG)	<b>read:</b> Tallis, <i>The Hand: A Philosophical Inquiry into Human Being</i> , Ch. 1; Lehmann, "Kneading, Wedging, Dabbing and Dragging: How Motions, Tools, and Materials Make Art"		
Mar-9		Final Project	<b>NO CLASS:</b> Final Project individual student check-ins	Prepare for 20-min one-on-one discussion with instructor re: final project progress		
Mar-14		SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS				
Mar-16		SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS				
Mar-21			<b>On Campus:</b> Evans Annex, 4th floor, 3.419, Dyeing intro presentation + prep work, led by Naomi Rosenkranz	<b>read:</b> Rosenkranz, "The Secrets of Cochineal"		
Mar-22		Optional, but strongly encouraged	<b>On Campus:</b> HELD 205, 10:30AM–12:00PM, Dyeing with bacteria: Part I, led by Dr. Donna Janes (Biology)			
Mar-23			<b>On Campus:</b> Evans Annex, 4th floor, 3.419, Dyeing	<b>read:</b> Mamidipudi, "A Recipe for Crafting Color: The Revival of Natural Dyeing in South India"		
Mar-24		Optional, but strongly encouraged	<b>On Campus:</b> HELD 205, 1:00–2:30PM, Dyeing with bacteria: Part II, led by Dr. Donna Janes (Biology)			
Mar-28		Summary	Summary discussion: knowledge transmission	<b>read:</b> Eyferth, "Craft Knowledge at the Interface of Written and Oral Cultures"		
Mar-31		Sample Book with Reflection Paper 2 due March 31, 5:00 PM				
Mar-30		Final Project	Final Projects: progress presentations	Prepare a 5-min presentation on Final Project progress		
Apr-4		Craft knowledge and sustainability	waste, repurposing & sustainability I	Rag paper making	<b>read:</b> Shell, "Prologue" in <i>Shoddy: From Devil's Dust to the Renaissance of Rags</i>	
Apr-6			waste, repurposing & sustainability II	Paper dyeing from medieval Persian recipes	<b>read:</b> Barkeshli, Stiglitz and Zekrgoo, "Persian recipes: from dyeing paper to black inks"	
Apr-8			Optional, but strongly encouraged	Card weaving (1:00–3:00 PM) + backstrap troubleshooting (3:00–5:30 PM) at Intersections		
Apr-11			repair & sustainability	Mending, intro lesson	<b>read:</b> Sekules, <i>Mend! A Refashioning Manual and Manifesto</i> , excerpts	
Apr-13	textiles and waste		Mending, continued	<b>read:</b> Bédard, "Paved with Good Intentions," in <i>Unraveled: The Life and Death of a Garment</i>		
Apr-18	animal-human collaboration		Unravelling silk cocoons	<b>read:</b> Yiyu Xu, "The Knowledge System of the Traditional Chinese Craftsman"		
Apr-20	Art, Craft, and Science		<b>On Campus:</b> Materials Science Lab visit	<b>read:</b> Smith, "Science," in <i>A Concise Companion to History</i>		
Apr-25	Summary		Summary discussion: sustainable craft	<b>read:</b> excerpts from Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> ; Plato, <i>Republic</i> ; Palissy, <i>Admirable Discourses</i>		
Apr-27	Final Project		Final Projects: presentations			
Apr-28	Sample Book with Reflection Paper 3 due April 28, 5:00 PM					
May-2	Final Project	Final Projects: presentations	<b>NB:</b> Final Projects due May 2, 11:59 PM			

## Support and Resources

*Technology Support* – If you have any questions or need assistance with Canvas, please contact Help Desk Central, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

EMAIL: [helpdesk@tamu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamu.edu)

PHONE: (979) 845 – 8300

Help Desk Central also offers CHAT support (8:00 am – 11:59 pm CST) at [hdc.tamu.edu](http://hdc.tamu.edu) via the yellow “Start Chat Now!” icon.

*Research Support* – If you have problems navigating the TAMU Library databases or catalogue, please contact our Visualization librarian, Tina Budzise-Weaver ([tmweaver@library.tamu.edu](mailto:tmweaver@library.tamu.edu)).

*Writing Support* – If you would like help with writing assignments, please consult the resources available online through the University Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.tamu.edu>) or contact them directly: phone 979-458-1455 or email [uwc@tamu.edu](mailto:uwc@tamu.edu).

## COVID-19

To help protect Aggieland and stop the spread of COVID-19, Texas A&M University urges students to be vaccinated and to wear masks in classrooms and all other academic facilities on campus, including labs. Doing so exemplifies the Aggie Core Values of respect, leadership, integrity, and selfless service by putting community concerns above individual preferences. COVID-19 vaccines and masking—regardless of vaccination status—have been shown to be safe and effective at reducing spread to others, infection, hospitalization, and death.

General university communications regarding COVID-19 policies and how these will impact spring semester courses will be regularly updated on the following website:  
[www.tamu.edu/coronavirus/index.html](http://www.tamu.edu/coronavirus/index.html).

Please see the [Illness / COVID-19 info page for this course](#) for detailed guidance on university protocols and course-specific accommodations.

## University Policies

### Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

## Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24](#).)

## Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case" ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

*You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at [aggiehonor.tamu.edu](http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu).*

## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below) Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

*Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit [disability.tamu.edu](http://disability.tamu.edu).*

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## Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

*Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#).*

*Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).*

## Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care by utilizing available resources and services on your campus

*Students who need someone to talk to can contact Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) or call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](#).*