

The Color class is structured around the seven contrasts of color as explained in Johannes Itten's The Art of Color (and his shorter version The Elements of Color). Each contrast lecture/discussion is followed by an in-class, hands-on exercise, often derived from the "contrarian" color concepts of Josef Albers, that demonstrate the changeability and malleability of colors as they interact. All exercises and free studies (themed color assignments) reinforce the understanding of the effects colors have on each other. Class discussion/critiques of each exercise and free study reinforce learning. (\*\*See next page for Student Learning Outcomes.)

**I. Intro Session & Contrast of Hue**

- A. Color Quiz. Intro to Itten's 7 contrasts. Intro to Albers "Color is the most relative medium in all art."
- B. Vocabulary of color. Create color wheel and color family strips using Coloraid
- C. Contrast of Hue: Itten illustrations & Albers cards
- D. Free Studies explanation. "Carnival" theme assignment. Critique

**II. Contrast of Value/Intensity/Light-Dark**

- A. Itten & Albers: Black/White and monochrome values
- B. Concept of surrounding color(s) pulling its own characteristics.
  1. \*\*EX: 1 Color Looks Both Dark & Light. Monochrome families. Critique
  2. \*\*EX: 1 Color Looks Like 2. Use all colors, seeking both value and hue draining. Critique
- C. Itten's chart of same values with 12 different hues and grays
  1. Practice matching coloraid strips of similar values in different hues
  2. \*\*EX: CUBES of Sunny and Rainy Days using the same 4 color families. Critique
  3. Free Study: Using 12-15 different hues, create a landscape with 3 "planes" of similar values. Critique

**III. Contrast of Saturation (Dull/Vivid)**

- A. Itten & Albers
- B. 4 ways of desaturating color
  1. EX: 1 Color Looks Both Dull & Vivid. Critique
  2. Free Study: Theme of Night, Dawn or Twilight using contrast of saturation. Critique

**IV. Complementary Contrast and Warm/Cool Contrast**

- A. Itten & Albers; complementary pairs and their families
- B. Free Study: Rug (or own choice) using complementary contrast. Critique
- C. Itten; Albers relativity re Warm/Cool
- D. EX: 2 Colors Look Like 1. Critique

**V. Simultaneous Contrast (Vibrating)**

- A. Itten and "vampire" grays. EX: Create vampire gray samples for notebooks. Brief critique
- B. Vibrating Boundaries with hues: causes and cures
- C. Free Study: "Project Runway" fashion outfit. Create a backstory for your character; design accordingly, incorporating some simultaneous contrast. Critique

**VI. Color Boundaries Concept**

- A. Albers – hard/soft/disappearing/vibrating boundaries; how to replicate boundaries
- B. Compare transposing colors to transposing music from one key to another
- C. \*\*EX: Intervals/Colorways: Create one colorway of 4 colors; transpose that into a second colorway in a different color "key" with valid intervals and similar boundaries between colors. Critique

**VII. Contrast of Extension (Quantity)**

- A. Itten & Albers
- B. Free Studies: Leaf studies – create 7 leaf studies illustrating each of the 7 color contrasts. Critique
- C. Free Study: Self Portrait in colors. Critique
- D. Repeat Quiz, supplying reasons for the answers.

*\*\*See next page for Student Learning Outcomes*

**Exercise: 1 color looks both light and dark** (monochrome families)

By creating their own sample of a color that looks both light and dark depending on its background, students will begin to see how relative color interactions are, in the simplest (monochromatic) form

**Exercise: 1 color looks like 2**

Students will increase their understanding of the relevant nature of colors by manipulating the subtraction of both hue and value in their background color choices, making 1 color look like it is 2 different colors.

**Exercise: “CUBES” and Free Study: “3 Planes”**

Students will learn how many different hues can join to create a single “plane” by selecting hues of similar value for each plane. They also learn to problem-solve when a single hue does not join into its group. This concept is invaluable and students will use it in all kinds of media/themes in their future art work.

**Exercise: Intervals / Colorways**

Students learn how to develop a second color combination (colorway) that has validity in value, saturation and other contrasts, by reading the “boundaries” between colors. Similar to transposing music from one key to another, students learn to reproduce the same “distance” between the boundaries by repeating the boundary characteristics (soft, hard, disappearing, etc.) in the new colors. This skill is especially useful in fashion and industry design, and when doing commission work.

**Ultimate Outcome:**

Students will learn enough about color interactions that they will be able to examine, apply the concepts learned in class and solve any color challenges they find as they create their future art in any medium. And they will very likely have a lot of fun and a lot of “aha!” moments learning about the fascinating world of color.