

NewcastleX

Faculty of Education & Arts: School of Creative Industries

**Drawing Nature, Science and Culture:
Natural History Illustration 101
edX course code: NHI101x**



OVERVIEW

Course Description Do you find the natural world to be a constant source of inspiration? Do you observe it, care for it, marvel at it, photograph it and even draw and paint it? Would you like to use your artwork to pay appropriate homage to the many masterpieces of nature? In this course, the Natural History Illustration staff at the University of Newcastle will encourage you to know your subjects inside and out, and they will share with you the finer points of their specialised craft. Undertaking this course and immersing yourself in the set tasks will help you to hone your skills in both art and observation.

In this course we will explore concepts related to:

- Studying your environment
- Accurately recording your observations of flora and fauna
- Studying the anatomy and form of plants and animals
- Rendering techniques
- Field sketching
- Thoughtful composition
- Colour and texture
- Scale and proportion
- 3D form
- Tonal studies
- Incorporating fine detail

A new module covering these concepts will be made available to you each week.

Prerequisites NHI101x is ideal for natural history illustrators of all skill levels and for nature lovers who would like to learn how to record their observations in colourful detail. It is a course that sits beautifully within the realms of art and science.

Time commitment To get the most out of the course you are encouraged to spend, at the very least, three to six hours per week viewing demonstrations, reading content, taking part in discussions, completing assessments, drawing tasks and quizzes.

COURSE OUTLINE

www.newcastle.edu.au
CRICOS Provider 00109J



SYLLABUS

Learning Objectives

This course will help you to develop:

1. An understanding of the application of fieldwork data to natural history illustration.
2. Observational and visual analytical skills.
3. Field sketching and recording techniques.
4. A basic ability to apply realistic drawing techniques and concepts.
5. An understanding of the fundamental structure of plants and animals.
6. An ability to accurately capture a 3D form on a 2D surface.
7. A working knowledge of compositional techniques.
8. An ability to apply tonal rendering techniques.

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

This course contains a number of ways to improve your observational and drawing skills, apply new practices and gauge how you are progressing. Carrying out the weekly tasks and submitting them for peer review will help reinforce for you the core concepts of the course.

Assessments are in the form of drawing assignments (70%) and quizzes (30%). You will see these at the end of each module, and it is recommended that they be completed during that particular week. The pass mark for this course is 50%.

Students opting for a verified certificate must complete all of the graded assessment tasks, and pass, to be eligible.

COURSE TEAM

The course team for NHI101x comprises University of Newcastle Natural History Illustration lecturers, Andrew Howells and Bernadette Drabsch. Bernadette Drabsch provided the written material in each module. Andrew Howells provided visual material for the studio lectures. Clare Lloyd designed, developed and project managed the course with help from the University of Newcastle's Blended and Online Learning Design (BOLD) team. Melanie James was MOOC executive producer.

Artworks featured in the course were provided by: Andrew Howells, Bernadette Drabsch, Daniel Atkins, Prue Sailer, Lee Dedman, Linda Lunnon, Tanya Hoolihan, Deirdre Bean, Stephanie Holm, Kathirine Sentas, Samantha Bayly and Gina Cranson.

Gina Cranson and Clare Lloyd are course moderators.



SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Topic	Learning Activity	Assessment Due
1	26 Oct, 2016	What is NHI?	Research NH illustrator Tonal experiments	
2	2 Nov, 2016	Observational Drawing	Draw landscape	Object drawing (15%) 9 Nov, 2016
3	9 Nov, 2016	Fieldwork	Field sketches Field photographs	Quiz (15%) 16 Nov, 2016
4	16 Nov, 2016	Structure: Botanical	Leaf drawing	Flower drawing (15%) 23 Nov, 2016
5	23 Nov, 2016	Structure: Animals	Bird drawing	Mammal drawing (15) 30 Nov, 2016
6	30 Nov, 2016	Rendering	Tonal study	Rendered drawing (25%) 7 Dec, 2016 Quiz (15%) 7 Dec, 2016

ASSESSMENTS

This course has 6 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail within the course material.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Response Due	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Object Drawing	09 Nov, 2016	13 Nov, 2016	15%	2, 4 & 7
2	Flower Drawing	23 Nov, 2016	27 Nov, 2016	15%	2 & 3
3	Mid-Course Quiz	16 Nov, 2016	n/a	15%	1, 2 & 5
4	Mammal Drawing	30 Nov, 2016	4 Dec, 2016	15%	2, 3, 4, 5 & 6
5	Rendered Drawing	07 Dec, 2016	11 Dec, 2016	25%	2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 8
6	Final Quiz	07 Dec, 2016	n/a	15%	2, 4, 5, 6 & 7

COURSE MATERIALS

While it is recommended that you have these materials, all you really need is a pencil, some paper and time to practise, practise, practise.

- A3 sketchpad
- Good-quality **hard, smooth paper** such as Bristol board
- A **hard surface** to rest your paper on (either a desk, table or drawing board)
- **Scrap paper** or paper towel to rest your hand on
- A **selection of graphite pencils**, ranging from 4B to 2H
- A **kneadable eraser** and a **hard plastic eraser**
- A **feather** or a soft brush to dispose of eraser rubbings
- A desk lamp

Throughout the course you will find suggestions for “further resources”. These explore relevant topics and may help your studies but they are not compulsory reading.



COURSE OUTLINE

MODULE	TOPIC	WHAT WE WILL DO
1	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet your instructors• Set up a workspace.• Gain an understanding of key natural history illustration concepts.• Research a natural history illustrator in your area.• Experiment with pencils to produce tonal studies.
2	Observational Drawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop visual recording techniques.• Learn mindful observational skills.• Hone visual analysis.• Explore foreground, midground & background.• Produce simplified shapes of natural objects & accurate line drawings.• Draw a habitat scene with depth, narrative & a strong focal point.
3	Field Sketching & Recording Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply observational drawing techniques in the field• Try gestural drawing.• Record colour & texture.• Make a field journal, incorporating notes, drawings & photographs.
4	The Structure of Flowers & Leaves	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draw plants, considering scale & proportion.• Analyse & revise drawings.• Draw from various angles to develop 3D form.• Study plant anatomy to draw the underlying structure.
5	The Structure of Mammals & Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin to understand animal structure by considering bones & muscles.• Draw a mammal.• Illustrate bird structure with gestural sketches & finished drawing.
6	Rendering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn tonal rendering techniques.• Develop rendering skills.• Put finishing touches to drawings.• Produce a tonal study.• Add texture, patterns & features to your drawing.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Academic Policy

Students who enroll in NHI101x are expected to abide by the terms of the edX Honor Code. NewcastleX commits to taking appropriate action should there be violations of the [edX Honor Code](#), which may result in dismissal from this course. No refunds will be issued under such circumstances. The University of Newcastle and NewcastleX have created this course under strict guidelines to meet the highest academic standards and maximise benefits to students. We undertake to maintain a positive and inclusive learning environment, in which discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated.

If you have any concerns, please notify us via the edX contact form.



Communication Methods	Communication methods used in this course include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Discussion Board on edX website. Students will receive communications via the posting of content or announcements on the course site.- Email: Students will receive communications via their edX email account.
Course Evaluation	Your feedback is sought for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement.
Discussion Guidelines	For details on online forum protocol, click on the Discussion Guidelines tab at the top of the page and/or consult the edX Code of Conduct. Students are encouraged to post at least once per module – to participate in discussions and peer review marking. A course moderator will be available to answer questions on the Discussion Forum. Students are asked to be patient in the event of there being a large number of queries. The course team is based in Newcastle, NSW, Australia, and works within UTC/GMT+11 (Daylight Saving Time). Your course moderators will be online each day (Monday-Friday) for a few hours.
Note	Students will be notified of any changes made to the course content or schedule.