

Foundation Program – New Student Guide

Congratulations! You are about to begin your professional training in art & design. The first year (Foundation) program at Otis College provides core studies for life-long learning and professional practices in art & design. The program is organized to foster the most growth and success possible within the first year of your art/design school career.

Foundation offers an integrated platform of skills, information, and experience that will support you in the future, both educationally and professionally. It will provide you with an experiential understanding of the rich relationships between all of the art & design disciplines. You will be working alongside future Fashion Design, Product Design, Digital Media, Architecture/Landscape/Interiors, Communication Arts, Fine Arts, and Toy Design students. Foundation mirrors the future; many of the boundaries between the various fields will overlap, and sometimes, disappear.

When school starts, you will be attending studio classes within a “Section”, or group of students. Your studio classes will meet together as a section group for all of your studio courses in the first semester, and will continue in the second semester in several of your classes. This section grouping provides increased peer support and a more secure setting to work in, as well as better opportunities for developing connections with others creatively, socially, and professionally.

The Foundation program emphasizes “sequential learning”—the taking of incremental steps in order to accumulate the skills, confidence, and understanding needed to reach a higher goal. This starts with activities and problems that focus attention on individual tasks and issues related to the courses. As the year progresses, the coursework evolves along a pathway that leads from activity that is highly defined by your instructors to activity that is increasingly defined by you. This evolution is what allows you to discover and/or exploit a degree of personal vision. By the end of Foundation year, the potential for your individual growth and success in the Art & Design fields will be uncovered. You will be truly prepared to move into your major as a sophomore at Otis College.

Below are some questions students frequently ask about the Foundation experience:

What studio classes will I be taking in Foundation?

In the first semester, the core curriculum includes a choice between Life Drawing I and Creative Practices I. You will also take Drawing and Building Form and Principles of Design. Students take these three studio courses along with two Liberal Arts and Sciences courses: Writing in the Digital Age and Introduction to Visual Culture.

In the second semester, all students take Connections through Color and Design, which is a Creative Action course, and two Liberal Arts and Sciences courses: Birth of the Modern and Ways of Knowing. In addition, you will choose between Life Drawing II and Creative Practices II; and between Drawing Studio and Form & Space; and you will take a Foundation Elective, offered by the major departments.

In **Principles of Design**, and its second semester counterpart, **Connections through Color & Design** (6 hours each semester), you will study the fundamental elements, processes and language of two-dimensional design and its crossover application to real-world experience. Class

work involves a range of materials, tools, organizing principles, and ways of thinking. In learning about design, various assignments are undertaken to focus attention and foster skill acquisition related to individual design elements and visual organization. Since Principles of Design is a 6-hour (weekly) class, much of the work is accomplished in class. A wide range of processes are included, such as painting, photography, and digital media. The second semester Connections through Color & Design course introduces several leading models for understanding the interaction of color in pigment-based and digital media, as well as providing an integrated learning experience that expands the traditional classroom to include resources and expertise from the larger metropolitan community.

Drawing & Building Form is a 6 hour class in the first semester. You will study form in both two-dimensional rendering and three-dimensional composition through drawing and building. By drawing objects, you will develop skills in the translation from three-dimensional reality to the two-dimensional pictorial framework. You will build skills of relational measurement, value as an indication of placement in space, and pictorial composition that will inform both your drawing and form-building activities. Drawing techniques such as perspective and isometric projection will clarify form in the round and facilitate ideation and planning for successful realizations of your three-dimensional compositions. Through building three-dimensional works, you will learn the form-generating potential of line, plane, and volume—and their interaction—as powerful form-generating elements.

Drawing Studio meets for 3 hours each week. In this second semester drawing course, you will draw and draw again, transferring and expanding on acquired skills from Drawing and Building Form. Instruction will expand to include color, problem finding, and complexity of idea – enabling you to make compelling images and abstractions. You will be encouraged to develop your personal vision through the acquisition of research skills, and through the introduction of more varied drawing media.

Form and Space is a three-dimensional design course that meets for 3 hours each week in the second semester. We often think of art and design in terms of two-dimensional skills – drawing and picture-making. But the “real” world is three-dimensional – nature, buildings, our bodies, and even space itself. Knowing how the complex 3-D visual experience works is vital in all aspects of visual art and/or design. Focusing on the unique problem of invention in form, the Form & Space curriculum expands on skills acquired in Drawing and Building Form to advance your ability to imagine, plan, construct, and visually resolve your own three-dimensional inventions. By the end of the semester in Form & Space, you will be capable of handling materials, using tools, thinking in the round, and solving 3-D problems of both a visual and constructional nature.

In **Life Drawing**, you will receive 6 hours per week of sequenced instruction in one of the most challenging and compelling of all Western art traditions—structural drawing focused on the human figure. The figure is one of the most complex natural forms, and serves well as a model of nature itself in drawing. This course provides instruction in structure, visual relationships, and mark-making. You will draw from the live model each week. Traditional methods of analytical figure drawing are taught—gesture, anatomy, measurement and transparency. You will learn to use devices for perceptual development like axis lines, the plumb line, head counts, surface landmarks, planar analysis, and ellipses. Throughout the year, this will all accumulate to provide the perceptual, intellectual, and manual skills needed to make strong, lifelike figure drawings that embody a sense of personal vision. Students have the option of taking Creative Practices and Responses in second semester, in place of Life Drawing II.

Creative Practices I and II focus on studying, researching, and exploring practices of creativity that bridge art and design disciplines. Students employ ‘art and design’ thinking, plan and develop independent projects, and define parameters and intention. Students pursue various methods of inquiry, ideation and evaluation including writing, research, material investigations and iterative process through mapping, drawing, collage, constructions, video and performance. Students engage frequently in critique and in the presentation of ideas, topics, and concepts of deep interest – developing strong oral communication and critical thinking capabilities.

What can I do this summer to prepare for my studio classes?

The summer is a good time to prepare for the school year by finding some experiences that will help to slow down and focus your attention on something aesthetically enriching. In Foundation, you will often be asked to focus your attention, entertain possibilities, and produce a lot of work. Before you arrive in the Fall, a great way to prepare is to get as much exposure to “aesthetic experience” as possible.

For example, go to the museums wherever you live—move slowly and look closely at work that attracts you. Think less in terms of what you like, and more about *how* things were done. When we see an old painting of a battle scene or a mythological subject, we might feel distanced from it because of how different our time is from the time in which that work was produced. Looking more closely can put you in mind of the incredible human investment present in the work. You can connect with how much knowledge went into even the smallest part of that whole.

Go to a concert, a dance recital, or a beautiful garden. Read an inspiring novel, or see a special film. By giving yourself aesthetically enriching experiences, you allow yourself to slow down, open up, and take in something of the potential for human achievement in the arts that is within your power to achieve as well.

The pace of contemporary experience, from Instagram to life on the freeways, is incredibly fast. This rapid pace is increasing all the time. It divides our attention into tiny pieces—we don’t stay focused on any one set of sensory inputs for more than seconds or minutes at a time. As an artist and/or designer, it may become your job to produce more fuel for that rapid-fire culture, but to do that you will yourself need to *slow down*. This is necessary because of how much time, skill, sensitivity and understanding it takes to invest what we make with the kind of compelling quality it needs to compete in the world of art and design. In other words, the more you slow down and focus your attention, the more successful you can be at stimulating others’ need for ever-more interesting and inventive images, forms, and products.

Give yourself access to as many aesthetic experiences as you can this summer.

I've heard Foundation is tough. Is that true? If so, why?

It is true that Foundation at Otis College is a challenging, stimulating, and rigorous program. As such, it can be perceived as tough. There are some good reasons why students view the program this way. One is that starting a college career, the first step in what will become a professional career, is perhaps tough in itself. After all, coming to Otis College from high school or a junior college, you might not have worked on a professional level before. Another factor is that Foundation moves you into a professional mode, and for some that transition can be challenging, or can just take some time. The great thing is that your department administrators, faculty advisors, classroom instructors and other students around you are all prepared to help. One point

that is easy to forget is that your instructors are here for you—they teach because they understand. So, while standards exist and they are maintained, lots of help is available in meeting them.

How do I know if I need a course reader or textbook?

All of your required course readers and textbooks should be purchased online **AFTER** you have registered. You will need to check the [Estimated Price Lists](#) to get information regarding required materials for your classes.

What is a course reader?

Course readers or course packs are custom-published packs compiled by your professor with materials that are relevant to the course. Course packs allow professors to include up-to-date articles and readings and are customized for each class. Usually an instructor will choose to use a course reader when there are multiple readings they wish to use for class, and it becomes too costly to have students purchase all the books. Course readers must be purchased through <https://store.cognella.com/> and cannot be purchased through other vendors.

How do I order required Textbooks?

1. You can purchase your required books from any bookseller, in-store or online. Some examples would be Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Textbooks.com. More can be found online to choose from. Also, many have rental and digital options at a cheaper rate.
2. You will need the Student Schedule printout (sample below) provided by the Registrar.
3. Using the information found on the Estimated Price Lists (ISBN, Title, Author, Publisher) and your Student Schedule, you can search for your books online.

Sample Student Schedule Printout

CRN	SUBJ	CRSE	SEC	CMP	TITLE	CREDITS
30396	FND	115	A	G	Principles of Design	2.0
30425	FNDT	180	A	G	Life Drawing I	3.0
30090	AHCS	120	C	G	Visual Culture	3.0

CRN – a number you use to register online

SUBJ – stands for subject

CRSE – stands for course

SEC – stands for section

CMP – stands for campus (G is the Goldsmith Campus on Lincoln)

TITLE – course title

CREDITS – number of credits or units course is worth

How do I order required Course Readers?

To purchase a reader, please follow these instructions:

- **Step 1:** Log on to <https://store.cognella.com/>
- **Step 2:** Choose the correct course pack, select a format, and proceed with the checkout process.

- **Step 3:** After purchasing, you can access a digital copy of the first few chapters (if you selected a print format) or all chapters (if you selected a digital format*) by logging into your account and clicking 'My Digital Materials' to get started on your reading right away.

Print orders are typically processed within 24 hours; the shipping time and price will depend on the selected shipping method and day it is shipped (orders are not shipped on Sundays or holidays).

*Digital access: To access your course pack, you will need an Adobe ID and the free Adobe Digital Editions (ADE) software installed on your computer. Visit <https://cognella.com/students/#ml-digital> for easy instructions. Once you download the digital pack you can access it online or offline at any time on your computer, tablet, or smart phone. You can also annotate, highlight, and search the content. Please note that the digital course pack expires after six months.

If you experience any difficulties, please call Cognella at (858) 552-1120

How do I return an item or request a refund?

Textbooks: Certain conditions apply to returning your materials for a full refund. BEFORE you open or write in anything, please check the Returns FAQ of the site or store where materials were purchased for refund policies and restrictions.

Course Readers: Please see the [Student Help FAQ](#) section on the Cognella website.

Can I have my books and readers delivered to Otis?

If you will be in transit when your course materials are going to be delivered, have not established a residence, or if you are in the Otis Housing program, you may qualify to have your orders shipped to the College. To see if you qualify and find out how to arrange this, contact the office of Student Affairs at (310) 665-6960 or check with the Student Affairs Office on the 1st floor.

Can I sell my book once the semester is over?

To sell your course reader or text book, contact the department representative for the course to see if those materials will be used again next term.

I need more help...

Course Readers: Check the [Help & FAQs](#) on Cognella website.

Textbooks: Contact the store you ordered text books from regarding materials ordered.

If you have questions about the courses or required course materials, contact the department where the course is being offered. For non-studio courses, please use the [Liberal Arts and Sciences Contact Form](#) or call (310) 665-6920.

Do I need to purchase a computer?

Otis does not recommend a specific computer configuration or purchase for the Foundation year. There are computers available for use on campus. However, you may opt to purchase an iMac or MacBook to supplement your use of the College's computers. Keep in mind that you may want to purchase a more appropriately configured computer once you declare a major. See more at: <http://www.otis.edu/computer-center/software-hardware-purchases>

Remember . . .

The reason you were admitted to the College is that you have distinguished yourself. Foundation is happy to have you, and wants to be a part of your success. The program sees every student as an individual, and will recognize your individual development throughout the year.

The Top Six Things To Know About Your BFA Program:

As an undergraduate student you are enrolled in a 120-credit degree program that leads to a B.F.A. Degree. The following *six key things to know* will help you navigate your college career, and graduate on time:

1. **The College Catalog** (The Hoot) tells you all about the program, its requirements, and how to move from level to level toward your earned degree. Download The Hoot for the academic year you entered (or would have entered) as a Freshman, save it as a pdf to your drive or send it to yourself as an email.

<http://www.otis.edu/registration-records/course-catalog-student-handbook>

2. **Understanding Course Credits** allows you to build ***with your Advisors*** each semester's schedule, always remembering the goal—graduation! Your status as either a Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, or Senior depends on your total accumulated course credits.

Level	Credits
Senior	84–120 Credits
Junior	54–83 Credits
Sophomore	25–53 Credits
Foundation	0–24 Credits

3. Your **Course Requirements** are outlined in the catalog for your Foundation year, all your Liberal Arts and Science requirements, and your Major (and Minor, if you choose to pursue one), and Creative Action. Follow these ***with your Advisors*** to be sure you're on track each semester!

FOUNDATION

Fall - Foundation		CR
COURSE		
Life Drawing I or Creative Practices I	FNDT180 FNDT172	3
Principles of Design	FNDT115	2
Drawing & Building Form	FNDT160	3
Writing in the Digital Age	ENGL107	3
Intro to Visual Culture	AHCS120	3
		14

Spring - Foundation		CR
COURSE		
Life Drawing II or Creative Practices II	FNDT182 FNDT173	3
Connections through Color & Design	CAIL101	3
Drawing Studio – Expanded Practices or Form and Space	FNDT193 FNDT161	2
Elective	FNDT145	1
Birth of the Modern	AHCS121	3
Ways of Knowing	LIBS114	3
		15

The Catalog includes one of these for every Major and Minor at the College.

4. Your **Academic Standing** depends on your successful completion of required courses. A cumulative GPA of 2.0 ("C") or better is required to continue in good standing. Academic Probation is conferred upon a GPA that falls below 2.0—this is remedied with help ***from your Advisors***.
5. **Adding, Dropping, and Withdrawing** from courses can be successfully accomplished ***with your Advisors***. It is important to be sure that any changes to your academic schedule be made in such a way that you don't fall behind on progress toward your degree! **Your Advisors** will help you do this in the most productive way; be sure to *read your Otis College email* for important dates and reminders!
6. **Knowing and Using Your Resources** is critical to your success. Your Academic Advisor, Academic Mentor, Department Chair, Student Learning Center staff, and Student Affairs staff are all at your service to help you succeed at Otis College, and beyond.