

Hello,

Welcome to the Constructive Anatomy class. I wanted to take a moment to explain what this course is, how to approach it, and what to focus on as you begin—especially if this is your first time taking a class like this.

When we say **Constructive Anatomy**, we're talking about learning the human figure as a *structure*, not as a finished picture. This class is not about copying outlines, chasing likeness, or rendering surface detail. Instead, the focus is on understanding how the figure is built and how it functions in space.

We work **from the inside out**.

That means:

- Starting with the figure as **simple volumes** (boxes, cylinders, and masses)
- Establishing **proportion, balance, and weight** before detail
- Learning anatomy as **functional structure**, not memorization
- Drawing figures that feel like they can *stand, move, and turn*

At first, the drawings may feel rough, unfinished, or even awkward. That's normal—and expected. You are not aiming for a “pretty” drawing in this class. You are training your eye and hand to think structurally, to understand what is happening beneath the surface, and to build the figure logically.

Whether you are working from a live model, photo reference, or imagination, the goal is the same:

to give you a **reliable framework** for drawing the human figure—one you can return to again and again in drawing, painting, and long-term study.

This course is designed as a **progressive series**. Each session builds on the previous one, and concepts will repeat intentionally. Repetition is not a sign you're behind—it's how this material settles in. You can join at any point, but consistency over time is where the real progress happens.

If you've taken anatomy classes before that felt either too vague or overwhelmingly technical, this course is meant to sit in the middle: clear structure, practical application, and steady reinforcement through drawing.

For now, the most important thing to do is simple:  
show up, draw honestly, and focus on structure over finish.

More details about upcoming sessions and how the series will unfold will follow soon.

I'm glad you're here.

Warmly,

John

Bucks County Classical Arts Center



Hello,

Welcome to the Constructive Anatomy class. I wanted to take a moment to explain how this course works, how to approach the drawings, and what we'll be focusing on in **Lesson 1**, especially if this is your first time working this way.

When we say **Constructive Anatomy**, we're talking about learning the human figure as a *structure*, not as a finished picture. This class is not about copying contours, chasing likeness, or rendering surface detail. Instead, the focus is on understanding how the figure is built and how it functions in space.

We work **from the inside out**.

That means:

- Starting with the figure as **simple structural elements**
  - Establishing **proportion, balance, and weight** before detail
  - Learning anatomy as **functional structure**, not memorization
  - Drawing figures that feel like they can *stand, move, and turn*
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## Lesson 1: The Armature

Our first lesson focuses on what we call the **armature**.

The armature is the underlying structural framework of the figure. Think of it as the figure's internal scaffolding—the simplified system that holds everything together before muscles, contours, or surface detail are added.

In this lesson, you are *not* trying to draw a finished figure.

You are focusing on:

- Making stick figures
- With ovoid for head, chest and hips
- Simple ovoids or spheres for joints
- Simple mitten or sock shapes for hands or feet
- Showing center line in the front of body from pubic triangle to pit of neck
- Showing simple spinal column line from sacrum to back of head

At this stage, drawings should be **light, clear, and economical**.

They may look skeletal, abstract, or unfinished—and that is exactly right.

### Studying Through Copies (Important)

A very effective way to understand the armature is by **copying strong structural drawings**.

For this reason, I recommend studying the armature drawings found in:

- Andrew Loomis's *Figure Drawing for All It's Worth* (see the armature sections: Look at pages 31-34 from Loomis's "Figure Drawing for all its Worth": <https://illustrationage.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/andrew-loomis-figure-drawing-for-all-its-worth.pdf>)
- *How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way*: pages 44-64: <https://archive.org/details/HowToDrawComicsTheMarvelWay>

When copying these drawings, the goal is **not style imitation or polish**.

Instead, pay attention to:

- How the figure is *simplified*
- How the torso and pelvis relate
- How balance and weight are indicated with minimal lines
- How movement is suggested without surface detail

Doing careful copies trains your eye to recognize structure and proportion quickly. This is a normal and valuable part of learning to draw the figure.

If you'd like to continue practicing beyond those examples, you can also use classical sculpture as reference. I've provided a [Nude Classical Sculpture reference board](#), which works very well when you apply the same armature thinking to three-dimensional forms.

Going further, if you use the style of these drawings and wish to practice further and develop your taste use the link and use my Nude Classical Sculpture Board:

## A Note on Expectations

Do not worry if this feels unfamiliar or uncomfortable at first.  
You are training a new way of seeing.

This course is designed as a **progressive series**. Concepts will repeat intentionally, and each lesson builds on the previous one. Repetition is how this material becomes usable and intuitive over time.

For now, your job is simple:  
show up, draw honestly, and prioritize structure over finish.

More details about upcoming lessons and how the series unfolds will follow soon.

I'm glad you're here.

Warmly,  
John  
Bucks County Classical Arts Center

### Example demos from me

