

Creative State

Drawing on Experience



Jennifer Landin was 9-years-old, cheerfully growing up in rural Michigan, when she had a life-changing epiphany. The colored-pencil sketch she'd created of a horse was pretty, but proportionally too long. When she halved the horse's torso by folding the paper however, the drawing became perfect.

"That's when I first realized proportions are important and must be measured," says Landin, now teaching assistant professor in the Department of Biology. "You need correct proportions for a drawing to work."

This is the very premise of Landin's popular biological illustration course that teaches students to draw life forms accurately and to use illustration to learn how objects function and evolve.

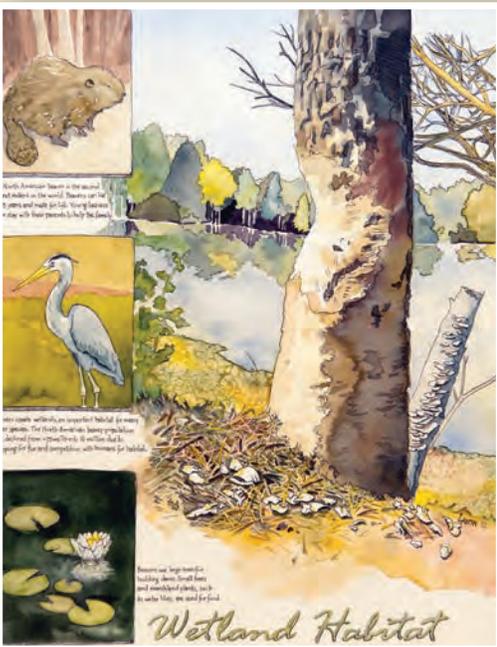
Landin developed the course, now in its second year, while earning her doctorate at NC State. Her research explored the use of drawing as a teaching tool and how accurately science majors see proportion and detail.

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Students from engineering, dentistry, design and biology attend the course — and while most have never drawn before, the student illustrations are gorgeous. This spring two regional galleries, the North Carolina Aquarium at Roanoke Island and the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, are even exhibiting the work.

"The word is spreading," Landin says.



TOP: Jennifer Landin's biological illustration course helps students understand the structures and anatomy of plants, animals, skeletons, even fungi. BOTTOM, left: An example of Landin's work, a beautiful and detailed drawing of animals and plants in a wetland habitat. BOTTOM, right: Another work by Landin, who says, "I don't really teach students to draw. I teach them to see."