

The following activities and practices are organized to reflect the way we teach studio and seminar courses. We organize the first five or six class periods of each semester in the following way, regardless of the content of the class:

DURING THE FIRST / SECOND DAY OF CLASS

Naming Who We Invite Into Our Space of Learning (activity)

Our teachers: This activity draws from the wisdom expressed in “Skywoman Falling,” in Robin Wall Kimmerer’s book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.²¹

Time: 30–45 minutes

What it can do: When we gather together in spaces of learning, this activity helps us to imagine another, bigger circle of people that sit behind us, people who have taught us important lessons, people who have made our ongoing transformation possible, and people who have made our presence here possible. They might include our teachers and mentors, mothers, fathers, siblings, friends, artists, or authors of influential works.

How it works:

1. Sit in a circle.
2. Make a list of people who have played a role in your ability or desire to be here in our space of learning (directly or indirectly).
3. Write about why and in which ways they are important to you.
4. Choose two people from your list who you would like to bring into the circle.
5. Share with the group why and in which ways these people are important to you.

Reflection: Talk about how naming who is in the room with you might alter your sense of belonging in the shared space of learning.

²¹ Robin Wall Kimmerer, “Skywoman Falling,” *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. (Minneapolis, Minn. Milkweed Editions, 2013), p 3–9.