

Locks as Art
ART CS 120
UCSB, Spring 2022
Tuesdays 1:00-3:50 PM
College of Creative Studies Building, Room 120
Instructor: Lucas Murgida
Lecture #1

Welcome Everyone!!

Plan for Today:

- Introductions
- Syllabus
- Weekly Course Plan (Approximate)
- Projects
- Break
- Lecture and Lesson Demo

Introductions

Please share:

- Preferred name?
- Pronouns?
- What year and majors/minors are you?
- Favorite Color?
- Sweet, Sour, Salty, or Spicey?
- Chocolate, Vanilla, or Strawberry?
- Truths or Dares?
- Flying or Invisibility?
- No Pain or No Fear?

Syllabus

Approximate Plan for Week #1-Week #5

•Week #1, Tuesday 3/29:

Go over course basics and expectations.

Lecture 1 and Lesson Demo

Assign Final Project, Due Week #9, 5/24

Assign Homework #1

You must upload Homework #1 to BOX and be ready to share with the class on 4/12.

•Week #2, Tuesday 4/5

NO CLASS!!

I am out of town.

Use this time practice, think, research, and complete the first assignment.

•Week #3, Tuesday 4/12:

Review Homework #1

Lecture 2 and Lesson Demo

Assign Homework #2

You must upload Homework #2 to BOX and be ready to share with the class on 4/19.

•Week #4, Tuesday 4/19:

Review Homework #2

Lecture 3 and Lesson Demo

Assign Homework #3

You must upload Homework #3 to BOX and be ready to share with the class on 4/26.

•Week #5, Tuesday 4/26:

Review Homework #3

Lecture 4 and Lesson Demo

Assign Homework #4

You must upload Homework #4 to BOX and be ready to share with the class on 5/3.

Schedule a Mandatory Zoom Meeting with me via Zoom to talk about a plan for your final project.

Approximate Plan for Week #6-Week #11

•Week #6, Tuesday 5/3:

Review Homework #4

Lecture 5 and Lesson Demo

Assign Homework #5

You must upload Homework #5 to BOX and be ready to share with the class on 5/10.

•Week #7, Tuesday 5/10:

Review Homework #5

Lecture 6 and Lesson Demo

Assign Homework #6

You must upload Homework #6 to BOX and be ready to share with the class on 5/17.

•Week #8, Tuesday 5/17:

Review Homework #6

Lecture 6 and Lesson Demo

Prepare final projects

•Week #9, Tuesday 5/24:

Review and critique first half of the students final projects as a group.

•Week #10, Tuesday 5/31:

Review and critique second half of the students final projects as a group.

•Week #11, Tuesday 6/7:

NO CLASS! GREAT WORK!

Homework Assignments:

- This studio art course is taking a different approach to teach you artist “skills.” Your goal is to take the mechanical and conceptual lessons that we talk about during each class and figure out how you can mobilize these ideas and tactics in your own art practice, research, and life.
- The homework that you make might not be directly related to locks/keys, entrance/exit, or access/denial. That is OK! Our goal is to get you thinking and really start changing your relationship to these ideas.
- The bare minimum for each homework assignment is a typed one page analysis of your experience and ideas. However this is a studio arts course and I would love to see you try and make ART about your experience with these techniques, materials, or ideas. Regardless of what you make, please keep in mind that you will be sharing it with the class. Please only share what you feel comfortable sharing.
- Work quickly and intuitively! The turn around for these homework assignments is only a week so you need to challenge yourself to trust your instincts and see what happens.
- I am not looking for “masterpieces.” I am looking for you to challenge yourself and try something new. If you create something with earnesty, I will (and the class) will take it seriously and give you constructive feedback!
- Create a folder labeled with your name and upload to our shared BOX account. You must upload your homework to receive credit for the assignments.

Final Project:

- This will constitute a major portion of your grade and will be the culmination of the class.
- It is open ended and can take on whatever form that you chose, however our goal once again is to use the ideas, materials, and techniques related to locksmithing discussed in the lectures as the inspiration for your project.
- We will look at and critique these projects as a group during Week #9 and Week #10, with half of the students showing on each day.
- You must upload a digital version of your project to our shared BOX account in order to receive credit for the assignment.

Before I start with the Locksmithing Lessons, I want to share a small amount of information about my art practice and the art movement that my work is a derivative of. Taking direct inspiration from the work of the performance and conceptual artists of the 1960's and 70's, I have been using my jobs as research to inform my art practice since 1999.

You may not be familiar with this type of work, so I want to tell you a quick story to help you understand this type of art practice, why it is important to me, the kind of dialogue that I hope you engage with, and what directly inspired the creation of this specific class at UCSB.



John Baldessari
1931-2020

“I Am Making Art”
1971

In 2005, after working professionally as a locksmith for a couple of years I made my first art about this labor experience. To do this I created a conceptual project called *The Locksmithing Institute*. This “school” traveled to different public places and aimed to teach anyone interested themes or skills related to locksmithing. Initially, the lessons were a derivative of the physical activities that I executed while working as a locksmith, such as picking locks or making keys.





After doing three of these lessons in the first year, the classes quickly moved away from being about anything directly related to locks or keys and started to focus on the psychological conditions that I noticed reflected in the people that I was hired to help during my daily locksmithing jobs. I shifted the focus of the classes away from practice and more towards theory that centered around the following question that I authored, “What happens to people when they become separated from places that make them feel safe and secure, like their home or their car?” This question has been at the heart of my research and life for the past 20 years. With that said, it is an honor to explore the next chapter of *The Locksmithing Institute* with each of you.

Our Goal:

Take the skill sets of locksmithing and combine them theoretical analysis, and use the fusion of these ideas and skills to make new works of art.

SKILL SETS + THEORY = ART PRACTICE

Although we are examining locksmithing in this context, in the future you could use this formula with ANY skill set. Learn everything there is to know about a skill and then conceptually examine it in great detail. It works...trust me.

With that said....

To me, this whole class is a work of art.

Our conversations are a work of art.

The thinking that you put into understanding these ideas is a work of art.

The projects that you will make are works of art.

Drawing direct inspiration from Baldessari:

WE are making art.

With that said, let's get started...

The Locksmithing Institute of UCSB, College of Creative Studies

Spring 2022

Lesson #1:

Picking Locks:

Pressure VS Manipulation

Ethical Promise (please repeat after me):

I do solemnly swear, that from this day forward,

I will be ethical at all times.

I will use the lessons that are being gifted to me in this class,

As research to inform my personal growth and the healing of our world.

I will behave in a way that protects the interests,

Of my community, my family, my teacher, and this institution.

I will never use this knowledge to break any,

Local, State, or Federal Laws.

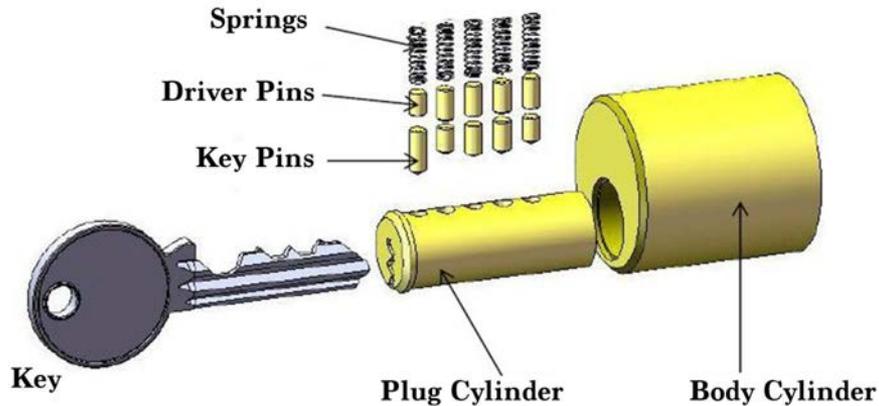
I understand that the lessons of this class,

Are not designed to teach me how to break into places or to steal things.

The lessons of this class are designed to empower me,

And effect positive change.

Locks Composed of Concentric Cylinders:



- Plug cylinder goes inside of Body cylinder.
- Springs drive two sets of pins from the Body Cylinder down into the Plug Cylinder.
- This binds the two cylinders together and won't allow Plug Cylinder to rotate inside of the Body Cylinder.
- Driver pins have flat bottoms
- Key pins have tapered bottoms. The taper allows the key to glide across them as it goes in and out of the lock.
- If the correct key goes into the lock, the key pins are pushed up and become flush with the top of the Plug Cylinder.
- When the key pins become flush, it is called a "Sheer Line."
- Creating a "Sheer Line" will allow the Plug Cylinder to rotate inside of the Body Cylinder.
- LOCK OPENS!

Image Credit:

<https://www.engineeringclicks.com/lock-design-part-1/>

Picking locks requires you to create a Sheer Line without a key.

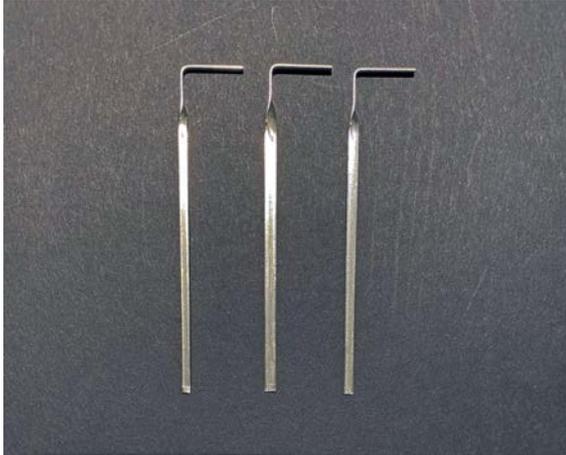
There are several different ways to create a sheer line, but today we are going to talk about the most popular method: **Lock Picking**. In order to pick a lock you need a set of **lock picks** and **tension wrenches**. If you commit to being in the course each of you will get –among other things– your own lock pick set, consisting of:

- 2 Rake Picks
- 3 Hook Picks
- 3 Single Ended, Bottom Tension Wrenches
- 3 Double Ended, Bottom Tension Wrenches
- 2 Double Ended, Top Tension Wrenches
- 1 UCSB Branded Case

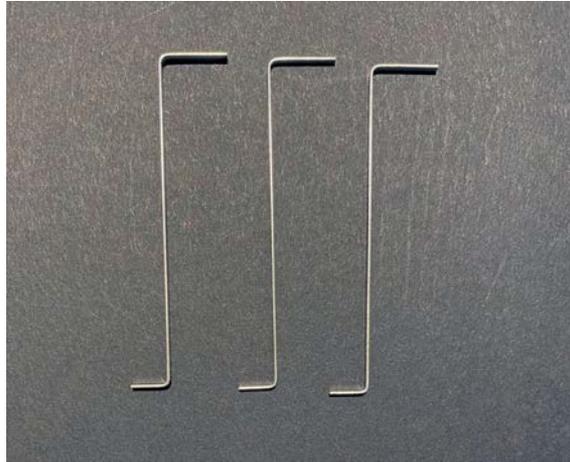


Tension Wrenches (part 1):

Used to apply rotational PRESSURE to the key cylinder. This binds the key pins to the shear line.



Single-Ended Bottom: Used to apply pressure to the bottom of the keyway. Has some and bend and spring.



Double-Ended Bottom: Used to apply pressure to the bottom of the keyway. Is more rigid with multiple lengths.

Each come in three different widths. Keyways can be different sizes.



Tension Wrenches (part 2):

Used to apply rotational PRESSURE to the key cylinder. This binds the key pins to the shear line.

Double-Ended Top: Used to apply pressure to the top of the keyway. Each side has different lengths.



Lock Picks:

Used to MANIPULATE the key pins into a sheer line.



Rakes: Used for quick, multiple pin picking.

Hooks: Used for intentional, single pin picking.



Where to insert your tools:

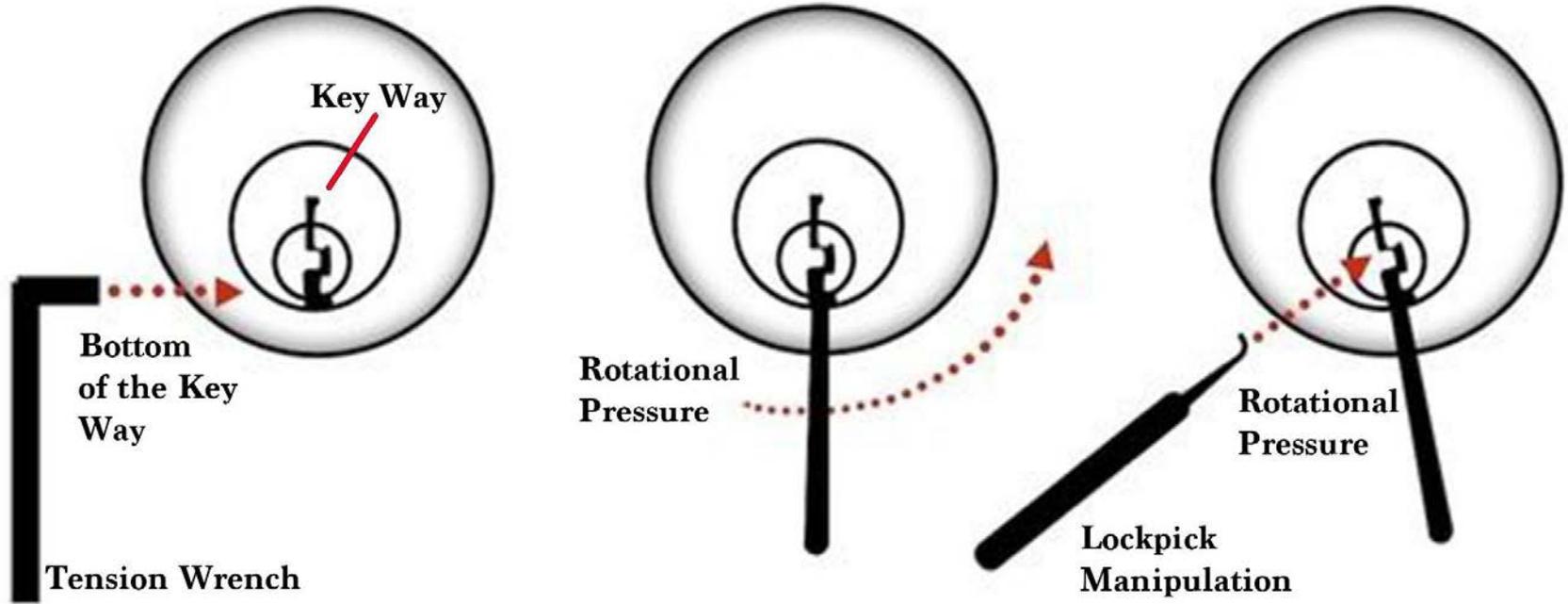


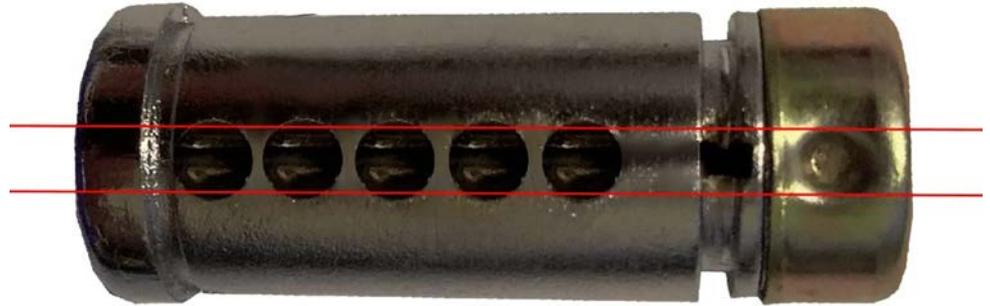
Image Credit:

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/how-to-pick-a-lock>

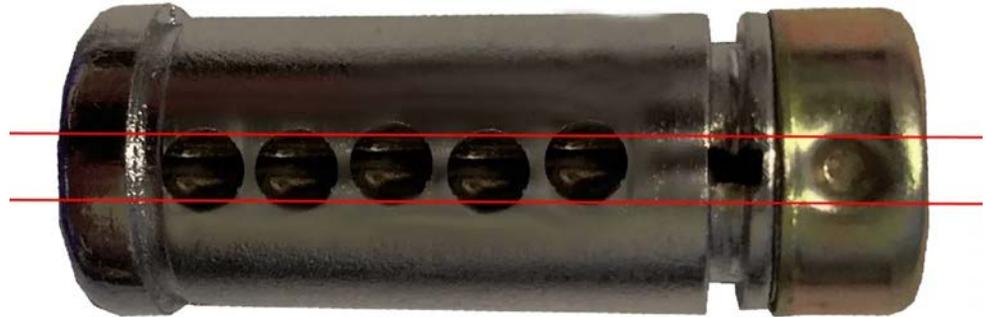
Why Locking Picking is Possible:

- It is almost impossible to drill a straight line of holes into a cylinder. As soon as the tip of the drill bit comes into contact with the surface of the cylinder, it will veer to left or right.
- Notice that the holes in the second image extend beyond the red reference lines.
- This is what allows you to bind the Driver pins of the lock to balance on the tiny inaccuracies of the Plug Cylinder.

In an ideal world, Key Pin holes **CAN** be drilled in a straight line.



In the real world, Key Pin holes **CAN'T** be drilled in a straight line.



Notice:

- This GIF starts with rotational PRESSURE that binds the Driver pin between the Body cylinder and Plug cylinder.
- Next, the Key pin is MANIPULATED upward and pushes the Driver pin upward until it gets bound above the top of the Plug cylinder.
- This creates a Sheer Line and the Key pin drops down and no longer has spring pressure.
- When all five Driver pins that are in the lock have been pin manipulated into a Sheer Line, the Plug Cylinder will rotate.
- LOCK OPENS!

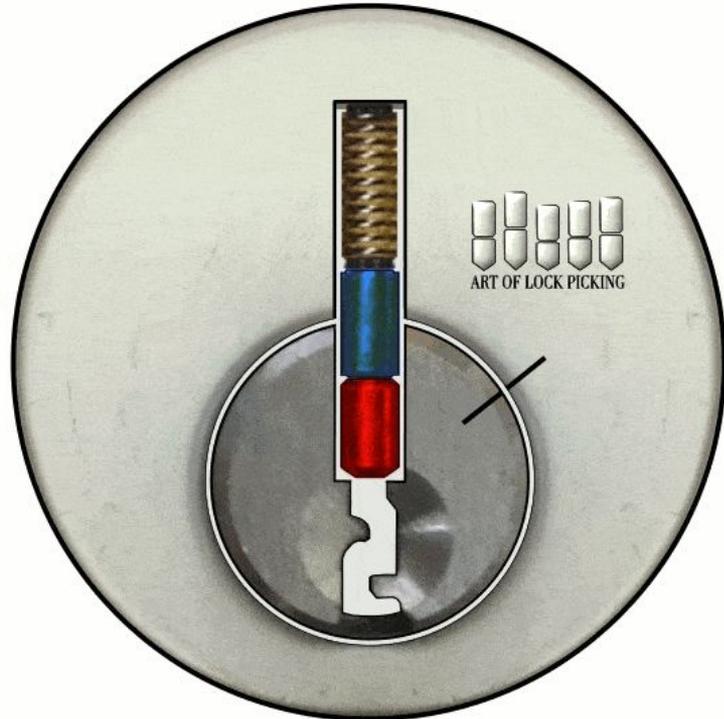


Image Credit:

<https://www.art-of-lockpicking.com/how-to-pick-a-lock-with-a-bobby-pin/>

Now you will learn to PICK A LOCK!!!

I want you to pay careful and close attention to what the experience is like.

- What does it PHYSICALLY feel like?
- What does it INTELLECTUALLY feel like?
- What does it EMOTIONALLY feel like?
- What do you smell, taste, hear...etc?
- What do you find yourself thinking about?
- How does make you think about yourself?
- What things does it make you remember from your life, pop-culture, history, science...etc?
- Notice all the details and make a note of them.

This is the first piece of “research” that will inform your homework assignments and final projects.

Homework #1:

- Practice picking locks. We will work on this skill together in our next class.
- Read the PDF that is posted to GauchoSpace.
- Start the process of finding AT LEAST ONE brass key that you have a personal connection to and can safely modify. Please note that after we are done, the key will no longer work. You have several weeks to find the perfect key.
- Submit Homework #1 in a folder labeled with your name to BOX by 1:00 PM, Tuesday April, 12th.

As you practice, read the article, and live your life reflect on the themes of Access/Denial, Pressure/Manipulation, Entrance/Exit, Locked/Unlocked...etc. Take notes!

Pay close attention to how the experience is felt in your body.

Pay close attention to the kinds of things you are day-dreaming and sleep-dreaming about.

How does the experience resonate or come into conflict with your core values, and the beliefs of your family and community?

What are some historical references that you remembered or discovered in your research?

How does this relate to your sense of self?

How does this relate to your art practice?

How does this relate to your other course work?

There is no wrong way to do this assignment. Submit at the very least one typed page that deals with the experience on your own terms. But, try to engage with these ideas in an artistic action...photos, performance video, audio, prototypes, hair brained schemes, baking, poems, family interviews...etc.

Go for it!!!

NO CLASS NEXT TUESDAY APRIL 5TH!!!!