**Ch. 4: Shape and Form**

**Vocabulary Terms**

1. shape – an enclosed space defined by other art elements such as line, color,

and texture.

2. figure and ground – the perceptual tendency to divide visual patterns into

two kinds of shapes with the figure appearing to be on top of, and surround-

ed by the ground. Often referred to positive shape and negative shape.

3. positive space – the enclosed areas or objects in an artwork. They may

suggest recognizable objects or nonrepresentational shapes.

4. negative space – the space not occupied by an object or occupied by an

object or figure but circulating in and around it, contributing to the total

effect of the composition.

5. form – an element of design that appears three-dimensional and encloses

volume such as a cube, sphere, pyramid, or cylinder.

6. shape constancy – the tendency to see the shape of a three-dimensional

object as unchanging regardless of any change in position or angle from

which it is viewed.

7. closed form – forms in painting and sculpture that have few or no openings

or negative shapes.

8. foreshortening – a method of applying perspective to an object or figure so

that it seems to recede in space by shortening the depth dimension, making

the form appears three-dimensional.

9. size constancy – the tendency to see the size of an object as unchanging re-

gardless of the distance between the viewer and the object.

10. organic shapes – free forms, or shapes and forms that represent living things

having irregular edges, as distinguished from the regular edges of geometric

shapes.

11. geometric shapes – mechanical, human-made shapes such as squares,

triangles, circles, etc. They have regular edges as opposed to the irregular

edges of organic shapes.

12. open form – forms in paintings and sculpture that emphasize openings.

13. positive and negative shapes – in pictures, positive shapes are the figures

and negative shapes make up the ground.