VFX 200 Syllabus - Spring 2014 - Brian Mellen

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Office hours: Th 1:30pm to 3:00pm **DPC C106A**

Summary of Course:

VFX 200 is an introductory course to visual effects. Using Adobe Photoshop and After Effects, students will gain an understanding of what goes into creating a digital composite. Beginning with still images in Photoshop and transitioning to video in After Effects, students will learn how to create and assemble their own digital composites through a series of projects throughout the quarter.

The class is an introductory course, but by the end of the quarter, students will have a solid foundation in Photoshop and After Effects. Students will also be able to apply some of the knowledge gained in class to their own personal projects and transition to the more intermediate/advanced concepts presented in **VFX 278** and **VFX 378/478** in future quarters. These are the objectives of the course.

* Syllabus is subject to change

Required textbooks and printed resources:

After Effects Apprentice, Second Edition, by Chris and Trish Meyer (For CS6)

    Recommended text:

    Adobe Photoshop CS6: Classroom in a Book

Required Supplies:

DC majors should have their own external drive for their project work for this and other VFX/DC classes. The University cannot guarantee that media or projects left on lab computers will be safely maintained. Non-majors should at least have some sort of other external or flash drive big enough to store their work.

Grading:

Attendance & Participation	10%
Assignments	30%
Quizzes	10%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam	30%

LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Grading Scale:

A = 100-93, A- = 92-90, B+ = 89-87, B = 86-83, B- = 82- 80, C+ = 79-77, C = 76-73, C- = 72-70, D+ = 69-67, D = 66-63, D- = 62-60, F = 59-0.

A indicates excellence, B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D work is unsatisfactory in some respect, F is substantially unsatisfactory work

Student responsibilities:

Each student is responsible for their time management and for meeting the expectations in the syllabus. The instructor is not responsible for reminding students of assignment deadlines in class. In the event of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor for an assignment sheet detailing any homework. If an assignment is listed on the syllabus you are still responsible for completing the assignment on time.

Deadlines:

Video production requires strict adherence to deadlines, therefore late assignments will not be accepted for grading and written feedback will be given at the instructors discretion. You will not be eligible for an A in the class unless you turn in all assignments on time.

Attendance & Participation:

This course demands class participation - attendance is mandatory. Students arriving more than 15 minutes late, or leaving before class is dismissed will be considered absent. You are allowed two (2) unexcused absences. After that, a one letter deduction for each absence will be taken from your final course grade. Excessive tardiness will also be penalized.

Quizzes:

Quizzes spread throughout the quarter will be given to students to test their knowledge of what they retained from coming to class. Some will be multiple choice and T/F while others while test your abilities in the software we use.

Midterm:

The Midterm will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions based on material covered in class lectures, quizzes, and readings. Student will be allowed one sheet of notes (front side only) for the Midterm.

Final Exam:

The Final Exam will test students on their proficiency in Photoshop and After Effects.

Content Changes:

Depending on time factors, the assignments projected for the term may require slight alteration or rescheduling.

CLASS SCHEDULE

* Syllabus schedule is subject to change

Week One - 04/01 and 04/03

Intro to VFX, Learning to See, Forced Perspective, Intro to Photoshop

> **ASSIGNMENT #1 (04/10 DUE):** Using the principles of forced perspective, take a still photo and make something (person or object) look bigger or smaller than it actually is. You can use whatever camera you can get your hands on. This is an in-camera trick. Upload a **JPEG** to D2L.
>
> Use the naming convention **Lastname_VFX200_assn1**. Points will be deducted for not following the correct naming convention or not using the correct compression.

Week Two - 04/08 and 04/10

Image Generation, Photoshop Masking and Selections, Photoshop Demo (Clones), Photography Basics

> **ASSIGNMENT #2 (04/17 DUE):** Take four different pictures of the same shot. One should be a blank plate and the other three should be pictures of yourself positioned in different parts of the frame. Splice all four together in Photoshop to make it look like there are three different versions of yourself in the same shot. Upload a **JPEG** to D2L.
>
> Use the naming convention **Lastname_VFX200_assn2**. Points will be deducted for not following the correct naming convention or using the correct compression.

Week Three - 04/15 and 04/17

Video Compression, Advanced Photoshop Masking and Selections, Filters

> **ASSIGNMENT #3 (04/24 DUE):** Think of an interesting way to integrate elements in a shot that weren't there in the initial plate. Composite at least two elements into your original plate. You must shoot the initial plate yourself, but the other elements can be taken from anywhere. Try to match perspective, exposure, color correction, and grain as best you possibly can. Upload a **JPEG** to D2L.

Use the naming convention **Lastname_VFX200_assn3**. Points will be deducted for not following the correct naming convention or using the correct compression.

Readings: Pre-Roll, Lesson 1 - Basic Animation

Week Four - 04/22 and 04/24

Film formats: Media, Resolution, and Aspect Ratios, Introduction to After Effects, Basic Animation, Parallax Demo, Rendering

> **ASSIGNMENT #4 (05/01 DUE):** Find a **LARGE** picture on Google images that has a definite foreground, middle ground, and background and cut it apart using Photoshop. Separate it into three layers so that there's a foreground, middle ground, and background. Save as a .psd file. Import the .psd file into After Effects and use the transform properties to give the illusion that a camera is dollying parallel to the still image. The animation should be five seconds in length. Render as 720 x 480 in **H.264 (**Quicktime Movie) and upload the video to D2L.
>
> Use the naming convention **Lastname_VFX200_assn4**. Points will be deducted for not following the correct naming convention or using the correct compression.

Week Five - 04/29 and 05/01

MIDTERM on 04/29 - Multiple Choice and T/F, Photoshop Practical

Intro to Masks, Layer Control

> **ASSIGNMENT #5 (05/15 DUE):** You will be given several options to choose from for this assignment to create an interesting composite. More details will be give in class. Render at whatever resolution your camera uses and upload the video to D2L as **H.264** (Quicktime Movie).
>
> Use the naming convention **Lastname_VFX200_assn5**. Points will be deducted for not following the correct naming convention or using the correct compression.

Readings: Lesson 3 - Layer Control , Lesson 4 - Creating Transparency

Week Six - 05/06 and 05/08

Effects, Basic Green Screen, Color Correction

Week Seven - 05/13 and 05/15

Rotoscoping, Roto-Masking

> **ASSIGNMENT #6 (05/29 DUE):** Using a video camera, shoot a 5-10 second clip of a moving object that you plan on roto-masking in After Effects. Roto-mask the point of interest in your shot and apply an interesting effect to your footage. The results should be seamless. Upload the video to D2L as **H.264** (Quicktime Movie).
>
> Use the naming convention **Lastname_VFX200_assn6**. Points will be deducted for not following the correct naming convention or using the correct compression.

Readings: Lesson 5 - Type and Music

Week Eight - 05/20 and 05/22

Type and Music, Basic 2.5D

Week Nine - 05/27 and 05/29

Motion Graphics, Illustrator, Additional Integration Techniques, Post-Production Workflows, Working in Post-Production in Chicago

> **ASSIGNMENT #7 (06/10 DUE):** Pick lyrics from a song, dialogue from a movie, or words from a standup performance. Animate text in After Effects to the spoken word using the original audio track. The animation should be one-minute in length. Render as **H.264** (1920 x 1080, Quicktime Movie) and upload the video to D2L. You will also submit your **AE Project file** so I can grade you on organization.
>
> Use the naming convention **Lastname_VFX200_assn7**. Points will be deducted for not following the correct naming convention or using the correct compression.

Week Ten - 06/03 and 06/05

Final Exam on 06/03 - After Effects Practical

ASSIGNMENT #7 DUE June 10, 2014 at 11:45am.