

## VFX 278 - Digital Compositing I - Syllabus - Spring 2014 - Brian Mellen

[bmellen@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:bmellen@cdm.depaul.edu)

**Office hours:** Tu 11:15am to 11:45am **DePaul Center C106A**  
4:45pm to 5:45pm **DePaul Center C106C**

### Summary of Course:

VFX 278 expands on the concepts covered in VFX 200. Using Adobe Photoshop and After Effects, students will delve in deeper to the art of digital compositing. Students will create and assemble their own digital composites through a series of projects throughout the quarter. Some of the topics covered during the quarter will include but are not limited to advanced animation, blending modes, transparency, tracks mattes, keying, motion-tracking, type, and shape layers.

Students will also be able to apply some of the knowledge gained in class to their own personal projects and move to the more intermediate/advanced concepts presented in VFX 378/478 in a future quarter. These are the objectives of the course.

*\* Syllabus is subject to change*

### Textbooks and printed resources:

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

### Required Supplies:

DC majors should have their own external firewire 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	20%
Final Project	15%
Quizzes	10%
VFX Breakdown	10%
Storyboards	10%
Final Exam	25%

**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 instructor's 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 and from the readings.

### **VFX Breakdown:**

Each student will be expected to present a 2-3 minute scene from a movie (one that feature special effects and visual effect prominently) of their choosing at some point during the quarter. Students will give their very best attempt at breaking down the effects used in the scene in a presentation for the class. Keynote or PowerPoint presentation required.

### **Final Exam:**

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

## **Group Evaluations:**

At the end of the quarter, each group member is required to turn in a written evaluation of their team members for the final project. If all evaluations are uniformly positive, all group members will share the grades; if evaluations are negative, the grades of the group member in question will be docked for the final project.

## **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**

Pre-Roll, Editing in After Effects, Basic Animation, Rendering

**FINAL PROJECT (06/10 DUE):** In your groups you will plan a minute long visual effects piece that you will turn in at the end of the quarter. The group will turn in one polished product. The final composited short should combine at least two to three techniques we've covered in class this quarter. Storyboards are **DUE 04/29**.

*Readings: Pre-Roll, Lesson - 1 Basic Animation, Lesson 2 - Advanced Animation, Appendix - Rendering*

### **Week Two 04/08**

Advanced Animation, Motion Sketch, Graph Editor, Bouncing Ball Animation

**Bouncing Balls (04/15 DUE):** Using the bouncy ball file provided to you on D2L, animate three versions of the balls bouncing on screen and off (Hint: Lesson - 2 covers this topic). Bonus points if you get them to interact with each other. At the very least, each ball should bounce at varying heights and speeds. Render at 1280 x 720 in **H.264** (Quicktime Movie) and upload the video to D2L.

Use the naming convention **Lastname\_VFX278\_BouncingBalls**. Points will be deducted for not following the correct naming convention or not using the correct compression.

*Readings: Lesson 7 - Expressions and Time Games pp.182-189, Lesson 3 - Layer Control*

### **Week Three 04/15**

Time Remapping, Layer Control, Blending Modes, Track Mattes

**Time Remapping (04/22 DUE):** Shoot footage with a moving subject that you would like to speed up or slow down in After Effects (Hint: Shoot using a high shutter speed and a higher frame rate). It needs to be at least ten seconds in length. Render at whatever resolution your camera uses and upload the video to D2L as **H.264** (Quicktime Movie).

Use the naming convention **Lastname\_VFX278\_TimeRemapping**. Points will be deducted for not following the correct naming convention or not using the correct compression.

*Readings: Lesson 4 - Creating Transparency pp.88-113*

### **Week Four 4 04/22**

Transparency and Masks, Effects

**Particle Effects (04/29 DUE):** Shoot some footage with the intention of integrating a particle effect into the shot seamlessly. It needs to be at least five seconds in length. Render at whatever resolution your camera uses and upload the video to D2L as **H.264** (Quicktime Movie).

Use the naming convention **Lastname\_VFX278\_ParticleEffects**. Points will be deducted for not following the correct naming convention or using the correct compression.

*Readings: Lesson 8 - 3D Space*

### **Week Five 04/29**

2.5D, After Effects Camera

#### **STORYBOARDS DUE**

**AE Camera (05/06 DUE):** Using Google Images or footage you've shot yourself, assemble a scene in 2.5D and animate a camera move through the scene. It needs to be at least five seconds in length. Render at whatever resolution your camera uses and upload the video to D2L as **H.264** (Quicktime Movie).

Use the naming convention **Lastname\_VFX278\_Camera**. Points will be deducted for not following the correct naming convention or using the correct compression.

*Readings: Lesson 9 - Track and Key pp.220-233*

## **Week Six 05/06**

Motion-Tracking, Stabilization

**Motion-Tracking (05/20 DUE):** Shoot some footage that has a clear point to motion track. Track text or some other element to the footage. It needs to be at least ten seconds in length. Render at either 720 x 480 or 1280 x 720 (depending on the camera you choose) in **H.264** (Quicktime Movie) and upload the video to D2L.

Use the naming convention **Lastname\_VFX278\_MotionTracking**. Points will be deducted for not following the correct naming convention or using the correct compression.

*Readings: Lesson 9 - Track and Key pp.234-241*

## **Week Seven 05/13**

Mocha

## **Week Eight 05/20**

Keying, Screen Final Project footage

### **FINAL PROJECT RAW FOOTAGE DUE**

**Keying (05/27 DUE):** Using the provided green screen footage, make your own composite using video or stills. If you use a still, you must add some element to your composition to make it look like video. It needs to be at least ten seconds in length. Render at 1280 x 720 in **H.264** (Quicktime Movie) and upload the video to D2L.

Use the naming convention **Lastname\_VFX278\_Keying**. Points will be deducted for not following the correct naming convention or using the correct compression.

*Readings: Lesson 10 - Paint and Puppet pp.242-253, Lesson 11 - Shape Layers*

## **Week Nine 05/27**

Paint, Shape Layers

## **Class 10 06/03**

Final Exam

**FINAL PROJECT DUE June 10, 2014 at 2:45pm**