VFX390/490- Advanced Topics in VFX- Fall 2020
(Virtual Cinematography)

Contact Information
- **Instructor:** Chris Olsen
- **Email:** colsen11@depaul.edu
- **Office Hours:** Tuesdays 9-noon
- **Office Hours Zoom Link:** https://depaul.zoom.us/j/753170617
- **Phone:** +1 (312) 415-9095
- **Preferred Contact:** via email first
- **Tech Support**: scaavsupport@depaul.edu

I am generally able to respond to your emails within 24 hours Monday through Friday. I generally DO NOT respond to emails on the weekends or holidays. As such, please don't wait until the weekend to ask class related questions.

Course Information
- **Description:** Learn and apply real world cinematic techniques within a computer graphics environment to refine digital camerawork, pacing, lighting, and aesthetics.
- **Topics will include**: ARNOLD Rendering basics, CGI Camera, Lensing and Framing, Color and Shadow, Atmosphere and Environment, and Kinetics.
- **Meeting Day/Time:** Tuesday 1:30pm - 4:45PM
- **Location**: ONLINE via Live Stream Zoom Link: https://depaul.zoom.us/j/96089204223
- **Instruction Type**: Remote Lecture-Discussion

Course Prerequisites
VFX200-Intro to VFX and ANI 230-Intro to CG Modeling.
Additionally, you will need at a minimum:
- Frequent access to a Mac or Windows computer that connects to the Internet, with the following suggested technical specifications: Intel® 7thGen CPU or equivalent, 16 GB of RAM, Graphics card with 4GB+ VRAM, 1920 x 1080 or greater monitor resolution, 30GB disk space for installation. *(Specifications lower than this should be tested in advance of class to ensure a good experience.* Instructions to find out the specifications of your system are available here:Finding Out Your Technical Specifications)
- A working e-mail account that you check regularly (and that is updated in Campus Connect)
- Autodesk Maya Software (1 year free educational licenses are available HERE: https://www.autodesk.com/education/edu-software/overview?sorting=featured&page=2&filters=me-products,individual
- Adobe Creative Cloud software ()
- Access to a software suite such as Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point). DePaul students are eligible to receive Office 365 ProPlus for installation on their home

computer and personal mobile devices. See [Office 365 Education Plus](#) for installation instructions.
- Administrator access to a computer to install software.
- The ability to view video files.

Reading Materials
- Any will be provided within D2L

Learning Outcomes
- Analyze usage of camerawork and lighting in historical and contemporary film.
- Identify real world lighting cues to help guide CG to match live footage for VFX shots.
- Discuss creative camera and lighting solutions for CGI/VFX projects.
- Critique CG cinematography and lighting content.
- Compose, light, and render camera shots for CGI/VFX projects.

Assessment
- VFX Exercises: 50%
  - VC Exercise 1 – Abstract Still Life: 25 pts
  - VC Exercise 2 – Painting with Shadow: 25 pts
  - VC Exercise 3 – Framing Sequence: 25 pts
  - VC Exercise 4 – Color Study: 25 pts
  - VC Exercise 5 – Mood: 25 pts
  - VC Exercise 6 – Action: 25 pts
- Final Project: Four Worlds: 50%
  - Inspiration Presentation: 25 pts
  - Work-In-Progress World 1: 25 pts
  - Work-In-Progress World 2: 25 pts
  - Work-In-Progress World 3: 25 pts
  - Final VFX Project Completion: 50 pts

PLEASE NOTE: ALL COURSE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE SUBMITTED HERE WITHIN D2L.

Course Outline

Week 1
Topics: Course overview, Intro to the Basics: Arnold Renderer, Light, Camera, Keyframes
Assignments: VC Exercise 1 – Abstract Still Life

Week 2
Due: VC Exercise 1 – Abstract Still Life
Topics: VC 1 Dailies; Deeper into Light, Types
Assignments: VC Exercise 2 - Painting with Shadow

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Week 3
Due: VC Exercise 2 - Painting with Shadow
Topics: VC2 2 Dailies; Deeper into Camera, Framing and Shot Composition, Lenses, Perspective Theory
Assignments: VC Exercise 3 - Framing Sequence

Week 4
Due: VC Exercise 3 - Framing Sequence
Topics: VC 3 Dailies; Deeper into Color Theory, Materials, Textures, Surface
Assignments: VC Exercise 4 - Study of Color and Sheen

Week 5
Due: VC Exercise 4 - Study of Color and Sheen
Topics: VC 4 Dailies; Defining "Place", Atmosphere and Environment, Aesthetics, Lighting Choreography
Assignments: VC Exercise 5 - Setting the Mood

Week 6
Due: VC Exercise 5 - Setting the Mood
Topics: VC 5 Dailies; Kinetics (Engaging with the action), performance tracking, story spooling, Character, Action, Props
Assignments: VC Exercise 6 - Study of Color and Sheen; **Assign VC 7-Final Project "FOUR WORLDS: initial VC7A-Inspiration Presentation.**

Week 7
Due: VC Exercise 6 - Study of Color and Sheen; **"FOUR WORLDS" VC7A-Inspiration Presentation**
Topics: VC 6 Dailies; Student Presentations; Light Sourcing, Cueing and HDRI
Assignments: **"FOUR WORLDS" VC7B-WIP World 1**

Week 8
Due: **"FOUR WORLDS" VC7B-WIP World 1**
Topics: Ray Tracing, Reflections, Glass, Water and Chrome
Assignments: **"FOUR WORLDS" VC7C-WIP World 2**

Week 9
Due: **"FOUR WORLDS" VC7C-WIP World 2**
Topics: Particles and special effects; Render passes, layers and plates
Assignments: **"FOUR WORLDS" VC7D-WIP World 3**

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Week 10
Due: **"FOUR WORLDS" VC7D-WIP World 3**
Topics: **AR/VR ; Real Time Render**
Assignments: **"FOUR WORLDS" VC7E-FINAL COMPLETE**

Week 11
Due: **"FOUR WORLDS" VC7E-FINAL COMPLETE**
Topics: **Final Project Review**

Course Policies

- **Focus**: Class time requires your complete attention. All students are expected to participate in all class activities. This means no distractions, such as cell phone use, web browsing, texting/chatting, food, or working on other projects in class.
- **Professionalism**: Students are expected to act according to the professional environment of the classroom. This includes but is not limited to:
  - Maintaining a positive and open-minded attitude while participating in class discussions.
  - Progressively achieving the highest standards of quality of artwork to be submitted for grading.
  - Defending their artwork in an articulate manner that demonstrates critical and analytical thinking.
  - Demonstrating neat, self-disciplined, and timely work habits.
  - Attending class on time and stay throughout the whole class period.
- **Dailies**: Each week we will spend the first portion of class reviewing your assignments together as a group. IN ORDER TO BE INCLUDED IN DAILIES, YOUR ASSIGNMENT MUST BE TURNED IN BY NOON ON THE DAY **BEFORE** CLASS. Please do not wait until the last moment to work on your VFX assignment.
- **Resubmissions**: Visual effects are a highly iterative process. In the spirit of this, any of the initial six VFX exercise assignments that are turned in BY THE ORIGINALLY ASSIGNED DEADLINE are able to be revised and resubmitted. Revised files should be uploaded to the original submission folder on D2L. Resubmissions will be accepted until the beginning of the final class of the course. Neither the Student Presentation nor Final Project assignments are eligible for resubmissions.
- **Late work**: Assignments submitted late will have their grades reduced by 20% per class the assignment is late. **Late assignments are not eligible for resubmissions**.
- **Attendance**: Attendance is key to success in this course. Student who miss three days of class will have their final grade lowered by 20%. Students who miss four days of class will automatically fail the course. Missing more than 15 minutes of class counts as an absence.
- **Contact**: Please make time during my office hours to ask questions in person, as this is often the fastest way to answer a complex question. I also can be available outside of

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office hours by appointment. I make every effort to respond to email within 24 hours, except on weekends and holidays. If you have an issue or emergency, please contact me as soon as possible before the next class date.

- **Have fun**: Making film and VFX can be challenging and stressful; don't forget to have fun and enjoy the process. We are all artists, and our art thrives when we put all of our passion and enthusiasm into our work.
- **Syllabus Changes**: This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be addressed during class, and posted here in D2L.
- **Drop Dates**: Can be found at https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx

University policies

Accommodations and Students with Disabilities

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations that can provide you with enrollment information, or inquire via email at csd@depaul.edu.

- Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 - (312) 362-8002
- Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 - (773) 325-1677

Students are also invited to contact me privately to discuss your challenges and how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use during this course. This is best done early in the term and our conversation will remain confidential.

Additional Accommodations

This course may include instructional content delivered via audio and video. If you have any concerns about your ability to access and/or understand this material in its default format, please notify me within the first week of the course so accommodations can be made.

Assistance with Writing – The Writing Center

Consider contacting or visiting the Writing Center to discuss your writing. Writing Center tutors are undergrad and graduate students across disciplines who would love to help you at any stage of the writing process with any kind of writing you're working on. In each appointment, tutors collaborate with you to set an agenda focused on one, two, or three specific topics for revision. Online appointments are available through audio and video or text-based chat or through written feedback where you upload a draft and a tutor provides feedback that is emailed to you. All writing center services are free.

Schedule your appointments on a weekly or as-needed basis, and bring your assignment sheets and other relevant materials to your appointments.

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Student Evaluations

At the end of this course, you will be provided with the opportunity to evaluate this course. Course evaluations provide valuable feedback that can improve teaching and learning. The greater the level of participation, the more useful the results. As students, you are in the unique position to view the instructor over time. Your comments about what works and what doesn't can help faculty build on the elements of the course that are strong and improve those that are weak. Isolated comments from students and instructors' peers may also be helpful, but evaluation results based on high response rates may be statistically reliable (believable). As you experience this course and material, think about how your learning is impacted. Your honest opinions about your experience in and commitment to the course and your learning may help improve some components of the course for the next group of students. Positive comments also show the department chairs and college deans the commitment of instructors to the university and teaching evaluation results are one component used in annual performance reviews (including salary raises and promotion/tenure). The evaluation of the instructor and course provides you an opportunity to make your voice heard on an important issue – the quality of teaching at DePaul. Don't miss this opportunity to provide feedback!

Academic Integrity

Work done for this course must adhere to the University Academic Integrity Policy, which you can review in the Student Handbook or by visiting Academic Integrity at DePaul University.