

# VFX 278 - Syllabus - Winter 2012

## Course Description

This course is an introduction to the field of Compositing: the art of putting together all components of a special effect shot. The course has two targets:

- Introduce the fundamental techniques of compositing (transparency, keying, tracking) in After Effects.
- Learning how visual effects are conceived, broken down, planned and executed.

## Course Objectives

The course is designed to prepare the student for practical work in visual effects. We will:

- Analyze effects from Hollywood movies to illustrate the principles and practice
- Learn how visual effects fit into the post-production workflow
- Introduce the technical background necessary to deliver high-quality media
- Develop and refine techniques for visual effects & compositing using After Effects

## Textbook

After Effects Apprentice - Real World Skills for the Aspiring Motion Graphics Artist  
(Focal Press - ISBN: 978-0-240-81136-9)

- Please Note: the above book covers After Effects CS4. You can get information on what was changed in CS5.5 (the version we will be using in the classroom) by downloading this PDF document:  
<http://www.crishdesign.com/books/After-Effects-Apprentice/AEA2/AEApprentice2-Updates-for-CS5.pdf>

## Required supplies

### External Firewire Drive

All our class exercises and home assignments deal with projects and media. It is the responsibility of the student to **back up all projects & all media**. Do not leave your projects on the lab computer and always make sure to back up your portable drive to another drive back home.

### 2-button mouse with scroll wheel

The lab "mice" are very basic. I strongly recommend that you acquire a USB mouse with at least two buttons & a clickable scroll wheel. It will make your After Effects experience much better.

## Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course, but some familiarity with Photoshop, the Final Cut Studio suite and Adobe Premiere Pro would be most helpful.

## Grading

Assignments:	50%
Final Project:	25%
Attendance:	25%

## Notes

The week by week schedule is subject to change. The overall speed and rhythm of instruction will be determined by the abilities and needs of the students.

## Weekly Schedule

- 1. Introduction to Compositing and After Effects**
  - Fundamental concepts of Compositing
  - Introduction to the AE Interface & Tools
- 2. Basic Animation**
  - Fundamentals of animation, keyframes & Transform properties
  - Anchor Point, Keyframe types, Motion Sketch, Smoother
  - Project Settings & Parameters
- 3. Layer Control & Blending**
  - Layer Editing, Stacking, Work Area
  - Effects & Presets
- 4. Transparency – Part A**
  - Mask & Pen tool
  - Bezier tool & shortcuts
- 5. Transparency – Part B**
  - Track Matte, Luma Matte, Stencils
  - Render Queue, Modules
- 6. Keying**
  - Import Issues, Footage Interpretation
  - Color Space, Codecs, Formats (short lecture)
  - Keylight basics
- 7. Tracking**
  - Stabilization, Tracking, 4-point tracking
- 8. Type**
  - Type Animation, including 3D
- 9. Shape Layers**
  - Shape Layers & Layer Animation
- 10. Recap & Final Project**
  - Wish list, Questions, Final project