

# Syllabus for VFX-278

## Course Information

**Name:** DIGITAL COMPOSITING I  
**Course #:** VFX-278-401  
**Quarter:** Fall 2014  
**Time:** Tuesday 13:30 - 16:45  
**Campus:** LOOP  
**Room:** DPAUL C106C (Basement of Barnes & Noble)  
**System:** Course Online

## Instructor Information



**Instructor:** Savvas Paritsis (Assistant Professor)  
MFA-NYU-Tisch School of the Arts  
**Office:** CDM 463  
**Phone:** 312-362-5857  
**Office hours:** Monday 11:00 - 14:00  
**Advising hours:** Tuesday 17:00 - 20:00

## Course Summary

This course is an introduction to the field of Compositing: the art of putting together all the elements of a Visual Effects shot. The course works on two levels:

- It introduces the fundamental techniques of compositing using Adobe After Effects.
- It teaches students how to plan & execute complex effects by using examples from Hollywood movies.

## Learning goals

- Students will be able to apply the fundamental techniques of compositing: transparency, keying, tracking.
- Students will be able to plan and execute simple Visual Effects, from conception to execution and delivery.

## Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course, but some familiarity with Photoshop and Adobe Premiere Pro would be very useful.

## Grading

Please note that late assignments will not be accepted. You must submit on time, even if you are not able to come to class on that particular day. There are many ways to submit material online. Make sure to read and understand the notes provided in class.

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

## Textbooks

After Effects Apprentice - Real World Skills for the Aspiring Motion Graphics Artist

- Publisher: Focal Press; 3rd edition (August 23, 2012)
- ISBN-10: 0240817362
- ISBN-13: 978-0240817361
- Link: After Effects Apprentice

## 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. Please note: hardware problems are not acceptable as an excuse for late submissions.

## Week-by-week

### Week 1 - Introduction

Introduction to Compositing and After Effects: Fundamental concepts of Compositing, Introduction to the AE Interface & Tools

### Week 2 - Basic Animation

Basic Animation: Fundamentals of animation, keyframes & Transform properties, Anchor Point, Keyframe types, Motion Sketch, Smoother, Project Settings & Parameters

### Week 3 - Layer Control & Blending

Layer Control & Blending: Layer Editing, Stacking, Work Area, Effects & Presets

### Week 4 - Transparency A

Transparency - Part A: Mask & Pen tool, Bezier curves

### Week 5 - Transparency B

Transparency - Part B: Track Matte, Luma Matte, Stencils, Render Queue

### Week 6 - Keying

Keying: Import Issues, Footage Interpretation, Color Space, Codecs, Formats (short lecture), Keylight basics

### Week 7 - Tracking

Tracking: Stabilization, 1-point tracking, 4-point tracking

### Week 8 - Paint & Cloning, Time, Media

Paint & Cloning Tools, Time manipulation, Media Management

### Week 9 - Shape Layers

Shape Layers

### Week 10 - Recap & Final Project Review

Recap & Final Project: Wish list, Questions, Final project

## Course Policies (include on your syllabus)

### Changes to Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

### Online Course Evaluations

Instructor and 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 and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>.

The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work any assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

### Withdrawal

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system (<http://campusconnect.depaul.edu>). Withdrawals processed via this system are effective the day on which they are made. Simply ceasing to attend, or notifying the instructor, or nonpayment of tuition, does not constitute an official withdrawal from class and will result in academic as well as financial penalty.

### Retroactive Withdrawal

This policy exists to assist students for whom extenuating circumstances prevented them from meeting the withdrawal deadline. During their college career students may be allowed one medical/personal administrative withdrawal and one college office administrative withdrawal, each for one or more courses in a single term. Repeated requests will not be considered. Submitting an appeal for retroactive withdrawal does not guarantee approval.

College office appeals for CDM students must be submitted online via MyCDM.

The deadlines for submitting appeals are as follows:

- Autumn Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent winter quarter
- Winter Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent spring quarter
- Spring Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter
- Summer Terms: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter

### Excused Absence

In order to petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or significant personal circumstances should complete the Absence Notification process through the Dean of Students office. The form can be accessed at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/forms.html>. Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. The professor reserves the sole right whether to offer an excused absence and/or academic accommodations for an excused absence.

### Incomplete

An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. CDM policy

requires the student to initiate the request for incomplete grade before the end of the term in which the course is taken. Prior to submitting the incomplete request, the student must discuss the circumstances with the instructor. Students may initiate the incomplete request process in [MyCDM](#).

- All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval.
- If approved, students are required to complete all remaining course requirement independently in consultation with the instructor by the deadline indicated on the incomplete request form.
- By default, an incomplete grade will automatically change to a grade of F after two quarters have elapsed (excluding summer) unless another grade is recorded by the instructor.
- An incomplete grade does NOT grant the student permission to attend the same course in a future quarter.

### Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at:

Student Center, LPC, Suite #370

Phone number: (773)325.1677

Fax: (773)325.3720

TTY: (773)325.7296