

VFX 378/478 Syllabus - Spring 2015 - Brian Mellen

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Office hours: M 4:45PM - 6:15PM 14 E. Jackson Rm. 513

Summary of Course:

Digital Compositing II will expand on topics covered in Digital Compositing I and Intro to Visual Effects. Through course readings, technical exercises, and a final project, students will have an advanced understanding of Visual Effects. The goal for the student is to come out of the class with a visual effects short for their demo reel and a proficiency in Visual Effects that goes beyond simply knowing the software. We will focus on learning the principles of good digital filmmaking in preparation for both artistic and commercial endeavors.

** Syllabus is subject to change*

Textbooks and printed resources:

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

Recommended Text:

Creating Motion Graphics with After Effects, Fifth Edition, by Chris and Trish Meyer

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 external or flash drive big enough to store their work.

Grading:

Attendance & Participation	10%
Quizzes	20%
Technical Exercises	20%
VFX Breakdowns	10%
Treatment/Script	5%
Storyboards	5%
Raw Final Project Footage	10%
Rough Cut of Final Project	5%
Final Project	15%

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 = 62-50, 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.

Also, all hard drives fail at one point or another. Make sure you backup your projects at least twice for this class and all future projects. If your hard drive fails and you didn't backup your project, no extensions will be given. No accommodations are typically made in the real world for lack of preparation and in order to prepare you for the job market, no accommodations will be made in this course for lost data.

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:

Four Quizzes spread throughout the quarter will be given to students to test their knowledge of what they retained from coming to class and their readings. It's imperative that you follow along with the readings. It will be obvious who has kept up with the readings and who hasn't. Quizzes will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and software testing.

Technical Exercises:

There will be technical exercises assigned students this quarter. Exercises will challenge students to apply some of the techniques covered in class/readings to their own footage.

VFX Breakdown:

Each student will be expected to present a 2-3 minute scene from a movie 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 for graduate students.

Final Project:

Students will be divided into groups. After careful planning (treatment, script, and storyboard), groups will go out and shoot live action footage. They will then take this footage and create a piece utilizing some of the skills we learned in class. The project doesn't have to use every concept we learned, but it should use **at least three** different visual effects techniques to enhance the overall story. Only **one project** per team needs to be submitted. Grades will be based on the group's efforts. **Undergraduates are required to submit a two minute short. Graduate students are required to submit a three minute short.**

Don't just build a project around one particular effect and throw story by the wayside. Your final project should be something you're proud of and can put on a demo reel. An effort to tell a complete story is a requirement. Those who fail to follow instructions will be marked down accordingly.

CLASS SCHEDULE

** Syllabus schedule is subject to change*

Week One 03/30

What is Compositing? Animation and Keyframe Review, Graph Editor

Technical Exercise #1 (Due 04/13): Details to be discussed in class and eventually posted on D2L.

Readings: *After Effects Apprentice: Pre-Roll, Lesson 1-4*

Lynda.com: 01-04

Week Two 04/06

QUIZ 1 TODAY

Masking Review, Advanced Masking

Readings: *After Effects Apprentice: Lesson 7*

Lynda.com: 09: Expressions, 10: Time Games

Week Three 04/13

TREATMENT/SCRIPT DUE

Time and Expressions

Technical Exercise #2 (Due 04/27): Details to be discussed in class and eventually posted on D2L.

Week Four 04/20

PRESENTATION/STORYBOARDS DUE

QUIZ 2 TODAY

Useful Effects Breakdown

Readings: After Effects Apprentice: Lesson 9 pg. 244-269

Lynda.com: 12: Tracking and Keying

Week Five 04/27

After Effects Motion-Tracking, Mocha

Technical Exercise #3 (Due 05/04): Details to be discussed in class and eventually posted on D2L.

Readings: After Effects Apprentice: Lesson 9 pg. 270-275

Lynda.com: 12: Tracking and Keying

Week Six 05/04

FINAL PROJECT CHECKPOINT - RAW FOOTAGE DUE

QUIZ 3 TODAY

Technical Exercise #4 (Due 05/18): Details to be discussed in class and eventually posted on D2L.

Green Screen Work in After Effects

Week Seven 05/11

Green Screen Demonstration

Readings: After Effects Apprentice: Lesson 8 pg. 206-223

Lynda.com: 11: 3D Space

Week Eight 05/18

FINAL PROJECT ROUGH CUT DUE - SOME EFFECTS PROCESSED

QUIZ 4

3D Space and After Effects Camera

Technical Exercise #5 (Due 06/08): Details to be discussed in class and eventually posted on D2L.

Readings: After Effects Apprentice: Lesson 8 pg. 224-243

Lynda.com: 11: 3D Space

Week 9 06/01

Advanced After Effects Camera, 3D Lights

Week 10 06/08

Cinema 4D Lite

FINAL PROJECT DUE June 8, 2015 at 2:45pm in 14 E. Jackson Rm. 513