

VFX200 Introduction to Visual Effects Syllabus

DePaul University

Course Information

Course Code: VFX200

Course Title: Introduction to Visual Effects

Prerequisites: None

Term: Autumn 2017

Section: 401

Class Hours: Mondays 10:00am - 1:15pm

Location: CDM 922

Faculty Information

Brian Andrews

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Office Hours: Mondays 1:30pm - 4:30pm

Office Hours Location: CDM 477

Course Description

Introduction to the use, history, and production methodologies of visual effects. Fundamental techniques will be explored through compositing exercises and projects.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Discuss the structure and business practices of the visual effects industry.
- Analyze historical and contemporary uses of visual effects in film.
- Critique visual effects content.
- Compose shots for visual effects.
- Navigate a compositing software application.
- Produce simple composited shots to established specifications.

Software

Adobe AfterEffects CC

Textbook

AfterEffects Apprentice, (4th Edition) by Chris & Trish Meyer

Readings

- The VES Handbook of Visual Effects, Chapter 1 "Introduction"
- The Art and Science of Digital Compositing, Chapter 2 "Learning to See"
- The Visual Effects Producer, Chapter 2 "Digital Effects: The 15 Minute Version"
- The Visual Effects Producer, Chapter 3 "Who You Gonna Call: The VFX Team"
- The Art and Science of Digital Compositing, Chapter 3 "The Digital Representation of Visual Information"

Assignments & Grading

AfterEffects Exercises: 20%

	Book Lesson	Lynda.com
Exercise 1	Lesson 1	After Effects Apprentice: 02 Basic Animation
Exercise 2	Lesson 3	After Effects Apprentice: 04 Layer Control

Exercise 3	Lesson 4 pages 100 -115	After Effects Apprentice: 05 Creating Transparency Parts 1-4
Exercise 4	Lesson 10 pages 320 - 329	After Effects Apprentice: 13 Paint, Roto and Puppet Parts 1-6
Exercise 5	Lesson 9 pages 281 -287	After Effects Apprentice: 12 Tracking & Keying Parts 1-4

Forced Perspective Project: 10%

Visual Effects Sequence Presentation: 20%

Final Project: 50%

Footage Review: 10%

Production Review: 10%

Composited Shot: 30%

Course Outline

Week 1

Topics: Course overview, What are a Visual Effects?, Photographic Principles ,

Readings: The VES Handbook of Visual Effects, Chapter 1 “Introduction”; The Art and Science of Digital Compositing, Chapter 2 “Learning to See”

Assignments: Forced Perspective Project

Week 2

Topics: Forced Perspective Project Critique, Introduction to AfterEffects, Animation in AE.

Assignments: AfterEffects Exercise 1

Due: Forced Perspective Project

Week 3

Topics: The Visual Effects Pipeline, AfterEffects Workflows, Effects in AE.

Readings: The Visual Effects Producer, Chapter 2 “Digital Effects: The 15 Minute Version”,

Assignments: AfterEffects Exercises 2

Due: AfterEffects Apprentice Exercise 1

Week 4

Topics: Lecture- History of VFX, Part 1: Pre-Digital; Masking and Rotoscoping

Reading: VES Handbook Chapter 1; “Confessions of a Roto Artist”

Assignments: Watch any of the films mentioned in lecture; AfterEffects Apprentice, Exercise 3

Due: AfterEffects Apprentice Exercises Lesson 2

Week 5

Topics: History of VFX, Part 2: Digital - Today, Transparency Techniques

Assignments: Visual Effects Sequence Presentations, AfterEffects Apprentice, Exercise 4

Due: AfterEffects Apprentice Exercise 3

Week 6

Topics: Structure of the VFX Industry (or How a VFX Film Gets Made, and Who Makes It.), 2D Motion Tracking

Readings: The Visual Effects Producer, Chapter 3 “Who You Gonna Call: The VFX Team”

Assignments: Read the credits of one of your favorite VFX driven films, AfterEffects Apprentice Exercise 5

Due: AfterEffects Apprentice Exercises 4

Week 7

Topics: Visual Effects Sequence Presentations

Week 8

Topics: Chromakeying, Assign Compositing Project,

Assignments: Compositing Project Footage

Due: AfterEffects Apprentice Exercise 5

Week 9

Topics: Digital Color Theory, Color Matching, Footage Review

Readings: The Art and Science of Digital Compositing, Chapter 3 “The Digital Representation of Visual Information”

Assignments: Compositing Project Production Review

Due: Compositing Project Footage Review

Week 10

Topics: Compositing Lighting Techniques, Production Review

Assignments: Compositing Project Final Delivery

Due: Compositing Project Production Review

Week 11 - Final Day 11:00 Am to 1:15pm.

Topics: Compositing Project Critique

Due: Compositing Project Final Delivery, All project resubmissions due.

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.
- Resubmissions: Visual effects are a highly iterative process. I highly encourage revisions and resubmission of work based off of feedback from the class. Resubmitted files should be submitted to the original submission folder on D2L. Resubmissions will be accepted until the beginning of the final class of the course. Project reviews are time based and therefore not eligible for resubmissions. Late work penalties cannot be made up by resubmissions.
- Late work: Assignments submitted late will have their grades reduced by 15% per class day 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 attend office hours and ask questions in person, as this is often the fastest way to answer a complex question. I also am available outside of office hours by appointment. I make every effort to respond to email within 24 hours, with the exception of Sundays and holidays. If you have an issue or emergency, please contact me as soon as possible before the next class date.
- Have fun: While 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.

University Policies

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

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in CampusConnect.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

Academic Policies

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the University Academic Calendar. Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at:

<http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/PoliciesandProcedures.aspx>

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: csd@depaul.edu.

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

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