

VFX200 Introduction to Visual Effects Syllabus

Course Code: VFX200
Course Title: Introduction to Visual Effects
Prerequisites: None
Term: Spring 2022
Section: 901
Class Hours: Wednesdays 5:45pm - 9:00pm
Location: DePaul Center Room C106B

Faculty Information

Travis Chandler
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 9pm - 10:30pm by appointment
Office Hours Location: Classroom

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

None

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

VFX Exercises: 30%

VFX Exercise 1 - Forced Perspective
VFX Exercise 2 - Animation

VFX Exercise 3 - Effects
VFX Exercise 4 - Rotoscoping
VFX Exercise 5 - Chroma Keying
VFX Exercise 6 - Motion Tracking

Visual Effects Sequence Presentation: 20%

Final Project: 50%

Pitch: 10%
Project Review: 10%
Final Project Sequence: 30%

Course Outline

(Subject to change. Check D2L for the most up-to-date info.)

Week 1

Topics: Course overview, What are Visual Effects? Photographic Principles.
Assignments: VFX Exercise- Forced Perspective

Week 2

Topics: Forced Perspective Exercise Dailies, Introduction to After Effects, Animation in AE.
Assignments: Visual Effects Sequence Presentation
Due: Forced Perspective shots.

Week 3

Topics: Post your Visual Effects Sequence Presentations, check your feedback online and make adjustments if needed. No in-person lecture this week.

Week 4

Topics: The Visual Effects Pipeline, AfterEffects Workflows.
Assignments: VFX Exercise 3: Effects
Due: VFX Exercise 2: Animation

Week 5

Topics: Effects Exercise Dailies; Lecture- History of VFX, Part 1 + 2
Assignments: VFX Exercise 4: Rotoscoping
Due: VFX Exercise 3: Effects

Week 6

Topics: Rotoscoping Exercise Dailies; Chromakeying; Guest speaker on working in the industry
B VFX Exercise 5: Chromakeying
Due: VFX Exercise 4: Rotoscoping

Week 7

Topics: Chroma Keying Exercise Dailies; 2D Motion Tracking
Assignments: VFX Exercise 6: Motion Tracking
Due: VFX Exercise 5: Chromakeying

Week 8

Topics: Motion Tracking Exercise Dailies, Assign Final Project
Assignments: Final Project Pitch

Due: VFX Exercise 6 - Motion Tracking

Week 9

Topics: Effects Techniques, Final Project Pitch

Assignments: Compositing Project Production Review

Due: Compositing Project Footage Review

Week 10

Topics: Light & Shadow Techniques, Noise & Grain, Final Project Dailies; Final Project Studio

Assignments: Compositing Project Final Delivery

Due: Compositing Project Production Review

Week 11

Topics: Final Project Critique

Due: Final Project Delivery, All project resubmissions due.

Course Policies

Focus: Do your best to avoid distraction while working on your projects and viewing our lectures. It's hard, but you can do it!

Professionalism: Turn your work in on time, in the correct format, titled correctly. This is half the battle.

Resubmissions: Visual effects are a highly iterative process. I highly encourage revisions and resubmission of work based on feedback.

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.

Contact: 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 accommodations 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.

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