

**DePaul  
SCA**

**ANI 426**

## **Visual Concept Development**

Fall 2021-22 | M/W 10:10am– 11:40am | In Person class; CDM 527

Instructor: Devin Bell (he/him/his)

Office: 512 (or ZOOM appointments)

Email: [dbell@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:dbell@cdm.depaul.edu)

Office hours: M/W 11:40am-12:40pm, and 3:00-3:30pm

Advising hours by appointment only via email or Bluestar

<https://campusconnect.depaul.edu/>: Tues 9:00-10:00am, and 11:00am-1:00pm

### **Course Description:**

This course focuses on visual development and style guides for animation, cinema and game projects. Coursework involves character design, environmental design, prop design, lighting, color, texture and layout. Students will practice visual research, drawing and an array of digital tools to build the skills necessary to create an immersive world with a cohesive look and feel.

PREREQUISITE(S): ILL 200 and ANI 230

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- 1) Students will be able to increase knowledge of traditional and digital tools needed to create visual development for animation, game and cinema.
- 2) Students will be able to research humans, animals, locations, objects, color theory and lighting to create character and environment sketches
- 3) Students will be able to analyze historical and contemporary examples of production design
- 4) Students will be able to research different aesthetics and techniques found in traditional and digital painting, while experimenting with their own styles and practices.
- 5) Students will be able to create a comprehensive “production bible” for a potential animation, game or cinema project

### Recommended Texts and Materials (not required)

“Color and Light: A Guide for the Realist Painter”, by James Gurney

“The Noble Approach: Maurice Noble and the Zen of Animation Design”, by Tod Polson

“*Dream Worlds*: Production Design for Animation”, by Hans Baker

### **Attendance Policy:**

After two absences, your final grade for the course will automatically be lowered by one-letter grade per absence. Any student missing five or more classes will receive the grade of "F" for the quarter. Contact me before class if you are unable to attend. Being late to class two times counts as one absence. You are responsible for any missed lectures and assignments. If you miss a class, it is still your responsibility to turn in the assignment on time. We have very tight deadlines that are in place to benefit you and your projects. Lecture notes alone will not make up for missed work.

This course is designed as all “in-person” meetings. If circumstances change, we may meet remotely via synchronous Zoom meetings or recorded lectures, but I will notify you in advance under Announcements in D2L and/or sent via email.

**You may not miss the midterm or final class date. Doing so will equal an automatic two letter grade reduction of your final grade. If for any reason you cannot make one of these dates you must contact me BEFORE the class meets. Excuses given after the fact will not be accepted regarding late assignments or absences.**

**No incompletes will be given without documented proof of circumstances beyond your control.**

**Important dates for Spring 2021:**

<https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx>

- **September 14- Last day to add (or swap) classes**
- **September 21- last day to drop with no tuition penalty**
- **October 26- last day to withdraw**

### **Critiques and Participation**

One of the best ways to learn in a classroom environment is through *active* participation in discussions and critiques. In general, we will be following a pattern of creating concept art and then discussing it in critique in the following week. When I open up the floor for you to speak, please make the effort to voice your honest and constructive opinion. This will help you learn from your mistakes and progress in your character design/world-building skills.

There may be certain circumstances when we do not have enough time to critique each student’s work in the class. I encourage students to volunteer their assignment early when a critique begins, or if time does not allow, make an appointment with me during my office hours for a thorough discussion of the work. Late submissions miss the benefit of the in-class critique, so it is always better to turn in a work in progress than nothing at all.

### **Class Work**    Assignments

- Must be completed and fully uploaded through D2L one hour BEFORE class starts. To receive any credit for a late assignment, it must be submitted within 24 hours of the deadline. Late assignments will be accepted with teacher discretion only. For most of the projects, you will submit scanned drawings and/or digital files such as multi-page Word docs, pdfs or jpegs. For all time-based projects, ensure rendered movie files play properly. Class time is for working with the material at hand, not finishing late assignments.
- Late work will not be accepted unless approved PRIOR to the class in which it is due. Any assignment handed in late or when not present in class should be accompanied by an e-mail to me.
- Written Assignments: Must be typed.

\* BACK UP YOUR WORK: Failure of computer software and or hardware will not be accepted as an extenuating circumstance for late projects or incomplete grades so back up your work daily.

## Grading

Assignments	75% of grade
Final Project	25% of grade
Total	100%

	A = 100-93	A- = 92-90		
B+ = 89-88	B = 87-83	B- = 82-80		
C+ = 79-78	C = 77-73	C- = 72-70		
D+ = 69-68	D = 67-63	D- = 62-60	F = 59-0	

### Standards for Achievement:

#### Grade A:

Student performs in an outstanding way. Student exhibits achievement and craftsmanship in all work. Design criteria is exceeded and student challenges him/herself in project design. Student exhibits commitment to expanding ideas, vocabulary and performance.

#### Grade B:

Student performs beyond the requirement of the project. Student exhibits above average progress and craftsmanship. A design criterion is exceeded. Student exhibits above average interest in expanding idea, vocabulary, and performance.

#### Grade C:

Criteria of assignment is met, and all requirements are fulfilled. Student shows average quality work and minimum time and effort on projects. Student shows moderate interest.

#### Grade D:

Student performance is uneven and below average. Requirements for projects are only partially fulfilled. Minimal interest is shown and attendance, participation and involvement are inadequate.

#### Grade F

Student fails to meet minimum course requirements and shows no interest. Levels of participation and craftsmanship are extremely poor. Student's attendance is inadequate.

#### Requesting an incomplete grade:

An incomplete grade may only be assigned to a student if the student has experienced an extenuating circumstance near the end of the term, the student is in good standing in the class, and the request is made in a timely manner. Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at

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

## Materials and Supplies

You will need access to (or own) a digital drawing tablet or interactive pen display and the Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Animate, and After Effects) or equivalent drawing and editing software. If you do not make your work digitally, a printer and scanner are recommended; do NOT submit poor quality photos taken with your phone.

**Be prepared with materials to draw on paper AND your digital tablet every time our class meets.**

## Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course requires original content authorship for all visual and written material; plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism can occur when referencing source material too closely when creating your own work, copying an image with only slight modification (to color, line, pose, etc.), tracing an image or parts of an image, or submitting work that you did not create. We all reference other

artwork, but you must understand how to use this reference only as a springboard and generate your own take on the subject. If you have a question about using reference material, ask me *before* turning in your projects, not *after*. Any exception will be expressly stated, such as in-class drawing exercises from reference, and these must still be created freehand. Plagiarized work will result in an academic integrity violation and may result in an “F” for the quarter.

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: [cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment](http://cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment).

\* Special Accommodations/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](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).

Evaluations from students are a required part of the course and help the instructor recognize areas for improvement. Evaluations are anonymous. Students are sent periodic reminders automatically over three weeks, or until the evaluation is complete. Students complete the evaluation online in [CampusConnect](#).

## **COVID-19 Health and Safety Precautions**

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic. Students, faculty and staff are expected to (1) wear a mask as required at all times while indoors on campus; (2) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms; (3) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions; (4) stay home if sick; (5) participate in any required COVID-19 testing; (6) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training; and (7) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Advisory. By doing these things, we are taking care of DePaul together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who do not abide by the mask requirement may be subject to the student conduct process and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with any requirements should register with DePaul's Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).

## **Respect for Diversity and Inclusion at DePaul University as aligned with our Vincentian Values**

At DePaul, our mission calls us to explore “what must be done” in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. We value diversity because it is part of our history, our traditions and our future. We see diversity as an asset and a strength that adds to the richness of classroom learning. In my course, I strive to include diverse authors, perspectives and teaching pedagogies. I also encourage open dialogue and spaces for students to express their unique identities and perspectives. I am open to having difficult

conversations and I will strive to create an inclusive classroom that values all perspectives. If at any time, the classroom experience does not live up to this expectation, please feel free to contact me via email or during office hours.

**Emergency Plan.** An emergency can occur at any time, suddenly and without warning. The following link provides detailed information on Emergency Evacuation and Fire Alarm safety: <https://resources.depaul.edu/emergency-plan/emergency-evacuation/Pages/Evacuation.aspx>. The University will use the DPU Alert to announce school closing or other emergencies. In the event of an emergency evacuation, the primary outdoor assembly area for CDM will be Grant Park (Southeast corner of Jackson and Michigan Ave).

**Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns.** Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Please let me know your preferred name and pronoun, and be respectful of the preferences and identities of your peers. For more information, see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at <http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>

### Schedule

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/or sent via email. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments will be submitted online at least 1 hour prior to class.

Lecture

Assignment given

<b>Week 1</b> September 8	<b>Introduction</b> Core Principles applied to visual concepts	Iconic Character pt. 1
<b>Week 2</b> September 13	<b>Lecture:</b> Harmony vs. Dissonance (Characters, settings and combined)	Iconic Character pt. 2
September 15	<b>Critique Iconic Characters</b> <b>Lecture:</b> Environment Design- life reference, building visual toolset	Begin Environment Design (warm-up, reference and a solid start to final layouts)
<b>Week 3</b> September 20	<b>Lecture:</b> Adding fantasy elements to environment	Environment Design
September 22	Individual Progress critiques	Complete Environment Design (Final layouts- detail & shading)

<b>Week 4</b> September 27	<b>Critique Environment Designs</b> <b>Lecture:</b> Layout and Backgrounds for animation/game	Begin Sequential Layout (written treatment & thumbnails)
September 29	<b>Lecture:</b> Atmosphere, depth and strong lighting	Sequential Layout
<b>Week 5</b> October 4	<b>Lecture:</b> Story-driven character- context, subtext and fabricated history	Complete Sequential Layout (detail and shading)
October 6	<b>Critique Sequential Layouts</b> <b>Lecture:</b> Color Theory- color scripts and technique	Masters of Lighting- pt. 1
<b>Week 6</b> October 11	<b>Lecture:</b> Painting Mood boards- color and light in concept art <b>In-class painting exercise</b>	Masters of Lighting- pt. 1
October 13	<b>Critique Masters of Lighting- pt. 1</b> <b>Lecture:</b> Cinematography analysis	Masters of Lighting- pt. 2
<b>Week 7</b> October 18	<b>Lecture:</b> Cinematography applied to concept art, and vice versa	Masters of Lighting- pt. 2
October 20	<b>Critique Masters of Lighting- pt. 2</b> <b>Lecture:</b> Designing animals and creatures, research and testing	Weird Pet
<b>Week 8</b> October 25	<b>Lecture:</b> Pushing character iteration to show greater acting range, greater potential on screen	Weird Pet
October 27	<b>Lecture:</b> Character turnarounds, character expression/pose sheets	Weird Pet
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Critique Weird Pet</b>	Final- thumbnails

November 1	<b>Lecture: "Pitch bibles" and Writing Treatments</b>  <b>Present final project</b>	
November 3	<b>Critique <i>Final Project thumbnails</i></b>	Final- Layouts & Lighting
<b>Week 10</b> November 8	<b>Lecture: Art Direction- controlling the look of everything</b>	Final- Layouts & Lighting
November 10	<b>Critique <i>Final Project Layouts &amp; Lighting</i></b>	Final- Polished Concept Paintings
<b>Week 11</b> November 15	<b>Individual progress critiques</b>	<b>Complete Final- Polished Concept Paintings</b>
November 17th (FINAL)	<b>Final project due</b> <b>ATTENDANCE MANDATORY</b>  <i>NOTE: CLASS WILL BE HELD IN SAME ROOM</i> <b>Wednesday, November 17th, 8:30am-10:45am</b>	