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MART 302.02: Introduction to Motion Design

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SYLLABUS

MEDIA ARTS 302 - Section 02
INTRODUCTION TO MOTION DESIGN
3 Credits - Spring 2013 - The University of Montana
Instructor: Wesley Meeks
Office Hours: By Appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides instruction of the fundamental principals of digital compositing with Adobe After Effects, with emphasis on concept, 2D & 3D composition, layering, digital cinematography, lighting, video integration, and animation. The course's primary focus will be on completion of exercises and projects beginning with basic still image 2D animation, moving through After Effects generated content, 3D staging and animation, and green screen keying and compositing.

This is a studio course where artists will integrate production techniques, various forms of digital design, and create original time based digital compositions as an expressive and communicative art form. Aesthetic, technical and conceptual issues will be addressed through lectures, demonstrations, exercises, projects, and critiques. Technical proficiency will be tested twice during the semester with midterm and final practical exams.

OBJECTIVES

Students will demonstrate understanding of the following principles and techniques through studio assignments:

- Concepts and Terminology
    - o compositing
    - o color perception
    - o composition
    - o animation
    - o spatial relationship
    - o timing / tempo
    - o cause and effect
    - o blending techniques
    - o three-dimensional staging and lighting
- Application of still image based software in conjunction with motion and time based software: Adobe After Effects, Photoshop and Final Cut.
- Project Development and presentation
- Constructive critical interpretation of peer projects

TOPICS

- Project Setup & Planning
- Composition
- Motion Theory
- 2.5D Set-up
- 3D Staging
- 3D Cameras
- 3D Lighting
- Color Correction
- Video Integration / Compositing
- Color Keying

- Professional Production Techniques

GRADING

Philosophy

It is a common misconception that teachers assign grades when in reality it is the student who earns the grade. You are responsible for the effort put into each project therefore you assign your own grade. The purpose of grading, from a teacher's perspective, is to clearly and accurately pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of your progress.

Evaluation

Your overall grade will be based on your understanding of the information and ideas discussed, your formal, technical, and conceptual progress as demonstrated in projects, your participation in class discussions, and professionalism during the course.

There will be a total of 100 points for the session and the following distribution of points will be used:
(listed in chronological order)
Exercise 1 : 2 Points
Exercise 2 : 3 Points
Project 1: 15 Points
Exercise 3 : 5 Points
Exercise 4 **:** 5 Points
Practical Exam 1 : 10 Points
Project 2 : 15 Points
Project 3 : 15 Points
Final Project : 20 Points
Practical Exam 2 : 10 Points

Exercises will be assigned points based on punctual delivery and ability to follow directions.

Projects will be graded on the application of technique and conceptual principles to the creative work, the organization of the production process, participation, technical proficiency with the various software applications, their aesthetic application, problem solving, project presentation and the ability to meet deadlines.

See the Production Schedule below for exercise and project due dates.

Exams

Two practical exams will be administered during the course of the semester. We believe practical exams provide a more tangible assessment of the students' understanding of the materials presented than do the typical question/answer format.

At the beginning of the practicals, students will be given source material (if applicable) and a movie file of a short motion design piece. The goal will be to replicate the movie with After Effects. Points will be distributed based on the following criteria:
5 pts - Replication of the reference movie – does it look exactly the same?
5 pts – AE Project organization – named layers, named comps, etc

Expectations for class participation

Participation by all members is critical to the success of this studio. Excellent participation is a given and includes contributing to ongoing discussions and critiques, suggests alternative ways of approaching projects, along with a thoughtful process and strong work ethic.

ATTENDANCE

Good attendance and punctuality are critical to success in this course and will strongly affect your

grade. Three (3) unexcused absences will be allowed. Every unexcused absence beyond this will lower your grade by a letter grade. A total of seven absences, excused or unexcused, will result in you receiving a grade of "F" for the class. Excused absences include religious holidays, a death in the family or illness with a doctor's note.

Regularly coming to class late is not acceptable. It is distracting and disrespectful to both the instructor and your fellow students. After one warning by the instructor additional late arrivals will be counted as absences.

MOODLE

Moodle will serve as our home base this semester; a place to download assignment source materials and instructions, upload completed assignments, review grades and feedback, and to find links to resources and inspiration. Be sure to check the Moodle page regularly for announcements regarding homework and projects.

BACKING-UP YOUR WORK

It cannot be stressed enough how critical it is to back up your files! Computers, especially in public labs, are prone to all manner of errors and failures. On the other hand, portable flash drives and hard drives prone to theft, loss and damage. Only you are responsible for protection of your data. You should be saving your projects, frequently, on both your workstation's hard drive and on your personal portable media. It would even be wise to back up your portable media on your home computer, just in case. It may seem like a hassle, but trust us, when your computer crashes or your flash drive gets washed in your pants pocket, you will be really happy not to have to redo your work.
LOSS OF DATA, FOR ANY REASON, IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE EXCUSE FOR TURNING WORK IN LATE.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Please be respectful of your instructor and your peers:
- Turn your cell phones off when you enter the classroom.
- Please check your email, tweet, and update your FB profile on your own time.
- Please be seated, and logged in to your computer before the start of class. If you arrive in class after attendance has been taken, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure your presence is counted in the attendance log.
- Follow all posted computer lab rules, including those involving food/drink.
- **All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php**

THE LAB

What this lab is:
This lab has been established so that students in the School of Media Arts can have a dedicated lab in which to do their course work. You will have Griz Card access to this lab all day, every day. After hours access to the McGill building (locked after 10pm) can be activated via approved Griz Cards on the south entrance nearest the tennis courts.

What this lab is not:
This lab will not be used to work on things that are outside of Media Arts course requirements and will not be used by students outside of the program. Abuse of this lab will not be tolerated.

SOFTWARE INFORMATION

The primary software programs that you will be using are:

- Adobe After Effects CS5
- Adobe Photoshop CS5
- Adobe Illustrator CS5

You will also be using the Internet and the network browser in the lab.

Be self-reliant! There are few better skills we can teach you than to learn to solve your own problems. Take advantage of the programs' help menus, they are there for a reason. If you get stuck, Google it! You'll be amazed by how often your question has already been asked and answered in the support communities and discussion boards online.

Students with disabilities or special needs should see the instructor with any concerns or questions.