

COMPOSITING AND SPECIAL EFFECTS

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:

Conceptual and technical use of animation and compositing software for television, cinema, interactive media, and live performance.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to provide the student with the opportunity to accomplish the following objectives and goals:

1. Develop an understanding of the use and design of motion graphics.
2. Develop a working knowledge of the following technical aspects of compositing; footage preparation, keyframe manipulation, mattes & masks, tracking, chroma-keying.
3. Develop a working knowledge of Adobe After Effects.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

Meyers, Creating Motion Graphics is recommended as a reference guide for this course. Any edition past 4th of the text is relevant.

GRADING BREAKDOWN:

Grading Policy: Grades are assessed on the students understanding, effort and success on each paper, projects and presentations. Grades will be assigned based on the percentage of the total points available. Point totals could change with addition or subtraction of assignments. Please feel free to discuss grade questions or concerns with the instructor at any time.

Late Work: Late work will not be accepted for full credit for classroom critique or presentation. 10% of the total points possible will be deducted for each class period a project is late.

Homework Assignments and Projects

- Critiques
 - Animation Critique 20 Points
 - Service Learning Project Critique 20 Points
 - Greenscreen Scene Critique 20 Points
- Storyboards & Treatments
 - Animation Storyboard 10 Points
 - Service Learning Treatment & Filming Plan 20 Points
 - Final Project Treatment & Storyboard 20 Points
- Special Effects Projects:
 - Music Video 80 Points
 - Animation Title/Graphics Project 50 Points
 - Service Learning Project 80 Points
 - Greenscreen Scene Project 50 Points
 - Final Project 50 Points

Total 400 Points

GRADING SCALE:

372 – 400	=	4.0	292 – 311	=	2.0
352 – 371	=	3.5	272 – 291	=	1.5
332 – 351	=	3.0	240 – 271	=	1.0
312 – 331	=	2.5	Below 239	=	0.0

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

Week	Topic	Monday	Wednesday	Assignment Due Monday
Week 1	Animation: Introduction to After Effects		Shortcuts, basic animation, importing media	Music Video Assigned
Week 2	Animation: Movement & Style	NO CLASS	Meaning of Color and Movement	
Week 3	Animation: Effects	Tour of Effects	Blending Modes	Animation Storyboard
Week 4	Animation Range: Text and Shapes	Animating Shapes	Animating Text	
Week 5	Compositing: Layering	Layers in Video	NLE to AE to YouTube	Animation Project
Week 6	Compositing: Masking	Paths, Effects, Masks	Color Grading/Color Correction	Animation Critique
Week 7	Compositing: Matte	History of VFX & Basic Matte	REACH Studios Service Learning	Service Treatment & Plan
Week 8	Compositing: Keying	Keying in AE with Keylight	MSU Filming Service Learning	
Week 9	Animating Mattes: Rotoscope	Rotoscoping & Refining the Matte	MSU Filming Service Learning	Service Project
Week 10	Animating Mattes: Basic Tracking	Tracking Overview	REACH Studios Service Learning	Service Critique
Week 11	Animating Mattes: Camera Tracking	3D in AE	Camera Tracking	Green Screen Scene
Week 12	Animating Mattes: Mocha Tracking	Mocha Tracking	Mocha Shapes	Greenscreen Critique
Week 13	Animating Mattes: Hiding the Background	Cloning & Tracking	NO CLASS	Final Project Storyboard & Treatment
Week 14	Final Project: Work Week	<i>Final Project</i>	<i>Final Project</i>	
Week 15	Final Project: Work Week	<i>Final Project</i>	<i>Final Project</i>	
Week 16	Final Project			Final Project

Special Effects Assignments Grading

Project grading for VFX Creation Assignments will be evaluated based on the quality of work, challenge of design attempted, level of completion. The purpose is to create unique works that are portfolio worthy. This also applies to storyboards. Storyboards should not be drawn on lined paper. They should be properly labeled and clear. Students may use storyboarding software or print out storyboard grids. Storyboards should be in the correct aspect ratio of the final product.

- Quality (20% of project grade) – Does this project demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles covered in class? Does it meet the requirements as laid out in the assignment?
- Challenge of Design (40% of project grade) – Is the design unique, creative and adventurous? Does this project show evidence of creative problem-solving? Does this project look original (ie: does this project look like one-of-a-kind)? Were copyright permissions and rules followed?
- Completion (40% of project grade) – student effort on the project is evident. It is clear that all avenues were explored to improve and refine the project. There are no obvious or glaring areas that were left as-is.

Some of these assignments will be completed in groups, which will be assigned by the instructor. These projects will be assessed on quality of work, level of mastery of the concepts, attention to detail, and ability to work with a team. Students will receive a portion of their grade assessing their productivity and contribution to the finished project.

Copyright:

- Material developed and created by others is protected by the Copyright Act. There are guidelines available for "fair use" of copyrighted material for education. Make sure you adhere to these fairly restrictive guidelines. Give credit where credit is due on all work for this class.
- If you plan to use the artistic work of another in any Special Effect Assignment for this class, make sure you receive permission from the copyright holder for all copyrighted material. Failure to do so will negatively affect your grade on that assignment.

Submitting Work from Other Classes

- It is not acceptable to turn in the same creative assignment to more than one course. (If you wish to do a larger project that counts for two different courses, please ask permission of the instructors.) It is not acceptable to turn in the same creative assignment in two different semesters. Faculty talk to each other often. If we discover the same assignment being turned in to more than one course without prior instructor approval, the project grade will revert to 0.0.