

Course Syllabus

Computer Graphics: ART 354

Spring 2008 - M-W 6:00 pm-8:50 pm AC404
California State University, Northridge

Department of Art/CSUN

Instructor: Jeff Courtney
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Course Description

Application and principles of computer graphics as a creative technological medium. Practical tutorials in the use of Illustrator CS3 and Photoshop CS3 in the creation of print graphic communications. Tapping into the computer as a powerful medium for visual expression.

Course Pre-requisite ART 200

Upper-division standing in art. Non-art majors consult department for equivalency.

Course Objective

This course will cover Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop CS3 (basic to advanced skill levels). We will deal with both technical and creative aspects of each application. If time permits, the instructor will introduce an additional software application and an accompanying project.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory in this class. Lectures, directions, demonstrations and critiques will not be repeated. Do not miss class on project deadline days as you will be marked down one grade point for missed deadlines.

More than 3 absences will result in lowering your final grade by 1/3 grade unit per absence. (For example, with 4 absences, A becomes an A-. With 5 absences it would become a B+.) The 3 excused absences are for illness and emergencies, not excused "cuts". If an illness or emergency requires more than 3 absences, official documentation will be required. **The instructor will make necessary marks for students who are continually late. Attendance and promptness will greatly affect your overall final grade.**

During the first 20 minutes of the class, the instructor will take attendance. If you are not present at this time, you will be marked as absent. Please notify the instructor if you were late or not present during roll call. **If you have missed a class, you should always contact your fellow students or the instructor for information on the class missed before returning to class.** The university gives authorization to lower grades or fail students for poor attendance and tardiness at the instructor's discretion.

Late Project Penalties

A project not ready at the beginning of class or handed in after a critique on the due date will be penalized by 1/3 grade unit for each class it is late. An absence is not an excuse for a late project. Limited lab access is not an excuse for a late project. Plan ahead for lab time!

Grading

Each project will have 2 Phases:

- Roughs (50%)
- Final (50%)

You will be given a grade for each phase, on a scale from 0-25 (25-23=A A-, 22-16 B+ B B-, etc...). The final grade for each project will be determined by combining the 2 project phases.

Also note that each phase will include participation, absences, and tardiness, which will affect grades significantly. I will be grading not only on technical skills, but will also heavily weigh concept originality and presentation skills and participation during critiques.

Thumbnails are mandatory in this class. **5 thumbnails are the minimum at the roughs phase every project.** These are checked off by the instructor at the very early stages of computer generated work. Not having these handy will result in a drop of the overall grade for that project.

Resubmitting a project for a better grade is allowed a week after the official due date. (For example, if a project is due on a Monday, you have till the following Monday to resubmit the project.) You can do this for any project throughout the semester.

(Project content and their order of assignment may be changed at the instructor's discretion during the semester)

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on the basis of:

1. Class participation, interaction, and discussion.
2. Craftsmanship and appropriate use of the digital tools contained in the applications.
3. Evidence of initiative, creative and imaginative responses to assigned problems.
4. Attendance!
5. Progress of work through the semester.

Final Exam

You are required to meet at the posted exam time for this class.

Required Texts (2)

- Adobe CS3 Classroom in a Book for Photoshop, (ISBN# 0321492005) and Illustrator (ISBN# 0321492029)

Reference Books

- Visual Quick Start Guide for Photoshop and Illustrator CS3.

Software Skills Covered

Illustrator CS3

- Getting started
- Making selections
- Creating basic shapes
- Painting
- Lines and curves
- Working with type
- Layers and templates

Photoshop CS3

- Basic tools
- Scanning/correcting/retouching
- Creating a photo-collage
- Creating type, importing files
- Advanced layering/ blend modes
- Clipping groups, alpha channels, layer masks

Supply List

- 2 Mini Flash USB Drives (minimum of 512MB)
- CD-Rs as needed
- 9x12 Tracing Pad
- #2 Pencil, white eraser
- 15x20 Black presentation boards as needed
- 18" Metal ruler with cork
- X-Acto Knife with #11 blades
- 3M Super 77 Spray Mount
- White Tape, or Masking Tape

(I can't tell you to go out and buy a Mac and Adobe software. What I can tell you is that you are going to be at a distinct disadvantage in this class and in the graphic design world without one. This is not to say that you won't do well in this class without it, but you will need to plan for access to the computer labs on campus.)

CD portfolio

You will use your one Mini USB drive to **backup your files**. The second USB is used to save your work-in-progress files (do not save your work on the computer's hard drive), while the CD-R is used as **portfolio disk**, which will contain files that are to be handed in to the instructor periodically throughout the course. I will give you a list that will contain the appropriate names for your files for each stage of each the project. This will, hopefully, alleviate any confusion on what the instructor is to view. You are responsible for backing up all your projects.

A "lost" file is not an excuse for a late project!

Miscellaneous

• Don't be shy about experimentation. I will be looking for projects that push the limits of the software.

• Always talk to me if there are any issues that deal with the projects. I will give you feedback, explanations, suggestions, etc... Don't be afraid to talk to me!

• **I suggest using e-mail as a guarantee for me to get your message. I usually respond in a timely manner.**

• You are not to use the computers, printer and scanners while another class is in session without the permission of the instructor.

• There will be absolutely no food or drink in the computer lab.

• Show respect and be helpful to your fellow students. Have your work done and be present when we view the class' work. Help each other in the lab. Remember, the person you help today might be somebody that returns the favor when you are out in the working world.

• Some of your student work may be copied by the instructor for use as examples to show future classes.

This Syllabus is subject to change.