

Course Description

Throughout the past decade, the convergence of digital images, sound and text has resulted in the emergence of interactive digital media. Integrated through powerful tools, these elements allow us to convey ideas and artistic expression in ways never before possible. This course is an introduction to the principles of designing for this new form of communication, focusing on the delivery of creative content. It is geared toward students without substantial experience in digital media, but skilled in their respective artistic fields – painting, writing, sculpture, film, animation, theater, music, etc. Students work with industry-standard software tools, developing the basic skills and design concepts necessary to successfully bring their creative visions to this new medium.

This is not a Web development class – it is a course in the foundations, tools, and techniques of interactive design. Course topics include concept development, information design, interface design, interactivity, motion graphics, digital audio and video, technical design, and project management. The class sessions will feature a combination of lectures, demonstrations, technical labs, critiques and guest lectures. Students will complete design/tech assignments and related readings, and will be expected to contribute to the class's weekly discussions and critiques.

Prerequisites

Familiarity with the Macintosh computer required. No programming experience required. No graphics software experience required, although experience with Photoshop is helpful. Core software will include Adobe PhotoShop, Macromedia Dreamweaver, and Flash. The course will also introduce Macromedia Director, digital video effects, QuickTime and QuickTime VR, and sound editing software.

Who Should Take the Class?

Students with an interest in and curiosity about interactive media design and development. Students from a broad variety of disciplines are encouraged to apply – after all, it's called "**multimedia**" for a reason! People with visual design backgrounds, as well as those without, can all contribute to and benefit from the class.

Course Structure

The course will be divided into four 3-week segments covering the 12 remaining weeks of the term, plus Final Project Presentations the last week. Each 3-week segment will focus primarily on one area of interactive design. Each 3-hour class meeting will include a lecture, demonstrations/presentations, and lab/critique. There will also be some guest lectures. Sean Dack, our TA, will offer 2 to 3 Lab hours at a regular time each week so that you can bring in questions and issues for answers and assistance. The specific day and time of these hours is TBD. I will be available mostly through e-mail. Toward the end of the semester, I will be in the Lab at hours TBD to help with final projects.

Required Readings:

Weekly Handouts. Marc Johnson 2000. Available only in PDF format on the course website.

Supplemental Readings. Articles and excerpts from industry publications. Available in photocopied form on a weekly basis.

Interactivity by Design. Ray Kristof & Amy Satran, Adobe Press / Hayden 1995. ISBN: **1-56830-221-5**.

Recommended Readings:

Demystifying Multimedia. Apple Computer, Vivid Publishing 1993. Random House Electronic Publishing 1994. ISBN: **0-679-75603-5**. *Unfortunately, this unique book is out of print.* I will attempt to make a copy available for you to borrow.

Designing Multimedia. Lisa Lopuck, Peachpit Press 1996. ISBN: **0-201-88398-8**.

Flash 4 for Windows and Macintosh: Visual Quickstart Guide. Katherine Ulrich. Peachpit Press 1999. ISBN: **0-201-35473-X**.

The Director 8 for Macintosh & Windows: Visual Quickstart Guide. André Persidsky, Peachpit Press 2000. ISBN: **0-201-70258-4**.

Dreamweaver 3 for Windows & Macintosh: Visual Quickstart Guide. J. Tarin Towers, Peachpit Press 2000. ISBN: **0-201-70240-1**.

The QuickTime VR Book. Susan A. Kitchens, Peachpit Press 1998. ISBN: **0-201-69684-3**.

Class Time:

Thursdays from 5-8pm. Attendance is required.

Course Outline (subject to change):

Readings noted in the outline are subject to change, and may be supplemented by additional handouts.

Week 1 Sep 7, 2000 Course Application and Orientation

- Overview of the course and requirements
- Student Information Questionnaire (Application)

Readings for next session:

Readings Packet – For Week 2

Week 2 Sep 14, 2000 Introducing Interactive Digital Media

Concepts: Analog vs. Digital
 Animation 1 – animated GIFs

Tools & Techniques: **GIFBuilder**

Assignment 1: Critique

Readings for next session:

Interactivity by Design, Chapter 1

Readings Packet – For Week 3

Week 3 Sep 21, 2000 Telling a Story in the Digital Realm

Concepts: Animation 2 – animated GIFs
 Telling a Story
 Interactive vs. Print Design
 Storyboards

Tools & Techniques: **GIFBuilder** continued
 Digitizing images (scanning)
 Photoshop refresher

Assignment 1 Due

Assignment 2: Storyboard for “My Story About Me”

Readings for next session:

Readings Packet – For Week 4

Week 4 Sep 28, 2000 User Interface (UI) Design and Metaphor
Guest Lab: Trevor van Meter, Flash Animator

Concepts: What's in an Interface?
 Metaphor in UI Design
 UI Do's and Don'ts

Tools & Techniques: Sketch problem - metaphor
Flash 1

Assignment 2 Due

Assignment 3: UI Design for "My Story About Me"

Readings for next session:

Readings Packet – For Week 5

Week 5 Oct 5, 2000 Information Design
Guest Lecture: MJ Broadbent, Designer & Information Architect

Concepts: Information Design (I.A.)
 I.A. and UI Design
 UI on the Web

Tools & Techniques: Sketch problem – UI Design
Flash 2

Readings for next session:

Readings Packet – For Week 6

Week 6 Oct 12, 2000 Image Processing for Digital Media

Concepts: Bit Depth & Resolution
 Color Palettes
 Image Optimization
 File Formats and Sizes
 Text and Fonts

Tools & Techniques: **Photoshop/ImageReady**
 Using a Digital Camera
 Debabelizer

Assignment 3 Due

Assignment 4: Implement "My Story" in **Flash**

Readings for next session:

Readings Packet – For Week 7

Week 7 Oct 19, 2000 Digital Audio 1

Concepts: Working with Digital Audio
 Bit Depth & Sampling Rates
 File Formats
 Compression (IMA, SWA, MP3)

Tools & Techniques: **SoundEdit**
 Recording Digital Audio
 Grabbing Audio from a CD
 Introducing **Director**

Readings for next session:
Readings Packet – For Week 8

Week 8 Oct 26, 2000 Digital Audio 2

Guest Lecture: Christopher Janney, Sound Artist

Concepts: Beyond the Box
 MIDI
 Synchronization

Tools & Techniques: **SoundEdit**
 MIDI Sequencer
 More on **Director**

Assignment 4 Due
Assignment 5: Add audio to “My Story About Me”

Readings for next session:
Readings Packet – For Week 9

Week 9 Nov 2, 2000 Project Planning and Organization

Concepts: Proposal to Production to Release
 Design and Specifications
 Collaboration
 Testing and Delivery

Tools & Techniques: Creating the Proposal and Specifications
 Audio synchronization with **Director**

Readings for next session:
Readings Packet – For Week 10

Week 10 Nov 9, 2000 Digital Video 1

Concepts: Working with Digital Video and QuickTime
Frame Rates and Data Rates
File Formats
Codecs and Quality
Digital Video on the Web

Tools & Techniques: Web-enabling Assignment 5
Capturing DV with **Premiere**
Basic Video Editing
Saving your video as a QuickTime movie

Assignment 5 Due

Assignment 6: Final Project Proposal

Readings for next session:

Readings Packet – For Week 11

Week 11 Nov 16, 2000 Digital Video 2

Guest Lecture: Zoe Beloff, Filmmaker and Digital Videographer

Concepts: Storytelling with Digital Video
Integrating DV into an Interactive Project

Tools & Techniques: Importing and Controlling DV in Director
Creating streaming QuickTime for the **Web**

Assignment 6 Due

Assignment 7: **Final Project (due December 14)**

Readings for next session:

Readings Packet – For Week 12

Holiday Nov 23, 2000 THANKSGIVING

Week 12 Nov 30, 2000 QuickTime VR

Concepts: A tour of QTVR sample panoramas and objects
How does QTVR work?
Methods of creating QTVR pano's and objects
QTVR scenes
Integrating QTVR into an Interactive Project

Tools & Techniques: Creating our own panorama
Importing and controlling QTVR in **Director**
Using QTVR on the **Web**
Using hotspots in **Director**

Readings for next session:
Readings Packet – For Week 13

Week 13 Dec 7, 2000 Web-based Multimedia / Real World / Recap & Review
Guest Lecture: Rob MacLeod, Digital Media Innovator

Concepts: Considerations for Web-based projects
Recap and Review (Q&A)
Getting ready for your Final Project Presentations

Tools & Techniques:

Week 14 Dec 14, 2000 FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS