Art 426: Motion Graphics

Meeting times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-4:40 PM MIT 367
Instructor: Jessica Fenlon
Email: fenlon@uwm.edu

Credit Hours: 3 credits.
Class Meetings: ~5 hours per week (~75 hours total)
Independent work outside of class: 6+ hours per week (90+ hours total)

Information for students

Please familiarize yourself with the following university policies. At the request of the Faculty Senate, the Academic Policy Committee prepared a summary of recommended items for each course syllabus. This summary is available in printed form from your department chair and at: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/news_events/upload/1895R3-Uniform-Syllabus-Policy.pdf. See also http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/news_events/upload/Syllabus-Links.pdf. Student academic misconduct procedures are outlined here.

Course Objectives

This course introduces storyboard conceptualization, production, and staged creation of motion graphic design workflows. Students will learn to create engaging time-based animations for various end-user video platforms. Typography, graphics, photography, video and audio content will be managed, created, and used to develop an array of design solution skills. Other goals include the development of global technical, verbal, experimental and conceptual design skills that will serve the student in many creative and design contexts.

Students will learn to …

✴ Effectively manage time as a design element
✴ Integrate animation and sound
✴ Work collaboratively with creative partners
✴ Understand various video codecs and proper uses for each
✴ Present, discuss, and articulate concepts through analysis, research, and idea development related to course topics

Required Materials

✴ External Hard-Drive (If working on lab machines)
✴ Software: After Effects CC.
✴ Headphones
✴ Sketchbook

Sketchbook will be used to create storyboards, concept development, design workflow and
progress documentation of assigned projects, as well as to sketch. This sketchbook, as a process book, must be turned in with each project.

Note: Purchasing the software is not mandatory. It is beneficial to learn the latest version of After Effects and to have it available for practice and project completion. Other motion graphics software may also be taught in this course; After Effects will be used to bring multiple elements together and finish work.

Projects
Specific details for each assignment will be provided at each project launch. The project outline below could be modified as class needs dictate.

✴ 1. Music Animation/Kinetic Typography
✴ 2. TV/webseries opening sequence
✴ 3. 48 hour film challenge prep
✴ 4. Product launch sequence
✴ 5. FINAL PROJECT

There will be a portfolio-building project due every third week of class. You will often be required to submit smaller ‘sketches’ at the end of a class period.

In-Class Activities

Lecture/Demo. Hands-on training working with AfterEffects CC, to produce the assigned projects related to course lectures and demonstrations. Each day attendance will be taken and a lab assignment might be given. You must complete the assignment and hand it in or show it to the instructor at the end of class to earn your participation points.

Critiques/Discussion. Class critiques start on the due date. All students will be in attendance and on time with the required assignment completed. Projects not available for critique will be considered late. Late projects will be downgraded one full letter grade for each class day it is late. An “F” is given after two weeks. If you will be unexcusedly absent on a due date, you must turn in your assignment that day via the course web site. There will be three types of critiques: class critique, group critique, and one-on-one critique.

Workshop. You can work on your project; do your research; interact with your classmates or ask for help from your instructor. You must be present in class during scheduled workdays.

Overall course requirements

Students are to arrive prepared to ignore limits, to engage with content, and to invent something new. The “laboratory” is a place where students enter an open space of learning.
It is expected students will attend all classes and bring creative force, enthusiasm, imagination dedication, and an open mind to their own development for these are qualities that cannot be taught, they can only be stimulated and appreciated. The assignments in this course will expose students to the same kind of thought processes and problem-solving methods that they will need to understand and employ as professionals.

Students who demonstrate a lack of motivation in attendance, professionalism, and/or in completing their work on a timely basis will be asked to drop the class.

Participation and Attendance: Class discussions, critiques, Q&A sessions are critical to creating growth within each student, therefore, participation and attendance are components of the final grade. You will be allowed 3 absences; each additional absence after that will lower your grade by a full letter.

Tardiness: Students must be present and ready to work when class begins. Being present without your tools and materials is not considered “ready to work”. Plan to arrive with enough lead time to set up your computer and anything else you need to fully participate. 3 lates = 1 absence. If you are late, you are responsible for alerting/reminding me after class, so that I can update my attendance record.

Readings + Research: Students are expected to engage in all assignments and classroom discourse with depth and research supported by critical discourse. For each reading assignment students must accompany their critical reflection with topically-related research. Articles and books must be properly cited using MLA guidelines.

Writing: Students will be required to document and retain observations and findings, analysis, time spent to complete tasks, and critical summaries for each stage of each project. Include all process documentation with the submission of each assignment.

No cell phones allowed in class. It is disruptive to class when phones ring and ping. Class time is for work on current projects, exercises, discussions, and more. Students are not to work on outside projects in class. Use class time wisely and efficiently.

Be prepared appropriately for class. Bring all “process” work and necessary supplies to class. Effective time management is crucial to your success as a professional. Do not procrastinate. Expect to feel unsure most of the time; this is a sign that you are making progress, taking risks, discovering. Move forward in your process even when you feel unsure. Be sure to meet every interim deadline by having readings completed, journal entries thoughtfully written and/or visuals to show, not just verbal explanations.
**Process Book**

A Process Book is a collection of your thoughts, notations, ideas, rough thumbnails, sketches, refinements, design permutations, and research for all class lectures, workshops and projects, comments from critiques for each project. It is 20% of each final project grade. It is important to document and retain every aspect of your ideation in chronological order. For the documentation of your creative provenance and will allow you to have a better understanding of what you did and how you did it. Furthermore, it is important to note, that some manifestation of the process book could eventually become part of your professional portfolio.

**Process Book Requirements**

A Process Book must accompany each project. Document and retain every aspect of your thinking, decision-making, and creative process. I expect to see notation with dates on a class-to-class basis.

The process book is a important part of how designers research visually and in writing. The more versed you become in your design process and the methodologies and strategies used by professionals in and outside of your profession, the better you will be able to articulate to peers, employers and clients the work. **Process book work is 20% of each project’s final grade.**

- Document methodologies used in design research
- Demonstrate thought process (ideation, planning, reflection, and critical analysis)
- Record visual working/thinking processes outside of your head, in order to better develop the work and thought process.
- Demonstrate your effective design process; development of your process is expected to proceed across the semester.
- Demonstrate your understanding of strategic management of each phase of a project’s development, so that a diverse array of options can be evaluated and then acted upon or rejected efficiently.

**Grading**

Each assignment and project is presented in class, and will receive a written evaluation and a letter grade. Projects are graded on the following nodes:
Does the project align with your process book work?

How coherently do you discuss and present your work?

How well does the project align with your intent?

Do media production choices deliver content implicitly?

Has your work, in the context of the series of projects built over the semester, shown technical and conceptual growth through self-challenge?

Aesthetic interest.

You will receive feedback comments both during and after critique. Keep notes of both faculty and peer insights.

**Late assignments** get a full mark-down of a letter grade for every class they are late. Absences do not excuse lateness – assignments are turned in online. Extensions can be granted, but only if negotiated with the instructor in advance of the due date.