

Rebecca Mushtare

Assistant Professor
rmushtare@mmm.edu
Office: Nugent 560D
Hours: F 9:00-10:30
& by appointment

Digital Media II

COMM 325 Section 01 meets in Nugent 556 on Thursdays from 2:30PM – 5:20PM (F09)

Description

In this second semester of the Digital Media sequence, students will expand their technical, design and conceptual skills developed in Digital Media I into linear and non-linear stories using the Flash Authoring Environment. Students will explore animation, user interactivity, procedural and object-oriented programming and combinations of digital media (video, sound, images, etc.)--Blurring the lines between art, design, theory and computer programming. Students will spend the first half of the semester focusing on animation, vector imaging, and linear stories and finish the semester developing non-linear stories, interactivity and learning Action Script to execute those ideas. Group brainstorms, teamwork and critiques will be central to our process and full participation is expected.

* Prerequisite: COMM 225 Digital Media I

Teaching/Learning Methodology

Many of the concepts and ideas introduced in Digital Media I will act as the foundation for the more advanced topics in this course. As in previous courses, it is integral to fully participate by experimenting and testing new ideas and techniques. A large part of digital media (and most creative media) is the ability to creatively problem-solve in a variety of areas including: composition, aesthetics, story/concept, efficient production methods, developing and refining procedures, etc. An emphasis will be placed on developing this skill and the ability to be resourceful. Sitting on the sidelines will not suffice – it may take a little courage at times, but it is completely important to leap into new territory, take risks and explore. Those that are timid will be limited in what they will be able to accomplish. Those that are engaged and committed will surprise themselves at how accomplished they can become in a short amount of time. I am more than willing to sit with you to review material until you grasp the concepts or troubleshoot or problem-solve, but, remember, you are the one responsible for your own learning – therefore it is your responsibility to seek me out. Throughout the semester we will engage the material through demonstrations, viewings/interactions of contemporary work, in-class exercises, hands-on exploratory activities, readings, mini and long-term projects including one collaborative data-visualization project with student researchers (details to come).

As an individual who has opted to advance her/his study in digital media, it is also important to become more familiar with the history of Digital Media, as well as with contemporary creative practice using digital media. Each student will be responsible for a “show and tell” and bulletin board display of a historically important digital media artist. Although we will not create projects outside of the screen realm in this course, this weekly show & tell will expose you to practices that take digital media into hand held devices, physical space and unexpected places.

The success of the class as a whole is dependent on the willingness of everyone to commit to learning, sharing, supporting and exploring together.

Learning Goals

At the close of the semester a successful student will be able:

- To successfully and intelligently assemble many forms of digital media into a multimedia project utilizing the Flash authoring environment.
- To critically discuss/analyze/situate your media creations in a local, global, and historical context
- Use basic animation techniques to tell a story.
- To conceive of an idea, develop that concept, and execute a completed cohesive project.
- To clearly communicate your ideas and feedback in a respectful manner.
- To use the feedback given to others in the successful generation of new projects.
- To use basic programming skills to add interactivity to media projects.
- To create work that is socially/politically/economically aware.

Required Materials

USB Flash Drive (256MB+) or a portable Hard Drive

Required Text:

Learning ActionScript 3.0 by Shuppe & Rosser. 2nd Edition. O'Reilly Press 2008.

Recommended Texts:

The Visual Story: Creating the Visual Structure of Film, TV and Digital Media by Bruce Block. 2nd Ed. Focal Press 2008.

Timing for Animation by Harold Whitaker and John Halas. Focal Press 2008.

Lynda.com is a subscription based video tutorial service that has exceptional Flash resources (among many others). Lynda.com is available on a monthly basis for \$25 and is a great way to reiterate concepts or learn new things.

Grading & Attendance Policy

Assignments must be turned in complete and ON TIME to earn an A in the course. All assignments must be turned in to earn a B in the course. All major projects/assignments must be completed to pass the course. Assignments are due at the start of class. All assignments are to be turned in on the server BEFORE class begins. Written assignments are due both digitally (on server as a .doc, .txt or .rtf) and physically (printed and stapled in the left hand corner – ABSOLUTELY NO FOLDED CORNERS).

At the first sign of struggle with the course material the student should contact and meet with the instructor to develop a plan for continuing success. Those who demonstrate honest effort and commitment will receive the support they need to succeed. Students who do not meet this standard will not do well in this course.

Attendance is REQUIRED. Many assignments and activities do occur IN CLASS; you are responsible for all material and assignments missed due to an absence. All students are forgiven for 1 absence IF all in-class assignments are completed in a timely fashion. Three absences will result in a failure of this course, as you will have missed 9 hours of instruction.

Grade Distribution

10	In-Class Exercises/Assignments
10	Show & Tell
10	Flipbook
10	Setting the Mood
10	20 Second Symbol Animation
10	Greeting Card
20	Proposed Interactive Project
20	Final Project

Student grades will be negatively affected by late assignments, poor attendance (including arriving late and leaving early), and lack of participation or preparedness.

Tips for Success

- Plan your time – multimedia projects are time consuming and technically involved. Plan at least three hours a week to spend in the Digital Media Lab or on your own computer. You will spend MORE time in the lab if you are not prepared to start on your project when you arrive – research, materials, sketches and site maps all need to be done before you arrive. The open lab schedule is posted on the lab door.
- Work with a friend—two heads are better than one when you run into technical, conceptual or creative roadblocks. Many students work in the Digital Media Lab—you shouldn't have trouble finding a buddy there.
- Save and save again. Back up your work in MULTIPLE locations.
- Attend class – each week builds on the previous one. Missing class will severely impact your grade.
- Ask for help when you have trouble – don't allow yourself to get behind on new material.

Health & Safety

Only drink beverages with a lid. Be especially careful around computers, one spilled drink can result in electrical shock and/or expensive damaged equipment. Please keep foodstuffs on tables in the center of the room away from equipment.

Staring at a glowing monitor for extended periods of time can cause headaches, eyestrain and problems with your eyesight. Remember to take frequent short breaks by looking away from the monitor and focusing on something in the distance, or close your eyes for a moment. Your eyes need a break!

Repetitive stress injuries like carpal tunnel syndrome, ulnar tunnel syndrome, and tendonitis can develop with excessive keyboarding, mouse-ing, etc. Use good form and stretch your muscles regularly to reduce your risk. If you have wrist pain use one of the mouse pads with a wrist pad available in the lab.

Use good posture! Try not to slouch: sit upright, maintaining the natural curves of your back and keep your shoulders relaxed. Take time to properly adjust your chair and workspace. If you have trouble reaching the floor comfortably place a book under your feet. Stand up and stretch occasionally.

Policies

GERMS: Computer labs breed illness. Please be conscientious and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before (and after) using the computers, particularly if you have been sick.

FOOD & DRINK: Our class is long, and it is understandable that you may need food or drink. Please keep your snacks and beverages on the center tables and FAR AWAY from our brand-new, adorable computers. Please also don't touch the computers with sticky or food-covered fingers... please wash your hands first, we want to keep our lab clean.

CELL PHONES: Be respectful to the learning environment - No cell phones should be visible or audible during class.

LAB ACCESS: Students enrolled in a digital media course are permitted to access the classroom during school hours when classes are not meeting. The class schedule is posted on the lab door. If you would like to use the lab and the door is locked bring your MMC ID to the security desk at the front door and sign out a key.

DISABILITIES: Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments for this course must either enroll in the Program for Academic Access or register with the Office of Student Support Services. For any accommodation, the instructor must be presented with either a letter from the Assistant Director of the Program for Academic Access or an Accommodations Card from the Office of Student Support Services during the first week of classes.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: MMC fosters an academic community where students and faculty work together to create a learning experience that imparts knowledge and forms character. To achieve this, the College requires all members of the community to adhere to the policy of Academic Honesty that can be found in the Student Handbook, the College Catalogue and on the College website.

Digital Media is an academic subject. If you are using digital resources or images in your digital work you **MUST** cite the source (hyperlinks are acceptable in this medium). Stealing and taking credit for work that is not your own is dishonest and may also be **ILLEGAL**. Images, songs, text and video can only be used in their entirety if they are in the public domain or can demonstrate "fair use." If you have specific concerns related to digital media please contact your instructor immediately.

Tentative Schedule

Week 1: September 10

Vector Drawing
The Art of Simplification
Frame by Frame Animation
Story Telling Basics

In-Class: Vector Portrait
Homework: Flipbook & Read excerpt from "The Animation Book"

Week 2: September 17

Frame by Frame Animation in Flash
Tweening: Shape Tween & Shape Hints

Establishing a mood: color palette, music, timing, camera movement, speed, flow, visual intensity, line

In-Class: Shape-Shifting

Homework: Read McCloud & Setting the Mood Exercise

Week 3: September 24

Tweening – Graphic Symbols & Motion Tweening & Motion Paths

Sound Effects

Depth/Space; Point of View; Rhythm

In-Class: Bouncing a Ball

Homework: Read “Timing for Animation” & 20 Symbol Animation Brainstorm/Story

Week 4: October 1

Easing, Gravity, Timing

Garage Band Basics

In-Class: Cornucopia of Balls

Homework: Transportation Symbol Animation

Week 5: October 8

Ambient Sound Lecture (Visitor)

Approaching Interactivity

Movie Clips and Animated Graphic Symbols

In-Class: Surveying

Homework: Read Krug & Ambient Scene for Greeting Card

Week 6: October 15

Button Basics

Functions, Properties, Events

In-Class: Button Challenge

Homework: Finish Greeting Card; Read 13-17; 24; 31-40; 71-80

Week 7: October 22

Data Types & Variables

Writing Procedures

Input Text & Dynamic Text

In-Class: Procedure Activity

Homework: Read 18-24; 25-28; 197-203 & Brainstorm Project Ideas (set up meeting)

Week 8: October 29

Proposal Writing

Writing Reusable Functions

Drag & Drop & Targets

This

In-Class: Puzzle

Homework: Project Proposal with Storyboards (Project itself will be due Tuesday, November 24 @ 8am)

Week 9: November 5

Dynamic Content

Children & Parents

Constraints

In-Class: Fridge Words

Homework: Graphic & Sound Elements; Read 49-63

Week 10: November 12

Web Distribution Tidbits (licensing, publishing, linking to other URLs)

Introduction to Final Project

In-Class: Work Day

Homework: Animation & Initial Scripting; Read Tufte

Week 11: November 19

Data Visualization

Considering the User

In Class: Meet with Collaborators/Brainstorm

Homework: Finish Project for Tuesday, November 24 @ 8am; Final Project Proposal w/Storyboard

Week 12: December 3

Dynamically Removing from Display List

Removing Event Listeners

In Class: Meetings/Work Day

Homework: Graphics & Sounds for Final; Initial Scripting; Read 221-231

Week 13: December 10

Individual Consultations

In-Class: Meet with Collaborators

Homework: Complete Project

Week 14: December 17

Final Presentation of Work

Peer Review

Reflections

Careers, Competitions and Future Opportunities