

VM260: Introduction to Digital Media Production

Spring 2011 – Course Credits: 4

Tues/Thurs 12-1:45 – 180 Tremont St. T809

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Office hours: 180 Tremont St., 916D – Tues 2-3pm and by appointment

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the theory and practice of digital media production. It will stress the conceptual, aesthetic, and technical concerns of digital media, emphasizing creativity and familiarity with the material. Areas include introductions to Web design and development, animation, interactivity, graphics and imaging, as well as project management, interface design, and user experience.

The emphasis in the course is on the creation of meaningful works using the materials. While there is instruction in the technical aspects of new media, the major areas of concern are concept, content, critique, and aesthetic decisions.

Objectives

- *Conceptual:* To examine the concepts behind each step of the digital media production cycle, from ideation to publishing, and consider the concepts behind historical and contemporary works
- *Aesthetic:* To understand principles of design and their unique application to digital media, and to start to develop your own media aesthetic
- *Technical:* To acquire the technical skills necessary for producing digital images, vector animations, Web sites, and other forms of digital media
- *Critical:* To consider theoretical, historical and cultural concerns regarding digital media

Required Materials

We will use a class website (<https://sites.google.com/a/emerson.edu/vm260-spr11/>) to manage course content. Please check it frequently for project details, resources, and announcements. You will also post links to your completed assignments on the website prior to deadlines.

You will also need a storage device to manage your media – a Flash drive, a USB 2.0 external hard drive, or an online dropbox. (This storage should be separate from and in addition to your Pages account.)

Assignments and Requirements

- Create two websites, each showing your capacity for creativity and your competency in the areas of web design and web development.
- Design and produce a final project: a complex, portfolio-quality piece of digital media using the technologies covered in class.
- With a partner, research and prepare a presentation of a piece of digital media and lead a class discussion on the piece.

- Participate in discussions and critiques.
- Complete the assigned exercises, tutorials, and readings.

Grading

- Website #1: 10%
- Website #2: 20%
- Layer Tennis: 20%
- Final Project: 30%
- Class Presentation: 10%
- Participation: 10%

These guidelines should give you some idea of what to expect for a final class grade:

A: Truly outstanding work on all levels, including project ideation, design, and execution, as well as attendance, participation and discussion leadership. Do not expect an “A” if you are late to class, miss class, or do not regularly participate, no matter how good your projects are.

B: Strong, above-average work in all areas. Projects must work well and be based on a good idea; you must participate and attend regularly.

C: Average work. Any one of the following may earn you a “C”: non-functioning projects, projects that do not meet requirements, frequent absences or lateness, or lack of participation.

D: Poor work. Earning a “D” usually entails late work and/or repeated violation of class policies.

F: Unacceptable work and/or behavior.

Project grades

Work will be evaluated according to creativity and expressiveness as well as technical concerns. In other words: the idea, the form, and the function will all be considered. An “A” project or exercise grows out of a great idea, is technologically sound and bug free, and has a carefully planned and well-executed look and feel.

Unless the subject matter demands an intentionally rough-around-the-edges aesthetic, I expect your work to be polished and professional.

Late work

Assignments must be submitted by noon on the day they are due. Grades will be docked 10% for each day they are late.

If you have difficulty posting an assignment to the class website, you may email it to me at jonelle.lonergan@gmail.com. Technical difficulties, lack of internet access, broken hard drives, etc. are **not** acceptable excuses for late work. Back up your work frequently and avoid waiting until the last minute to hand it in.

Class Policies

In-Class Behavior

No computer work is allowed during discussions and presentations. You may not use cell phones, instant messenger, or email at any time during class. (Please silence your phone when class begins.) Be respectful of each other at all times, especially during project critiques.

Attendance

Attendance and punctuality are mandatory. Six or more absences will result in a failing grade. Your final grade will be lowered by one point for each unexcused absence and 1/3 of a point for each time you arrive late to class.

Disability Services Office

Students with disabilities who are seeking consideration for services or accommodations should contact the Associate Director for Disability Services: (617) 824-8592, dso@emerson.edu, or Disability Services Office, Emerson College, 120 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116.

Plagiarism

It is the responsibility of all Emerson students to know and adhere to the College's policy on plagiarism (http://www2.emerson.edu/academic_affairs/policies/Plagiarism-Policy.cfm). If you have any question concerning the Emerson plagiarism policy or about documentation of sources in work you produce in this course, speak to your instructor.

Schedule

Date	In Class	Due Today
Tues, Jan. 18	Logistics; introductions	
Thurs, Jan. 20	HTML (history & basic markup)	Read " How Does the Internet Work? " Read " The Basics of HTML " Read: " Getting Started with HTML " <i>Optional:</i> Read Mark Pilgrim, Dive into HTML5 (Chapters 0 and 1)
Tues, Jan. 25	Website planning process, HTML	Complete HTML Basics tutorial (Introduction through HTML Quick List)
Thurs, Jan. 27	Content vs. Presentation, CSS	Read Michael Cohen's " Separation: The Web Designer's Dilemma " Read http://www.cssbasics.com/ (1-6) <i>Optional:</i> Read CSS Specificity
Tues, Feb. 1	Principles of Graphic Design, CSS	Read http://www.cssbasics.com/ (7-15)

Thurs, Feb. 3	Presentation CSS, color theory	Read "Colour" in Mark Boulton's Designing for the Web <i>Optional:</i> Read Janet Lynn Ford's Color Theory Tutorial
Tues, Feb. 8	CSS, typography	Read Webmonkey's Web Typography Tutorial (lessons 1 and 2) Browse the Google Web Fonts API <i>Optional:</i> Read Jason Santa Maria. "On Web Typography"
Thurs, Feb. 10	Presentation , work on website #1	
Tues, Feb. 15	Critiques	Website #1
Thurs, Feb. 17	Critiques; Intro to Layer Tennis	Browse Flickr's Photoshop Tennis group and Coudal Partners' Layer Tennis archive
Tues, Feb. 22 -- No class (Emerson Monday)		
Thurs, Feb. 24	Presentation , Defining "new media", ideation	Read Lev Manovich, "New Media From Borges to HTML" Browse the Rhizome ArtBase
Tues, Mar. 1	Photoshop: selections, layers, masking, adjustments	Read A Comprehensive Introduction to Photoshop Selection Techniques Read Unveiling Photoshop Masks
Thurs, Mar. 3	Presentation , Photoshop drawing and painting	Read Photoshop's Brush Tool: A Basic Guide Read A Basic Guide to Photoshop CS4 Adjustment Layers
Mar. 5-13 – Spring Break		
Tues, Mar. 15	CSS review, multi-column layouts	Layer Tennis (Group 1) http://www.cssbasics.com/ (16-18)
Thurs, Mar. 17	Presentation , work on website #2	
Tues, Mar. 21	Critiques	Website #2
Thurs, Mar. 23	Critiques	
Tues, Mar. 29	User experience, CSS Interactivity	Layer Tennis (Group 2) Watch Understanding Web Design
Thurs, Mar. 31	Presentation , Photoshop review, Illustrator & vector drawing	Read the UW Illustrator Tutorial (Vector Graphics through Simple Text)
Tues, April 5	Vector animation	Final project proposal

Thurs, April 7	Presentation, Flash for the web	Read Thoughts on Flash Read " Who Needs Flash? "
Tues, April 12	HTML5, CSS3, Progressive enhancement	Layer Tennis (Group 1) Read J. David Eisenberg's " Get Ready for HTML5 " Read Andy Clarke's <i>Hardboiled Web Design</i> (Chapter 4)
Thurs, April 14	Presentation, Copyright	Read Best Practices for Marking Content with CC Licenses: Creators
Tues, April 19	Peer review; Work on final project	
Thurs, April 21	Work on final project	
Tues, April 25	Work on final project	Layer Tennis (Group 2)
Thurs, April 27	Critiques	Final project
Tues, May 3 (10:30am)	Critiques	