Digital Foundations – Spring 2009
ART 1602C
Section: 5
MCH 315B (Carothers Building)
Tues. & Thurs. 3:35 - 6:05pm

Digital Foundations

Instructor: Meg Mitchell
Email: msmegmitchell@gmail.com (when sending email please put the course number in the subject line of your email.)
Office: FAH 411
Office Hours: by appointment. Appointments are available Tuesday and Thursday from the hours of 1:30 to 3:00pm. Email me to set up an appointment time.

Email policy: *while I may sometimes respond quickly to your email, do not EXPECT an immediate response. I will endeavor to respond to your email within 24 hours (or the next business day, M-F) of my reading it.

... our moment of zen:
"With identical options to choose from, everyone’s art begins to look and taste the same." - Golan Levin

Required Reading:
There is no required textbook for this class, but there will be quite a lot of reading in the form of handouts. All handouts and assignments will be available for download via blackboard. Participation on Blackboard (http://campus.fsu.edu) IS REQUIRED to succeed in this course. However, the information provided on blackboard should not be seen as a substitute for attending class (see my attendance policy below).

Course Description:
Introduction to the theory and practice of digital imaging and the basics of time-based art and design. Fulfills computer competency requirement for art majors.

Goal/Rationale:
Digital Media has grown to the point where it saturates all of our sensory perception. From telecommunications, to cinema, to music; virtually all of the ways which we take in the world have been permeated by the computer. This class will serve as an overview of the more widespread instances of this permeation, and as an exploration into the areas where these genres overlap.

In this course, you will be introduced to the basic practices of digital media: image acquisition and manipulation, vector illustration, digital video production, digital audio production. In addition, writing and research projects may pop up from time to time. Beyond simply working with the tools, you will be encouraged to be looking at what contemporary artists/scientists/engineers are doing with them as well. Critical analysis of not only your work, but that of others will be a focal point of this course. Though this course will have a heavy technical bent, of primary importance is the quality of work/product produced and not the technical difficulty required to complete the work.

During this class, a large amount of material will be covered in a short amount of time. Significant time outside of class will be necessary to complete the requirements for this course. A willingness to experiment and curiosity are also pre-requisites. It is expected that you will push the software in ways that are not what the makers intended.

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

* Use basic vector, raster, layout, and video editing programs effectively;

* Effectively combine elements of temporal organization to create narrative and associative compositions;

* Effectively utilize the power of juxtaposition, implication and metaphor;

* Employ collaborative as well as individual approaches to creativity;

* Speak and write critically about personal and peer artworks and propose alternatives.
Course Calendar:
The course calendar is available on Google Calendars:
http://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=g1rqu67v70k5lqm3a0s82dkv4%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America/New_York

Course Outline:
*each of these topics will be covered in more detail in periodical handouts, assignments, and readings

Introduction: Digital Media Basics

The topics we will cover in the introduction are as follows:

- Digital Media in Everyday Life
- Technophobia, what it is, and why YOU can’t afford to have it!
- Raster vs. Vector
- Color Spaces (RGB, CMYK, LAB, Grayscale, Index, and Websafe)
- File Types and other Useless Acronyms (and why you need to know them)
- File Compression (why you sometimes need it, and how it can ruin your images)

1: Vector Illustration and Layout

In this section of the course we will explore vector illustration with Adobe Illustrator as our primary tool. We will discuss the advantages of vector illustration over raster imaging (pixels), and what types of applications it is best suited for. In this unit, we will use the language of painting and drawing to discuss many of the attributes of the images we create.

Specific assignment details will be handed out in class. While there will be in-class work time, expect to complete the majority of your assignments outside of regular class time.

2: Raster Image Manipulation

Image processing with Photoshop is perhaps the most common and basic element in digital content creation. We will start with an overview of the basic components of a digital image, and work towards more advanced techniques specific to the software package. In addition, considerable time will be spent learning the various means of importing and exporting images to and from the computer. We will cover scanning, digital cameras (video and still), alternative means of obtaining images from the outside world, as well as various methods of printing and outputting images back from the computer. For this unit, we will be incorporating the language of traditional photography when we discuss our work. We will use the language of the figure, through portraiture and multiples, to explore the implied and explicit narrative.

3: A/V, or for the uninitiated, Audio/Video

This portion of the semester will be equally divided between creating digital video content and the creation of audio to accompany that video. Though audio is commonly looked at as playing a supporting role to video – wherein sounds and soundtracks are dictated by the piece of video, and not the other way around – we will look at ways in which the audio and video play equal roles in a completed short video.

Time will be spent learning video editing tools such as Final Cut Express and I DVD, software used for transferring video from the computer to DVD. Also, audio production tools such as Garage Band will be covered. In addition, we will look into methods of encoding video pieces for the World Wide Web.

In addition to this technical material, we will begin looking at sound and video artists who either use the computer in the creation of their work, or artists whose work came as a precursor and inspiration for the work now being created by new media artists. We will also look at the language of cinema and popular culture, and how these tools are being adapted by "fine" artists. We will examine how the language of video is used to create both the linear and the non-linear narrative.

Specific assignment details will be handed out in class. While there will be in-class work time, expect to complete the majority of your assignments outside of regular class time.
Individual Research Presentations:
You will be required to make two informal presentations based on your research into selected contemporary artists/designers.

Grading:
While you will receive grades for each individual project completed, the grades from each section of the class will count towards one cumulative grade for that section. So, if you receive A’s for all of the assignments in video/audio, you will receive an A for that section of the class. Each section will count towards your final grade as follows:

Image Processing: 28%
Vector Illustration: 28%
Digital Video/Audio: 28%
Individual Research Presentation: 6%
Final Portfolio: 6%
Attendance/Participation: 4%

Grading Criteria:
YOU WILL RECEIVE FINAL LETTER GRADES ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

A (90 – 100): Overall Excellence, to receive an A, you must consistently exceed the expectations of the assignment. Work must go beyond the scope of the assignment, both technically and conceptually; I will be looking for real technical exploration of the tools, and a strong sense of curiosity and experimentation regarding the requirements of the assignments. In short, you will have to make work that is strong in all ways, and develop a personal aesthetic that is inventive and compelling. In addition, participation in critiques and in class discussion of the assignments will be required in order to receive an A.

B (80 – 89): Above average: you will meet and exceed the requirements of the assignment. Work should be both conceptually and technically strong, but there will be room for improvement.

C (70 – 79): Average: You have merely completed the objectives of the assignment. If an assignment calls for 5 images, you have completed 5 images, however you have not been inventive or creative enough in your solution for the assignment.

D (60 – 69): Below Average: You have only partially fulfilled the requirements of an assignment, by either not physically completing enough work, or by not addressing the requirements of the assignment.

F (59 – 0) Fail: You have not handed anything in.

In addition, attendance and class participation will play a role in determining your final grade.

The cumulative grades from the three sections of the class will be used in determining your final grade. Put simply, the final weighted average on blackboard = your final grade. In addition, overall artistic improvement will also play a role in determining your final grade. Borderline grades will be determined by overall improvement, class participation, as well as attendance.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:
You will need a large format storage device in order to keep your video and project files. At a minimum (for the first few weeks of class) you should have a 1 gigabyte or larger USB drive. If you are an art major and plan on continuing to work with the computer, you should purchase an external firewire hard drive as soon as possible. An external USB drive is also acceptable, however having a firewire drive will make video editing easier in the lab. An 80 gb drive should be plenty of space.

A few blank DVD-R’s
1 blank Mini-DV video cassette
Supplies for matting: (all available at Utrecht)
Several sheets of black 4ply mat board
Mat Cutter
Hefty metal ruler, 24 in long
Sharp 2b pencil or mechanical pencil.
Spray Mounting adhesive or Paper Cement

**Attendance:**
The more courses you miss, the further behind you will be in the class, and the fewer opportunities you will have to get feedback on your projects. Therefore, it is **doubtful that you will pass this class with more than four absences.** Attendance will be recorded daily in case an advisor or dean inquires about a student. If you miss a class YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE for making up missed work. I will answer specific questions, but I will not re-teach any lesson. If you anticipate an excused absence, you may want to **be proactive and inquire ahead of time about the course content you will miss.** For University approved excused absences, see http://www.fsu.edu/~fasenate/attendance.html

**Critique Attendance:**
Timely attendance is critical to a productive critique. Therefore, if a student is late for a critique I mark it as half of an absence. Critique days are marked on your course calendar.

**Late Work:**
Late work will not be accepted. All work must be turned in on its due date, or it will not be accepted and will receive a failing grade. If need be, in **EXTENUATING** circumstances, arrangements may be made **ahead of time** for extended due dates.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

**Florida State Academic Honor Policy:**
The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for the integrity of students’ academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.”

**Class Policy on Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement:**
Be aware that I will not enforce against the use of copyrighted material within the context of this class, since their use may be appropriate for certain assignments. However, you should be aware that this falls under the umbrella of "fair use", and that anything else you do with the materials outside of class may put you at risk of being guilty of copyright infringement. Of course, there is one simple way to deal with all of this:

**Use original material !! Use material that is licensed for Creative Commons !!**
I will provide you with several links to databases full of open-use material....

Also, please be aware that I will not accept assignments that you have completed for another class, even if the work in question fits the parameters of the given assignment. This will be treated as an act of academic dishonesty.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**
Reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities may be arranged by contacting the instructor of this course on an individual basis. This syllabus can be made available in an alternate format upon request by students with disabilities.

**Lab Fee:**
The Art Department charges a lab fee to be used for expendable materials used throughout the art facilities.

**ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFO:**
The Art Department Advisor is Meridith McMackin: [mmcmackin@fsu.edu](mailto:mmcmackin@fsu.edu)
The Chair of the Department is Dr. Joe Sanders 644-6474
Student Confirmation of Policies and Procedures:

(to be read, signed, detached and returned by the student)

I have read and understand the policies regarding assignments, attendance, academic integrity and late work.

Student Name ______________________________

Date __________________________