COURSE OUTLINE

Course Number  Course Title  Credits
DMA135        Digital Narrative  3

Hours:  Pre-requisites  Implementation
lecture/Lab/Other (1/4)  DMA 105 or divisional permission  Fall 2013

Catalog description:
Exploration of narrative art, its structure and approaches as it applies to time-based graphics. Students investigate narrative in a variety of formats -- from comics to animation to film editing and various "artistic" permutations in between -- with emphasis on current digital practices.

Required texts/other materials: To be purchased by student

16+ GB removable storage device
Sketch Pad/Book 9" X 12", 11" X 14", 14" X 17", 12" X 18" or 18" X 24"
Sketch tools/media: pencils, colored pencils, pens, and/or markers, etc.
Text as indicated by the instructor

Revision date: Fall 2013  Course coordinator: Sarah Sweeney, tel. x 3457, e-mail:
sweeneys@mccc.edu

Information resources:
Internet: As indicated by the instructor

Suggested Reading: [Available at the school library]
- Cinematic Storytelling by Jennifer Van Sijll
- The Animator’s Survival Kit, by Richard Williams, 2002
- How Video Works, 2nd Edition by Weise
- Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art, Scott McCloud
- Visual Storytelling: The Art and Technique, Tony Caputo
- First Cut: Conversations With Film Editors, Gabriella Oldham
- Making Movies Work: Thinking Like a Filmmaker, Jon Boorstin
- In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing, 2nd Edition, Walter Murch
- From Word to Image: Storyboarding and the Filmmaking Process, Marcie Begleiter
- Filmmaking: Narrative and Structural Techniques, Bob Foss
- The Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structures For Writers, 2nd Edition, Christopher Vogler

Other learning resources:
Class membership on www.lynda.com for software training modules used in the course
Course Goals:

The student will be able to:

1. Understand historical perspectives on narrative creation both before and after the digital revolution; (GE Goal 1,6,7, MCCC CS Goal A,B,D)
2. Understand basic narrative structure and technique; (GE Goal 1,6,7, MCCC CS Goal A,B,D)
3. Demonstrate how to plan and execute a time-based media project; (GE Goal 1,4, MCCC CS Goal A,B,D,E)
4. Implement storyboarding techniques as a planning tool in the design of time-based narratives; (GE Goal 4, MCCC CS Goal B,E)
5. Apply basic design principles, visual storytelling and cinematography techniques to create a digital narrative work of art; (GE Goal 4, MCCC CS Goal B,D,E)
6. Demonstrate usage of formal animation techniques such as, sequencing, staging and timing; (GE Goal 1,4, MCCC CS Goal A,B,D,E)
7. Apply industry standard software tools as they relate to the production of animation, motion graphics and video editing; (GE Goal 4, MCCC CS Goal B,D,E)

Course-specific General Education Knowledge Goals and Core Skills.

General Education Knowledge Goals
Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.
Goal 4. Technology. Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.
Goal 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.
Goal 7. History. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

MCCC Core Skills
Goal A. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.
Goal B. Critical Thinking and Problem-solving. Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.
Goal D. Information Literacy. Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.
Goal E. Computer Literacy. Students will use computers to access, analyze or present information, solve problems, and communicate with others.

Units of study in detail.

Unit I Digital Narrative Theory
Students will learn about narrative concepts for the creation of linear time-based media forms such as video/film, 2D animation and motion graphics. Elements of visual storytelling will be introduced including: context, character, conflict, plot, temporal and spatial staging.

Learning Objectives
The student will be able to...
Unit I

2D Animation

Students will learn how to create two-dimensional animation sequences using frame-by-frame animation and keyframing, (or tweening). Students will be introduced to vector based digital animation tools, such as Flash software, while learning basic animation principles including: squash and stretch, anticipation, staging, follow through, overlapping action, slow-out/slow-in, arcs, secondary action, timing, exaggeration and personality and appeal.

Learning Objectives
The student will be able to...

i. Create an effective written treatment for a digital narrative, including cinematic direction; (CG 1,2,4,6)
ii. Describe the principles of animation; (CG 1,5)
iii. Understand the fundamental principles of visual storytelling and cinematic construction; (CG 1,3,4,5,6)
iv. Understand historical perspectives on narrative creation both before and after the digital revolution; (CG 1)
v. Apply a common lexicon to digital narrative concepts; (CG 1,4)

Unit II

Short Film

Students will create a short digital film based on traditional ideas of storytelling such as a narrative arc, three-act structure, character, setting, point-of-view, etc. The project will explore the mechanics and aesthetics of filmmaking; with an emphasis on the editing process using standard industry software programs.

Learning Objectives
The student will be able to...

i. Create an effective written treatment for an animation, including direction; (CG 2,4,6)
ii. Create storyboards that represent primary action and narrative direction; (CG 2,3,4,5,6)
iii. Create static design compositions to define look and feel of animation project; (CG 2,3,4,6)
iv. Document the design process and development of the animation; (CG 2,5)
v. Develop rough animations; (CG 4,5,6,7)
vi. Refine elements into a final animation; (CG 4,5,6,7)
vii. Incorporate acquired sound files into a digital animation; (CG 4,5,6,7)
viii. Engage elements and principles of design to create motion graphics; (CG 6,7)
ix. Engage individual creative process; (CG 6)
x. Engage in critical assessment of students’ work; (CG 4,5,6,7)
xi. Use standard industry tools in 2D animation and editing;

Unit III

Short Film

Students will create a short digital film based on traditional ideas of storytelling such as a narrative arc, three-act structure, character, setting, point-of-view, etc. The project will explore the mechanics and aesthetics of filmmaking; with an emphasis on the editing process using standard industry software programs.

Learning Objectives
The student will be able to...

i. Construct an effective narrative film project; (CG 4,6)
ii. Create storyboards to define key cinematic moments in the digital film; (CG 3,4,6)
iii. Document the design process and development of the digital film; (CG 2)
iv. Incorporate acquired media elements for film narrative: photography, audio, public domain video footage, scanned images, etc.; (CG 2,7)
v. Create a rough cut digital film; (CG 2,4,6,7)
vi. Refine edit into a final cut of the digital film; (CG 2,4,6,7)

vii. Engage individual creative process; (CG 4,6)
viii. Engage in critical assessment of students’ work; (CG 1, 4, 6)
ix. Use standard industry software programs to edit digital audio and video files; (CG 2, 7)
x. Engage elements and principles of design to create design compositions; (CG 6)

Unit IV  
Motion Graphics
This project will explore contemporary motion graphic design. Techniques explored may include some or all of the following: frame-by-frame 2D animation, interpolated 2D animation, motion typography, cutout animation, stop motion, compositing, etc. Imagery may come from scanned images or drawings, digital type, vector objects, photographs, public domain video footage, live action video clips, etc. Students will assemble/composite a final visual effects film using standard industry software programs such as Adobe After Effects.

Learning Objectives
The student will be able to…

i. Conduct research to define a narrative context for a motion graphics project; (CG 1, 4, 6)
ii. Create storyboards to define key cinematic moments in the digital film; (CG 3, 4, 6)
iii. Document the design process and development of the project; (CG 2)
iv. Engage elements and principles of design to create design compositions; (CG 6)
v. Incorporate acquired media elements into motion graphic film: photography, audio, public domain video footage, scanned images, etc.; (CG 2, 7)
vi. Composite multiple media into a final digital cut of a digital film; (CG 7)
vii. Engage individual creative process; (CG 1, 4, 6)
viii. Engage in critical assessment of students’ work; (CG 1, 4, 6)
ix. Use standard industry software programs to edit digital audio and video files; (CG 2, 7)

Evaluation of student learning:

Attendance & Participation – 20% of grade
Since the course is largely experience-based, attendance is critical for student success. Students are expected to put in at least 4 - 6 hours per week of lab outside of class and to contribute to lectures, lab practices, discussions and critiques in class.

Projects & Assignments – 80% of grade
Instructional modes used: Tutorial-based assignments, lectures and laboratory instruction, project-based assignments with specifications and limitations set by the instructor, demonstrations by the instructor of professional software and systems, and discussions and critiques of student and professional work.

Unit 1: Digital Narrative Theory 20%
Unit 2: 2D Animation 20%
Unit 3: Short Film 20%
Unit 4: Motion Graphics 20%

Academic Integrity Statement:
Students are expected to comply with the college-wide requirements for academic integrity. Mercer County Community College is committed to Academic Integrity—the honest, fair, and continuing pursuit of knowledge, free from fraud or deception. This implies that students are expected to be responsible for their own work. Presenting another individual’s work as one’s own and receiving excessive help from another individual will qualify as a violation of Academic Integrity. The entire policy on Academic Integrity is located in the Student handbook and is found on the college website:
www.mccc.edu/admissions_policies_integrity.shtml

**Special Needs Accommodations**

Any student in this class who has special needs because of a disability is entitled to receive accommodations. Eligible students at Mercer County Community College are assured services under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you believe you are eligible for services, please contact Arlene Stinson, the Director of Academic Support Services. Mrs. Stinson can be reached at (609) 570-3525.