2D Art and Animation for Games
Course Syllabus – Fall 2017
New York University
Tisch School of the Arts
Mon & Wed. 6:20-9:00pm

Instructor:
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Overview

2D Art and Animation for Games is a 1-semester, 4-credit class that builds fundamental skills around the design and production of art assets for games. Through a series of individual design assignments, critiques, and exercises, students will explore concepts like art direction, color theory, animation principles, and UI design while building a working knowledge of prominent industry tools.

Credits: 4

Course Goals:
-   Develop an understanding of the visual designer's role in a game development context, as well as the tools and processes a visual designer might use.
-   Encourage a careful, critical eye toward visual design in a games context.
-   Learn fundamental methods of visual design and animation and apply them to the visual design of original gameplay concepts.

Prerequisites:
-   Students must have completed Intro to Visual Design or equivalent.

Requirements:
-   Students are expected to bring a laptop and drawing tablet to each class session.

Week-by-week Schedule

This class is structured around weekly design assignments and in-class critique sessions. Each class will consist of devoted critique time, lecture time, homework assignments, and exercises, with some in-class demonstrations of tools. Lab periods will mostly be reserved for tool demonstrations, lesson overflow, and structured work time.

UNIT 1 – ART & DESIGN FUNDAMENTALS

Week 1: Visual Research
    Topics: Class overview, Compiling Inspiration and Visual Research
    Lab: Intro to Photoshop

Week 2: Intro to Color Theory
    Topics: The Color Wheel & Traditional Color Schemes, Fundamental Do's and Don'ts
    Due: Mood Board

Week 3: Sprites 101
    Topics: Using Forms and Colors to communicate Behavior
    Due: Color Tests
    Lab: Pixel Art 101

Week 4: Character Design
    Topics: Body Language, Build, Silhouette, Fashion
    Due: Game Mockup - Sprites
    Lab: Designing Characters for Different Perspectives

Week 5: Environments
    Topics: World Design, Lighting, Separation
    Due: Original Character

Week 6: Style
    Topics: How Style Affects Feel and What Styles Afford
    Due: Game Mockup - Environment

UNIT 2 – ANIMATION FUNDAMENTALS

Week 7: Intro to Animation: Timing & Key-Framing
    Topics: Storyboarding, Frames, & Timelines
    Due: Re-Style

Week 8: Weight and Timing
    Topics: Key-Framing, Squash and Stretch, Easing
    Due: Final Storyboard
    Lab: Implementing Art in an Engine

Week 9: Character Animation I
        Topics: Arcs, Secondary Animation, Offsets, and Passes
        Due: Bouncing Ball

Week 10: Character Animation II
        Topics: Keyframing Complex Action, Anticipation, Follow-Through. Breaking the Rules.
        Due: Walk Cycles
        Lab: Key Action Breakdown

Week 11: The Face
        Topics: Facial animation
        Due: Action Animations
        Lab: Begin Final

Week 12: Effects Animation!
        Topics: Emphasizing Action and Creating Visual Interest

Week 13: The Title Screen
        Topics: Screenshake, Parallax, Hit Pausing
        Due: Effects

Week 14: Special Topics
        Topics: TBD

Week 15: Final Presentations
        Due: Final Project

Assignments

The core of this course is the weekly assignments and critique sessions. Each assignment will require students to come in with high resolution displayable versions of their work, and in many cases playable versions of re-skinned games. For animation assignments, students must bring isolated .gif or .mov exports of their animations, as well as playable versions of their games with the implemented artwork. Starting with the end of Unit 1, each assignment will build toward the complete visual design of a playable game. This completed game will take the place of a final project.

Grading

Evaluation of work

Each homework assignment will be evaluated with the following criteria:

· **Visual aesthetic.** Is the assignment solving the visual design problem in a way that seems appropriate for the project and for the designer's personal aesthetic? Does the project display a sophisticated visual sensibility?

· **Creativity.** Does the assignment display innovation and uniqueness? Does it show a creative imagination that does not solve the given design problem in an ordinary way?

· **Appropriate for the assignment.** Each project is a response to constraints given by the instructor. Has the project properly addressed these constraints? Has it built on the examples and discussions presented in class?

· **Presentation.** Are the assignments presented in a clear format so that the instructor and the other students can properly discuss and analyze it?

Students will be given grades based on a 100-point scale. Each assignment will be graded on a point scale, and these points will be added up to determine the final grade, according to the following:

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92-100 A
90-91  A-
88-89  B+
82-87  B
80-81  B-
       etc.
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The following are the components of the grade:

Participation in discussions and critiques	30
Weekly Assignments	40
Final Game	30
TOTAL	**100**

Late penalties

All assignments must be turned in on time. If an assignment is not turned in by the class for which it is due, its grade will drop by 20%. If it is a week or more late, its grade will drop by 50%.

Participation

The participation & peer grades portion of your grade is based on the following:
- Productive participation in group discussions and critiques
- Attendance

Attendance

The following is the attendance policy for all NYU Game Center classes:

Attending and arriving on time to all class sessions is required and expected. This includes all labs, recitations, and critiques. If you will be missing a class due to illness, or unavoidable personal circumstances, you must notify your professor in advance via email for the absence to be excused.

Unexcused absences and being late to class will lower your final grade. Three unexcused absences lower your final grade by a letter. Each subsequent unexcused absence will lower another letter grade. Two tardies will count as one unexcused absence. Arriving more than 15 minutes late to class will also count as an unexcused absence.

NYU STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as though it were your own. More specifically, plagiarism is to present as your own: A sequence of words quoted without quotation marks from another writer or a paraphrased passage from another writer's work or facts, ideas or images composed by someone else.

ACCESSIBILITY AT NYU

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212 998-4980 for further information.