

## George Mason University Course Syllabus

<b>Course Title:</b>	Computers in the Creative Arts
<b>Course Code/Section:</b>	AVT 180, Section 8
<b>Session/Year:</b>	Fall, 2007
<b>Meeting:</b>	Thursdays, 1:30–4:10 PM, FAB B208
<b>Professor:</b>	Jandos Rothstein
<b>Contact Info:</b>	jrothste@gmu.edu
<b>Class information:</b>	<a href="http://www.jandos.com/for_students">www.jandos.com/for students</a>
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesdays, 3:20–4:20, and by appointment

### Course Description

Computers in the Creative Arts will investigate and present current computer technologies with special attention and focus on artistic and design applications. Emphasis is placed on employing computers for creation and research. An overview of hardware, software, operating systems, peripherals, and 2D graphics will be covered. No previous computer experience is necessary.

Exploration of a range of computer applications will be stressed, and project work will incorporate skills acquired using these applications. We will focus on QuarkXpress, Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop, and may also look at web applications. We will draw upon GMU's extensive technological resources to explore new ways in which computers can assist the art-making process in a variety of disciplines.

This course fulfills the skills portion of the general education requirement in information technology. For more information on the mission of the General Education Program, visit [www.gmu.edu/departments/provost/gened/](http://www.gmu.edu/departments/provost/gened/) on the web or consult the course catalog.

### Objectives

This course seeks to prepare students to apply basic computer skills to the creative process in order to develop artistic applications with new technologies. Students will continue to develop aesthetic sensibility and use computer tools ethically for communicative and research purposes. While advanced expertise with any of the programs we look at comes only after a year or more of daily use, students will develop a good foundation for future learning and creation.

### Assignments and Projects

Projects and weekly assignments will be added to a digital portfolio stored on a USB Drive, portable hard drive, or CDs throughout the semester. Major projects will be due mid-term and at the end of the semester. Most projects will be critiqued in class. Throughout the semester, students will conduct creative research related to their projects.

If reading assignments are given, students should be prepared to discuss these assignments during class periods. There will be a mid-term written exam related to the history and terminology of computer art, as well as the project due at mid-term. Midterm projects must demonstrate an understanding of technical skills learned in the first half of the semester. The final project, due at the end of the semester will reflect the technical skills accumulated throughout the course.

### Required Texts

Adobe, Adobe Photoshop CS2 (or CS3) Classroom in a Book, Adobe Press, 2006.  
Adobe, Adobe Illustrator CS2 (or CS3) Classroom in a Book, Adobe Press, 2006.

## Supplies

Some sort of storage device is required. This may be in the form of a portable hard drive or USB drive. USB drives are less expensive, more durable, smaller, and easier to carry around than hard disks, but hold significantly less data. You can purchase a disk or USB drive on line, at Microcenter, CompUSA, or the computer store on campus. You should also have a supply of blank CDs (I recommend purchasing these on a spindle) for turning in projects.

## Computer Lab

The Computer Arts Lab in the Fine Arts Building will post the schedule of available hours shortly after classes begin. Additional Facilities are available on campus. The Star Lab is located on the second and third floor of the Johnson Center. For more information, visit the Star Lab's web site (<http://media.gmu.edu>). While there are a few Macs at the Star Lab, note that the Star Lab is primarily comprised of windows machines.

## Attendance Policy

This is a studio courses, which includes a substantial critique/discussion component and lab component. That means that your attendance is just as important as mine. Studios are, by their nature, dynamic educational environments. During critique periods; in the interaction of instructor and student on ongoing projects, the studio provides resources and learning opportunities that cannot be "made up" by other means. Therefore:

- Students are required to attend all class meetings, to arrive on time, and to stay for the duration of the class.
- Students arriving seven minutes or more late to class will be marked tardy. Students arriving 20 minutes or more late will be marked absent. Three tardy marks equals one absence. Students who leave before the class is dismissed will be marked absent.
- Students who are having difficulty with the attendance requirement may be asked to drop the class.
- Students who accumulate two or more absences will receive a reduced or failing grade.
- There are no excused absences.

## Student Evaluation/Methods of Assessment:

The quality of each project will be determined using the following criteria as appropriate:

- Evidence of having learned necessary computer skills
- Concept: Originality, creativity and effectiveness of the solution
- Aesthetics: Visual impact and beauty
- Presentation: Craftsmanship, effective use of materials

## Class and University Policies:

- All projects are due at the **beginning** of class on the date assigned. Late projects will be reduced one letter grade for each week late or portion thereof. After two weeks, projects will not be accepted. The final project is due on the last day of class. No extensions will be given. All projects must be turned in as both printouts and on a labeled CD in a resealable envelope. Do not turn in your thumb or hard drive.
- This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran's status, or physical ability.

- As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the Department of Art and Visual Technology adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).
- Students in this class are bound by the Honor Code, as stated in the George Mason University Catalog. The honor code requires that the work you do as an individual be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas. (This does not prohibit collaborative work when it is approved by the instructor.) Violations must be reported to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously. Using someone else's words or ideas without attribution is plagiarism, a very serious Honor Code offense. Plagiarism will also result in a failing grade.
- Students must be completely prepared for class to be considered present, ie. they must have all necessary supplies and computer files and all ongoing (ungraded) projects with them. Working on the design portion of projects on platforms and software other than Macintosh QuarkXpress is by permission of instructor only.
- If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.
- Students who are in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). The services of the Writing Center are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis.
- Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Students are responsible for the content of university and class communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.
- Cell phones and pagers must be turned off during class. The use of headphones is permitted during work periods.
- Students may redo work for a higher grade if the piece was originally turned in on time. Revisions must be a substantial reconsideration of the original—not merely a correction of errors. The deadline for revised work is the last day of class.

### Useful Information:

- **Open Studio Hours** AVT teaching studios are open to students for extended periods of time mornings, evenings and weekends whenever classes are not in progress. Policies, procedures and schedules for studio use are established by the AVT studio faculty and are posted in the studios.
- **ArtsBus** The dates for this fall's ArtsBus trips are SEPTEMBER 22, OCTOBER 20 and NOVEMBER 17. If you need ArtsBus credit for this semester, you **MUST** enroll in AVT 300 before September 11. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment. There will be **NO** exceptions. If you plan to go on multiple ArtsBus trips this term and wish to count them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300. Please go to the ArtsBus website: <http://artsbus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy.

- **Important Deadlines** Last Day to Add (Full-Semester Course) September 11, 2007  
 Last Day to Drop (Full-Semester Course) September 28, 2007  
 Elective Withdrawal Period (Full-Semester Course) September 29-October 26, 2007

Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for late adds (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the AVT office (or the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid processing). Requests for non-elective withdrawals and retroactive adds (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student's major is located. For AVT majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, Performing Arts Building A407.

**Course Outline** (Subject to change—this course will be broken into modules during which we will focus on the three principle programs we will study this semester. I will give you a complete module schedule as we begin each one.)

### **Week 1-3: QuarkXpress, Introduction to the computer**

- Week 1** Introduction to the Course • Mac/Lab Overview • Technical Lecture: Mac OS, Intro to Quark as a typesetting/art creation medium. • Creating documents, text boxes. **ASSIGNMENT 1:** Design a standard-sized one-color (black) text-only business card (2 x 3.5") envelope, and letterhead for yourself in Quark (it may be personal or for business). Due week 2.
- Week 2** Critique of letterhead project, • Controlling text: size, leading, tracking, tabs, picture boxes. **Assignment 2:** Using a phrase or slogan you like (it may be something you have written) create an 8.5 x 11 horizontal poster. The poster must be visually engaging even though you use only text.
- Week 3** Critique of poster project, • Creating multipage, multi-column documents, defining colors, master-pages. **Assignment 3:** Using a phrase or slogan you like (it may be something you have written) create an 8.5 x 11 horizontal poster. The poster must be visually engaging even though you use only text. Create a four-page (2 spread) 3 column layout using provided headline and deck, and jabbered to 50% text density. Leave one full page blank for future art.

### **Week 4–7: Photoshop**

- The Photoshop working space, advantages and disadvantages of Raster art, learning the tools, image creation and modification, defining colors, color spaces. Midterm project begun, which will incorporate Quark assignment 3.

### **Week 8–12: Illustrator**

- The Illustrator working space, advantages and disadvantages of vector art, learning the tools, Building simple shapes, Illustrator's text tools, importing, importing and auto-tracing images, exporting. Midterm project due.

### **Week 13–15: Synthesis, Intermediate Quark, Final**

- Produce a final project that incorporates all three programs studied. Final due last day of class.