ATCM 4316   Animation Lab I
Casey Johnson
Term: Spring 2025
Meeting Time: Tuesday 10:00 am - 12:45 pm
Room: ATC 3.913

Contact Info   Phone: 7523
Email: cjohnson@utdallas.edu

Course Modality and Expectations
Instructional Mode: Traditional
Expectations: Lectures will be given in class each week.

Covid-19 Guidelines and Resources
https://www.utdallas.edu/coronavirus/students/
https://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies

Course Description:
This course will take you through the process of producing a complete 3D animated short film from beginning to end. It is designed as a two-semester sequence in which you will work on a team as a specialist in one or more areas of the animation production pipeline. Topics will include Story and Concept Development, Character Design, Modeling, Texturing, Rigging, Animation, Lighting, Rendering, Compositing as well as Project Planning and Management.

Course Requirements:
Students must have permission to enroll in this course.

Course Structure:
Class sessions will consist of studio sessions, demonstrations, critiques, and class discussions focusing on aspects of the production project(s). The class format will take on a variety of styles as the subject dictates, and examples will be presented for discussion in lectures, videos and demonstrations. Attendance is required and students are expected to be participating and working in each and every class.

Course Objectives:
Through the successful completion of this course students will:
- Establish an understanding of the production pipeline for creating a 3D computer-animated short film
- Gain experience on a production team and develop an appreciation for what it means to be an integral part of a larger project
- Develop written and verbal communication skills for efficient goal completion across various teams
- Develop a new set of vocabulary of terms and concepts related to the creation and manipulation of computer graphics
- Establish a methodology for analyzing and problem solving as it relates to 3D computer-generated forms
- Continue to develop the ability to offer informed and constructive, technical and aesthetic critiques of the work of peers and of self
- Develop a practical understanding of the specific computers and software used in the course

Required Textbook and Materials:
No textbook is required. Note taking materials (notebook, pens, pencils, etc.), and access to a computer that has Python, a text editor, and Maya. Documents relevant to the class will be posted on box or e-learning. Cloud storage, a 100 GB jump drive, or portable hard drive is required.

Course Materials:
Documents relevant to the class will be posted on the network drive and in Team.

Grading Policy:
Students must demonstrate satisfactory achievement of course objectives through fulfillment of course assignments and by contributing to class discussions and critiques. Course assignments will require students to use software and equipment available at the ATEC computer labs. Quizzes will also be given. Grades will be presented via eLearning. Feedback on assignments will be placed on Box. Course evaluation will be based upon the following:
- Proficiency navigating Project Pipeline (Shotgun, Box.com, Discord; etc.)
- Meeting deadlines
- Lead evaluations
- Attendance

Points Required for Grade:
```
A   93 - 100
A- 90 - 92
B+ 87 - 89
B   83 - 86
B- 80 - 82
C+ 77 - 79
C   73 - 76
C- 70 - 72
D+ 67 - 69
D   63 - 66
D- 60 - 62
F   Below 60 is failing
```

Class Attendance:
All students are required to be on time and in attendance for each and every class. Two (2) absences are allowed as personal or sick leave for this semester. Students will receive one letter grade reduction for three (3) absences. Students who accumulate four (4) absences or more should withdrawal from the course due to four (4) absences resulting in a failing grade ("F ") for the course. If you are going to be late to a class, you must contact your production manager and your department lead so they know when you are joining. It is important to attend class on time. Persistent and reoccurring tardiness is disrespectful to the instructor and to your peers. Arriving to class more than 15 minutes late twice will be counted as one (1) absence. Every additional late arrival will result in one (1) absence. Students may leave early with instructor's permission; however, such occurrences should be very infrequent.

Class Participation and Classroom Citizenship:
Regular class participation is expected regardless of course modality. Students who fail to participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. A portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class. It also includes engaging in group or other activities during class that solicit your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures (and/or labs). Class participation is documented by faculty. Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to University requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Class Recordings
Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

The instructor may record meetings of this course. Any recordings will be available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. If the instructor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Technical Requirements

In addition to a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable a successful learning experience. Please review the important technical requirements on the Getting Started with eLearning webpage.

Course Access and Navigation

This course can be accessed using your UT Dallas NetID account on the eLearning website.

Please see the course access and navigation section of the Getting Started with eLearning webpage for more information.

To become familiar with the eLearning tool, please see the Student eLearning Tutorials webpage.

UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The eLearning Support Center includes a toll-free telephone number for immediate assistance (1-866-588-3192), email request service, and an online chat service.

Communication

This course utilizes online tools for interaction and communication. Some external communication tools such as regular email and a web conferencing tool may also be used during the semester. For more details, please visit the Student eLearning Tutorials webpage for video demonstrations on eLearning tools.

Student emails and discussion board messages will be answered within 3 working days under normal circumstances.

Distance Learning Student Resources

Online students have access to resources including the McDermott Library, Academic Advising, The Office of Student AccessAbility, and many others. Please see the eLearning Current Students webpage for more information.

Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties

The University is committed to providing a reliable learning management system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and also contact the online eLearning Help Desk. The instructor and the eLearning Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

Academic Support Resources

The information contained in the following link lists the University's academic support resources for all students. Please go to Academic Support Resources webpage for these policies.

Course Technical Platform and Software Worksheet

ATEC lab computers will be available via remote connection from your personal computer. These are timed connections that allow you to remotely connect to and use the ATEC Lab computers. More information on Remote Connection setup and procedures can be found on https://atecio.utdallas.edu. While remote connection is available, your experience will be more streamlined if you have a personal computer capable of running the software used in the course.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to UT Dallas Syllabus Policies webpage for these policies.