

Fall 2011 Roane State Community College

Advanced Computer Art
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class site/blog: www.rscocomputerart.blogspot.com

Suggested Text: Classroom in a book Photoshop/Illustrator

Required/Optional Materials:

-To transport, store, or archive your files and media, you should consider obtaining a portable USB keychain or jump drive and/or writeable CD's/DVD's.

-You can also use your personal account to temporarily store files/media.

Introduction & objectives: Your eyes and Brain, are your primary artistic tools you utilize to produce your art. The computer is an almost infinitely flexible tool with which you can render creative and aesthetically compelling artwork in many forms and in many ways, and we will explore avenues by which the computer can be used in your artistic pursuits. However, first must come the establishment of basic working skills in which all forms of art are grounded (color, composition, texture, form, line, space and perspective, etc). These working assets must be tightly linked to the creative potential you bring to any medium. When combined with the computer, exciting and powerful ways of representing your artistic ideas can be harnessed, and wonderful things can be achieved. But, remember, the computer is not a cure-all for poor traditional grounding in the artistic process. It really is nothing more than alternative forms of

paper, tubes of paint, brushes and pens, etc. The key is in technique, finesse and ideation. What you do with these tools can be dull or devastating, glory or garbage. It's up to you. Each one of us brings with us various artistic strengths and weaknesses. The computer will probably not hide your liabilities, but can accentuate your assets in new ways. My objective for the course is to open-up ways to explore artistic creation using new tools and media and real-world working strategies, while keeping a firm grip on basic technical and aesthetic concepts that should be applied at all times to what you do. The two somewhat contradictory

rules that apply are: “Go ahead, don’t be afraid” and “Watch out, proceed with caution”.

Take risks and experiment as much as possible; nothing will explode – **just remember to save your files often.**

Attendance: This is important, and part of showing commitment and a serious work attitude. As such, class attendance and participation can strongly influence your grade in the course, since it reflects your dedication and commitment to doing art. You will be expected to attend every class and arrive on time for each. You will be allowed a maximum of 3 unexcused absences.

Important, since instructions start when class starts. Arriving late disrupts the class and disrupts me!! If you make a habit of being over 5 minutes late for class, your grade will suffer. You are responsible for finding-out from fellow classmates what you missed and making sure you keep- up with instructions and assignments.

Grades: Aside from attendance and class participation, your performance will be evaluated by your ability to successfully complete a series of assigned tasks on time (as if I were a real client expecting a completed image). Mini-projects will be assigned as we progress through the course material. You are expected to complete all assignments. I will treat you as a responsible, mature person and will expect you to meet your commitments in a professional manner.

Course Outline: This is a generalized scheme, and not necessarily in the order given. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Basic intro on computer-based art; overview of methods and strategies; modes and paths of input and output
- Macintosh OS basics and file handling; intro to software/hardware, monitor calibration, etc.
- Styles, trends, modes, aesthetics: from primitive to postmodern; developing creative content
- Elements and principles of design and typography basics
- Essentials on pixel-based and vector-based art: color, resolution, layout, formats, and output; working with rulers, grids, guides, layers, etc
- Modes of getting art into the computer: scanning, digital cameras, and other art resources (e.g. web, stock art) for manipulation

- Working with a comprehensive (Adobe Illustrator) vector-based drawing program; fills, strokes, bezier curves, points & paths, blends and gradients, transformations (e.g. rotations, scaling), layers, typography & object composition and layout; output formats.
- Working with Adobe Photoshop, the most widely utilized digital painting (i.e. pixel-based) software program; from basic principles to more advanced methods, including: resolution and input/output format considerations using the tools (pencils, pens, brushes, gradients, etc) selecting, moving, cloning, and compositing objects and type principles of scanning; tonal range, color, contrast, levels, curves, manipulating and compositing text color spaces, calibration, and color control; image editing and correcting, scaling, cropping, and transforming objects layers, paths, and channels filtering, blending, opacity, masking, layer modes and effects, etc creating patterns, textures, custom brushes, backgrounds, output considerations and strategies; media and web-based media (intro to Adobe ImageReady)
- Export/import and file interchange methods between programs as a creative workflow
- Web-based graphics and presentation: working strategies; formats, optimization, compression, color; HTML basics; incorporating graphics and text into pages; using Adobe Image Ready to create image maps, optimized slices, functional rollovers and simple web animations
- The business of art: working with clients and service bureaus, copyright, ethics, portfolios, and presentation; real-world challenges and working strategies

Possible projects include:

- **Logo design** incorporating fundamentals of design concepts (e.g. composition, balance, harmony, rhythm), typography and understanding objective and subjective use of color, symbology.
- **Still life** and/or abstract composition done with vector art program; incorporates basic rules of perspective, proportion, light & shadow, volume.
- **Self-portrait:** representational work created on computer from sketch, manipulated in

Photoshop; based on rules of facial portraiture. Selection, painting and editing techniques

- **Image correction/accuracy** -- A sharp, tonally broad color-corrected and edited complex image imported via scanning.

- **Exercises in text** manipulation with stylizing and highlighting effects

- **Manipulation of a given color image** by converting to gray-scale, duotone, etc; colorizing a b/w image to highlight selective areas, etc

- **Textile design**; creating a patterned and textured swatch using both Photoshop and Illustrator, incorporating fundamentals and strategies for image collaging and compositing

- **Full page color print** containing multiple serial transformations (a la Andy Warhol) using a variety of color, blend, filtering, etc techniques of one or two scanned and composite main images (e.g. self-portrait and abstract design)

- **Layout design** for a computer graphical user interface (GUI) with title, navigation buttons/controls, labels, stylized background etc. Using ImageReady to enhance optimization and make navigation functional.

- **Functionally interactive webpage** with text, links, images, rollovers, animated GIF

Recommended reference books: These books are small (no added flab and filler), readable, packed with useful real-world information, and relatively inexpensive. They are very useful for daily work in digital art. Note: These books are now or will soon be available in recent editions for Adobe CS3 software. Look for the best prices online (e.g. Amazon, Barnes & Noble)

1. Adobe Illustrator; Visual Quickstart Guide; Weinmann & Lourekas; Peachpit Press Around Quite excellent for getting starting and advancing with Illustrator. Concise, affordable, and easy to understand and follow. Filled with useful techniques and tips and practical in scope. A valuable resource. Beginner through advanced-intermediate user.

2. Photoshop; Visual Quickstart Guide; Peachpit Press. Probably around \$20. Pretty good. Probably will get you started well, and covers most topics

briefly but usefully. Highly recommended. Beginner through advanced-intermediate user

3. Adobe Photoshop Studio Techniques; Ben Willmore; Adobe Press. Around \$40-45. Well written and organized. Cuts through technical jargon and explains things in practical terms. Literally packed with useful techniques and tips. Indispensable if you plan to do serious production work with Photoshop. Beginner through advanced.

4. HTML and XHTML for the World Wide Web; Visual Quickstart Guide; Elizabeth Castro; Peachpit Press. Compact and packed with step-by-step methods for creating a variety of media for the Web. Good information on adapting and optimizing images, and excellent primer on HTML basics and beyond. A best-selling primer for all things Internet to get you going and definitely worth the inexpensive price. Beginner through intermediate.

