



GDES116

Digital Tools for the Visual Arts

Professor Harry St.Ours
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Montgomery College, Maryland

 Distinguished Educator

Objectives

This course is a rigorous and intensive overview of the equipment and applications used by design professionals, including Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Premiere Pro, WordPress and more. It will provide students with an understanding of the digital tools used in the visual arts, while featuring practical, hands-on use of software for solving design applications problems.

Students will develop a fundamental knowledge of the tools and techniques most commonly used by contemporary artists and designers in the studio, and will learn the basics of working in a network environment, pixel and vector based applications, elements of typography, digital page layout, video editing, web design basics and legal issues facing the digital designer when accessing images and other material online.

Upon completion of the course students will be prepared for more advanced study in specific applications, as well as have command of the tools needed for survival in today's digital art and design studios.

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Course Topics

Introduction: Welcome. Syllabus, Artists & Apple: Why We Use Macs; Concise History of Computers in the Arts.

Lesson 1: Raster Design. Image Modes & File Formats; Selection Tool Essentials; Introduction to the Type Tool; Using FTP.

Lesson 2: Image Acquisition. Ethics of Copyright, Online Image Resources; Film, Slide & Flatbed Scanning, Digital Camera Images & other Legal Downloads with Attributions.

Lesson 3: Correction. Correction tools, Blur & Sharpen; Toning Tools, Dodge & Burn; Levels & Noise; Scratches & Tears; Filters & Clone Tool; Repairing Damaged Photos.

Lesson 4: Colorization. Color Modes and File Formats; Color Blend Modes; Color Adjustment Layers; Hue/Saturation and Color Balance; Colorizing Black and White Photos.

Lesson 5: Compositing. Photo Montage Design; Using Advanced Selection Tools; Advanced Photo Illustration Techniques, Mastering Quick Mask; Head and Shoulders Composite with Originals for Comparison.

Lesson 6: Shapes & Colors. Introduction to Illustrator and Object-Oriented Design; Understanding Paths and Shapes, Strokes and Fills; Shapes & Colors Templates.

Lesson 7: Points & Paths. Intermediate Illustrator, Mastering the Pen Tool; Photo Reference; Mesh Tool; Creating Vector Illustrations; Points & Paths Templates.

Lesson 8: Vector Typography. History of Typography, Typography Basics Using Vector Type Tools; Vector Type Illustrations.

Lesson 9: Bitmap Typography. Type Tools in Photoshop, Type Mask Tools, Using Filters; Bitmap Type Illustrations.

Lesson 10: Page Design. Layout for Print; Using Adobe InDesign; Understanding Placing & Modifying Images; Layout & Design Using Type Illustrations.

Lesson 11: Video Editing. Intro to Premiere Pro; Motion Media Basics; Dynamic Time-Based Productions; Export.

Lesson 12: Web Design. Web Design Basics with WordPress; Web Page Layout and Design; About HTML, Blogs and Other Online Resources.

Portfolio Development: Completion of Outstanding Work. Update of Existing Projects, Incomplete Projects or Projects Needing Help; Building a Professional Quality Portfolio.

Portfolio Submission: Final Thoughts. Preparing for Entering the Job Market; Design Career Success Strategies.



Evaluation

One-third of your final grade will be based on **Classwork**, which includes attendance & meeting deadlines. Each assignment is designed to lay a foundation for the next, so students are expected to attend every class. After unexcused absences exceed the number of classes per week, you may be dropped from the class.

Another one-third of the final grade is based on the average of your **Assignments** grades, which should demonstrate skillful & imaginative use of the media. Unexcused late assignments are generally reduced by one letter grade and may also affect your Classwork grade. Each of the assignments will be graded as follows: B- = 80-82; B = 83-86; B+ = 87-89. This works the same for As, Cs and Ds, as well.



The final one-third of the grade is based on a properly prepared **Final Portfolio**, which is to be submitted by the announced deadline. It will consist of all of the semester's work, improved or updated as necessary based on the grades you received and the comments of the instructor, if any. These three criteria will each be assigned a letter grade and will be averaged for the final grade. Montgomery College requires the assignment of a final "hard" letter grade, with no pluses or minuses, so therefore final grades of (for example) from 80 through 89 would all result in a grade of B.

Recommended Texts

There are no required texts for this course, however, the step-by-step tutorials I have provided constitute the equivalent of a free Open Educational Resource (OER) textbook which I wrote specifically as a review for this course. The lessons are available in PDF format on the Lessons page of our class Website and on our class Blackboard site. These comprehensive PDFs may prove to be a useful addition to your digital skills library as you explore this exciting field of digital art and design.

File Storage

If you don't have a cloud storage solution, you should consider getting a free account from Dropbox or a similar service. Typically you are given several GBs of free storage, so you can store or retrieve your important files anywhere you have Internet access. And removable media, like a flash drive, is highly recommended. For our projects we will use a cloud storage system.

Software Discounts

For this course, the college provides software accounts for the necessary Adobe and Microsoft apps you will need. But other discounts may be available to you, too. Also, visit the Apple Education Store for educational discounts on Apple hardware, which typically can save one hundred dollars or more over standard retail computer pricing.

Important Student Information Link

Students seeking or interested in a degree or a certificate in a program offered by the Department of Media Arts and Technologies must make an appointment with a full-time faculty advisor in the discipline of their choice for advising each semester. In addition to course requirements and objectives that are in this syllabus, MC has information on its web site (montgomerycollege.edu/admissions-registration/student-resources/syllabus-resource-list.html) to assist you in having a successful experience both inside and outside of the classroom. The link provides information and other resources to areas that pertain to the following: student behavior (student code of conduct), student e-mail, the tobacco free policy, withdraw and refund dates, disability support services, veteran services, how to access information on delayed openings and closings, how to register for the Montgomery College Alert System, and finally, how closings and delays can impact your classes. Please make sure that you obtain and read a copy of the current Student Handbook which contains the Student Code of Conduct. (montgomerycollege.edu/documents/policies-and-procedures/42001-student-code-of-conduct.pdf) It is important that you read and understand

this information. If you have any questions please bring them to your professor. As rules and regulations change they will be updated and you will be able to access them through the link. If any student would like a written copy of these policies and procedures, the professor would be happy to provide them. At Montgomery College, each and every student is expected to behave in ways which promote a teaching and learning atmosphere. Students have the right to learn; however, they do not have the right to interfere with the freedom of the faculty to teach, or the rights of other students to learn. Students will be treated respectfully in return for respectful behavior. All in-class discussions should be carried out in a way that keeps the classroom environment respectful of the rights of others. This means that, for example, students should not interrupt someone else who is talking regardless of whether that person is the instructor or another student. Students should not monopolize class time by repeatedly interrupting and asking questions in a manner which hinders the learning process of others. By registering for this class and staying in this class, you are indicating that you acknowledge and accept these policies.

