

WELCOME

There is the concrete technique of homo faber—man the maker—to which we are accustomed, and which poses the problems we have normally studied. There is also the technique, of a more or less spiritual order, which we call magic.

Jacques Ellul
The Technological Society, 1952
p 24

The superficies is a limitation of the body. And the limitation of a body is no part of that body. And the limitation of one body is that which begins another. That which is not part of any body is nothing. Nothing is that which fills no space.

Leonardo DaVinci
The Theory of the Art of Painting,
Circa 1500



Typography at its best is a visual form of language linking timelessness and time.

Robert Bringhurst
*The Elements of
Typographic Style*, 1992
p 17

The making comes to an end when its result is experienced as good—and that experience comes not by mere intellectual and outside judgement but in direct perception.

John Dewey
Art As Experience, 1934
p 49

COURSE DETAILS

Goals

To expose students to the field of motion graphics design and its disciplines.
To clarify how viewers of moving imagery perceive and experience time.
To help the student develop an aesthetic for visual kinetics.
To demonstrate technicalities involved with compositing digital video.
To cultivate a mature sensibility to criticism of design solutions.

Description

Balanced between theory and practice, this course is founded on the proposition that time behaves as a physical medium that can be “sculpted” in order to produce experiential and engaging moving imagery. We will review specific properties of time as foundational elements to the production of digital composite imagery. This includes a thorough examination of rhythm, pace, and duration. Readings for this portion of the course will introduce how time relates to us as experiential beings. The course investigates how and why image-making techniques are born and surveys the technological advancements made in this domain. Beyond this, readings explore how audiences interpret moving imagery and graphics. Topics here include typography, cognitive psychology and semiotics.

Students will be exposed to industrial tools and processes for crafting professional motion graphic and digital composite imagery. Software applications used for this course include Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, and Adobe AfterEffects. This course emphasizes that student work for assignments is underpinned by theory and guidelines discussed during class and found in readings. Students complete three assignments, and a final.

Expectations

Skills

You should have excellent digital file management skills and know either the Macintosh or Windows operating system. It is expected that you understand how to save, backup, and recall your work even when flaws arise. If you seek assistance in this regard, take it upon yourself to ask a fellow student for help. If you have absolutely no experience with Adobe Photoshop this course will prove to be a challenge. You should have some experience with digital video editing software for this course.

Performance

This course, as with any course, will take a good amount of time so please sharpen your time management skills. Attention to detail in your creative work is essential, and should not be disregarded. Readings should be completed on the scheduled day listed below as they act as a starting point for in-class discussions. A class is enjoyable precisely because many different perspectives on one topic can be heard, not just the teacher’s or a few student’s.

What You Will Need

From Within

A strong work ethic
An inquisitive mind
A positive attitude
Imagination
Dreams

From Outside

Course reading packet (Jenn’s on Guadalupe)
Course Text: *The Visual Story* by Bruce Block (University CO–OP)
Unruled process sketchbook
Backup media
Bevo Bucks for printing
Time

COURSE DETAILS CONTINUED

Readings & Exams

The course text provides fundamentals for understanding composition and motion. The course packet includes readings on theory of art practice, time, vision, and magic. These readings have been carefully selected with the purpose of helping you succeed in your creative endeavors. Please refer to the page in this syllabus detailing the schedule of reading assignments. For each reading assignment, you are required to post a short reading response to a paragraph excerpt that struck you as interesting (or confusing) to the course website. This will count towards your participation grade.

Two exams will be given for the whole course of study. The exams will draw from readings, lecture, and lab sessions. There is no opportunity to make up an exam if you miss it. Inform your instructor if you intend to be absent on the day of an exam. Please mark your calendars with the following dates.

Exam 1 Wednesday, March 5

Exam 2 Wednesday, April 23

Assignments

You will be required to turn in three assignments, and one final project. These will expose you to various problems motion graphic designers and digital composers face on a day-to-day basis. Use the readings to help inform the choices you make in working on your assignments. While each assignment has a distinct title, there are many possibilities they present to you, so use your imagination. All assignments must be delivered on an optical disc as well as posted to the studio server.

Many of the assignments require that you work on your own time—please be prepared to manage the steps to complete each assignment. All process sketches and notes for assignments should be recorded in your process notebook which count toward your assignment grade. You will have opportunities throughout the semester to work on your assignments during lab sessions.

Late assignments are accepted, but with penalty. Two points will be deducted from your evaluation grade for each day it is late. If you do not turn in an assignment on the day that it is due, you will receive a zero.

Attendance & Late Work

It is expected that you arrive to class on time. Missing class is generally frowned upon and reflects on your final grade. If you are absent for more than three consecutive class sessions without communicating with your instructor, it will be assumed that you have withdrawn from the course. This class emphasizes deadlines so please do your best to submit your assignments on time.

Grades

To the right is a breakdown of your grade in this course. It is advisable that you keep track of your grades in order to ensure your instructor does not miscalculate your final grade.

You will learn the details of each assignment in class and will get a sheet documenting its requirements.

Grades for assignments are based on documentation of your process, the quality of your work, and your creative solutions. If you do not turn in any work for an assignment on the day that it is due, you will get a zero for that assignment.

Grade Itemization

Attendance & Participation	10%
Exams (2)	20%
Assignment 1	15%
Assignment 2	15%
Assignment 3	15%
Final Project	25%
Total	100%

READING SCHEDULE

January 21

Packet	Pye, David. "The workmanship of risk and the workmanship of certainty" in <i>The Nature & Art of Workmanship</i> . Ellul, Jacques. "Primitive Technique" in <i>The Technological Society</i> . Bringhurst, Robert. Excerpt from <i>The Elements of Typographic Style</i> . Solomon, Martin. "The Power of Punctuation" in <i>The Idea of Design</i> .
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January 28

Packet	McCloud, Scott. Chapter 2 in <i>Understanding Comics</i> .
Text	Chapters 1 – 4

February 4

Packet	Kepes, Gyorgy. "Visual Representation" in <i>Language Of Vision</i> . Lightman, Alan. "25 April 1905" and "3 June 1905" in <i>Einstein's Dreams</i> . Brinkmann, Ron. "Time and Temporal Manipulation" in <i>The Art and Science of Digital Compositing</i> .
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February 11

Packet	Dewey, John. "Having An Experience" in <i>Art As Experience</i> . Brinkmann, Ron. "Basic Image Compositing" in <i>The Art and Science of Digital Compositing</i> .
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February 18

Packet	McCullough, Malcolm. "Tools" in <i>Abstracting Craft: The Practiced Digital Hand</i> . Dobbert, Tim. "2D Tracking" in Matchmoving in <i>The Invisible Art of Camera Tracking</i> .
Text	Chapters 7 & 8

February 25

Packet	Lewis, Mumford. "Art & The Symbol" in <i>Art and Technics</i> . Lewis, Mumford. "The Tool & The Object" in <i>Art and Technics</i> .
Text	Chapters 5 & 6

March 17

Packet	Brinkmann, Ron. "Matte Creation and Manipulation" in <i>The Art and Science of Digital Compositing</i> .
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March 24

Packet	Chion, Michel. "The Audiovisual Scene" in <i>Audio Vision</i> .
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March 31

Packet	Brinkmann, Ron. "Matte Creation and Manipulation" in <i>The Art and Science of Digital Compositing</i> .
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ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

February 6

Screening of *Kinetic Typography Assignment*.

This project challenges you to use creative visual composition and time-based sculpting to create a visually engaging motion graphics piece that is emotive and informative.

February 27

Screening of *Creative Matchmoving*

This project requires that you produce moving imagery that incorporates graphics that match the camera movement and angles from digital video footage that you capture with a camera.

April 2

Screening of *Transitional*

This project requires that you develop a significantly interesting and mesmerizing transition between two shot. The actual transition should be longer than your typical dissolve or color dip.

May 8

Screening of *Trailer or Title Sequence Assignment*.

Pulling from techniques learned in class and from your own experimentation, this project challenges you to create a motion picture trailer to an existing film of any genre, or to create a title sequence for a fictional narrative or a narrative currently in production.

LECTURE TOPICS

- Introduction to course, syllabus, and classmates
- Theories of making
- Framing, composition, the visual object
- History and development of magic
- The time canvas, units of time, cognition
- Kinetic typography
- Tempo and rhythm in 2D space
- Information design, lower thirds overlay, network IDs and endtags
- Digital image compositing fundamentals, transfer mode algebra
- Computer generated mattes vs. Photographed mattes
- The alpha channel: historical development and conceptual model
- Designing the visual effect
- Workflow for the digital compositor
- Post production industry structure
- Getting a job after Radio–Television–Film

The University of Texas at Austin
College Of Communication
RTF 344M VISUAL EFFECTS & MOTION GRAPHICS
Unique Number 08040
Mondays & Wednesday 1:00–2:30PM

Dr. Arie Stavchansky, Lecturer
ariestudents@sbcglobal.net | CMA 7.236 | Office Hours TBA
Course Website
<http://courses.utexas.edu>

UNIVERSITY POLICY

Accommodations

At the beginning of the semester, students with disabilities who need special accommodations should notify the instructor by presenting a letter prepared by the Services for Students with Disabilities Office. To ensure that the most appropriate accommodations can be provided, students should contact the SSD Office at 471-6259 or 471-4641 TTY.

Scholastic Dishonesty

The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. For more information on scholastic dishonesty, please visit the Student Judicial services Web site at <http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>.

Undergraduate Writing Center

The Undergraduate Writing Center, located in the FAC 211, phone 471-6222, offers individualized assistance to students who want to improve their writing skills. There is no charge, and students may come in on a drop-in or appointment basis.

Notice

Dates appearing in schedules are subject to change on given notice by the instructor.

The University of Texas at Austin
College Of Communication
RTF 344M VISUAL EFFECTS & MOTION GRAPHICS

Unique Number 08040
Mondays & Wednesday 1:00–2:30PM

Dr. Arie Stavchansky, Lecturer
ariestudents@sbcglobal.net | CMA 7.236 | Office Hours TBA

Course Website
<http://courses.utexas.edu>

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Requirements

In order to help me gauge the skill set of this class and to help me get to know you better, please take the time to fill out this questionnaire. Please detach this sheet from your syllabus and turn it in to me at the end of the class period. Thank you.

Name _____

Major _____

Classification _____

Email _____

Age _____

Where have you seen some recent motion graphics work, and what did you enjoy about it?

Have you ever used Adobe Photoshop or Adobe AfterEffects. If so, what did you use them for?

Have you ever worked with or created vector graphics?

Have you superimposed graphical imagery or text over live action video? If so, what software did you use?

What do you hope to gain from this course of study?

Which film directors do you like?

Where do you see yourself in the next five to ten years?