GAME 320- Digital Painting for Games
3 Credits, Fall 2018

Instructor Name: Professor Gregory Grimsby
Meeting Time: Thursday 1:30PM – 4:10PM
Classroom: Fairfax Campus, Art and Design Building, Room 2002
Campus Office: Fairfax Campus, Art and Design Building, Room 2021
Campus Office Hours: Thursday 12:00PM to 1:00 PM, or by appointment: Friday 1:30PM-2:00PM
Office Phone #: 703-993-5733
Email: ggrimsby@gmu.edu

Prerequisites (recommended)
- GAME 232 with a ‘C’ grade or better.
- AVT 323 (Drawing II) or AVT 333 (Painting II)

Course description:
Students develop observational, sketching, and rendering skills in the digital medium. Students practice digital painting from reference and imagination as they create convincing game surfaces and simple concept drawings. This course is an intermediate course for students with some traditional drawing skills and familiarity with Photoshop.

Objectives
Students who complete this course will be able to:
1. Demonstrate a consistent and effective digital imaging process.
2. Render detailed, hand-painted textures using digital painting techniques
3. Digital paint convincing lighting and shadow.
4. Digital paint convincing form and material.
5. Adapt their traditional drawing and painting skills to the digital environment.
6. Critique and analyze their own digital art and the works of others in an articulate and discerning fashion.

Course Structure
Learning Activities include the following:
1. In-class lectures
2. In-class tutorials and exercises
3. Online Video tutorials
4. Online Video lectures
5. Online Practice exercises
6. Individual assignments

This course meets each scheduled week of GMU's instructional calendar. See the Course Schedule for a list of topics and assignments. Online materials are provided via the Blackboard Learning Management system (Bb) housed in the MyMason portal. Exercises and tutorials will improve your rendering skills and observational drawing using Photoshop and Wacom tablets. Group critiques will provide a forum to discuss student work.

Contacting the Professor
The primary method of contacting the professor outside of class will be via email. Students can expect a response within 24 hours, except for during holidays, which will delay responses until the next class day. Responses will not come after 10PM, nor before 9AM.
Students can visit during my campus office hours, but an appointment is suggested as I tend to get queued up.

If you are having trouble with a file, be prepared upon my request, to send it .ZIP or .RAR archived to me via email, so I can debug any issues. Additionally, the best method for helping you may be to connect via Blackboard Collaborate and for you to share your screen.
Expectations

Course Week:
Class will meet each scheduled week of GMU's academic calendar.

Log-in Frequency:
Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least twice times per week.

Participation:
Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.

Technical Competence:
Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.

Technical Issues:
Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.

Workload:
Please be aware that this course is not self-paced. Students are expected to meet specific deadlines and due dates listed in the Class Schedule section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.

Instructor Support:
Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

Etiquette:
The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words. Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

Accommodations:
Learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Assessment and Grading:

Assignments (100 pts each)
Students will be responsible for several assignments. These assignments are designed to provide dedicated practice in specific areas and allow for assessment of skill growth. It is the students’ responsibility to refer to Blackboard to see the exact date and time assignments are due.

Final Project (150 pts)
Students will create and submit a completed final project. Specifications will be given in Blackboard. The final project will take more time and effort than a typical assignment. Plan accordingly.

Classroom Participation (50 pts)
Students are expected to actively engage in class discussions, answer questions when prompted, and in general, add to the collective dialogue.

Final Exam
There is no final exam in this course. The capstone Assignment replaces it.
Grading Scale
Specific grading criteria for each graded work is given in Blackboard.

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

- 97%+ = A+
- 96-93% = A
- 92-90% = A-
- 89-87% = B+
- 86-83% = B
- 82-80% = B-
- 79-77% = C+
- 76-73% = C
- 72-70% = C-
- 69-60% = D
- <60% = F

Failure to turn in a Final Project will result in a grade of ‘F’ for the course, regardless of the student’s point total, as this project replaces the final exam.

!!Note that after points are totaled, the instructor may adjust a student’s final grade to better reflect their accomplishments.

Late Work and Make-up Policy
Late work is only accepted at the instructor’s discretion, and a deduction will be applied to the grade in most situations. Failure to turn in work on time will result in a 0 for the assignment. Meeting deadlines is one of the most important aspects of art production. Please pay careful attention to the DUE DATE & TIME for each assignment. DO NOT PROcrastinate!!!

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from finishing an assignment, the student must contact the instructor BEFORE the assignment is due.

Attendance
Attendance is mandatory. Unexcused absences reduce a student’s final grade using the chart below. Two tardies equal one absence. Email the instructor if you know you will be missing class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days Absent</th>
<th>Deduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2</td>
<td>No deduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1 letter grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-2 letter grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>Grade of ‘F’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each class is a building block for the next. Absent students miss important material and typically do not do well in this course. The video tutorials do not replace the lectures but supplement them. If you have to miss class, you are responsible for making up the work and completing the assignments on time.

Resources
A traditional textbook is not used in this course. Instead, students will use online resources posted at Blackboard as their study material. Blackboard materials are meant to augment class lectures, not replace them and ARE NOT a viable alternative to attending class.

Game Lab
In the Art and Design building, room 2002 (subject to change) is a monitored computer lab available outside of class hours for students to work on their projects. Hours are posted on the door and on the program website:

Students will need at least 8 hours outside of class each week to complete coursework.
**Required Class Material:**

**Software Needed:**
The software below is needed in this course. It is installed on all class and game lab computers. Students do not need to acquire this software IF they are able to use the lab to complete assignments

- Web browser (See Blackboard Support for supported web browsers)
- Blackboard Courses (Log into http://mymason.gmu.edu, select the Courses Tab)
- Blackboard Collaborate (select from the course menu)
- 3ds max 2018 (student version available at [http://students.autodesk.com](http://students.autodesk.com))
- Zip or Rar archive program
- Photoshop (no free version available). View [https://creative.adobe.com/plans](https://creative.adobe.com/plans) to see payment options for Photoshop. Check under the ‘students’ tab. Adobe offers a $10 month to month “Photography” plan for students.
- Online backup, aka Dropbox.

**Hardware Needed:**

- A Windows computer with at least 8 GB of RAM and to a fast, reliable broadband Internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL).
- Wacom tablet (or quality pressure sensitive equivalent). Students will need a tablet to the best work possible on the texturing assignments. The entry-level Wacom Bamboo priced from $70 and up. The intuos 5 small is a significant improvement, but more costly at $250. Having a tablet is a must for any student serious about making game art.
- Computer speakers or headphones to listen to recorded content.

**Textbook Required:**

- None

**How to Be Successful in this Course**

Every 3D model represents a puzzle. This class teaches students how to approach and solve these challenges. Modeling is heavy on problem solving and process and light on rote memorization. Students who excel in this course are the ones who practice diligently. Additionally, consider the following:

- View and attempt all the video tutorials on the website. Don’t just do the graded assignments.
- Pursue additional help on the internet, aka Google, Youtube, Autodesk, etc.
- Put in the time. You cannot cram your way through this course.
- Attend every session of class.
- Do not procrastinate on your projects.
- Consider taking this course later or adjusting your schedule if you are on credit hour overload or if you are taking other time-consuming classes (like studio art classes).

**GMU Honor Code:**

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. GMU has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.
Disability Accommodations

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, http://ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Privacy

Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See http://masonlive.gmu.edu for more information.