George Mason University
College of Visual and Performing Arts
Computer Game Design
V1.0

GAME 320 Digital Painting for Games
3 Credits, Fall 2019

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

Prerequisites: GAME 231; AVT 323 or AVT 333

*Note: This syllabus may change according to class needs. Students will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason e-mail and/or through Blackboard.

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.

Course Structure
Learning Activities include the following:
1. Video tutorials
2. Video lectures
3. Critiques
4. Practice exercises
5. Individual assignments

This course will be delivered face to face with learning materials and assignments provided online using the Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name and email password.

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.

Technical Requirements
To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course. Please be sure that you have access to Blackboard and that your GMU email account is active and not over quota.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
**Required Class Material:**

**Software Needed:**
The software below is needed in this course.
- Web browser (See Blackboard Support for supported web browsers)
- Blackboard Courses (Log into http://mymason.gmu.edu, select the Courses Tab)
- 3ds max 2019 (student version available at http://students.autodesk.com)
- Zip or Rar archive program
- Photoshop (no free version available). View https://creative.adobe.com/plans to see payment options for Photoshop. Check under the ‘students’ tab. Adobe offers a $10 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 do the best work possible on the texturing assignments. The entry-level Wacom Bamboo is 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. Consider a tablet with a screen for the best drawing experience. XP-Pen and Huion make inexpensive drawing screens.
- Computer speakers or headphones to listen to recorded content.

**Textbook Required:**
- None

**Contacting the Professor**
The primary method of contacting the professor 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.

Students may also be able to reach me on our class Discord. See Blackboard for a link to the Discord. Discord is an online social media app designed for gamers, and works great for us.

**Expectations**

**Course Week:**
Each course week will start on Monday, and finish on Sunday, 11:59PM.

**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. In addition, students must log-in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings.

**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.

Netiquette:
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:
Online learners who require effective accommodations to ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Screen-Sharing:
There are some class activities that require you to share your screen with me via Blackboard Collaborate. It is your responsibility to make sure you protect your privacy and the sensitivity of others. Keep your operating system desktop free of passwords or inappropriate imagery.

Assessment and Grading:

Assignments (100 points each, 600 points total)
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.

Capstone Assignment (150 points, 150 points total)
Students will create and submit and a completed “capstone” project. Specifications will be given in Blackboard. The capstone project will take more time and effort than a typical assignment. Plan accordingly.

Class Participation (100 points total)*
Students are expected to complete practice exercises we do in class. These prepare you for the assignments. Participation will be tracked by the professor for each student. Show up to class. Do the exercises. Don’t sleep in class. Get credit. Poor attendance or failing to apply yourself to the exercises will result in a reduced participation grade in proportion with the deficiency.
**Extra Credit (to be determined)**

Total points in the course: **850 points**
*It is possible, though not likely, that the total points may change.

**Grading Criteria**

Specific grading criteria for each graded work is given in Blackboard.

**Grading Scale**

Assignments, the final project, and your course grade use the letter grade scale below. The percentage is derived from points earned out of points available.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97%+</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>96-93%</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>92-90%</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>69-60%</td>
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<td>&lt;60%</td>
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**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 PROCRUSTINATE!!!**

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

**Course Schedule**

A schedule for the course is given in Blackboard. Follow the SCHEDULE link in the left sidebar.

**The Discord**

Students are highly recommended to join the class Discord server. Students are able to help each other and receive help from the professor as well. In previous semesters, students have rated the Discord as very helpful to them in the class. Students are expected to follow the guidelines posted on the Discord for appropriate, collegial behavior.

**Academic integrity:**

This course will be conducted in accordance with the GMU Honor Code, and all students are expected to abide by it. The GMU Honor Code, as found in the University Catalog, is as follows: To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work. Details concerning the university’s Honor System and Code can be found in the University Catalog (accessible online at the above link).

If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor or utilize the GMU writing center.

Students have submitted plagiarized work to me every semester. Don’t be one of those students. Its not worth it.
Disability Accommodations

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

Privacy

George Mason University strives to fully comply with FERPA by protecting the privacy of student records and judiciously evaluating requests for release of information from those records. Please see George Mason University’s student privacy policy https://registrar.gmu.edu/students/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.