

DD 443 Character Design

Fall 2018 School of Art & Design, New Jersey Institute of Technology

W:1130AM - 230PM

Instructor: Jessica Ross

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Course Description

This course is focused on the creation and design of characters for 2-D mediums such as comics, 2-D video games, model sheets for 3-D creation, and concept art. Students will gain a strong ability to create both humanoid and creature based characters by using a variety of skill sets. Basic anatomy, illustrating age, acting (through characters), prop and costume design, are a few of these skill sets needed for strong character design. Students will also learn pre-production tools such as reference gathering, concept sketches, and mood boards.

Course Objectives

Creating personality Rendering Cloth Anatomy, Perspective Twinning Silhouette Styles /Genres Drawing Skills Intro to Portraiture Character Design History Prop and Costume Design

Required Materials:

Sketchbook Mechanical Pencil and Leads 18" Cork back ruler Intuos Pen – This course is taught in a computer lab with Cintiq Touch monitors, and so it is primarily a digital course. For those who are perusing digital illustration or animation careers, an Intuos pen and tablet are worthwhile investments that you will eventually be required to own. The Intuos 5 Grip Pen is the more popular and widely used in this field.

<http://www.wacom.com/en/us/>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Required Texts:

Creative Character Design by Bryan Tillman (Focal Press; 1 edition (June 15, 2011)

Creating Characters with Personality: For Film, TV, Animation, Video Games, and Graphic Novels Tom Bancroft (Author), Glen Keane (Introduction) Watson-Guptill (February 1, 2006)

Character Mentor: Learn by Example to Use Expressions, Poses, and Staging to Bring Your Characters to Life, Tom Bancroft, Focal Press; 1 edition (April 24, 2012)

Suggested Texts:

Facial Expressions: A Visual Reference for Artists by Mark Simon Watson-Guptill; First Printing edition (June 1, 2005)

Character Development And Storytelling For Games Paperback by Lee Sheldon, Cengage Learning PTR; 2 edition (April 3, 2013)

Digital Character Design and Painting (Charles River Media Graphics) by Don Seegmiller, Delmar Thomson Learning (January 23, 2003)

Exploring Character Design (Design Exploration Series) by Kevin Hedgpeth, Stephen Missal, Cengage

Learning; 1 edition (October 20, 2005)

Better Game Characters by Design: A Psychological Approach (The Morgan Kaufmann Series in Interactive 3d Technology) by Katherine Isbister (Author), Tim Schafer (Foreword), CRC Press (June 14, 2006)

Class Policies

Assignments: Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Assignments that are not clearly labeled will not be accepted or graded. Late homework will be graded down one letter grade for every class late.

Academic Warning: Students who do not complete and submit assignments on time and to a satisfactory standard will fail the class. It is the student responsibility to obtain missed assignments from other classmates and make up work in time for the next class.

Data Backups: You are expected to keep multiple backups of all course data and to have your current project files available at all times during class time. You are encouraged to keep a cloud storage account in addition to a physical backup.

Lab Policies: No food or drink is allowed in the computer lab. Lab door codes are to be kept private within the roster of enrolled students. Lab projectors and speakers are only for instructor use. You are expected to use good judgement in setting lengthy rendering tasks using lab facilities. Failure to adhere to these policies can result in your being locked out of the labs.

Academic Warning: Students who do not complete and submit assignments on time and to a satisfactory standard will fail the class. It is the student responsibility to obtain missed assignments from other classmates and make up work in time for the next class.

Class Policies: Cell phones, email, music players, social networking and music streaming software should not be used during class.

Grading

The following factors will be considered when assigning your grade:

A. Ability to intellectually engage the material investigated in the course.

Students are to thoughtfully engage the material presented in readings, presentations and discussions. Responses to questions should be directly and thoughtful related to topics investigated in the assignment.

B. Communication.

The ability to communicate ideas and concepts to others. This includes written, verbal, and visual communication skills. Outside critics may be brought in at the end of each project to review your work in an open forum environment. These presentations should be considered "client presentations" and should be presented with a level of professionalism consistent with your work.

C. Independent thinking.

Independent thinking will be evaluated and will be based on the ideas and thoughts developed on an independent basis by the student. Depth of creative thought is primary to the independent thinking evaluation. Independent thinking must be clearly demonstrated in all aspects of the course including verbal participation in the classroom.

D. Professional Attitude.

Students are to express and articulate clearly their view toward the topics in this course in a method which reflects the quality of a professional in the field of design. It is the ethical responsibility of the student to support the learning community in this course in a positive and constructive manner. Maintaining a positive

learning community is parallel to expectations one will experience in supporting a positive work environment after graduation.

Professional attitude includes, but is not limited to, the ability to maintain and contribute to a positive learning environment, professional attitude towards classmates, guests, and the instructor. To receive a positive evaluation, professional attitude must be clearly demonstrated on a consistent and daily basis. Do not take this portion of the course for granted--you are expected to demonstrate professional maturation processes within the course. The ability to receive and give critical feedback, respond to challenging situations with a positive attitude, and support an excellent working studio environment are all essential to receiving high marks in professional attitude evaluations.

The grade breakdown for this course is as follows:

20% Class Participation 20% Assignment 1: Character Design Research Paper 20% Assignment 2: Cartoon Character 20% Assignment 3: Non Human Character 20% Assignment 4: Human Character

NJIT uses the following grades:

A/4.0 (superior) B+/3.5 (excellent) B/3.0 (very good) C+/2.5 (good) C/2.0 (acceptable) D/1.0 (minimum) F/0.0 (inadequate).

Kepler

Project grading is not officially applied to student standing until project deliverables have been uploaded in the proper format to the Kepler system. Failure to upload work to Kepler will result in an F for the course.

ATTENDANCE POLICY, ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with either freshman or sophomore standing also have an attendance requirement overlaid on the grading criteria. No more than three unexcused absences are permitted without a grade reduction. Each unexcused absence above the three (starting with the fourth) will result in a grade reduction of 1 for the semester. In other words, four absences would result in a maximum grade of B (assuming everything done is of "A" quality), five absences would result in a maximum grade of "C", six in a maximum grade of "D", etc. Students do NOT receive extensions for submission of work due to any unexcused absences. Acceptance of late work is at the discretion of the individual instructor. Absences for illness in order to be excused MUST be accompanied by documentation from professional medical personnel who are NOT members of your family. Since religious holidays are known in advance, students who expect to be absent due to religious holidays must notify their instructor by the second week of class.

NJIT and instructors will endeavor to make any accommodations required and necessary for the success of students with disabilities. However, in order to receive accommodations disabilities MUST be documented with the NJIT Disability Office AND notification of request for accommodation must be made to the instructor by the second week of class. No accommodations can be granted "after the fact" unless due to a situation (injury/illness/etc.) that occurs or is documented during the semester. In those instances accommodations will commence upon notification or observation of the disability.

Weekly Outline

Week 1 Course Introduction, History of character design

Week 2 Cartoon Character Survey Part One

Techniques Part One Reading 1

Week 3 Cartoon Character Survey Part Two

Techniques Part Two Reading 2

Week 4 Assignment 1 due

Reading 3

Week 5 Anatomy Part One

Reading 4

Week 6 Anatomy Part Two

Reading 5

Week 7 Techniques Part Three

Reading 6

Week 8 Assignment 2 due

Week 9 Screenings

Week 10 Anatomy Part Three

Week 11 Techniques Part Four

Week 12 Assignment 3 Due

Week 13 Workshop

Week 14 Workshop

Week 15 Course wrap up

Assignment 4 due

Assignment 1

Goals: Document a historic character designer in broadcast, feature, or gaming design.

Task: Write a six page research paper documenting a character designer who you admire. Include specific information regarding:

- How and where your character designer got his/her start?
- What was his/her greatest impact within the field of character design and production?
- What characters did your character designer create?
- What is it about this character designer that influences your pursuit of a career in this field?

Your paper must cite a minimum of three published books or periodical articles.

Deliverables: 1 Multi-Page PDF File including all research.

Schedule: Week 4

Assignment 2

Goals: Create an appropriate, cartoon character.

Task: Using the representational techniques studied thus far in this course, design a cartoon character based

on an existing animal and word combination. Examples of these include: Wacky Rabbit, Angry Bear, Curious Woodpecker.

Develop a complete character sheet, a two page backstory and two sheets of animated pose studies. All drawings must be colored and comparable in design to the example documents shown in class.

Deliverables:

3 Final Artwork Boards 1 Multi-Page PDF File: Include research, process images and final images.

Schedule: Week 8

Assignment 3

Goals: Create an appropriate, detailed non human character within the provided text.

Task: Using the short text provided as a starting point, develop and document a non human character. This may take the form of any existing or historic animal family.

Develop a complete character sheet, a two page backstory and two sheets of animated pose studies. All drawings must be colored and comparable in design to the example documents shown in class.

Develop a two page storyline incorporating your character into the world described in the provided text.

Deliverables: 3 Final Artwork Boards 1 Multi-Page PDF File: Include research, process images and final images.

Schedule: Week 12

Assignment 4

Goals: Create an appropriate, detailed human character within a text of your choice. Task: Using your text as a starting point, develop and document an anatomically correct human character.

Develop a complete character sheet, a two page backstory and two sheets of animated pose studies. All drawings must be colored and comparable in design to the example documents shown in class.

Develop a two page storyline incorporating your character into the world described in the text.

Deliverables: 3 Final Artwork Boards 1 Multi-Page PDF File: Include research, process images and final images.