**FIL 4703  
Visual Design for Film & Animation**

**Spring 2014, MW 1:00-2:50  
ES401**

**Asst. Professor Brad Lewter**

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Office hours by appointment

LA 412, Davie Campus; M 3 - 7, W 3 - 5 pm

**Course Description for FIL 4703 Visual Design for Film & Animation:**

This course is an exploration of visual design methodologies for use in the planning of a live action or animated film. This will include the analysis of cinematography, staging, shot composition, character & environmental design, story development, narrative structures, storyboard drafting, and animatic editing. The course will involve a great deal of sketching and drafting, regardless of preconceived ability. The primary software utilized for this course will be Photoshop and AfterEffects.

**Course Outcomes:**

Students will produce a number of short narrative and design projects utilizing traditional drafting and visual design tools. Emphasis will be placed on the effectiveness of visual narratives and the manner of presentation. By the end of the course, students should have a working understanding of visual design on which they may expand specialized skill sets.

**Objectives:**

Students will learn the techniques and theory behind the crafting of effective visual narratives. Through engagement in the course material, students should develop a thorough understanding of the technical and aesthetic issues surrounding visual design in both live action and animation applications. Student work should demonstrate an understanding of the course content and ultimately provide the student with examples of work for a digital art portfolio.

**Required Books:**

***Sketchbook***

By You!

**Recommended Books:**

***Story***

By Robert McKee

ISBN: 0-571-20228-4

***The Writer’s Journey***

By Chris Vogler  
 ISBN: 978-1932907360

***Film Directing Shot by Shot***

By Steven D. Katz

ISBN: 978-0941188104

***Figure Drawing for All it’s Worth***

By Andrew Loomis

ISBN: 978-0857680983

**Course Length:**

16 Weeks

**Credit Hours:**

4

**Prerequisites:**

C or better in DIG 3110 (Fund. of Multimedia), DIG 3305C (Fund. of 3D Comp. Animation), or RTV 3260 (Video Production)

**Recommended Prerequisites:**

Drawing II - Figure Drawing ART 2330C

**Instructional Methods:**

The material for this course will be taught through a series of lectures and hands on exercises. There may also be an occasional fieldtrip.

**Explanation of Assignments:**

This course will consist of a number of narrative and visual design exercises, the development of a short narrative concept, and the execution of that narrative in the form of storyboards, an animatic, and a visual design portfolio. Research materials (reference photos, brainstorming, etc) may be required before initiating an assignment and will be factored into that assignment’s final grade. Frequently, we will look at the updates of each assignment through formal critiques. As a group, we will analyze the progress and offer insight and suggestions from the perspective of "informed, fresh eyes". Participation during your and your classmates' work will be assessed in your participation grade for the semester. In addition to projects and quizzes, sketchbook checks will occur at my discretion.

Grading for this class will break down as follows:

Sketchbook 10%

Participation 20%

Assignment 1 10%

Assignment 2 10%

Assignment 3 10%

Assignment 4 40%

**Sketchbook:**

You are required to maintain a sketchbook in any format with which you feel comfortable (from 3" x 5" Moleskine to 11" x 17" sketchbook). However, you will be required to have sufficient space in said notebook each class for critique notes and/or conceptual sketches. Any work in your sketchbook due for critique must be photographed or scanned for display on the projector. If you run out of room you are required to bring an additional sketchbook. These notebooks may be collected at my discretion and will be evaluated based on individual diligence in planning of work and documentation of critique.

**Grading Legend:**

93-100 % A

90-92.9 % A-

88-89.9 % B+

83-87.9 % B

80-82.9 % B-

78-79.9 % C+

73-77.9 % C

70-72.9 % C-

68-69.9 % D+

63-67.9 % D

60-62.9 % D-

0 – 59.9 % F

A grading rubric that defines the evaluation of each assignment will be given on that assignment's handout.

**Attendance:**

Students should be present for every class of the semester, arriving before class begins and staying until class is dismissed.

You have three excused absences for this course. I would suggest saving them for

emergencies. If you find you have yet to take an absence, and the semester is drawing to a close, use that time to treat yourself to a reprieve. Every absence beyond your third will count as a 10 point deduction from your final grade in this course. Exceptions to this rule are extremely rare and will only be granted in the most extreme of documented circumstances.

In the case of absence, students are responsible for finding out what work they have missed, or in obtaining notes from a classmate. Extensions on work due are not granted for being absent for the class in which the work is collected. If an absence is unavoidable it is strongly recommended to contact the instructor before the absence and make any arrangements to turn in work early. Absenteeism can also affect your grade from a participation standpoint as well as the negative impact that it can have on your learning and work.

Special exceptions to these policies include religious observances and absences due to an event or purpose that is officially recognized by the University. Students are expected to notify me in advance of these special exceptions and they will be accommodated on an individual basis. Since these are planned absences that are known in advance, all assignments due the missed class day(s) must be submitted to me in advance of the absence.

**Tardiness:**

Being late to class or when returning from break will be recorded as a tardy, and can affect a student’s grade as it impacts participation. Tardy policy states that any student who is more than ten minutes late will be considered absent for that class. A late student is expected to join the class with a minimum of disruption to the lesson. A student who is late more than three times will receive an automatic 10 point deduction from their participation grade with additional 5 point deductions for each additional instance of tardiness.

**Late Work:**

You must turn in your work on the indicated date. A 10 point grade deduction for each day late will be computed in that assignment's final grade. Your work is "on-time" if it is provided when asked for on the day of critique. If you are asked to so, you will be expected to have your work available on a server, portable media, or instructor computer at the beginning of class. Failure to have your work available immediately on the day of critique will result in a grade deduction of up to 10 points. Being absent on the day the project is due does not grant you a free pass. If you do not turn in your project on the day its due I will not inquire about your project. It is your responsibility to turn it into me.

**Statement on Academic Dishonesty:**

Plagiarism is the act of taking words, ideas, or artwork and presenting them as your own without due credit. Plagiarism can include the assistance or complicity in another's plagiarism. Plagiarism is extreme academic misconduct, which defeats your objectives in attending this institution. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Cheating students will fail the class and discovery may lead to immediate expulsion from the college.

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see [University Regulation 4.001.](http://www.fau.edu/ctl/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf)

An additional note: with the plethora of assets available online it can be tempting to use some freely available resources to complete your assignments. This is acceptable as long as such assets are identified as borrowed and credit is clearly given to the contributing artist. Failure to indicate “borrowed” assets will be considered academic dishonesty and treated as such.

**Saving Work:**

It is strongly suggested that you back up your work in triple redundancy (3x). It is solely your responsibility to save your work. If you lose your work, I will sympathize with your loss but I will be forced to mark you for zero credit on any assignment you fail to submit.

**Changes to the Syllabus:**

Changes to course content are at the discretion of the professor. It is the student’s responsibility to stay informed of these changes. Every attempt will be made by the professor to inform the class of changes in a timely manner.

**Disability Policy:**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) -- in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297- 3880); in Davie, LA 240 (954-236-1222); in Jupiter, SR 110 (561-799-8010); or at the Treasure Coast, CO 117 (772-873-3441) – and follow all OSD procedures.

**Abbreviated Schedule**

Week 1: Mythic Narrative/ The Seven Sentence Story

Week 2: Character Design/ Anatomy / Archetype Vs. Stereotype (Stories Due)

Week 3: Digital Painting / Character Sheets (Character Silhouettes/Refined Sketches Due)

Week 4: The 3 Shot Narrative / StoryBoarding (Final Character Sheets Due)

Week 5: The 5 Shot Narrative / Animatic Editing (3 Shot Narratives Due)

Week 6: Environmental Design / Adaptation vs. Appropriation (5 Shot animatic due)

Week 7: Initial Round Narrative Pitch

Week 8: Final Round Narrative Pitch (Environmental Designs Due)

Week 9: Shot Composition / Camera

Week 10: Dialogue / 180

Week 11: Final project W.I.P. Critique / Beat boards

Week 12: Color Key Painting / Lighting

Week 13: Final project W.I.P. Critique

Week 14: Advanced Topics

Week 15: Final project W.I.P. Critique

Week 16: Final project due.