

COM 220-D: Digital Media Convergence
Spring 2014
M/W/F 9:25am - 10:35am
Room: McEwen 205

Course Website and Blog:

<http://blogs.elon.edu/com220d1403>

Instructor Info:

Phillip Motley
Office - Powell 201
Phone - 336.278.5614
Email - pmotley@elon.edu

Office hours:

M/W/F: 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm
Tues: 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Course Description:

Convergence is the blending of text, sounds and images in the media environment to create new media. This course features units on visual literacy, photo editing, audio processing, video editing and web publishing. Students learn theories of aural and visual aesthetics and produce individual web pages. Prerequisite C- or better in COM 100.

Course Goal:

Introduce students to media convergence technologies and prepare them for advanced studies in electronic media production. The course examines basic aesthetic principles in visual composition and techniques applicable to audio, video and web production.

Provide an opportunity for students to gain an understanding of traditional design principles as they are applied to the development of electronic media that falls into the categories of graphic design, time-based media and interactive design. Help students in developing relevant technical skills through an in-depth understanding of significant design and development software, development platforms and related toolsets.

Course Objectives

- Students learn to apply *theories relevant to presenting images and information*.
- Students learn to articulate the concepts of visual perception, digital image formation, audio processing, and graphic design.
- Students develop skills with the *tools of technology* (hardware and software) used in multimedia production.
- Students will demonstrate *creativity, analytical thinking* and a working knowledge of professional standards in the production of multimedia content.
- Students learn the impact of digital tools, methodology and content producing capabilities on today's evolving media landscape.

Required Textbooks: (Available in the campus bookstore)

Multimedia Foundations: Core Concepts for Digital Design - Costello, Vic (Focal Press, 2012)

Other Readings:

The instructor, at various points throughout the semester, will assign additional readings. These readings may appear as handouts, reserve reading in the library or as online resources. Each student is responsible for digesting the material in whatever format it is delivered. Material may be included on any quiz or exam.

Required Materials:

- External Hard Drive (minimum 500 GB)
- SD Card (class 6 or higher; 8 GB or higher capacity)
- Memory card reader (used to transfer images, audio or video from SD card to a computer)
- A good pair of headphones (over the ear, not earbuds)
- A sketchbook (choose a size and format that you are comfortable with)
- Valid Elon University ID (to check out equipment and enter the building after hours)

Final Grade Categories and Weighting: (1000 total points)*Project Assignments: (325 points)*

Students will create four multimedia projects during the semester. The project assignments are designed to explore a variety of ways to create digital media and to establish a fundamental understanding of industry standard software applications.

Homework Exercises: (200 points)

In addition to the four main course projects, students will complete ten short homework exercises throughout the semester to practice topics learned in class.

Blog Portfolio: (100 points)

One of the objectives of this course is to understand how web content is created and used. As part of this goal, students will create and maintain their own blog portfolio website. This website will be used for multiple purposes throughout the semester including serving as a web portfolio of the digital work created in the course and as a place for written reflections on reading assignments (see next item).

Reading Responses: (150 points)

Students will also use their blog portfolio to respond to and reflect on all assigned readings for the course.

Exams: (150 points)

Students will take a mid-term and final exam in this course that will cover all assigned reading material (from books, handouts, websites, etc.) as well as content covered during class through lectures, demonstrations and hands-on activities.

Professional Behavior: (75 points)

Professional behavior in this course is determined by a student's class participation, engagement and work ethic. Some specific items to pay special attention to include coming to class on time, bringing required materials to class, keeping up with reading assignments, meeting project and homework deadlines, and submitting work that is free of obvious errors.

Course Work Evaluation:

Graded projects and assignments will be evaluated via five primary criteria: aesthetic quality, technical mechanics, complexity, content and craft.

Aesthetic quality – refers to the underlying principles of design that contribute to the overall quality of a media project.

Technical mechanics – refers to the level of proficiency an individual demonstrates using the various hardware and software tools that are part and parcel of multimedia production.

Complexity – refers to the project's overall level of difficulty. Did you follow the path of least resistance or push yourself by attempting to do something more challenging?

Content – refers to the intellectual or material substance of a media project. This item attempts to answer the question "What's the point?" As an aspiring communicator, each project you produce

should be substantively meaningful to the viewer. Regardless of what you are producing, the content should be well researched, logically structured, and professionally presented.

Craft – refers to the level of execution achieved with a given project or assignment. Media and design related projects demand an acute level of attention to detail.

Incomplete projects or those failing to comply fully with the requirements of the assignment will receive a grade of “D” or “F”. The following grading scale will apply to all work completed in this course and be used in calculating a student’s final grade.

Grading Scale:

The following grading scale will be used to determine your final grade:

A = 100 - 93	A- = 92 - 90	B+ = 89 - 87	B = 86 - 83	B- = 82 - 80
C+ = 79 - 77	C = 76 - 73	C- = 72 - 70	D+ = 69 - 67	D = 66 - 63
D- = 62 - 60	F = 59 - 0	0 = Work not submitted to the instructor for grading		

Critiques:

As you develop each project, we will, as a whole class, critique your work. We will do so at the end of the project when your design work is completed; we will also critique the projects as you are developing them. Because each class meeting is only 70 minutes in length and because there are 18 students enrolled in the course, critiques will have to be managed with great efficiency and focus. In order to do so successfully, you will need to be prepared with your work (whether it is evidence of your project in progress or the final artifact) at the BEGINNING of the class period. Depending on the specific project, this may mean arriving in class with a print out of your work or with a cut of your edit or with links to your website design. Regardless of what is required for each critique, it is your responsibility to be prepared. Failure to do so will have two consequences: 1) you will not have your work critiqued that day (this is a bigger deal than it may seem as feedback is critical to producing quality work); and 2) your “Professional Behavior” grade for the course will suffer.

Special Notes:

Because of the nature of this course, regular data backup is extremely important and is the sole responsibility of the student. Leaving the only copy of a project or assignment on a lab machine is a bad idea. Leaving only one copy a project or assignment on a student’s laptop or external hard drive is only slightly better. The only way for you to insure that you don’t lose data is to have multiple backup copies of all of your important files. The instructor will not accept loss of your files as a valid excuse for missing a deadline.

Semester Schedule

Week 1: 2.5.14 - 2.7.14

Course introduction	
<i>Principles of computer graphics</i>	
Reading:	<i>Introduction to Visual Theory and Practice in the Digital Age (Handout: Barnett et al.) Multimedia Foundations pp 3-33</i>
Homework:	Set up WordPress blog portfolio

Week 2: 2.10.14 - 2.14.14

Vector graphics and visual communication	
<i>Gestalt theory Logo design</i>	<i>Adobe Illustrator Basics of vector drawing Bezier curves and pen tool</i>
Reading:	<i>Introduction to Visual Theory and Practice in the Digital Age (Handout: Barnett et al.)</i>
Homework:	<i>Vector silhouettes</i>
Project:	<i>Logo design</i>

Week 3: 2.17.14 – 2.21.14

Vector graphics and visual communication		Adobe Illustrator
<i>Typographic design</i>		<i>Manipulating and combining vector shapes</i>
Reading:	<i>Multimedia Foundations pp 245-275</i> <i>Typographic Design (Handout: Meggs et al.)</i>	
Homework:	<i>Modular type design</i>	
Project:	<i>Logo Design</i>	

Week 4: 2.24.14 – 2.28.14

Bitmap graphics and digital images		Adobe Photoshop
<i>Understanding pixels</i> <i>Principles of visual communication</i>		<i>Creating and selecting pixel-based content</i> <i>Using layers</i>
Reading:	<i>Multimedia Foundations pp 95-126</i>	
Homework:	<i>100 photographs</i>	
Project:	<i>Digital painting</i>	

Week 5: 3.3.14 – 3.7.14

Bitmap graphics and digital images		Adobe Photoshop
<i>Digital photography</i> <i>Composition</i>		<i>Color and tonal image correction</i> <i>Physical manipulations</i>
Reading:	<i>Multimedia Foundations pp 277-311</i>	
Homework:	<i>10 manipulated images</i>	
Project:	<i>Digital painting</i>	

Week 6: 3.10.14 – 3.14.14

Bitmap graphics and digital images		Adobe Photoshop
<i>Compositing</i>		<i>Masking</i> <i>Integration with Illustrator</i>
Reading:	<i>None</i>	
Project:	<i>Digital painting</i>	

Week 7: 3.17.14 – 3.21.14

Audio production		Audacity
<i>Audio recording</i> <i>Audio editing</i>		
Reading:	<i>Multimedia Foundations pp 315-351</i>	
Homework:	<i>Audio narrative</i>	
Exam:	<i>Mid-term (3.19.14)</i>	

Week 8: *** 3.24.14 – 3.28.14 (***) spring break: no class this week)

Week 9: 3.31.14 – 4.4.14

Video production and time-based media		Avid Media Composer
<i>Basics of time-based media</i> <i>Digital video</i> <i>Pre-production planning</i>		<i>Introduction to Avid interface</i>
Reading:	<i>Multimedia Foundations pp 353-382</i>	
Homework:	<i>Storyboards</i>	
Project:	<i>Community portrait</i>	

Week 10: 4.7.14 – 4.11.14

Video production and time-based media		Avid Media Composer
<i>Film grammar and shot selections</i> <i>Story logic and flow</i>		<i>Ingesting media content</i>
Reading:	<i>Shot by Shot (Handout: Katz)</i> <i>The Writer's Journey (Handout: Vogler)</i>	
Homework:	<i>Video vignettes</i>	
Project:	<i>Community portrait</i>	

Week 11: 4.14.14 – 4.18.14

Video production and time-based media		Avid Media Composer
<i>Principles of editing</i> <i>Audio integration</i>		<i>Editing techniques</i>
Reading:	<i>Multimedia Foundations pp 383-413</i>	
Homework:	<i>15 second sequence</i>	
Project:	<i>Community portrait</i>	

Week 12: *** 4.23.14 – 4.25.14 (**no class on 4.21.14)

Video production and time-based media		Avid Media Composer
<i>Post-production techniques</i>		<i>Transitions and other effects</i> <i>Creating and using graphics</i>
Reading:	<i>None</i>	
Project:	<i>Community portrait</i>	

Week 13: 4.28.14 – 5.2.14

Web design/development		TextWrangler and Cyberduck
<i>How the web works</i> <i>Introduction to page markup with HTML</i>		<i>Upload/download content via FTP</i> <i>Using a text editor</i>
Reading:	<i>Designing with Web Standards (Handout: Zeldman)</i>	
Homework:	<i>Newspaper markup</i>	
Project:	<i>Web-based resume</i>	

Week 14: 5.5.14 – 5.9.14

Web design/development		TextWrangler and Cyberduck
<i>Introduction to web presentation and layout with CSS</i>		
Reading:	<i>Developing with Web Standards (Handout: Allsop)</i>	
Project:	<i>Web-based resume</i>	

Week 15: 5.12.14

Web design/development		TextWrangler and Cyberduck
<i>Wrap up!</i>		
Project:	<i>Web-based resume</i>	

Finals: 5.19.14 (11:30am – 2:30pm)

Exam:	<i>Final</i>
Due:	<i>Blog portfolio</i>

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS POLICIES

The School of Communications has adopted the following minimum policies to provide students with a clear understanding and consistent application of course expectations, since journalism and communications are disciplines with rigorous professional standards. Teachers may designate more stringent policies on their course syllabi.

Attendance Policy:

Students in the School of Communications are expected to attend all classes. Just as professionals go to work each day, we expect students in a professional school to come to class on time and be prepared to work.

A student who misses more than 20% of scheduled classes in a term (more than eight absences for classes meeting three times a week, more than five absences for classes meeting twice a week) automatically receives an F because the student has missed too much content and participation to pass a course in a professional school.

Teachers will lower the final grade in a class for each absence beyond the equivalent of one week of class (three absences for classes meeting three times a week, two absences for classes meeting twice a week, and one absence during winter term or a summer session) as indicated in the course syllabus. An exception may exist for a student who misses more than a week of classes for a sanctioned university activity, such as presenting research at a national forum, class travel or university athletic travel. Students participating in such events must submit a written request in advance to the professor.

Coursework:

If students miss a class because of illness, participation in a university-sponsored activity, job interview or other causes, they have missed valuable content and engaged learning. In this sense, excused and unexcused absences are no different. To ensure that students avoid gaps in the progression of a course, professors may assign additional work. For example, a professor may require a student to write a 400-word summary of material covered in a missed class session or complete an additional lab assignment that demonstrates comprehension of material covered.

Tests and Examinations:

If students miss a quiz, test or examination they must submit a written request for a makeup to the professor. Students who miss a **final** examination must secure permission for a makeup from the department chair. As indicated in the Elon University Faculty Handbook, "students are not guaranteed permission to make up examinations and have no guarantees about the impact of the absence on their final grade for the course."

Grading:

Faculty members determine their own grading scale. Ordinarily a 10- or seven-point scale is used in courses. Teachers also establish the numerical standards for plus and minus grades. The university defines grades as follows:

- A** indicates distinguished performance,
- B** indicates above-average performance,
- C** indicates an average performance in which a basic understanding of the subject has been demonstrated,
- D** indicates a passing performance despite some deficiencies, and
- F** indicates failure.

Assignments:

Professionals meet deadlines. All assignments should be submitted on time, and they are due on the assigned date even if the student is absent from class. A teacher may choose not to accept late work, or to lower a grade by one letter for each weekday it is late.

Honor Code:

All students are expected to uphold the four fundamental values of the Elon Honor Code:

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Responsibility
- Respect

Breaches of these values will result in an academic or social honor code violation report. Honor code violations include: plagiarism, lying, cheating, stealing or vandalism, and facilitating academic dishonesty. These violations may result in the lowering of a grade or failure of a class. While “intent” may be considered in assigning sanctions, it is not a factor in determining responsibility for an offense. Students should consult with their professor if they are uncertain about whether specific activities are violations of the honor code.

Definitions and examples of Elon Honor Code violations above may be found at <http://www.elon.edu/e-web/students/handbook/judicialhonor.xhtml>

Religious Holidays:

Elon University embraces the mission of an academic community that influences and transforms mind, body, and spirit. The following policy guiding procedure for the observance of recognized holydays is consistent with and complementary to the University’s mission. Please click the link below for specific policies and procedures.

http://www.elon.edu/e-web/students/religious_life/ReligiousHolidays.xhtml