

CNM 190: Advanced Digital Animation

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Instructors: Dan Garcia (ddgarcia@cs), Jeremy Huddleston Sequoia (jeremyhu@cs)

TA: Peter Tsoi (petertsoi@berkeley.edu)

<http://inst.eecs.berkeley.edu/~cnm>

This course is targeted at 4th year students with backgrounds in either computer science, art, or film who intend to work in the visual effects, animation, or entertainment industries upon graduation. It will build upon students' knowledge from previous related courses, guiding them through the production process in an environment similar to studios like Pixar, PDI, and ILM. The unique structure of this course allows students to partake in an adaptive educational experience. We will survey many advanced topics and allow students to focus on a subset which they find interesting. These topics are presented in the order in which they are used in a production pipeline.

Students should be aware that this is essentially a **year long course** and should not enroll if they do not intend to take CNM 190 in the spring.

Prerequisites

In order to enroll in this course, students must have completed 2 of the following courses (or comparable experience): Art 172, Art 175, CS 184, or 1 Semester of UCBUGG

Course Structure

The course will typically meet for one lecture, one critique, and one open lab section each week. Please check the course website regularly for the actual calendar as it is subject to change based on availability of guest lecturers.

Weekly assignments are due before the critique in which they are discussed. These assignments need to be submitted on B-Space as well as given to your project manager in preparation for the critique (see below).

As we go through the story design process during the first few weeks, we will hone in on two stories to develop into 30-second shorts. The class will be divided into two production teams (one for each story) and work with those teams for the remainder of the year.

The first semester will focus on story, modeling, and animation. At the end of the first semester, modeling and animation will be final, and each team will prepare a final reel showing off the work (essentially a greyscale animation with default lighting).

The second semester will build upon the first semester's work by taking the films through shading, lighting, rendering, compositing, and post production. At the end of the second semester, we will have produced two amazing 30-second animations!

Director and Project Manager

Each production team will choose a director and a project manager. The director's role is ensuring the vision of the project is successfully achieved and keeping the film group on that artistic goal. The project manager is in charge of ensuring the team is working effectively towards that vision. The PM is the hub of the production team. Their primary role is handing out assignments, collecting work, and having it ready for viewing during critique (a 16G or larger USB flash drive is recommended).

Grades

The final grade will be based upon weekly homework assignments, participation in critiques, and confidential peer evaluation (each contributing to 1/3 of the grade). In addition, the final group deliverable can bump everyone in the group up or down a +/- level. Feedback (including current grades) will be provided mid-semester.

Plagiarizing

This may not seem like a big concern in a class of this nature, but it is still possible to plagiarize. Students may find models online and wish to use them in their film. This is perfectly reasonable in many cases (especially for extra set dressing), but credit must be given to the source of these models in the movie's final credits.