

VART 2600: Introductory Digital Imaging I

Fall 2010

Wednesday 7:00pm - 9:45pm & Friday 1:30pm – 4:20pm
Mac Lab (AS 371)

Matthew Hollett
E-mail: mhollett@swgc.ca
Office hours by appointment.

Class Objectives

VART 2600: Introductory Digital Imaging I is a studio-based introduction to the production of art using digital technology, particularly digital imaging software. Through studio assignments, research, and class discussion, students will develop a critical sense of the medium, as well as a personal approach to the use of technology as a tool for creative expression.

Students will be introduced to technologies such as raster and vector imaging, scanners and digital cameras, and web publication of digital artwork. These technologies and skills will be used in the creation of original and personal artwork. Throughout this process, students will be challenged to think critically about digital media, their relationship to technology, and their personal art practice. A sense of the history of digital artmaking and the use of digital technology by contemporary artists will be developed through slide presentations, research, and class discussion.

Content and Workload

Basic computer skills (week 1 and ongoing)

We will cover basic computer operation using **Mac OS X**, including accessing applications, file storage and management, and customizing the work environment.

Vector imaging (week 1 to week 7)

We'll discuss the difference between vector and raster images, and students will learn to create vector images using **Adobe Illustrator**. Illustrator will be the basis for several assignments. A basic understanding of file types will be part of this process.

Raster imaging (week 7 to week 13 / end of semester)

We'll use **Adobe Photoshop** to create raster images, and learn to combine raster and vector images. Photoshop will be the basis for several assignments. We'll also learn how to import image data using scanners and digital cameras, and about file types that are appropriate for raster imaging. Other examples of raster imaging software will also be demonstrated and discussed, time-permitting.

Web publication of digital artwork (ongoing / end of semester)

We'll learn more about the presentation of digital artwork, including how to prepare images for publication on the web, and how to prepare images for printing. Students will be encouraged to use Photoshop, Illustrator, and other software to develop a multimedia approach to digital artmaking. This is in preparation for VART 2601 (next semester), where students will learn more about web-based digital artmaking.

Materials List

- You probably already have a college e-mail account (@swgc.mun.ca). It's important that you check your SWGC e-mail to keep up with class announcements, including possible class cancellations due to inclement weather.
- A USB flash drive (also called a USB key, memory stick, thumb drive, or jump drive). This is useful for backing-up and transporting your files. For this class, a 2 GB drive is a good size (1 gigabyte = 1000 megabytes).
- If you have a laptop you are welcome to bring it to class, but it isn't necessary.
- A digital camera might come in handy if you own one, but there's no need to buy one for this class. Students can also borrow digital cameras from the AV desk in the library, or through the Visual Arts department. If you have a cellphone with a camera, you can take photos with that. Most digital cameras can also shoot video. You don't need expensive equipment to make great art!
- The usual artist's tools (pencils, brushes, sketchbooks, and so on).
- Source materials (drawings, photographs, journals, maps, magazines, newspaper clippings, comic books, favourite websites, old wallpaper, good music, poems, postage stamps, dreams, dead bugs, long walks, found objects, video games, vacations, abandoned buildings, good old-fashioned imagination, and so on).

The Mac Lab and Studio Safety

We'll be using the SWGC Mac Lab, which has Apple PowerMac G5 computers with Mac OS 10.4. The software we'll be using includes Photoshop CS3 and Illustrator CS3, which are part of Adobe Creative Suite 3.

Students taking digital classes have after-hours access to the Mac Lab. You are allowed to be in the lab until 2am, or until 3:45am during extended hours. These are the same hours as the Fine Arts building. The rest of the Arts & Science building closes at midnight.

Food and drink is not allowed in the Mac Lab. Smoking is prohibited in all the College's buildings.

Ergonomic safety is important - long periods working at a computer station can cause eye strain, back strain, and even carpal tunnel syndrome. Try to get up and move around once per hour, and try switching between the mouse and the stylus to give your wrists a break.

Evaluation

Group Critiques

Each assignment will conclude with a group critique of the work produced. This is a chance for students to share their work with the class, get feedback, and explain their ideas and working process. Students will be evaluated based on the creative and technical ability demonstrated by their work, as well as their ability to articulate concepts and active participation in group critiques.

Evaluation Sheets

Within a reasonable amount of time following each assignment, an evaluation sheet will be provided for the student. This sheet will contain commentary on the work presented, as well as a letter grade.

Evaluation Criteria for Each Assignment

- 15% Participation in group critiques (pertinence and clarity of verbal comments)
- 15% Fulfillment of project requirements (deadlines must be respected, and incomplete work will not be graded)
- 5% Presentation
- 25% Technical proficiency of work
- 15% Research (visual and conceptual)
- 25% Originality and expressive qualities of work

Final Grade Calculation

- 15% Assignment 1
- 15% Assignment 2
- 15% Assignment 3
- 15% Assignment 4
- 15% Assignment 5
- 20% Assignment 6
- 5% Attendance and motivation (attendance is mandatory).

A note about plagiarism

Television, photography, print media, and the web are all part of a larger visual culture which can provide endless sources of inspiration for the contemporary artist, and it has been demonstrated time and again in art history that the “borrowing” of visual media and ideas can be a valid strategy of individual art production. That being said, a basic sense of ethics includes the disclosure of sources and openness to discussions of appropriation. Digital technologies make it increasingly easy to “sample” images from many sources, and to avoid misunderstandings it is recommended that influences and sources be openly discussed during group critiques.

Reference Materials

Books relevant to the history and process of digital art production can be found in the art, photography, printmaking, and computer science areas of the College library. Art and technology magazines are also good sources of inspiration and information about current events.

Because of the nature of digital imaging and new media technologies, the web is a particularly useful source of information about artists working in this medium. These websites are good places to start:

- Whitney Museum Artport: <http://artport.whitney.org/>
- we make money not art: <http://www.we-make-money-not-art.com/>
- TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design): <http://www.ted.com/>
- Rhizome ArtBase: <http://rhizome.org/art/>

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the start of each class. Unexcused absences are taken into consideration when evaluating a student's attendance and motivation. Unexcused absences include: arriving late to class, leaving class early, missing class to catch rides home on weekends or mid-term breaks, sleeping in, or scheduling other outside activities during class time.

In the case of medical appointments, students must make efforts to schedule these at times that do not conflict with classes. However, in those cases where the student has made reasonable attempts but to no avail and must subsequently miss class, flexibility will be given.

Students who miss class for legitimate reasons will be expected to give their teacher(s) a brief written explanation authored by either themselves, or external verification. These written notes are to be submitted at or before the next attended class meeting. These will be placed in their files. Excused absences include illness, bereavement or accidents.

Students who are receiving treatment for a long-term condition will be required to obtain written verification from the professional who is administering the treatment or care. These will be placed on file with the program secretary.

To ensure consistency and equity the Faculty of Visual Arts as a group will assess any absence that is not so easy to categorize confidentially.