

**AVT 180: New Media in the Creative Arts**  
**Course Syllabus – Fall, 2016**  
**George Mason University**  
**College of Visual and Performing Arts**  
**School of Art**  
**Division of New Media**

**Course Information**

Section 007: Monday, Wednesday 9:00 AM – 10:15 AM

CRN 71780

Classroom: Art & Design, Rm. 1023

Instructor: Sean Watkins

Email: [swatkins@gmu.edu](mailto:swatkins@gmu.edu)

Phone: 703.993.1976

Office Hours: By appointment

Office: Art & Design, Rm. 2009

Prerequisites: None

Website: <http://swatkinsavt180.wordpress.com/>

**Course Description**

New Media in the Creative Arts 3 credits, 1:2 ratio lecture to studio hours (3:1:2)

Introduces computing from artist's perspective. Emphasizes computer use for artistic creation and research. Overview of image making and time-based media within the broad context of contemporary art, new media art, and mediated culture.

New Media in the Creative Arts investigates and presents current digital technologies and explores a variety of venues through which ideas can be presented. This course is an introduction to understanding how media and content can be employed from an artist's perspective, and stresses the role digital tools play in creating artwork. Emphasis is placed on employing computers and peripheral devices, as well as repurposing well understood objects for artistic creation and research. An overview of hardware, 2D graphics software, operating systems, and peripherals will be covered. We may engage in web applications if time permits. This course is designed for anyone without computer arts experience.

During the semester, we will explore digital software and hardware tools, digital artists, art history, and conceptual thinking to develop your own skills and create project work culled from these resources. The two-dimensional digital imaging programs Adobe Illustrator CC and Adobe Photoshop CC will be used. We will also be using Final Cut Pro, QuickTime, and the Web to browse video files for use in a small video, sound, and/

or animation projects. We will draw upon University resources, readings, and the Internet to explore ways in which computers influence, contribute to and assist in the processes of making art.

### **This class fulfills a General Education Core requirement for Arts**

Core requirements help ensure that students become acquainted with the broad range of intellectual domains that contribute to a liberal education. By experiencing the subject matter and ways of knowing in a variety of fields, students will be better able to synthesize new knowledge, respond to fresh challenges, and meet the demands of a complex world.

### **Arts goal**

Mason courses in the film making, visual and performing arts stress generative, inquiry based learning through direct aesthetic and creative experience in the studio environment. Courses aim to achieve a majority of the following learning outcomes: students will be able to identify and analyze the formal elements of a particular art form using vocabulary appropriate to that form; demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic technique and the expression of a work's underlying concept; analyze cultural productions using standards appropriate to the form and cultural context; analyze and interpret material or performance culture in its social, historical, and personal contexts; and engage in the artistic process, including conception, creation, and ongoing critical analysis.

### **This course satisfies a General Education Foundation Requirement for Information Technology**

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

This class fulfills a Mason Core Core requirement for Information Technology. IT goal: The purpose of the information technology requirement is to ensure that students achieve an essential understanding of information technology infrastructure encompassing systems and devices; learn to make the most of the Web and other network resources; protect their digital data and devices; take advantage of latest technologies; and become more sophisticated technology users and consumers.

1. IT courses will fulfill a majority of the following learning outcomes: Students will be able to use technology to locate, access, evaluate, and use information, and appropriately cite resources from digital/electronic media.
2. Students will understand the core IT concepts in a range of current and emerging technologies and learn to apply appropriate technologies to a range of tasks.
3. Students will understand many of the key ethical, legal and social issues

related to information technology and how to interpret and comply with ethical principles, laws, regulations, and institutional policies.

4. Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate, create, and collaborate effectively using state-of-the-art information technologies in multiple modalities.

5. Students will understand the essential issues related to information security, how to take precautions and use techniques and tools to defend against computer crimes.

## **Course Objectives**

This course seeks to provide students with the basic skills necessary to begin exploring the creative process using digital tools, and to begin the understanding of what New Media means in relation to other plastic and evolving arts. Students are also encouraged to develop an awareness of issues involving art and artists, aesthetics, and past and evolving methodologies in using technology for ethical, communicative, and research purposes. At the end of this course, students should be able to exhibit at least basic abilities with Photoshop and Illustrator, and skills in basic video editing. Through critiques and in class demonstrations, students should be able to explain and discuss the content, methodology and technological aspects of their work and others. Students should have acquired competency with computer skills, and general knowledge of working in a digital environment.

## **Course Requirements**

### **Assignments and Projects:**

There are four digital art projects with corresponding preparatory work:

Project 1 (1/2 semester): [Midterm Project: The Object](#)

Project 2: [Architectural Balance](#)

Project 3: [Mask/Sound](#)

Project 4: (Final Project) [Narrative Collage/Mashup Video](#)

There is also a [blog](#) that you will maintain throughout the semester, documenting your work and commenting on others.

Assignment and project guidelines and details will be given out in class. A class schedule accompanies this syllabus which gives project due dates. Projects will be collected into Mid-Term and Final portfolios. Mid-term and Final portfolios will be the substance of grading your projects. Projects will be critiqued in class. Throughout the semester, students will conduct creative research related to their projects. Both the Mid-term and Final Portfolios will be required on the due date assigned. Unexcused absences on critique or exam days may result in a lowered grade. Students who miss a critique will miss critical feedback from the professor and his/her peers. All student projects and

assignments must be based on original ideas of the student and must incorporate original artwork, that is, artwork produced by the student. Projects must follow the assignments stated goal.

If reading assignments are given, students should be prepared to discuss these assignments during class periods. There will be a mid-term written exam related to the history and terminology of computer art, as well as the project due at mid-term. Midterm projects must demonstrate an understanding of technical skills learned in the first half of the semester. The final project, due at the end of the semester will reflect the technical skills accumulated throughout the course.

On the due dates for projects or preparatory work, you must come to class with the appropriate materials ready for critique or discussion.

## **Resources**

[lynda.com](http://lynda.com)

Photoshop User Magazine <http://www.photoshouser.com> This magazine is the official publication of the National Association of Photoshop Professionals (NAPP). As a NAPP member, you automatically receive Photoshop User eight times a year.

## **Supplies**

A portable personal storage device is required for this class in order to back up and carry your files to and from class. Projects and weekly assignments will be added to a digital portfolio stored on your USB Drives, portable hard drives, or CDs throughout the semester. A variety of devices are available to choose from, including Firewire drives, and USB Flash or “Thumb drives”. These drives are available online, from computer stores such as CompUSA, Best Buy, or George Mason’s Patriot Computer Store.

## **Digital Classrooms**

The schedule of classes and open labs will be posted outside the digital classrooms in the Fine Arts Building within the first week of classes. AVT digital classroom schedules are also posted on the web at <http://www.avt.gmu.edu/LabSchedule.html>. Open labs are held in the top floor atrium in the Art & Design Building. They begin the second week of classes, and are staffed by *Lab Assistants* and AVT staff. *Lab Assistants* are students hired from within George Mason’s student body. Their job is to provide AVT students with a secure and reliable facility to work outside normally scheduled class hours. As Lab Assistants may not be AVT students, they may not be familiar with the particular project, software, or hardware issues you may need help with. Please ask your teacher or other Digital Staff for help with these issues.

Additionally, the Star Lab, located on the second and third floor of the Johnson Center, is

available for you to use. For more information, visit the Star Lab's web site (<http://media.gmu.edu>). Star Lab configures their facilities as closely as possible with the same versions of Adobe software that the AVT Digital Classrooms use, but as they are a University facility, AVT cannot always guarantee this. While there are a few Macs at the Star Lab please note that the Star Lab is primarily comprised of PCs. An introductory tour and introduction to Star Labs will be held early in the semester. You should familiarize yourself with Star Lab's facilities as soon as possible.

## **Course Expectations**

### **Attendance:**

Attendance factors significantly in your final grade. Students are expected to attend every class, and attendance will be taken. Students need to be on time, and attend the entire class. As each class builds on the previous one, it is very difficult to keep up with new information and concepts being introduced if you miss class, arrive late, or leave early. Chronically late arrival and early departure from class may result in a lowered grade. Unexcused absences on critique or exam days may result in a lowered grade. Three occurrences of arriving late to class will equal one unexcused absence. Three unexcused absences will result in a lowered grade. An unexcused absence will subtract four points off of your attendance grade.

### **Missed Assignments:**

Students are responsible for missed assignments and lectures and must contact a fellow student for missed assignments. Students who are falling behind in their work need to make an appointment to see me before problems become critical.

### **Class participation:**

It is expected that you complete assigned readings before class, and that you come prepared to discuss them in class. Assigned projects must be completed prior to attending the next class, although some additional in class time may be given to finish up something that could not be done outside of class. Working on an assigned project in class may cause you to be unprepared for additional materials that will be introduced that day. We will be critiquing assigned projects on their due dates. Participation in critiques is extremely important to the learning process not only for you, but also for others in the class. Come to critiques expecting to offer opinions and evaluations in a constructive manner. Aesthetic and technical aspects of projects will be discussed and analyzed.

## **Grading Policy**

Grades will be determined based on project work, assignments, critiques, active participation, tests, and attendance. All assignments/projects are due on the specified due date. A late assignment/project will result in a grade reduction. Any assignment/project that is handed in on time may be redone for a better grade. Only projects that are turned in on time will be accepted for a re-grade. The percentage breakdown is as follows:

Mid-term Project:	40%
Class participation, Blog, and attendance:	20%
Arch. Balance, Mask projects and Narrative Collage:	40%

<b>A+: 97-100%</b>	<b>A: 93-96%</b>	<b>A-: 90-92%</b>	<b>– Excellent, Outstanding work.</b>
<b>B+: 87-89%</b>	<b>B: 84-86%</b>	<b>B-: 80-82%</b>	<b>– Good, Above average work.</b>
<b>C+: 77-79%</b>	<b>C: 74-76%</b>		<b>– Average, Satisfactory work.</b>
<b>C-: 70-72%</b>			<b>– Average, but unsatisfactory work.</b>
<b>D: 60-69%</b>			<b>– Below Average, Unsatisfactory, passing work.</b>
<b>F: Below 60%</b>			<b>– Failure</b>

**Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences:** If you have a diagnosed disability or learning difference and you need Academic accommodations please inform me at the beginning of the semester and contact the Office of Disability Services (SUB I room 234, 703-993-2474). You must provide me with a faculty contact sheet from that office outlining the accommodations needed for your disability or learning difference. All academic accommodations must be arranged in advance through the Office of Disability Services.

**Technology:** In accordance with George Mason University policy, please silence all cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class. The instructor of the class will keep his/her cell phone active to assure receipt of any Mason Alerts in a timely fashion; or in the event that the instructor does not have a cell phone, he/she will designate one student to keep a cell phone active to receive such alerts.

**Commitment to Diversity:** This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran's status, or physical ability.

**Statement on Ethics in Teaching and Practicing Art and Design:** As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the School of Art adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

**Open Studio Hours:** SOA teaching studios are open to students for extended periods of time mornings, evenings and weekends whenever classes are not in progress. Policies, procedures and schedules for studio use are established by the SOA studio faculty and are posted in the studios.

**Important University Dates:**

**ArtsBus - Dates for Fall 2016:** September 24<sup>th</sup>, October 22<sup>nd</sup> and November 19<sup>th</sup>.

**ArtsBus Credit and Policies:** You are responsible for knowing and following Artsbus policies and rules. Please go to the ArtsBus website: <http://artsbus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for important information regarding ArtsBus policy. For credit to appear on your transcript you must enroll in AVT 300. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment.

If you plan/need to go on multiple ArtsBus trips during a semester and need them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300.

Non-AVT majors taking art classes do not need Artsbus credit BUT may need to go on the Artsbus for a class assignment. You can either sign up for AVT 300 or buy a ticket for the bus trip at the Center of the Arts. Alternate trips must be approved by the instructor of the course that is requiring an ArtsBus trip.

**Visual Voices Lecture Series:** Fall 2016 Visual Voices is a year-long series of lectures by artists, art historians and others about contemporary art and art practice. Visual Voices lectures are held on Thursday evenings from 7:20- 9:00 p.m. in Harris Theater: <http://soa.gmu.edu/visualvoices/>. Dates for Fall 2016: September 1<sup>st</sup>, September 8<sup>th</sup>, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, October 6<sup>th</sup> and October 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Masonlive/Email:** Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

**Attendance Policies:** Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

**Honor Code:** Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code. Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

**Writing Center:** Students who are in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). The services of the Writing Center are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis. The Collaborative Learning Hub Located in Johnson Center 311 (703-993-3141), the lab offers in-person one-on-one support for the Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, Blackboard, and a variety of other software. Dual monitor PCs make the lab ideal for collaborating on group projects, Macs are also available; as well as a digital recording space, collaborative tables, and a SMART Board. Free workshops are also available (Adobe and Microsoft) through Training and Certification; visit [itraining.gmu.edu](http://itraining.gmu.edu) to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.