



Course Syllabus

ART 1333-280: Computers for Artists

Fain College of Fine Arts
Spring 2026
T/TH 2:00 pm to 4:50 pm
Room: Fain C115

Contact Information

Instructor: Ashley Gillanders

Office: C115A

Office hours: T/TH 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm (C115A)
W 9:45 am - 12:45 pm (C104E)

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Course Description

Introductory studio experience in using the computer as a creative medium. Emphasizes hands-on software training directed towards the art of visual design and aesthetic expression. Topics include digital imaging, motion graphics, editing, and animation. It will also trace the central role played by computers in the field of the electronic arts, from pioneering efforts to current trends.

Prerequisite(s): There is no prerequisite for this course.

Course Expectations

This is a demanding, practice-based course that requires substantial time outside of scheduled class meetings. Thoughtful, well-crafted work is expected for critiques, which means allocating extra time to refine ideas and resolve technical challenges. Technical failures are an unavoidable and valuable part of the process, so plan accordingly and make use of open studio time.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Demonstrate foundational proficiency in industry-standard software** for digital imaging, video editing, AI image generation, sound design, and 3D modeling/animation.
2. **Apply principles of visual design, composition, and time-based media** across a variety of digital formats, including still images, motion graphics, and animation.
3. **Develop original artworks** that explore personal, cultural, or conceptual themes using digital tools, with an emphasis on experimentation and creative risk-taking.
4. **Understand and discuss the historical and contemporary roles of computers in artmaking**, including key moments, artists, and movements in the development of electronic and new media art.
5. **Use digital workflows to manage, organize, and export media files** in appropriate formats for both print and screen-based presentation.
6. **Critically analyze digital artworks** in terms of aesthetics, conceptual grounding, and technical execution through lectures, class discussions, and critique.
7. **Recognize and discuss ethical, social, and cultural implications** of working with digital tools and media, including issues of authorship, appropriation, identity, and representation.

Evaluation

Reading Discussions (1) = 5%

Technical Assignments (5) = 40%

Projects (3) = 55%

TOTAL = 100%

Course Schedule

Please note that the course schedule reflects expected class progress in the course subject matter and is considered tentative. The content and scope of this course are subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

Week	Date	Day	Level 1 Topic
1	1-20	Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Introductions / Syllabus<u>Homework</u>- Source course materials/equipment- Read "What is New Media?" by Lev Manovich
	1-22	Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Discussion: "What is New Media?" by Lev Manovich- Artist Lecture: Collage- Lecture: Digital Terminology- Demo: How to Scan- Demo: Introduction to Adobe Photoshop- Introduce Project #1: Digital Self-Portrait <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Begin working on Project #1
2	1-27	Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Lecture: Adobe Photoshop Pt. 2- In-class time to work on Technical Assignment #1 <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Technical Assignment #1
	1-29	Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Group 1 - Inkjet Printing Demo <p>*Students in group 2 do not need to attend</p>
3	2-03	Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Group 2 - Inkjet Printing Demo <p>*Students in group 1 do not need to attend</p> <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Technical Assignment #2
	2-05	Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Small critique: Technical Assignment #2- Open lab time to work on Project #1 <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Project #1 critiques next week!
4	2-10	Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Critique Day for Group 1: Project #1

	2-12	Thursday	- Critique Day for Group 2: Project #1
5	2-17	Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artist Lecture: Video Art Pt. 1 - Introduce Project #2: Experimental Video - Demo: Adobe Premiere Pro <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acquire footage for Project #2
	2-19	Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artist Lecture: Video Art Pt. 2 - Open lab time to work on Project #2
6	2-24	Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Screening - Nam June Paik: Moon is the First TV - Introduce Technical Assignment #3 <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capture field recordings needed for Technical Assignment #3
	2-26	Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lecture: Sound Art - Demo: Adobe Audition <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical Assignment #3
7	3-03	Tuesday	- Small critique - Technical Assignment #3
	3-05	Thursday	- Open studio time to work on Project #2
March 9 - 13 SPRING BREAK			
8	3-17	Tuesday	(Ashley at conference)
	3-19	Thursday	<p>(Ashley at conference)</p> <p><i>*MSU Field Trip to Dallas*</i></p> <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project #2 critiques next week!
9	3-24	Tuesday	- Critique Day for Group 2: Project #2
	3-26	Thursday	- Critique Day for Group 1: Project #2
10	3-31	Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce Project #3: Final - Lecture: 3D - Demo: Blender Pt. 1
	4-02	Thursday	- Demo: Blender Pt. 2

11	4-07	Tuesday	- Open lab time
	4-09	Thursday	- Small critique: Technical Assignment #4
12	4-14	Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lecture: AI as Material and Method - Demo: AI application TBA - Introduce Technical Assignment #5 <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project #3 Proposal
	4-16	Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open lab time to work on Technical Assignment #5 <p><u>Homework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical Assignment #5
13	4-21	Tuesday	- Individual Meetings
	4-23	Thursday	- Individual Meetings
14	4-28	Tuesday	- Open lab time
	4-30	Thursday	- Open lab time
15	5-05	Tuesday	- Critique Day 1: Project #3
	5-07	Thursday	- Critique Day 2: Project #3

Required Materials

- Notebook & Pen
- External Hard Drive
 - 1 TB or greater (consider what kind of computer it is formatted for, and know that the computers you will be working on during class time are Mac)
- [Red River inkjet paper, Arctic Polar Luster](#)
 - 8.5" x 11"
 - Box of 25 sheets

Grading

A = 90 -100%
 B = 80 - 89 %
 C = 70 - 79%
 D = 60 - 69%
 F = 59 % OR LESS

Classroom Conduct and Policies

- As a student at MSU Texas you are expected to conduct yourself in a courteous and mature manner.
- It is imperative that you work in a way that keeps the lab clean and organized and is respectful of other students. You must realize that your actions will affect others. Please be conscientious of your fellow students and be kind.
- General studio cleanup will be the last 15 minutes of each class session. Students will maintain discipline in studio safety precautions, maintenance and upkeep throughout the semester. The instructor will drop students not willing to take active part in those goals.
- Classroom behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the instruction will result in the instructor's removing the disruptive student(s) from the class.
- You are expected to come to class prepared, having completed all reading assignments and arriving with any required materials.
- Late assignments will NOT be accepted. All work is due on the assigned day.
- You are expected to contribute to critiques of the assignments and final projects, offering constructive criticism to their peers, and providing useful commentary about the work under discussion.
- Help each other, as you will learn as much from each other as you will learn from your instructor. I will do my best to create a safe and fun environment where you feel excited to make work.
- Disruptive and disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. Tardiness is disruptive, so be on time.
- Be mindful of the lab schedule; you are not permitted to work in the lab during other classes (unless you have permission from that instructor in advance).
- Active participation and involvement during class includes:
 - Giving your full attention to the instructor and your classmates
 - Having an open-minded outlook
 - Participating in exercises and assignments
 - Giving feedback during discussions and critiques, verbal or written
- All work must be made specifically for this class during this semester. No previously taken photos may be used. Failure to do so will result in an "F."

- A grade of "Incomplete" is granted only with a written doctor's excuse or under emergency circumstances such as illness or a death in the family.

Inclement Weather

In the event that the university closes due to inclement weather, our class will not shift to an online format. Any assessments, assignments, or deadlines that coincide with the closure dates will be adjusted as needed once campus reopens. I will communicate any changes or updates via D2L and email. Please monitor official university announcements during severe weather events.

Communication

I am always available to be reached by email, but I expect that you are respectful and professional in your communication.

Before you contact me, please ask yourself: *Have I first looked on D2L, in the syllabus, or reached out to a fellow student for assistance?*

If you have a private question, please contact me via email and I will respond within 24 hours on weekdays. Please do not expect a response over the weekend.

Cell Phones, Laptop Computers, and Recording Devices

Phones: Must be silenced and completely put away (out of sight) for the entire class. If a phone is out or audible, you may be asked to leave for the day.

Laptops/Tablets/Other electronics: Do not use devices during lectures or discussions unless I explicitly direct their use for a class activity.

Recording: Audio/video recording of class is not permitted.

Exceptions: Students with documented accommodations may use approved devices. Please inform me early in the semester.

Gallery Attendance

Students enrolled in studio or art history courses must attend every gallery opening and sign in at the reception desk. If the student cannot attend the gallery opening, they are required to write an exhibition review.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this class, you're welcome to use AI tools like ChatGPT to help with research, idea generation, and polishing your writing. Think of it as a conversation partner - a way to brainstorm, clarify, or refine your thoughts. But remember: your projects,

statements, and critiques will ultimately come from you. AI can support your process, but it can't replace your perspective, creativity, or lived experience.

You may not use AI to generate photographs or images for assignments in this class. The visual work must come from your own camera, materials, and artistic process.

Use AI to sharpen your voice, not substitute for it.

Attendance

Attendance in all classes is required, unless otherwise instructed. You are allowed two unexcused absences without it negatively affecting your grade. After two unexcused absences, Your final grade will be lowered by ½ letter grade (5%) for each class meeting you miss.

A tardy is arriving 10 minutes after the beginning of class. Three tardies will constitute an unexcused absence. Leaving class before dismissal will constitute an unexcused absence, as well as arriving at least 30 minutes after class has started.

If you have an unexcused absence or arrive to class late, it is not the responsibility of the instructor to let you know what you missed. It is up to you to ask a classmate.

Missed critiques will result in an automatic score of 0 on the project, regardless of whether or not the work was completed on time. Arriving late on a critique day will also result in an automatic score of 0 - NO EXCEPTIONS.

Content Disclaimer

Content in the arts can sometimes include works, situations, actions, and language that can be personally challenging or offensive to some students on the grounds, for example, of sexual explicitness, violence, or blasphemy. The Fain College of Fine Arts is devoted to the principle of freedom of expression, artistic and otherwise, and it is not the college's practice to censor these works or ideas on any of these grounds.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook-2025-26](#)

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs

and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

College Policies

[Student Handbook-2021-22](#)

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage.

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

Midwestern State University seeks to provide a safe, healthy, pleasant environment for its faculty, staff, and students. To this end, the use of tobacco products, including smoke and smokeless tobacco, and the advertising, sale, free distribution, and discarding of tobacco products shall be prohibited in all indoor and outdoor facilities and in all university vehicles. The policy extends to faculty, staff, students, vendors, guests, and visitors.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Student Privacy Statement

In accordance with Federal Privacy Laws a student's personal information is protected. As an instructor it is unlawful for me to share your personal information (including grades) with anyone unless I have written consent. This means I will not be able to discuss your grades with parents. If you have questions about your grades or have forgotten the grading policy for the course, please come by during office hours.