

**S Y L L A B U S**  
**THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ROME**  
**Department of Communication and English**

The learning goals for students pursuing a degree in Communication are meant to develop and enhance their writing skills, whether expository, reflective or analytical; or journalistic; or creative. The program also aims to develop students' conceptual analysis skills and critical thinking; and train them in the use of the appropriate/required tools and technology related to the field of Communication, in selected courses. The Communication degree program also offers students the opportunity to benefit from the Rome location, and prepares them to work and operate successfully in a global environment characterized by diversity and intercultural understanding and respect.

**Course Title:** Animation, Editing, and Special Effects

**Course Number:** COM316

**Period:** Fall 2011

**Credits:** Three hours.

**Professor:** Kristen Palana  
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URL: <http://www.kpalana.com>

**Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:35-12:00

**Office hours:** By appointment.  
My office is located on the first floor of the Carini Building near the Multimedia Lab.

**Course Description:**

This hands-on course will focus on intermediate and advanced video editing and special effects techniques. Students will learn how to create and combine primarily 2D computer animation and stop motion animation with video footage and moving type to create a range of special effects.

**Prerequisite:** COM215 The Computer as a Media Tool or COM217 Media Technology

**Course Learning Objectives:**

In this course students will:

1. Recognize fundamental concepts behind traditional and stop motion animation including aesthetics, timing, formats, and techniques.
2. Demonstrate the ability to use experimental video and animation techniques such as rotoscoping, color and chroma keying, blue screen techniques, masking, etc.
3. Identify and demonstrate how to create aesthetically pleasing visuals as well as effective sound design for projects.
4. Demonstrate the ability to use the animation and special effects capabilities of the appropriate software and tools.

### Course Learning Activities:

\* Project 1 –2D Animation. Students will use the appropriate software to create a short animation that will later be exported and refined using a video editing software program. CLO: 1, 2, 4, 5, & 6.

\* Project 2 –Stop Motion Animation. Students will use still imagery to create an animated video short that will be edited and refined using video editing software. CLO: 1, 2, 4, 5, & 6.

\* Final Project –Multimedia Experimental Video. Students will propose a final project idea and storyboard for their concept. They will have the option to combine 2D animation and/or stop motion animation with more traditional video footage. They can also choose to work solely with traditional video footage, though students will be required to utilize the special effects capabilities of video editing and video effects software programs. The goal of this project is to push the boundaries of what can be done in multimedia video. CLO: 1-6.

\*Homework Assignments. -These will be determined weekly as the course progresses. Usually they are demonstrations of new concepts learned or as applied to the above projects-in-progress. CLO: 1-6

\* Critiques -Students are expected to be able to articulate what elements are successful and/or what improvements could be made in their projects as well as their classmates' projects during class critiques. CLO: 2

### Assessment Tools

Students will be assessed by the following:

All projects will be rubric graded.

Items evaluated in the rubrics will be creativity, exploration of concepts and ideas, technical proficiency, professional presentation of projects, and effective participation in class critiques.

Homework will be assessed on a pass/fail basis.

### Grade Tabulation:

Final Project: 30%

Project 1: 25%

Project 2: 25%

Homework Assignments: 10%

Participation: 10%

### AUR grade values

94 – 100 points	=	A	"Excellent"
90 – 93.99 pts	=	A-	
87 – 89.99	=	B+	
83 – 86.99	=	B	"Good"
80 – 82.99	=	B-	
77 – 79.99	=	C+	
73 – 76.99	=	C	"Satisfactory"
70 – 72.99	=	C-	"Less than Satisfactory"
60 – 69.99	=	D	"Poor"
59.99 – 0	=	F	"Failing"

**Course Textbook:**

*The Animation Book* by Kit Laybourne. Three Rivers Press; Rev Sub edition (December 22, 1998)

All other reading materials are in the form of hand-outs in class.

**Suggested Reading:**

*Visual Quickstart Guide- Flash CS5*, by Katherine Ulrich

*After Effects CS5 for Windows and Macintosh: Visual QuickPro Guide*. By Antony Bolante

*Final Cut Pro 6 for Mac OS X: Visual QuickPro Guide* -by Lisa Brenneis

**Additional Costs:** The lab fee for this course (75 Euros per student) is used for the maintenance of the Multimedia Lab and production equipment.

**Grade Dispute Policy:**

Please note that grades are given according to AUR Grade Values. This means average projects will receive a C, good projects a B, excellent projects an A, etc. The reasons for each grade will be spelled out clearly in project rubrics and on corrected quizzes. If students do feel that they were given an incorrect grade, please address the issue with me personally after class in a respectful way. More often than not students are given the highest grade possible for the quality of work submitted and grade disputes are not encouraged unless a glaring discrepancy was made. Please also note that the final grade for the semester also includes scores for overall participation, attendance, and punctuality.

**Courtesy Policy:**

Compared to similar design/studio courses, our time slot is incredibly short at only 1 hour and 25 minutes per session. Please try to keep distractions and late arrival to an absolute minimum. Make sure your cell phone is turned off. If you have an emergency situation that requires your phone to be on, please speak with me first. Ringing cell phones, late arrival, leaving early, and walking in and out of class while class is in session is disrespectful to your Professor and to your fellow classmates and will result in the lowering of your Class Participation Grade and Overall Grade.

**AUR Attendance Policy:**

In keeping with AUR's mission to prepare students to live and work across cultures, the University places a high value on classroom experience. As a result attendance is expected in all classes and attendance records are maintained. The University's attendance policy is as follows:

**Minimum Attendance Requirement**

Students must attend a minimum of 70% of a course in order to be eligible to be considered for a passing grade.

## Absences

- **Students will not be penalized for three absences from class.**

If further absences are recorded, grade penalties will be applied according to the instructor's specific attendance policy, as stated in the syllabus. If the instructor does not specify an attendance policy, there will be no grade penalty other than that attached to the minimum attendance requirement.

Cases of prolonged absences caused by an emergency or a medical condition may require students to withdraw from some or all of their courses. Under such circumstances students should first consult their academic advisors.

### **Kristen Palana's Specific Attendance Policy:**

Any student with more than three absences will get two points off their final grade for every absence beyond three. **Please note that each two lates count as one absence.**

No make-up exams or quizzes will be given without a documented medical excuse. Incomplete grades are not given.

Attendance is taken at the start of each class. Late arrival will be marked as such. If a student is more than a half hour late to class they will be marked as absent.

### **If You Miss Class:**

Please use the class contact sheet (given out after the add/drop period) to email or phone a classmate who can lend you their notes and help you get back on track. In this course it is important to stay on top of material since so much is covered. \*Please do not email your professor for a briefing on what you missed, as it's not possible to sum up an entire a short email. After you have made an effort to contact a classmate and catch up, your professor will be happy to give you individual help by appointment.

### **AUR Academic Integrity Code & Policy against Plagiarism**

"Integrity is fundamental to the academic enterprise. It is violated by such acts as borrowing or purchasing assignments, including but not limited to term papers, essays, and reports; lending to or producing assignments for others (either for or without payment); using concealed notes or crib sheets during examinations, copying the work of others and submitting it as one's own; and otherwise misappropriating the knowledge of others. Such acts are both dishonest and deceptive: the work submitted to instructors is not the work of the person whose name it bears. In consequence, the sources from which one derives one's ideas, statements, terms, and facts, including internet sources, must be fully and specifically acknowledged in the appropriate form. Failure to do so, intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes plagiarism." -- AUR Student Handbook, 2006/2007, p. 15.

### **Suggestions:**

Back-up all work in progress. I recommend saving your projects under different names literally every time you make a change. It just takes one quick click...and could save you hours (if not days) of frustration. Always back-up everything!

Expect the unexpected. If you have an assignment due on Thursday, try to get it done a few days before. That way, if and when you are having technical problems, you will have some extra time to fix mistakes and troubleshoot. Remember: It is always better to show what you are working on than to show nothing at all. We can try to solve the problem in class if necessary.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

\*This outline is subject to change. Tentative: Guest speaker or field trip. TBD.  
Readings will be determined as course progresses on a week to week basis.

### **Schedule**

#### **Week 1**

**Day 1:** Introduction to the course. Samples of multimedia and animated work. Traditional animation techniques. For next class: Begin creating a traditional animated flipbook. **Day 2:** More animation techniques. Review of flipbooks. Introduction to Flash. Working with layers. Timelines. Simple cell animation.

#### **Week 2**

**Days 1 and 2:** Introduction to Project #1. More drawing and keyframe animation techniques in Flash. Motion tweening and morphing. Scenes. Looping. Testing movie. Rotate, scale, and skew. Grouping, break apart. Tools in depth.

#### **Week 3**

**Days 1 and 2:** Presentation of Project #1 ideas. Informal storyboard sketches. Working with text and fonts. Library, graphic symbols, movie clips, instances. Using Adobe Illustrator for keyframe animation in Flash.

#### **Week 4**

**Days 1 and 2:** Adding photographic images to Flash. Go over importing bitmaps, trace bitmap. Pro's and Con's. Working with sound in Flash. Exporting Quicktime movies from Flash. Importing into Final Cut Pro. Individual Help.

#### **Week 5**

**Day 1:** Individual help. Work in class. **Day 2: Project 1 Due. Critique.**

#### **Week 6**

**Days 1 and 2:** Working with Still Images. Jump cuts. Transitions. Using Keyframes to animate stills. Stop Motion techniques. Sample works that use stills. Introduction to Project #2. For next class: Use digital camera or video camera to capture stills of an object or person moving. Have Project #2 ideas and informal sketches

#### **Week 7**

**Days 1 and 2:** Go over Project #2 ideas and sketches. More tips and tricks. Work in class time. Go over work in progress.

#### **Week 8**

**Day 1: Project 2 Due. Critique.**

**Day 2:** Introduction to Adobe After Effects. Layering, compositing, and special effects. Working between After Effects and Final Cut Pro. Introduction to Final Project. For next class, have ideas for Final Project and informal storyboard sketches.

#### **Week 9**

**Days 1 and 2:** More effects in AE. Tinting, blurring, multiple layers. Keying. Masks. Work in class. For next class: Have refined storyboards for Final Project.

**Week 10**

**Day 1:** Review storyboards. Continue with After Effects. **Day 2:** More Special Effects, Motion Graphics, Text, and Sound Design techniques. Work in class time. For next class: Be started on Final Project.

**Week 11**

**Days 1 and 2:** Advanced topics and special topics covered by request. Work in class on Final Project. Individual help.

**Week 12**

**Day 1:** Advanced topics and special topics covered by request. Work in class on Final Project. Individual help. **Day 2: Rough Cut of Final Project Due.**

**Week 13**

**Day 1:** Advanced topics and special topics covered by request. Work in class on Final Project. Individual help. **Day 2: Fine Cut of Final Project Due.**

**Week 14****Final Project Due.**

Last day to hand in all revised projects.

**Thursday, December 15, 2011. Multimedia Lab. 10-12PM.**

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