

**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:** Interactive Online Media

**Course Number:** COM 407

**Period:** Spring 2011

**Credits:** Three hours.

**Professor:** Kristen Palana

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office phone. 06/58330919 ext. 702

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.

**Class Website:** <http://kpalana.com/com407>

**Course Description:**

This hands-on course teaches students how to create successful web-based interactive experiences such as online animation, games, web art, digital portfolios, dynamic web sites, experimental media, etc. Interactive Online Media incorporates elements of traditional visual art, communication, design, movement, sound, video, the Internet, photography, animation, as well as the elements of time and human interaction. Students will learn the aesthetics and foundations of interactive design and gain experience using the appropriate tools and technologies to create a range of interactive products. Career options, strategies, and development in this field will also be discussed.

**Prerequisite:** COM319 Web Graphics, Coding, and Site Design or COM215 The Computer as a Media Tool or Permission of Instructor

**Course Textbook:**

Visual Quickstart Guide- Flash CS5, by Katherine Ulrich

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

### **Course Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this course students will:

1. Have developed a foundation of skills for the creation of animated and interactive presentations.
2. Be familiar with the principles and aesthetics of interactive design
3. Have utilized the software program, Flash, and have created several interactive projects for their portfolios.
4. Have become familiar with techniques in 2-D animation, drawing and effects in Flash, creating buttons, working with sound, bitmap images, video, interface design, rules of navigation, user-friendly design, and designing for a target audience.

### **Course Learning Activities:**

1. Project #1: Animation. Students will create a simple animation in Flash which uses at least 3 Movie Clips. It must be at least 30 seconds long and run from the web. Sound is optional but encouraged. CLO: 1,3, & 4

2. Project #2: Simple Interactive Experience. Students will take their simple animation from Project 1 (or create a new one. -Strongly recommended) and add simple interactivity, buttons, and sounds. Must run from the web. CLO: 1-4

3. Project #3: The Master Plan. This project is on paper. Students will turn in the following:

\* A short half-page paper that outlines the concept for the final project. Students can write about activities people will be able to do, what it will look like, what kinds of sounds it will have, why it will be interesting, etc...

\* A simple navigation chart.

\*2 examples of what the interface will look like. One for the main page, and one for a secondary page. (These can be hand-drawn or printouts from Photoshop, etc...)

CLO: 2

4. Final Project: The Whole Package. Using plans from Project #3, students will create a more in-depth interactive project of their choice delivered either online or burned to a CD or DVD. Must be interactive. CLO: 1-4

5. 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: 1-4

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: 1-4

### **Assessment Tools**

Students will be assessed by the following:

Critique Participation: rubric graded

Quizzes

Project 1 rubric graded

Project 2 rubric graded

Project 3 rubric graded

Final Project: rubric graded

Homework, punctuality, and completeness

-Items evaluated in the rubrics will be creativity, exploration of concepts and ideas,

technical proficiency, aesthetic proficiency, professional presentation of projects, and effective participation in class critiques.

**Grade Tabulation:**

Participation: 10%  
Quiz 1 5%  
Quiz 2 5%  
Project 1 15%  
Project 2 15%  
Project 3: 10%  
Final Project: 40%

**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+  
70 – 76.99 = C “Satisfactory”  
60 – 69.99 = D “Poor”  
59.99 – 0 = F “Failing”

**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.**

**Course Textbooks:**

*Visual Quickstart Guide- Flash CS5*, by Katherine Ulrich  
*-All other reading materials are in the form of handouts in class.*

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

**Courtesy Policy:**

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.

**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 penalised for one absence from classes meeting once a week;
- \* Students will not be penalised for three absences from classes meeting twice a week;
- \* Students will not be penalised for four absences from classes meeting more than twice a week, as in the case of some intensive courses.

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 a half letter grade 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 class in 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. **Remember that YOU are responsible for preparing for upcoming quizzes/projects, due assignments, and doing the homework even for the classes you missed. Do not wait until the next class to find out what happened while you were away.**

#### **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.

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### **COURSE OUTLINE**

\*This outline is subject to change. Tentative: Guest speaker or field trip. TBD.

\*Reading and/or homework assignments will be determined weekly as the course progresses.

#### **Schedule**

#### **Week 1.**

Class Overview. Introductions. Define interactivity/aesthetics. Examine some sample works. Introduction to Flash, its windows and tools. Drawing in Flash. Working with layers. Timelines. Simple cell animation.

#### **Week 2.**

Review homework. More timeline issues. Tweening exercises. Morphing. Using traditional animation methods in Flash. Looping. Testing movie. Rotate, scale, and skew. Grouping, break apart. Tools in depth.

#### **Week 3.**

**Quiz 1.** Review work. Continue topics. Animated masks. Alpha effects. Examine interactive web sites. Go over importing bitmaps, trace bitmap. Pro's and Con's. Working with text and fonts.

#### **Week 4.**

Examine interactive web sites. Go over projects. Talk about designing for the web vs. for DVD and CD-ROM. Review Flash's windows and tools. Library, graphic symbols, movie clips, instances. Introduction to sound. Sound formats, importing. Making your own sounds.

#### **Week 5**

**Project #1 Due.** Critique. Publishing Flash projects. Making projectors. Putting them

up on web.

**Week 6.**

Examine interactive web sites. Review last week's topics. Talk about interactivity. Introduce Project #2. Simple Action Scripting. Stop and Go To commands.

**Week 7.**

Creating buttons, animated buttons, invisible buttons, buttons w/ multiple hotspots, simple action scripting, adding interactivity.

**Week 8.**

**Quiz 2.** Talk about accessibility, user-friendly design, and navigation techniques. Go over projects. Creating scenes. Organizing your movies. More interactive behaviors and Action Scripting. Tell target commands.

**Week 9.**

**Project #2 Due.** Critique. Examine interactive web sites. Review last week's topics. Final Project Planning.

**Week 10.**

Creating a simple pre-loader screen. Step by step in class pre-loader builder. Final project discussions. Work in class on Final Projects.

**Week 11.**

Designing for a target audience. Interface Design. Load Movie commands. Knowing how to modify code to suit your needs. Work in class on Final Projects.

**Week 12.**

Using video on the web. Final project discussions. Advanced web topics. Review any previously covered material as needed. Individual help. Demonstrations in Flash as per request. Work in class on Final Projects.

**Week 13.**

Work in class. Individual help. Preliminary critiques. Projects must be 75% complete.

**Week 14.**

**Final Projects Due.** Critique and Exhibition. **Tuesday, May 10, 2011. 1-3PM. Multimedia Lab.**