

Introduction and Course Purpose

Digital Media Graduates can expect to begin careers in a variety of capacities in diverse environments, from small start-up *boutique* web development companies to Fortune 100 corporate communication divisions. Young professionals can look forward to employment opportunities on projects that range from industrial, institutional, and museum exhibits to video production, electronic games, and corporate communications; from design of e-commerce applications to building animated 3d medical models and simulations used in training videos.

DIGM 250 Professional Practices is an advanced course that builds upon knowledge and skills introduced in the freshman and sophomore sequences of the Digital Media curriculum. The central purpose of the course is to explore the meaning of New Media professional practices in the context of an emerging field which some argue is not a discipline, and others argue does not constitute a field of study. This class will examine widely diverse activities associated with New Media, which is generally regarded as the coming together of computers and traditional media. Today, New Media is most recognized as 3d computer modeling and animation, electronic game design and development, web design and implementation. New Media also includes a growing array of computer delivery systems that include desktop configurations, commercial kiosks, mobile devices and ambient computer devices.

Objectives

- To broaden understanding of Digital Media in academic and professional settings.
- To establish the importance of team building, teamwork, and team management in digital media productions.
- To prepare students for advanced digital media projects that will be developed in the junior and senior years of study.
- To provide exposure to a variety of completed digital media projects produced for diverse clients.
- To provide exposure to conceptualizing all phases of media production from RFP's to project design, to the creation of media assets, the integration of those assets and their implementation and distribution.
- To introduce aspiring young professionals to client-oriented work, customs, and traditions.
- To familiarize students with the role of professional associations, and the importance of professional ethics and practices.

Class format

- The course includes lectures, and informed discussions based on assigned readings, review of case studies, and role-plays.
- Weekly readings include web resources, handouts, and other sources to be announced.
- Case studies are used as models for problem solving and to prepare students for three rounds of role-plays.
- Students keep journals to document their understanding of the readings, comment on class discussions and note progress on role-playing, the development of pitches and preparation of media assets.
- In three rounds of role-plays, teams of students write RFP's, others create treatments, design projects and pitch projects to the entire class.

Role-play Guidelines

Every student takes part in 3 rounds of role-play. Teams will play roles of client agency and design/production companies. In each round there will be one team representing the client agency and 3 teams representing competing production companies. Once formed, a team may not be broken during the course of a round. In each new round, new teams will be formed. Every class participant must take part in the role of a member of a client agency once, and in the role of design/production company member twice.

In each round the client agency will describe a project in terms of needs and objectives. The client agency will solicit bid ideas and budgets from three competing design/production companies.

The design/production company team will produce and/or collect assets, assemble the assets, and make a client presentation in the form of a 40 minute pitch. Prior to the class presentation, client agencies and production companies must arrange meetings in and out of class to review and discuss the progress of work.

Each presentation (pitch) will address the client's expressed needs and demonstrate how the overall design will meet the client's goals and objectives. To reach these ends, students are expected to draw upon all knowledge and skills gained through the Digital Media curriculum.

Each team will produce a demo making use of their skills in Photoshop, After Effects, Flash, Maya, Dreamweaver and other applicable applications.

Following presentations, the client agency will critique project proposals and select a winning project based on prescribed guidelines for evaluation. Others in class will evaluate the presentation and the decision of the client agency to

accept or reject the proposal. Evaluations will be made in light of original RFP's and informed by assigned readings.

The process will be repeated until each class member performs once as a client agency and twice in the role of a team member of a design/production company.

Analog Sketchbook

Each class member is to keep a sketchbook of drawings and brief notes relating to the role-play. These materials are used to convey and document rough drafts, concept drawings, moments of creative inspiration, product designs, and sundry other markings that aid in the development of class-assigned projects. Images and other content from the journal may later need to be incorporated in the students' *Digital Journal*. The course instructor may request access to the sketchbook at any time, hence, it is expected that students have their sketchbook available at every class.

Digital Journal

Content:

Each participant will keep an electronic journal describing progress toward personal mission statements based on readings and class discussions. Journal entries will provide documentation regarding assigned readings comprehension in light of class discussions. It is appropriate and required to make direct reference to reading material and related issues raised in class. Failure to do so will negatively impact grades. Journal entries should comment on experiences as a team member and observations regarding role-playing performances. Entries should describe an individual's contribution to the project and participation as a team member and provide evaluations of the performance of other team members. Entries should also include a discussion of perceived differences in performing as a client and as a producer and make reference to out-of-class client / producer meetings.

Format:

Journals must include entry dates. At least one entry for each week of class is required. Content should be developed as described above. Weekly entries should be 1 to 3 pages in length. Journals will be turned in electronically twice during the class. The first assignment is due at the start of the 5th week of class. The second assignment is due at the start time of the date of the scheduled final exam.

Grades

25% of the Grade will be based on informed participation in class discussions; 45% of the grade will be based on role-play and presentation rounds (each round is worth 15% of the final grade); The midterm journal review is worth 15% of the grade and the final journal review constitutes 15% of the total grade. Two unexcused absences will cause a student to lose one letter grade for the class, three unexcused absences will result in an automatic F; no appeals.

Required Readings

Most reading assignments will be available online. There will also be handouts and readings to be announced based on outcomes of class discussions.

Class Schedule

Week 1 June 24

- Introduction. Class parameters, objectives and expectations.
- Case Study of the Week
- Personal Mission Statements
- Distribute Weekly Assignment
- Form first round of client/agency and design/production company teams
- Assignment, due week 2:

Lev Manovich "What is New Media?" in The Language of New Media pp 19- 48.

Writing an RFP see

http://www.meadhunt.com/documents/newsletters/issues_rfp.pdf

Week 2 July 01

- Case Study of the Week
- Review Weekly Readings
- Writing an RFP
- Client/Agency Role-Play announcement of first RFP
- Assignment, due week 3:

<http://www.gamasutra.com/> Game developers website

<http://www.mca-i.org/> see What is a Media Communications Professional?

<http://www.aiga.org/> American Institute for Graphic Arts

<http://awn.com/> Animation World Network

Consider what are Digital Media Careers? Search the web for positions in Digital Media from entry level to management. Pay particular attention to the diverse firms that employ Digital Media graduates. Search for additional professional associations and community sites, *ie.*

<http://www.deviantart.com/>

Week 3 July 08

- Case Study of the Week
- Discuss the reading assignment What are Digital Media Careers?
- Team building exercise
- Assignment, due week 4:

<http://www.eff.org/> The Electronic Frontier Foundation. Use the site search engine and read about the Betamax case, and MGM v Grokster

Week 4 July 15

- First round of Role-play
- Assignment, Due week 5:
First Journal review due at the start of class

Week 5 July 22

- Discussion of web assignment from week 3, New Media copyright
- Client/Agency Role-Play announcement of second RFP
- Assignment, due week 6:
To Be Announced

Week 6 July 29

- Topic to be Announce
- Assignment, due week 7:
To Be Announced

Week 7 August 05

- Second round of Role-play
- Assignment, due week 9:
To Be Announced

Week 8 August 12

-No Class- SIGGRAPH/2008 Conference; LA

Week 9 August 19

- Client/Agency Role-Play announcement of third RFP
- Assignment, due week 10:
To Be Announced

Week 10 August 26

- Topic to be Announce
- Assignment, due week 11:
Second Journal review due at the start of class

Week 11 September 02

- Third round of Role-play