

Addendums to the syllabus – All policies listed below are effective as of the date of this addendum, May 10, 2010

Classroom Environment

- Disruptions to the learning environment will not be tolerated.
- When the instructor is talking, students are paying attention (this includes not working on projects, listening to music or surfing the web while the instructor is addressing the class).
- Cell phones will be turned off or silent. If an emergency call must be taken, the student must do so outside the classroom.
- Social networking such as Facebook, IM, or Twitter is not allowed during class activities. During work time students are expected to be working on the assignment for this class. Any student working on other class work or engaging in extensive discussion (more than 5 minutes) of activities will be asked to leave.

Students not following any part of this policy may be removed from the class. Repeated disruptions may result in the student being removed from the class for the remainder of the quarter.

Class is divided into three 50 minute sections. There are two 10 minute breaks. In a class that meets from 11am – 2pm these breaks occur at 11:50 and 12:50. Class resumes at 12:00 and 1:00. Class is finished at 1:50. If you leave early, (except for short bathroom breaks), or return late, then you will be counted as absent for the time you miss, (see below). If attendance becomes a persistent issue, you will be asked to leave the class for the remainder of the quarter.

Additional Class Attendance Policies:

If you have missed 12 hours of class total, you will fail the class.

Percentage points will be deducted from your final grade for class time missed:

- 3 hours missed = 0% deduction
- 6 hours missed = 10% deduction
- 9 hours missed = 25% deduction
- 12 hours missed = 40% deduction

This includes time counted off for lateness. You must be present at the beginning

of class.

Any time missed after the beginning of class will be counted in 15 minute increments. (for example -- 8:05 = 15 minutes late). The first hour of class is especially crucial in a project-based classroom. It is our opportunity to share technical skills, develop ideas, get feedback, share news and tips, and work together as a class. Though we may be more independent in the latter hours of a class, *I expect EVERYONE to attend the first hour from the beginning.*

Recommended
Actions for
Success

1. Make a class buddy on the first day who can provide notes if you are absent on a particular day.
2. Be detail-oriented. Sloppiness and mistakes will sink you quickly.
3. Have a positive attitude. How your instructor and your peers perceive you has an impact on your chances at success. A bad reputation will get around.
4. You have to talk like a computer animator if you're going to be one, so learn the language. You won't even make it through the job interview if you can't speak intelligently about your work and process. Know the proper singular form of the word vertices and know the difference between NURBS and NURMS.
5. Arguably the most important skill in 3D work is troubleshooting. In order to survive in this industry, you have to detect when something is not working right, determine the cause, and find a solution. The instructor is here to help, but you need to be self-directed in troubleshooting. Run through the following when you encounter a problem:
 - a. How can I describe the problem using industry-standard language?
 - b. What was I doing when I first noticed the problem? Does undoing that thing also undo the problem?
 - c. What do I think are the most likely causes for this problem? This is one of the tougher questions to answer. Check your course notes. Google a short phrase that describes the problem (this is one of the reasons the first bullet point above is important). Navigate the help docs. Ask classmates if they have ideas.
 - d. Once you find the answer, add it to your notes so you can refer back to it later. The next time you get stuck on the same problem, you'll know how to get around it quickly.
6. Find some way to improve with every project. Even if the overall idea of a particular project doesn't jazz you, there should be some way you can grow in some way useful to your career goal. Identify it and run with it. Keep in mind,

on the job, you will usually be doing work handed to you by others and you won't always enjoy the work.

7. Learn how to break your tasks down into pieces, create a schedule (try making a Gantt chart in Microsoft Visio), manage your time, and meet deadlines. It will lead to greater success and less stress.
8. Check your school e-mail daily (or forward it to an account that you do check daily). If I need to give or get important information outside of class, I will e-mail you at your school account.
9. Assemble your work into a demo reel, online portfolio, and print portfolio NOW! There are lots of good reasons for this. First, it takes practice to get good at putting reels and portfolios together, so it's stupid to wait until late in the game. Second, you never know when a job opportunity will come along, and you need to be ready at a moment's notice to compete against other artists for the spot. The reel and portfolios are living documents, constantly being updated as you produce new and better work – next quarter, the old and mediocre stuff goes out, and the new and awesome stuff goes in. Rinse and repeat.
10. Start networking NOW! Many jobs in this industry are filled by word-of-mouth. Here are some ways to get recommended, besides just having talent, working hard, and having a good attitude:
 - a. Join industry-related groups, such as the Minnesota Maya User Group, the After Effects User Group, and Independent Game Developers Association, and attend their meetings.
 - b. Attend industry-related events such as the Minnesota Electronic Theater
 - c. Post your work on industry forums so people can see it and give you feedback (some people have gotten job offers just from others viewing their posted work)
 - d. Attend software training sessions (some are free)
 - e. Call local companies for informational interviews and to get feedback on your work
 - f. Start introducing yourself to people who love 3D modeling, or animation, or visual effects, just like you do (use social networking sites on the Internet as well as face-to-face social occasions)

By the way, don't expect Career Services to do your job search for you – they are

there to assist, but you still carry the primary responsibility for finding work. Networking is key, and you can't wait until you graduate to start – do it now!