

Special Visual Effects

final project

Your final project for this class consists of many parts. In summary: you are to propose, pre-produce, produce, and evaluate at least one high-quality visual effects shot in DV.

Each of the following deadlines is a hard deadline. In other words, you must complete each part in full by its respective due date to get an evaluation/passing grade in the class.

PROPOSAL (due Tuesday April 8th at the beginning of class)

Hand in a typed (proofread, and spell-checked) description of the shot(s) you plan to produce. Along with the description of each shot, write (in broad strokes) how you plan to produce it. Whatever you propose, here are some things to keep in mind:

- I will be expecting high-quality work. You now know what it takes to make images that look good. Do it!
- I will be looking at the complexity of the work you are proposing. One very hard shot might be enough of a challenge, but if you propose one easy shot I'll bounce it back to you.
- We've had so much to learn this term about FX techniques that we haven't had many opportunities to make short films that feature FX work. I will warmly welcome proposals for short narrative or experimental pieces that feature FX shots, but only as long as the production of the non-FX work doesn't threaten the work expected for this class.

If your written description doesn't clearly explain the shot, you need to either revise the description or add sketches to make it clear to me what you want to do.

If you can't make up your mind, feel free to propose multiple ideas. I will help you find the best one.

* There is also reading for Tuesday: Rickitt chapter 4 on animation (pp 136-187).

PRE-PRODUCTION (due Tuesday April 15th in class)

On the 15th, we will break into three subgroups. Each of you will present a detailed description of how you plan to produce your shot to your subgroup. Non-class members will be present in each subgroup to keep the discussions on track and on schedule.

You will have 5 minutes to pitch your approach. You should use some form of physical documentation (drawings, pictures, models - whatever you need) to communicate to the subgroup exactly what you plan to do so there is no ambiguity. In addition to your pitch, you must hand in a typed written description of your approach (illustrated if necessary). The written description should go into gory detail, naming techniques that you plan to use, listing elements and mattes, etc.

Your pitch will be followed by 5 minutes during which time your groupmates have the job of picking apart every possible weakness of your approach, suggesting alternative ideas to achieve better results, and in general helping you get where you want to go.

On Thursday, April 10th, we will go through this process with the class as a whole to give you a better idea of what is expected. I will present a pitch for you to dissect in class.

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PRODUCTION (due Thursday April 24th in class)

We will re-convene the subgroups for this class and have you each present your work in progress. At this stage, all of your footage should have been shot and you should show rendered comps for critique from your peers. The total time limit per student will once again be 10 minutes.

Your role as presenter is rather simple: since the final project is a week from being complete, your shot(s) should stand pretty much on their own. The real contributions should come from your groupmates, who should point out trouble spots as well as ways you can improve the work in the final week. They are your test audience.

SCREENING AND EVALUATION (due Thursday May 1 in class)

Your final project is due in full on the last day of class. A complete final project consists of:

- The two written pieces you handed in on April 8th (proposal) and April 15th (pre-production).
- All supporting project files for your final project (Photoshop, After Effects, etc.)
- The source and final digital media for your final project (burn all the digital stuff to CD if it's larger than 20-30Mb).

Also due on the last day of class is your course portfolio, which should contain:

- A typed self-evaluation of your performance in the course. Make sure you include a self-critique of your final project. This is required for all students, not just Hampshire students.
- Your final reel, mini-DV or VHS, containing all of your assignments and the final project.

I have all the files that have been handed in to the hand-in folder, but for completeness's sake, you may want to burn all of your projects onto a portfolio CD, particularly if there is revised work you haven't handed in online.

Please feel free to email me with project-specific questions. This structure is designed to be flexible enough to allow for many different kinds of final projects and I'm eager to accommodate your particular interests and goals.