

# VM463: Graphic Design for Digital Media

Emerson College – Syllabus: Fall 2008 (revised 9/8/08)

Class sessions: Mondays 6:00pm – 9:45pm

Room: T809 at 180 Tremont St.

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## Course Description:

This course includes the fundamentals and aesthetic considerations of design composition (text, image, graphics, motion) and production for digital media. Students will conduct studies of and complete exercises in design and layout for the screen; visual communication of ideas and concepts in a non-textual context; screen elements for digital media art, such as buttons, type, color, and virtual environments; file formats; and digital media considerations and information flow/sequencing and design. **Prerequisite: VM 260.**

## Expectations:

You will increase your knowledge of graphic design theory, ability to discuss your design, and increase your practice in the context of digital media. You will be required to complete all assignments on time. Assignments will come in the form of individual modules. Each module will be part of an integrated, semester-long project that will be published online by the end of the semester. You will be given several in-class assignments designed to increase your familiarity with the tools, as well as take-home assignments that will be completed outside of class time. You are expected to participate in critiques and actively discuss your work and that of your peers. Be sure to bring your portable storage media (Flash Drive, FireWire drive, etc.) to every class, **and make regular backups of your work.**

## Grading is based on the following:

Attendance: Class attendance is absolutely required. Three absences will result in automatic failure. Punctuality counts. If you are over 10 min. late, you will be marked late. Two tardies equal one absence.

30%, In-class lab Assignments: Each class session will have a lab objective that students are required to complete before the end of class. Details will be given the day of each class on the specific assignment for that day.

20%, Participation: Active participation in all critiques and class discussions is expected. This includes completion of all reading assignments.

50%, Production & Quality: Major assignments will be described in detail in a project sheet. Each of these will include a critique session and/or screening. Attendance on these days is also part of the assignment. Successful and timely completion of all in class and take home assignments is expected. Your grade will be reduced for late or missing a due date. Your performance and work on critique days will be based on the following criteria:

### \*Quality:

Do you effectively convey your message to your audience? Is it accessible? Does it make sense to them? What is the purpose of any ambiguities you may employ?

Does your project consciously and intelligently engage with the material on a stylistic level?

Does your chosen style reflect or expand upon your chosen theme/subject matter?

### \*Production:

Does your project meet basic professional technical standards? Are your images clear, in focus? Is your sound properly recorded and mixed? To what degree do any technical inadequacies detract from your project's effectiveness?

**Required Supplies:**

Firewire drive: Emerson college recommends either Lacie or Maxtor brand Firewire drives. Be sure that the drive you buy actually has firewire connections and is not only limited to USB2.

<http://www.lacie.com/products/range.htm?id=10033>

<http://www.maxtorsolutions.com/en/>

**AND/OR**

USB Flash drive: Also known as a “jump-drive”, you can find these just about anywhere for relatively low prices. You should try to buy a USB2 drive rather than the slower USB connection.

<http://www.newegg.com/Store/Category.aspx?Category=324&name=Flash-Memory-Readers>

**Suggested but not Required Supplies:**

Domain Registration & Web Hosting: Although emerson provides free web hosting, you will want to register your individual “web-site name”, also known as a domain name for a professional impression.. There are many companies that do this, and some are unreputable or expensive. I recommend this site, just be sure to activate your “who-is guard”.

<http://www.namecheap.com>

If you buy your own domain name, you will need someone to host the site along with the name. Web hosting companies are a dime a dozen, and their offers change all the time. Again, go with someone who has a good reputation. Do your research, but in the meantime, here is one that I recommend.

<http://www.hostgator.com>

**Suggested but not Required Textbooks:**

Dreamweaver CS3: The Missing Manual by David McFarland  
Publisher: Pogue Press ISBN: 0596510438

Foundation Flash CS3 for Designers by Tom Green & David Stiller  
Publisher: Friends of ED, ISBN: 978-1590598610

Real World Adobe Photoshop CS3 by David Blatner, Conrad Chavez, Bruce Fraser  
Publisher: Peachpit Press ISBN: 0321518683

**Disability Statement:**

If you believe you have a disability that my warrant accommodations in this class, I urge you to register with the disability Services Coordinator, Dr. Anthony Bashir at 216 Tremont Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, (617.824.8415) so that, together, you can work to develop methods of addressing needed accommodations in this class.

[http://www.emerson.edu/disability\\_services/index.cfm](http://www.emerson.edu/disability_services/index.cfm)

**Plagiarism Statement:**

It is the responsibility of all Emerson students to know and adhere to the College’s policy on plagiarism. If you have any questions concerning the Emerson plagiarism policy or about documentation of sources in work you produce in this course, you should speak to your instructor.

[http://www.emerson.edu/student\\_life/handbook/Policy-on-Plagiarism.cfm](http://www.emerson.edu/student_life/handbook/Policy-on-Plagiarism.cfm)

\*Please Note: The following schedule is subject to change at my discretion. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out from your classmates what, if any, changes to the schedule have been made. Unless you receive an exemption from me, you will be responsible upon returning to class for both the current weeks assignments, as well as the assignments for the week you missed.

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**Week 1: September 8<sup>th</sup>**

Review Syllabus. Introductions and logistics. Intro to Web Concepts & HTML. Email communication test.

Lab Activity: Intro to HTML, Site proposals.  
Assignments: Obtain required course materials.  
Write Site Proposal & print 2 copies.  
Read "Casting the Net" & "Tim Berners-Lee" articles

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**Week 2: September 15<sup>th</sup>**

XHTML and Dreamweaver. Introduction to CSS. Creating a site-map.

Lab Activity: Dreamweaver website in class, site structure  
Assignments: Fill out your hosting and domain name worksheet.  
Create a sitemap for your website and print 2 copies.  
Begin collecting or creating text, images and graphics for your site.

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**Week 3: September 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Basics of Interface Design and Navigation. Essentials of Graphics and Imaging for the Web. Sketching Design Concepts.

Lab Activity: Individual meetings / Work on your Sketches  
Assignments: Sketch 3 concepts for your site design/interface, print 2 copies.  
Also bring your copies of the written proposal and sitemap.  
Be Prepared to present to the class next week.

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**Week 4: September 29<sup>th</sup>**

**CRITIQUE:** Class presentations and discussion of Site Proposals, Sitemaps and Sketches.

Lab Activity: CSS sample website.  
Assignment: Revise your Design sketches and Sitemap based on comments made during critique.

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**Week 5: October 6<sup>th</sup>**

Advanced CSS techniques. Introduction to DW Templates.

Lab Activity: Individual Meetings / Work on your first Template page  
Assignment: Create your first Main Template

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**Week 6: October 13<sup>th</sup> – NO CLASS (Columbus Day)**

Assignments: Complete your Dreamweaver CSS based website.  
Be Prepared to present to the class next week

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**Week 7: October 20<sup>th</sup>**

**CRITIQUE:** Class presentations and discussion of Dreamweaver CSS sites. Discuss Flash Project

Assignments: Write Proposal for Flash component of your site.

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**Week 8: October 27<sup>th</sup>**

Visiting Artist, TBA. Building Interfaces with Flash: Lesson 1. Sketching and storyboarding your interface.

Lab Activity: Begin Sketching interface ideas & Storyboard as described on your project sheet.

Assignments: Work on your Flash Interface.

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**Week 9: November 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Building Interfaces with Flash: Lesson 2. Publishing (uploading your site). File management on servers.

Lab Activity: Individual meetings / Work on your flash Interface in class

Assignments: Complete your Flash Interface.

Be Prepared to present to the class next week

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**Week 10: November 10<sup>th</sup>**

**CRITIQUE:** Class presentations and discussion of Flash Interfaces. Discuss AfterEffects Project.

Assignments: Write Proposal for AfterEffects project.

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**Week 11: November 17<sup>th</sup>**

Elements of motion graphics. Typographic elements in AfterEffects. Storyboarding.

Lab Activity: Sample typographic animation project

Assignments: Storyboard your AfterEffects project

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**Week 12: November 24<sup>th</sup>**

Advanced motion techniques in AfterEffects.

Lab Activity: Individual Meetings / Continue working on your AfterEffects Project.

Assignments: Continue working on Final Short Video. Bring questions to the next class.

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**Week 13: December 1<sup>st</sup>**

Preparing video for the Web. Use of Video with Flash. Use of sound with Graphics. Group Q&A session.

Lab Activity: Prepare your AE video for viewing on web.

Assignments: Combine the

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**Week 14: December 8<sup>th</sup>**

**FINAL CRITIQUE pt.I:** Class presentations and discussion of final project.

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**Week 15: December 15<sup>th</sup> – CLASS MEETS 8pm–9:45pm**

**FINAL CRITIQUE pt.II:** Class presentations and discussion of final project. The future of Digital Media.

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