



Official Syllabus for UW Animation Capstone 2025–2026: CSE 458

Important Links

458 Course Website: <https://courses.cs.washington.edu/courses/cse458/25au/>

The website is your go-to location for Assignment Tutorials, TA Office Hours, the Course Calendar, and other helpful resources.

Canvas: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1828377>

We will be using Canvas for assignment and file turn-in.

Course Personnel

Instructor: Barbara Mones

Email: mones [at] uw.edu

Lecturers: Terrell Strong & Amy Duer

Office: CSE2 143A

Emails: stront2 [at] cs.washington.edu & duera [at] uw.edu

TAs: Graham Godfrey, Erica Lipinski, Josh Seitz

Staff email alias: cse458-staff [at] cs.washington.edu

Office hours will be held in the Animation Lab (CSE2 143). Times are posted on the course website.

Email Addresses

Staff mailing list: [cse458-staff \[at\] cs.washington.edu](mailto:cse458-staff@cs.washington.edu)

If you need to contact the staff (including TAs) to ask a question, communicate an issue with getting to class on time, or expected absence ahead of time, this is the email to use.

Support email: [support \[at\] cs.washington.edu](mailto:support@cs.washington.edu)

When you have a computer or account issue, email the support helpdesk. Please CC the staff on the email, so we stay updated on machine status.

Cardkey access email: [cardkey \[at\] cs.washington.edu](mailto:cardkey@cs.washington.edu)

Contact for lab (CSE2 143) or classroom (CSE2 141) access, or if you are having difficulty accessing the Undergraduate Center. CC the staff on the email.

General Information

Lab: CSE2 143

Lecture:

In-person classes are in CSE2 141. Lab sessions are in CSE2 143.

Remote lectures are held over Zoom

***Classes will be held in person unless otherwise announced.**

Class Times: Tuesday and Thursday 11:30AM–12:50PM

Staff Meeting Times: Tuesday 9–10:30AM, Thursday 3:30–5PM

Date for in-class Final: Wednesday, December 10, 2025, 4:30–6:30PM

Final work turn-in: Friday, December 12, 2025, 10AM

TA Lab Hours:

- Monday: **10–1pm** (*Erica*), **1–3pm** (*Graham*)
- Tuesday: **1–3PM** (*Josh*)
- Wednesday: **12–3PM** (*Erica*)
- Thursday: **10:30–11:30AM** (*Graham*), **1–3PM** (*Josh*)
- Friday: **10–12PM** (*Josh*), **12–3PM** (*Graham*)

Office hours are in CSE2 143.

Lab Computers

While you should have your own machines capable of completing assignments remotely, our on-site lab computers have the software necessary to complete all of your course projects. You will need to log into lab computers with a CSE Account. We are working on getting you remote access, so you will be able to use them remotely using Microsoft Remote Desktop and the [Husky-Net VPN](#).

- Once remote access is enabled, we will guide you through this process. In the meantime, you will be working on your own machines.
- Do not save files on the desktop – there is a risk they will be deleted when you log-out.
- Saving Files on the Network:
 - When you work on a lab machine, you will also save files remotely. We will refer to this location as “the Network.” You can access your save location by from the file explorer at this address:
\\csenetid\cs\unix\projects\instr\capstone3
 - Navigate to the _student_files folder:
\\csenetid\cs\unix\projects\instr\capstone3_student_files
 - Create a subfolder with your name, and a second subfolder with files for the class.
(e.g., \\csenetid\cs\unix\projects\instr\capstone3_student_files\terrell\458)
 - Note that the Network can only be accessed from CS Machines.

Software

- We will primarily be using Autodesk Maya 2025
- You can install a Student version of Maya 2025 on your home machine by following the instructions on the [Autodesk website](#).
- You will also need a video editing program and a digital drawing/painting program. (Adobe Premiere and Photoshop are available on the lab machines.)

Other Materials

You should acquire or find:

- 2 flashlights
- A light ball (ping-pong, tennis ball, or equivalent)
- A heavy ball (bocce, bowling, or equivalent)
- A light box and a heavy box
- Rope, or equivalent

Note, you may optionally find or purchase a 3-light setup for the lighting reference we will do in this class and for the rest of the year. Sets will also be provided that you may work with in groups.

There is no required textbook but there will be books that will be recommended as support for class material.

Assignments, Turn-In Instructions, and Grading

Due Dates

The majority of assignments will be assigned on Thursday, and will be due the following Wednesday at 11 PM. At 11:30 PM, you will submit an Individual Critique Analysis. Note: the template for the Individual Critique can be found on the course website.

Turn-In Instructions

Final Assignments will be due on Canvas each Wednesday at 11PM. Grading Criteria is listed below. For each assignment, you will submit a Critique Analysis on Canvas by Wednesday at 11:30PM. Each Critique Analysis is graded for submission and completion. The information needed to provide the Critique Analysis is on the course website. Monday Progress Reports (Golden Rule #2): For each assignment, by 11PM every Monday, you are expected to submit the current status of your weekly assignment to Canvas, as well as a “Progress Report Statement,” detailing your current progress and your plan going forward to complete everything on-time. The Progress Reports are graded based on your successful submission of a work-in-progress file along with the completed progress report.

Grading Guidelines

Grades are broken down as follows:

Project 1 - Yacht and Hand Modeling (8% of final grade)

- Following instructions
- Resemblance to reference
- Good mesh topology
- Clean outliner, deleted History

Project 2 - Head Modeling (8% of final grade)

- Following instructions
- Resemblance to reference
- Good mesh topology
- Clean outliner, deleted History

Project 3 - Shading (8% of final grade)

- Following instructions
- All objects shaded in a believable manner
- Creativity, aesthetics
- Good UV topology
- Clean outliner

Project 4 - Lighting (8% of final grade)

- Following instructions
- Creativity, aesthetics
- Clean outliner

Project 5 - Rigging (8% of final grade)

- Clean outliner
- Following instructions

- Functional, "clean" rigs (e.g. proper channels locked and hidden)
- Good weight painting

Project 6 – Animation Basics (8% of final grade)

- Following instructions
- Silhouette, weight, line of action in poses
- Presence of Animation Principles
- Correct use of Animation Principles
- Readability of planning sheets
- Creativity, aesthetics, believability

Team-Based Final Project (42% of final grade)

- Following instructions
- Silhouette, weight, line of action
- Correct use of animation principles
- Readability of planning sheets
- Creativity, aesthetics, believability

Attendance/Individual Critiques/Progress Report (10% of final grade)

Grading Criteria for all Work

Professionalism (Participation and Collaboration)

- Ability to work in your group as both a leader in your area of expertise and productive team member to your group as a whole.
- Ability to receive and apply feedback from the Director and maintain a positive attitude towards the project.
- Ability to respond to communication from the Director promptly and respectfully.
- Where direction seems inconsistent or unclear, to have the ability to bring the discrepancy to the Director for discussion in office hours if needed.
- Ability to maintain a positive attitude toward the project.
- Ability to follow through on work that has been assigned.
- Ability to make constructive suggestions by doing the work assigned and providing alternate technical and aesthetic solutions when needed.
- Ability to communicate positively and constructively and to resolve concerns quickly and effectively.
- Ability to work collaboratively with other students and appropriate team members.
- Ability to provide appropriate and creative contributions to all aspects of the production.
- Ability to provide constructive and proactive approaches to problem solving during dailies in support of the goals in the agenda.
- Ability to work collaboratively to reach a common goal and vision including the ability to be flexible and fill in for a fellow student who needs help.
- Ability to find someone to fill in if an emergency keeps you from finishing your work on time.

Production (Quality of Individual Work)

- Ability to meet deadlines.
- Ability to manage and organize your time.
- Ability to complete assigned work.
- Ability to apply your skills to produce quality work.

- Ability to offer to take on production tasks and to complete them.
- Ability and willingness to take on extra work and do the job, especially contributions made near the end of a production.
- Ability to effectively and efficiently lead the areas you've been assigned.
- To provide weekly reports covering your leadership in your group and your support of other group members or the group as a whole.
- To fill out and submit all self-critiques covering your assessment of how you have functioned in the class as well as all requested critique analysis worksheets that assess how you feel about the work you produced individually and as part of a group.

Late Work Policy

It is assumed that your work will be on time. Incomplete work will be turned in on time so that it can be evaluated with everyone else. Under some rare and extenuating circumstances, the staff may decide to grade revised projects. Under these circumstances, there will be a 0.5 deduction every day the project is late. After three days, it will be up to the staff to decide whether or not the project will be graded. The breakdown is subject to change as a whole and adjustable on a per-student basis in exceptional cases. It is always better to turn something in incomplete and on time rather than late and complete. See Golden Rule #2 Below.

Religious Accommodations

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Religious Accommodations Policy:

- <https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>

Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form:

- <https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>

Attendance Policy

We take daily attendance. If you are late or absent to class, your grade will reflect this. If you miss more than half the class, you will be marked absent. If you know you will be late or absent to class beforehand, or if there is a day you must leave early, **you must email the staff alias before class**. In special circumstances in which attending class becomes a hardship, you must contact the instructor.

The Capstone Golden Rules

Follow the Capstone Golden Rules at all times.

1. **Stay Positive.** Collaborative, interdisciplinary work is fraught with potential misunderstanding and confusion even under the best of circumstances. In industry, it is critical to do your best to be a positive influence on the team and support the Director. It's important to communicate well, make constructive suggestions, and to avoid dwelling on the negative. Turn it around and be

respectful and helpful. Work well with your colleagues and Director so that the process moves as smoothly as possible.

2. **Do something.** If you have work assigned to you and that work is due for review, do something and submit it for review. You are much better off turning in work that is incomplete for the group/Director to review than nothing at all. If you turn in nothing the production group cannot progress. If you learn to present your work so that you get constructive feedback, we all can move forward.
3. **Follow the direction and accept feedback from the Director,** even when it doesn't seem like good feedback to you. If you are asked to do something and you feel that you could do it in a different and better way, do the work that you were asked to do first, and then do the work the way you feel it should be done. When both are complete show the Director who will be able to see both versions and decide which solution fits best. The Director will make the ultimate decision, but showing your idea is much better than ignoring the Director's request and decision. If you can show a better solution and the Director agrees, then you will have helped the project move forward. If you don't do what you were asked to do by the Director, you will hold the whole team back.
4. **The Director alone approves elements of the pipeline before they move forward.** This is called “green lighting” the production work and is done in industry before each element can move to the next stage of the pipeline. No one else can green light production work, because the process would become chaotic and unstable. This is consistent with industry and a very important aspect of any complex production. So, be careful not to move forward without the green light of the Director.
5. **The need to reach out to your staff and instructor while working remotely is critical.** In industry it is quite common for animators and animation production teams to work remotely. More recently, entire teams are working from home because of the pandemic. We are all working out the proper and most efficient protocol as working styles and accessibility to equipment evolve. This is the time to be particularly mindful to make every effort to communicate any concerns and be compassionate and respectful of your team members. If there are any suggestions for improvement or there's a level of discomfort that impedes your progress, share this with your instructor via email and/or request a Zoom meeting. You may share concerns with any of the staff members. The staff will bring the concern to the instructor for discussion. Staff do not make policy but can bring a concern to the instructor's attention.
6. **You may not submit any work obtained from generative AI as your own.** Generative AI produces derivative content and can impede personal creativity which would negatively affect the production. You are strongly discouraged from using generative AI.

Lab Rules

For the Animation Capstone Lab Spaces

1. **Only students of the Animation Capstone are allowed in the labs.** Anyone else must obtain specific permission from Barbara Mones before entering. This means no significant others/friends/family, etc. This is for the safety of the students as well as the security of our equipment.

2. **Our labs (CSE2 141 and 143) must be kept clean.** They are community spaces, and it is important that they stay as clean as possible for everyone who uses them. This means keeping your own workstation clean, as well as doing your part to keep the floor and refrigerator clean. The kitchen in the undergraduate commons is also used by other programs, so it is essential that you clean up your own messes, as well as return any dishes you may have used as soon as possible after you are finished.
3. **Always follow the Golden Rules** in the lab spaces.
4. **Follow all UW COVID-19 Procedures and Requirements** at all times.

You will risk losing lab access if you are discovered breaking any of these rules.