

SYLLABUS CSE 460 ANIMATION CAPSTONE – WINTER 2025

Course Description

Apply the knowledge gained in previous animation courses to produce an animated short film. Topics include story development, digital cinematography, creature and hard surface modeling, animatics, principles of animation, and rendering techniques.

Class meets Mon – Fri 11:30 AM – 12:20 PM. Classes will be held in person in CSE2 143.

Canvas: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1786132>

Course webpage: <https://courses.cs.washington.edu/courses/cse460/25wi/>

Fresh Eyes will take place during finals week.

Meeting Schedule

Instructor Meetings: Thurs 9:30-10:30 AM

TA/Staff Meeting: Tues 1–2 PM, Thurs 1–2 PM

Staff/Leads/Groups: TBD

Consultant Meetings:

- Tues 9:30–10:30 AM

Before class on Tuesdays, there will be a weekly TA/staff/consultant meeting that students may be invited to attend.

Important Emails

- Support: support [at] cs.washington.edu
- Class: cse460 [at] cs.washington.edu
- Full CSE Staff: cse460-staff [at] cs.washington.edu

Production Dailies

Weeks One to Four: Preproduction

You will receive your [Production Role](#) assignments, and we will review expectations and deliverables that will be expected from Leads in class. The Production Team Meeting schedule will be finalized and groups will begin meeting regularly. At the end of week 4, the Student Producers will turn over the Production Calendar and Story Bible.

Tutorials during this period will include:

- Rendering and using the Renderfarm
- Production and Rigging Shelves Review/Overview
 - How to set up a shot for production – Layout

- How to save and iterate on an asset — The Asset Manager
- Zbrush and Substance Painter
- Editing in Adobe Premiere
- Cinematography
- Motion, including jump, walk, and run exercises
- Dropbox setup and file organization
- Adobe Photoshop

Weeks Five to Eleven: Motionmatic

The Story Bible and storyreel will be turned over, and layout and motion work can begin. The date for Fresh Eyes will be finalized, and we'll aim to have a motiomatic and lit renders for at least 10 shots by then. All production groups should be making progress in their respective areas.

Animation Capstone Production Golden Rules

1. **Reach out** to your staff and Instructor while working remotely — it's critical. In industry it is quite common for animators and animation production teams to work remotely. Most recently, entire teams are working from home because of the continued 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 a concern 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.
2. **Stay positive.** Collaborative, interdisciplinary work is fraught with potential for 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 for everyone.
3. **Do something.** If you have work assigned to you and that work is scheduled for a review, do something and make sure to submit it for review. You are much better off turning in work that is incomplete for the group/Director to review than to submit 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.
4. **Follow the direction** and accept feedback from the Director, even when it doesn't seem like the right 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 do it the way you were asked to do it 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 your work 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.

5. **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 then becomes 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 and if you think your work is ready to be greenlit, communicate with the staff and Director to receive clear feedback.
 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.
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Grading

50% Production Projects

- *Pre-Production Assignments - 20%*
- *Fresh Eyes Deliverables - 30%*

10% Critiques/Attendance

20% 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. - 2%*
- *Ability to receive and apply feedback from the Director and maintain a positive attitude towards the project. - 2%*
- *Ability to follow through on work that has been assigned. - 2%*
- *Ability to work collaboratively with other students and appropriate team members. - 2%*
- *Ability to maintain a positive attitude toward the project. - 2%*
- *Ability to communicate positively and constructively and to resolve concerns quickly and effectively. - 2%*
- *Ability to provide appropriate and creative contributions to all aspects of the production. - 2%*
- *Ability to respond to communication from the Director promptly and respectfully. - 1%*
- *Where direction seems inconsistent or unclear, to have the ability to bring the discrepancy to the Director for discussion in office hours if needed. - 1%*
- *Ability to make constructive suggestions by doing the work assigned and providing alternate technical and aesthetic solutions when needed. - 1%*
- *Ability to provide constructive and proactive approaches to problem solving during dailies in support of the goals in the agenda. - 1%*
- *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. - 1%*
- *Ability to find someone to fill in if an emergency keeps you from finishing your work on time. - 1%*

20% Production (Quality of Individual Work)

- *Ability to meet deadlines. - 3%*

- *Ability to complete assigned work. - 3%*
 - *Ability to manage and organize your time. - 2%*
 - *Ability to apply your skills to produce quality work. - 2%*
 - *Ability to offer to take on production tasks and to complete them. - 2%*
 - *Ability and willingness to take on extra work and do the job, especially contributions made near the end of a production. - 2%*
 - *Ability to effectively and efficiently lead the areas you've been assigned. - 2%*
 - *To provide weekly reports covering your leadership in your group and your support of other group members or the group as a whole. - 2%*
 - *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. - 2%*
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