

ART A256: CHARACTER DESIGN 2

Item	Value
Curriculum Committee Approval Date	03/26/2025
Top Code	101300 - Commercial Art
Units	3 Total Units
Hours	108 Total Hours (Lecture Hours 27; Lab Hours 81)
Total Outside of Class Hours	0
Course Credit Status	Credit: Degree Applicable (D)
Material Fee	No
Basic Skills	Not Basic Skills (N)
Repeatable	No
Open Entry/Open Exit	No
Grading Policy	Standard Letter (S)

Course Description

An intermediate course and continuation of ART A251 with an emphasis on storytelling in creating Characters for illustration and entertainment art portfolios. Students will develop a several deep portfolio based projects of Character Designs for film, animation, interactive, immersive, and real-world themed environments. Topics covered narrative driven design, art styles for portfolios, design drawing types and current industry expectations. PREREQUISITE: ART A251. ADVISORY: ART A118, ART A135. Transfer Credit: CSU.

Course Level Student Learning Outcome(s)

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to design original, well-developed characters that communicate clear personalities, narratives, and fit seamlessly within specific worlds or genres.
2. Students will exhibit intermediate skill in digital and traditional rendering techniques, producing highly polished character concepts that reflect a professional-level understanding of anatomy, lighting, texture, and color.
3. Students will show the ability to engage in constructive self-assessment and peer critique, iterating on their designs based on feedback to refine character functionality, aesthetics, and storytelling.

Course Objectives

- 1. Master Advanced Character Anatomy and Proportions Students will refine their understanding of human and creature anatomy, learning to exaggerate or stylize proportions while maintaining believability and functional design.
- 2. Develop Unique and Complex Character Concepts Students will create characters with distinct personalities, backstories, and visual identities that align with specific narratives or world-building elements for games, animation, or film.
- 3. Enhance Technical Skills in Digital Character Illustration Students will deepen their proficiency in industry-standard digital tools (e.g., Photoshop, ZBrush) to create highly detailed and rendered character concepts.
- 4. Integrate Costume and Prop Design with Functionality Students will design costumes and accessories that not only reflect a

character's personality and story but also consider practical movement, world-setting, and narrative relevance.

- 5. Experiment with Genre and Style Diversity Students will explore various artistic styles and genres (e.g., sci-fi, fantasy, realism, and stylized) to adapt their designs for different entertainment mediums and project requirements.
- 6. Produce Industry-Ready Character Design Portfolios Students will curate a portfolio showcasing their design process, from concept ideation and sketches to final rendered characters, with attention to presentation and professional critique.

Lecture Content

Advanced Anatomy and Gesture for Character Design In-depth study of human and animal anatomy Exaggerating proportions while maintaining anatomical accuracy Dynamic posing and gesture to communicate action and emotion Character Psychology and Narrative Development Designing characters with strong personalities and backstories Analyzing how psychological traits affect character appearance and design choices Visual storytelling through facial expressions, body language, and costume Stylization and Exaggeration Techniques Exploring various levels of stylization in character design (realism vs. cartooning) Finding the balance between function and exaggeration Adapting character designs for different genres and visual styles Costume and Accessory Design for Narrative Designing costumes that reflect a character's background, status, and environment Considerations of practicality and movement in costume design Incorporating symbolic elements through costume and props Creature and Hybrid Character Design Principles of designing non-human characters and creatures Blending human, animal, and fantastical anatomy for hybrid designs Creating believable anatomy, motion, and behavior for creatures Exploration of Genre-Specific Character Design Designing for various genres (fantasy, sci-fi, horror, historical, etc.) Adapting character designs to match the tone, aesthetic, and narrative demands of specific genres Case studies of iconic genre-based character designs Rendering Techniques: Light, Texture, and Color Advanced techniques in rendering skin, fabric, metals, and other materials Using light and shadow to enhance character form and mood Developing strong color palettes that reflect the character's personality and environment Industry Practices and Portfolio Development Professional workflow for character design in the entertainment industry Managing client briefs and feedback loops Preparing a polished, industry-ready portfolio showcasing character design from concept to final render

Lab Content

Project 1: Fantasy Story Genre: High Fantasy Fantasy World-Building Character Ideation Lab Activity: Develop character concepts based on a fantasy story setting (kingdoms, magic, creatures). Focus: Thumbnailing and silhouette exploration for heroes, wizards, knights, or mythical creatures. Deliverable: 10 15 silhouettes for key fantasy characters (e.g., protagonist, mentor, antagonist). Anatomy Gesture for Fantasy Characters Lab Activity: Study fantasy archetypes through gesture drawing and anatomy breakdowns (e.g., warriors, elves, dragons). Focus: Dynamic poses that fit heroic or mythical archetypes. Deliverable: Gesture and anatomy studies for one main character (hero or creature). Costume Design in Fantasy Lab Activity: Create costume designs that reflect the fantasy world (armor, robes, medieval attire, magical elements). Focus: Designing functional yet elaborate costumes fitting the characters roles. Deliverable: Detailed costume sketches for the main characters. Final Fantasy Character Presentation Lab Activity: Finalize character designs, adding color, textures, and details to fit the

high fantasy setting. Focus: Rendering techniques for metal, fabric, and magical effects. Deliverable: Full character sheet for one fantasy character, including turnaround and action pose. Sci-Fi Story Genre: Sci-Fi (Space Opera/Cyberpunk) Objective: Design characters for a futuristic, technology-driven narrative. Focus on mechanical elements, futuristic costume design, and integrating technology into characters. Sci-Fi World Character Ideation Lab Activity: Develop character concepts set in a futuristic world (space explorers, AI, cyborgs, alien species). Focus: Thumbnailing and silhouette exploration for tech-savvy or alien characters. Deliverable: 10-15 silhouettes for sci-fi characters (e.g., space captain, bounty hunter, android). Mechanical Design Integration Lab Activity: Create sketches integrating mechanical parts into characters (e.g., robotic limbs, exoskeletons, tech-enhanced armor). Focus: Understanding mechanical forms and their interaction with human anatomy. Deliverable: Detailed sketches of mechanical parts and their integration into the character. Futuristic Costume Design Lab Activity: Design futuristic costumes that reflect the sci-fi world (armor, space suits, cyberpunk attire). Focus: Streamlined, functional, and tech-infused designs. Deliverable: Costume designs for sci-fi characters, focusing on materials like metals, holograms, and synthetic fabrics. Final Sci-Fi Character Presentation Lab Activity: Render characters with attention to futuristic details, including lights, tech textures, and metallic surfaces. Focus: Polishing the designs to showcase advanced technology and space elements. Deliverable: Full character sheet for one sci-fi character, including a turnaround, mechanical breakdowns, and dynamic pose. Horror Story Genre: Gothic Horror/Supernatural Objective: Design characters for a horror story, emphasizing mood, fear, and unsettling visuals. Focus on dark, eerie aesthetics and psychological elements in character design. Horror Atmosphere Character Ideation Lab Activity: Develop character concepts set in a gothic horror or supernatural world (vampires, ghosts, monsters, haunted individuals). Focus: Thumbnailing and silhouette exploration for terrifying or mysterious characters. Deliverable: 10-15 silhouettes for horror characters (e.g., monster, cursed hero, haunted antagonist). Anatomy of Horror Grotesque Design Lab Activity: Explore exaggerated anatomy and grotesque elements (mutations, distortions, monstrous forms). Focus: Distorting the human form to create unsettling, unnatural designs. Deliverable: Anatomical breakdowns and sketches of one main horror character. Costume Design for Horror Characters Lab Activity: Design costumes that reflect the dark tone of the horror setting (tattered clothing, Victorian dresses, eerie accessories). Focus: Using costume and texture to enhance the fear factor (worn fabrics, decayed materials). Deliverable: Costume sketches for horror characters, focusing on atmospheric details like bloodstains, torn clothing, and eerie textures. Final Horror Character Presentation Lab Activity: Finalize character designs with attention to mood, lighting, and atmosphere (e.g., dramatic shadows, pale skin, supernatural glow). Focus: Rendering characters with emphasis on horror aesthetics dark, haunting visuals. Deliverable: Full character sheet for one horror character, including a turnaround, dynamic pose, and mood setting.

Method(s) of Instruction

- Lecture (02)
- DE Live Online Lecture (02S)
- Lab (04)
- DE Live Online Lab (04S)

Instructional Techniques

Demonstration Observation Individualized instruction Student presentations Supervise student use of equipment Show instructional videos Lecture Discussion Feedback/evaluation of skills practice

Reading Assignments

Students will read on average 1-2 hours per week from the assigned text and online resources.

Writing Assignments

Students will provide analysis and reflection on story-related assignments.

Out-of-class Assignments

Students will complete all drawing assignments outside of class, and are expected to spend will complete all drawing assignments outside of class, and are expected to spend 1-2 hours per week on out-of-class assignments. Students will have access to the OCC Art/DMAD digital lab during their scheduled lab time and during open/arranged lab times.

Demonstration of Critical Thinking

Discriminate between visual treatments suited for various story driven themes. Analyze visual and verbal descriptions of assignment guidelines, developing theme and design through traditional media and digital software tools. Analyze instructor demos, and apply techniques towards completing assignment guidelines.

Required Writing, Problem Solving, Skills Demonstration

Reading and research assignments are given throughout the class that reinforce important concepts. Through the process of completing course assignments, problem solving skills and technical skills are put into practice.

Eligible Disciplines

Commercial art (sign making, lettering, packaging, rendering): Any bachelor's degree and two years of professional experience, or any associate degree and six years of professional experience.