Digital Arts Communication 400
(DAC400/ENGL403)

Digital Storytelling

Instructor: Adam Glover
Office: ECH 2102
Office hours: M 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm or by appointment
Extension: 31249
Email: adamg@uwaterloo.ca

Course Mandate and Objectives:

Digital Arts Communication 400 encourages students to explore digital storytelling, with an emphasis on turning a concept into a story, a story into a storyboard, and a storyboard into a short machinima movie. Along the way, students will learn to analyze stories, derive best storytelling practice, and put those practices to use into a digital production of their own design.

Overall, the emphasis of this course is on storytelling, not on the technology for rendering the story digitally. For this reason, the course uses MovieStorm, machinima creation software, that does not require any computer coding. The software does require, however, some serious concentration, familiarity, practise, and most of all patients -- so working with the program early in the term will help you later with your final project.

Course Organization:

This course consists of a series of workshops resulting in the design and production of a digital short-content narrative (approximately 2 minutes in length). Students are encouraged to bring questions to classes, provide ample and thoughtful feedback to others during class, and work independently on their projects outside of class time.

Course Texts:

There are no course texts. Students are encouraged to subscribe to MovieStorm (a 3-month license is 20.00 USD, which is considerably cheaper than most textbooks). [http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/](http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/). MovieStorm is available for both PC and Mac.

As well 3 of the computers in ECH (EAST CAMPUS HALL) 1205 will have MovieStorm installed. In addition to teaching the class I am also your technical point person for all questions related to MovieStorm. Please feel free to drop by my office upstairs (ECH 2102) if you are having technical difficulties with the software.

Course Assignments:

1. Getting Started Assignment - 10%
2. Beat Board - 10%
3. Test Clip - 5%
4. Storyboard - 10%
5. Final Project - 25%
6. Final Essay - 25%
7. Peer Evaluation - 10%
8. Professionalism - 5% (Includes attention to due dates, participation in class discussions, providing peer feedback)
**Main Assignment Descriptions:**

1. **Getting Started Assignment.** This assignment consists of three parts: 1. a 2 minute pitch for your story idea; 2. Five ideal YouTube comments; 3. Three to five factors that will make your story a success. (In class; then written up, with revisions, for submission on UW-LEARN).

2. **Beat Board.** A beat board is a short concept board that fleshes out the main story moments (beats). Created with Post It notes and then photographed for future reference. (In class; then written up, with revisions, for submission on UW-LEARN).

3. **Test Clip.** A 15 to 30 seconds (max) test clip using the MovieStorm software based on a single beat from the Beat Board assignment. (Uploaded to youtube or other video hosting site, link posted to UW-LEARN).

4. **Storyboard.** A story board is a cohesive plan "board" that builds on your beat board outlining the dialogue to each shot, the required shot types, how long shots will be, etc...(In class; then written up, with revisions, for submission on UW-LEARN).

5. **Final project.** The final 2 minute movie. It will be based on your choice of one of Aesop’s Fables. (In class screening; then revised, for upload to video host with link posted on UW-LEARN).

6. **Final essay.** Two parts. First part discusses your design choices generally. The second part offers an analysis of 3 specific design choices – which you will illustrate with at least two short clips each – showing what you might have done differently, their respective impact, and then explaining why you chose the design element that you did.

7. **Peer Evaluation.** You provide other students with feedback on their 1st draft of their story (includes getting started assignment, Beat Board, test clip and storyboard). They evaluate how thorough, useful, and friendly your advice is.


**Marking of Final Assignments (Instructional Module and Short Final Essay Assignments):**

Assignments handed in on or before midnight of April 9th will receive comments and a grade. Assignments handed in after April 9th but on or before midnight of April 16th will receive a grade only. After April 16th assignments may not be graded and a 0 submitted in lieu of the outstanding assignments.

**Back up your work:**

It is recommended that you backup your work in this class both frequently and to several different places. Computers suffer failures all the time. You should expect this in your work flow. Investing in a USB thumb drive or external hard drive is always a good idea when working in a class that makes use of digital media.

**Cross-listed course:**

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

**Academic Integrity:**

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. **Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic
offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm)

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm)

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm)

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):** [http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

**Academic Integrity Office (University):** [http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/)

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

**Note for students with disabilities:** The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.