

# **ART 250A — Introduction to Digital Practices Fall 2008**

**Mondays - Room 136 CFA  
Wednesdays - Room 215 CFA  
MW 9:00 - 11:30AM**

## **Contact:**

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## **Overview**

Introduction to Digital Practices is a hands-on survey of the rich and unique resources the computer offers the artist/designer. This course is designed for Visual Studies majors and non-majors with either very limited or no experience in the computer arts. It examines both the computer's unique capabilities and also its influence on traditional art forms such as printmaking, painting, photography, film, video, music, and graphic design.

Lectures will present a broad spectrum of computing issues applicable to communication design and emerging practices. Emerging Practices focus on exploring the technical, tactical, cultural and communicative potential of emerging technologies such as interactive multi-media, electronic installation, networked telematic communication, robotics, three-dimensional simulation, biotechnology, and algorithmic image synthesis.

## **Objectives**

This course sets the technical foundation and cultural introduction for advanced courses in the Communication Design and Emerging Practices concentrations. Such a foundation can be applied to most other study areas as well. We seek to develop basic understandings and skills with emerging media processes: data management, vector and raster graphics, audio manipulation, application of computer resources in problem solving, and interactive structures for knowledge representation. Within this course the student will work to gain an understanding of the Macintosh operating system, and will attain a working knowledge of several leading applications currently used by emerging media artists and designers. In addition to building a technical foundation, issues in the contemporary practice of design and emerging media will be discussed.

## Grading

Evaluation of student performance will be based on [three art projects](#) (approx. 55% of the final grade), [five technical tutorials](#) (approx. 25%), a group presentation on a chapter from the [text book](#) (approx. 8%), and online written responses to two [contextual readings](#) and three videos (approx. 8%).

To be considered in the general grading process are:

- level of technical execution, and adherence to project specifications
- originality, sensitivity and flexibility of overall detail and organization of visual elements
- appropriate and effective image choice, effective media selection and utilization
- effective visual and oral presentation of solutions
- involvement in group critique and discussion
- punctual submission of completed projects

For specific grade distribution and criteria, see your instructor's section info (see links at bottom). Grading details and requirements are also provided with each [Project](#) and [Tutorial](#) description.

**Late submissions:** If you turn in any work to the server after the posted due date, you must inform your instructor or it may not be graded.

### Grade Breakdown:

Percent	Letter Grade
100-94	A
93-90	A-
89-87	B+
86-83	B
82-80	B-
79-77	C+
76-73	C
72-70	C-
69-67	D+
66-63	D
62-60	D-
<60	F

You are expected to take notes. Throughout the semester there will be a lot of information presented. I don't expect you to absorb 100% of the information when it is presented. Notes are an excellent reference when you are working on a project on your own.

## **Attendance**

Students are required to be on time and to attend every class. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. **For each absence after the third, your final grade will be reduced by 5 points. Lateness counts as a 1/3 absence.** It is your responsibility to ask for missed notes, make up quizzes and tests, and, if absent on a project critique date, to arrange a critique and submission of work with the instructor.

Under rare circumstances, if a medical condition or other unavoidable circumstance results in an excessive number of absences, the student may request a grade of "I", incomplete. Assignments must otherwise have been turned in on time, the average grade of work submitted to date must be passing, and the request must be made before the semester ends. See [UB's policy on Incomplete grades](#).

## **Required text**

Students are required to purchase *Digital Media Tools, 3rd edition*, Chapman & Chapman, John Wiley & Sons, 2007. The book is in stock at [Talking Leaves Books](#), 3158 Main St., for \$50.

There have been several revisions in the textbook since the last edition. Please make sure that the textbook you purchase is the 3rd edition.

## **Lab requirements**

### ***Time Committment:***

Students are required to spend a minimum of 4 hours a week outside of class, completing readings, practicing technical exercises, or working on projects. Many students find that 8–12 hours is necessary to maintain "A" quality work. Ample lab time is provided to make this possible in lab 142, and students may also use their own computers.

### ***Seating and Logins:***

**It would be helpful to you to use the same computer during every lab class.** When you login to a lab computer, the server sends a copy of your data to the hard drive in front of you. It is sent back to the server when you logout. Using the same lab computer from class to class will greatly decrease your login and logiut times, as the server will not need to syonconize all of your data every time.

### ***Data Storage and Transportation:***

Students are **strongly recommended** to bring an external hard drive to every class session. The external drive will be used for keeping a copy of all work produced in class, for regular backups of your data, and for transferring your work to your home computer.

To minimize login time on our lab computers, you are encouraged to keep the amount of data stored in your lab account to less than 2GB. All other work can be kept on your external drive, with a copy backed up on your home computer.

UB Micro currently stocks the below drives. Any other similar USB 2.0 or FireWire drive will be suitable. One drive for multiple courses is ok. Please inform students of the need to format for PC as it will be used on both platforms, and to dismount the drive properly before disconnecting.

#### **La Cie mobile disk 160GB**

DRV01148 \$79.95

5400 RPM

USB 2, pocket sized, no additional power supply needed

#### **La Cie desktop hard disk 320 GB**

DRV01155 \$89.95

7200 RPM

USB 2, not as easily portable, power supply needed, but faster and more robust

Students are required to implement a backup strategy and to bring all files to each class. Students must make regular, periodic copies of all work in progress and final pieces.

**Lost or corrupt data, through the fault of yourself, the lab administrator, or hardware breakdown, is never a valid excuse for late work** — in class or in the commercial world. Rigorous backup and saving procedures should be followed habitually. Losing a file is not justification for not submitting an assignment. **Seriously, hard drives crash, computers get stolen, web servers get hacked. Please always have a copy of your data in two different places.**

Following all submission instructions is the responsibility of the student. Poorly named, misfiled or corrupt files may not be graded.

## **Connecting to the VS Server**

Students must be able to connect to the **VS Server 2** to submit files. If you are connecting from outside the UB network, a UB VPN connection must first be made. Download the UB VPN client free from <[ubit.buffalo.edu/software](http://ubit.buffalo.edu/software)>.

### **From a Mac:**

in Finder, **Go>Connect to server...** type in in **vs2.buffalo.edu**.

Log-in with your UB IT name and VS lab password.

Select your *Home* directory and/or *CourseWork*.

### **From Windows:**

1. Install an SFTP utility such as **FileZilla**, available free from [ubit.buffalo.edu](http://ubit.buffalo.edu).

2. Make an SFTP connection to **vs2.buffalo.edu**. If you don't specify a directory, you will connect to your **Home** directory. To connect directly to CourseWork, enter /Volumes/VSR1/**CourseWork** into the directory field.

3. Log-in with your UB IT name and VS lab password.

For more information about the labs, please read the **Lab Access**

**Guidelines**.

## **Etiquette**

It is not acceptable to text during class. It is disruptive towards the class. Also, please remember to keep your cell phones silent or on vibrate.

Computers in the teaching labs should be used for class related work only, especially during class. Please do not IM, check your email, or surf the Web during class.

## **Lab fees**

A \$100 fee will be charged to your tuition bill for each EP/CD LAB course. (LEC courses have a \$30 fee). These funds ensure the availability of the latest software and advanced hardware, file servers, projectors, supplies for printing, and other instructional technology needs. Every EP/CD course benefits from digital technology and students are required to use the technology either in the creation or the presentation of work. Lab fee waivers can only be issued to students who are serving as Lab Monitors or who drop or resign from a course within the first two weeks of the semester. For more info on your Lab Fee, see [Computer Art Lab Fees](#).

## **Academic Integrity**

Students are required to comply with the University's policy on Academic Integrity, as described in [Article 3a of University Standards](#). The following actions constitute academic dishonesty:

Work submitted to other courses; Plagiarism; Receiving major assistance completing an assignment without acknowledging that assistance; Falsification of academic materials; Misrepresentation of documents; Selling or purchasing academic assignments.

The sources of all quoted or appropriated material must be credited.

## **Health & Safety**

### **Ergonomics**

Workspace ergonomics play a key roll in the prevention of eyestrain, neck & back aches, and repetitive stress injuries. Proper posture, seat height, and arm position are important. Take frequent breaks to relieve muscle tension and eye strain. See pages 6 and 7 in your DMT text for more information.

### **Safety Escorts**

Safety Escort volunteers are available to walk you to your car or dorm between 8:00 pm - 12:00 am, Sunday thru Thursday when classes are in session. To request an escort on the North Campus, call 716-348-7258. To request an escort on the South Campus, call 716-348-1608.

### **First Aid**

AED (automated external defibrillator) are located in the corridor outside CFA 136, in the Atrium near the Drama Theatre, and elsewhere in the CFA. The AED is a critical life saving device used in cases of cardiac arrest, and must be used by trained personnel only. Several CFA staff in the EP/CD area have been trained in the operation of the AED, including Daniel Calleri, Dom Licata, Jerry Kegler (CFA 101) and Vince Harzewski (CFA 103). In the event of a medical emergency, have someone phone 645-2222, retrieve the AED, and look for a person trained in CPR.

**In case of emergency, call University Police, 645-2222.** Do NOT call 911, or time will be lost as they have o contact UB Police.