



Design and Industry Department, College of Creative Arts, SFSU

## DAI 627 Advanced Projects in Visual Communication Design Spring 2009 Topic: Virtual Worlds Design

### COURSE SYLLABUS - Spring 2009

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**Type of Course** Activity, Units: 3, Hours/Week: 6, Class Limit: 24

**Time/Location** Section 1: 9:10-11:55pm – Tuesday/Thursday, FA119

**Instructor** Jane Veeder, Professor of Digital Media <[jveeder@sfsu.edu](mailto:jveeder@sfsu.edu)>  
Research/Teaching Site: <http://online.sfsu.edu/~jkv4edu>  
Bio Site: <http://online.sfsu.edu/~jkveeder>  
Office: Fine Arts 317 Mailbox: DAI Department Office, FA 121  
Phone: Office 415/338-1547 only during office hours  
Office Hours (FA317): Wednesday 2-4pm, Thursdays 5-6pm (30 min appointments, sign up in DAI Office, FA121, or by calling 415/338-2211)

**Class Web Site** <http://online.sfsu.edu/~jkv4edu>

**Prerequisites** Instructor's permission.

**Course Overview** **DAI 627 Advanced Projects in Visual Communication Design**  
Development of student-driven project in advanced areas of digital and/or print media. Topics may include programming in design, physical computing, mobile media, corporate identity, information design.  
**Spring 2009 Topic: Virtual Worlds Design**

**Prerequisite:** Instructor's permission. For Spring, 2009: A perspective, a coherent body of skills to support your perspective, initiative, and commitment.

**Methodology:** Students will engage introductory 3D modeling and working within various interactive virtual worlds. "In-world" exercises and projects as well as analysis and reporting. Readings from the virtual worlds field. Students will produce writing and images for wiki development, and use appropriate design documents to produce a well-researched concept design for an original virtual world. Visiting speakers.

**Outcomes** Students will learn the basics of 3d polygonal modeling, visual and interaction design issues pertaining to online virtual worlds, and methods for conducting and reporting on active-research in online virtual worlds.

- Relevance** Online Virtual worlds concept and visual design, graphical interaction, both entertainment and serious game design, product design virtual prototyping and testing, Machinema, virtual marketing and commerce, accessibility in virtual worlds, cultural and social uses of cyberspace, education and learning in virtual worlds, etc.
- Your Body of Skills** Should fit your Perspective and support it. This course is NOT about equipping you with a NEW body of skills, but rather about interfacing your ALREADY EXISTING body of skills to the challenges (constraints and opportunities) of virtual worlds design.
- Interdisciplinary** Other than developing competency with the applications mentioned above, this course is not specific to any one technology or software specific - i.e. it supports an interdisciplinary range of approaches to the subject in terms of research, analysis, and design direction or flavor.

**RESOURCES** ++++++

- Class Website** The class Website at <http://online.sfsu.edu/~jkv4edu> is used for distributing handouts, assignments, providing links to online resources, and linking to student class Web pages.
- Course Reader** Readings and other hand-outs will be provided online in PDF format via the class website.
- Required Materials** Must have a computer (laptop or at home) that meets the technical requirements of SecondLife: <http://secondlife.com/support/sysreqs.php>
- Active research IN virtual worlds from home requires broadband internet access, i.e. cable modem or DSL (like on campus).
- Must possess a credit card for purchasing monthly membership in the virtual world being studied.
- Membership dues and other In-World expenses for online virtual worlds - probably under \$100 total.
- Purchase of up to 2 books TBA.
- CD-ROM blanks for turning in Blog files.
- Headphones or EarBuds for doing sound work in class lab sessions.

- Software Used:** **Required apps:**
- a. **ToonTown** online virtual world application (free account)
  - b. **Second Life** online virtual world application (premium membership)
  - c. **Wings3D** OpenSource Polygonal Modeler <http://www.wings3d.org>. Download latest "stable" version AND pdf manual. Site also features tutorials and links to other teaching materials.
  - d. **Various production applications** e.g. Photoshop, Audacity, etc., for producing bitmap graphics, sound files, videos, etc., for importing into SL.

**Optional opensource/free applications:**

- a. Creating SL Avatar Animations: <http://www.avimator.com/> or <http://caladan.nanosoft.ca/c4/software/posemaker.php> (Poser also works for this purpose)
- b. Other apps, TBA

**EVALUATION** ++++++

**Exercises** Various active-research exercises will be assigned and must be carried out independently with reporting done – featuring images, text, links, etc., as appropriate – on student Blogger blog site.

**Projects** There will be

**Critiques** Participation at all critiques is mandatory. Students are expected to be on time, actively contributing to discussion and presenting work. If there is a failure to participate in critiques, I reserve the right to assign you a failing grade. *Learning to think about and discuss virtual worlds design is a vital component of this class.*

**Participation**

- For this class, participation includes attending scheduled class sessions, meeting deadlines, individual consultations with instructor, ongoing and regular blogging, commenting on other student blogs, and collaborating with other students where appropriate based on each student’s work and when directed.
- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. Since there is so much technical, conceptual, and design information to absorb, regular attendance is vital to participating fully in this course and succeeding.
- Do not come to class when you are sick. Contact instructor in advance (email message is fine).

**Expectations** Workload: Expect to spend at least 6 hours per week *outside of class* working on assigned projects, reading, researching. Take this requirement seriously!

**Final CD-Rom** Students must turn in a CD-Rom containing an archive of all active research blog reporting and projects from the entire semester. This will be turned by early in Finals Week.

**Grading** SFSU Grading Definitions  
See full text of these grading definitions in the SFSU Bulletin at <http://www.sfsu.edu/~bulletin/current/grading.htm>  
A = Performance has been of the highest level, showing sustained excellence.  
B = Performance has been good, though not of the highest level.  
C = Performance has been adequate, satisfactorily meeting course requirements.  
D = Performance has been less than adequate.  
F = Performance has been such that course requirements have not been met.

Breakdown:  
20% Exercises  
40% Active Research Blog Reporting  
40% Projects (technical mastery, design thinking, creativity, meeting milestones, etc)  
100%



Exercises: All exercises must be turned in on time to receive full credit.

Projects: Any project turned in late will receive no better than a D. You will be graded for all project design and production milestones as well as the final project result.

Lost Work: No allowances for lost work. File management and doing regular backups is your responsibility.

Incompletes: No incompletes or grade changes for the course will be granted short of well documented, catastrophic events.

NOTE: To accommodate individual learning styles/paces, I make notes on student performance for each milestone and deadline and grade at the end of the semester, so I do not do incremental grading (i.e. publishing grades for each assignment). If you wish to know what your cumulative grade is at any point during the semester, email that request to me and I will be happy to figure that out and let you know.

**POLICIES** ++++++

**Etiquette**

- No food or drinks allowed in any DAI labs.
- Do not expect to do other work during critiques or discussions.
- Do not wear heavy perfume or cologne to class.
- Clean up after yourself, dispose of all trash in trash cans.
- **Do not work/play on computers during discussions or critiques.** No cel phoning, emailing, IMing, or unrelated web surfing during class.
- Help fellow students with technical problems you know how to solve.
- Respect your fellow students. Anyone causing repeated disruptions and distractions will be asked to leave.
- Abide by all lab rules and procedures.

**Syllabus Changes**

Instructor reserves the right to revise this syllabus and schedule at any time.