

2023 Fall Semester  
59 Carroll Hall  
UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media

Mondays and Wednesdays  
**Section 001:** 8am-9:45am (EST)

## MEJO 585: **3-D Design Studio**

*Maya for Visual Communication and Interactive Design*



### **Dr. Spencer Barnes**

Associate Professor  
218 Carroll Hall  
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### **Office Hours**

**Tuesdays & Thursdays:** 12:45pm – 2pm  
**Office Hours Meeting ID:** 968 5590 4614



## Description and Policies

### Course Description

The utilization of 3D software in visual communication is both an art and a science. In *MEJO 585: 3-D Design Studio* you will learn how to use a 3D software package called Autodesk Maya and apply its capabilities to dynamic explanations of information and phenomena.

Building design expertise comes with practice and this class is comprised of a series of readings, homework assignments, and exercises. Design is also an intellectual activity so we will have discussions and reviews (i.e., critiques) of your work during the semester to help further your understanding of the design principles and processes involved. Because of the structure of this course, attendance is necessary for learning and is required (unexcused absences will affect your final grade). **Deadlines are fixed.** If you need to miss a class it is your responsibility to inform me in advance and to subsequently make up the work. You are expected to conduct yourselves within the guidelines of the UNC-CH Honor Code (see p. 9). All work must be completed with the high level of honesty and integrity that this university demands.

### Goals of the Course

There are three primary goals for this class:

*Software and Production Skills:* You should finish the semester with a working knowledge of Autodesk Maya which will enable you to continue learning as you engage in a range of visual design projects.

*Design Fundamentals:* You should have a good understanding of how to apply 3D software for the depiction and dynamic explanation of information and phenomena.

*Showreel:* By the end of the course you will have completed several assignments that are suitable for a showreel that can be included in your portfolio. As mentioned earlier, design is an intellectual endeavor, and an on-going process. This class will not turn you into an expert in visual effects, but we hope that you will finish the semester with a solid foundation in 3D modeling and animation, and a repertoire of useful skills.



## Required Materials

You will be required to acquire and install the latest version of Autodesk Maya and Autodesk Mudbox on your personal computer. The software is free from the Autodesk Education Community website located at the following url: <https://www.autodesk.com/education/students> .

You will be required to use LinkedIn Learning for this course and video tutorials will be made available to you on this site: <https://software.sites.unc.edu/linkedin/> . The tutorials will sometimes be assigned for required viewing.

Additionally, I will assign videos for specific exercises and skills. I will also assign a variety of required reading materials and websites to be supplied during the semester.

Canvas, <https://canvas.unc.edu>, will house our course website.

### Textbook

#### **Motion Design Toolkit: Principles, Practice, and Techniques**

Austin Shaw and John Colette (2023) - Focal Press

ISBN: 9781032060576

### Items to purchase

#### **Conductor Tech Cloud Rendering**

You will need a ConductorTech Cloud Rendering account in order to complete each of the course's major projects: <https://www.conductortech.com/> .

#### **Backup tools**

A Dropbox.com account. Remember that you are responsible for backing up your work. No deadline will be extended due to a loss of files.

#### **Sketchbook**

You will need to roughly sketch your ideas when exploring new concepts. Don't worry about your drawing skill level.

### Supplemental Readings & Resources

#### **The Filmmaker's Guide to Visual Effects: The Art and Techniques of VFX for Directors, Producers, Editors, and Cinematographers**

Erin Dinur (2017) - Focal Press

ISBN: 9781138956223



## Assignments and Grading

### Grading

Grading in this course will be based on quizzes, homework assignments, key exercises, and a showreel of your work. No final exam will be given.

#### Assignments

	Percentage
Quizzes	5%
Homework & Exercises	25%
Project 1: Animal Behavior	20%
Project 2: Natural Phenomena	20%
Project 3: Showreel	30%
	<b>100%</b>

#### Scale

Percentage	Grade
100-95.5%	A
95.4-92.0%	A-
91.9-89.0%	B+
88.9-84.0%	B
83.9-80.0%	B-
79.9-77.0%	C+
76.9-73.0%	C
72.9-70.0%	C-
69.9-68.0%	D+
67.9-60.0%	D
59.9% and below	F

### Attendance Policy

Each student will be allowed two (2) unexcused absences and beyond that amount of unexcused absences the student's final grade will be reduced by 10% for each additional unexcused absence. Excused absences (doctor's note or cleared with me in advance) do not affect your grade. **If no documentation is presented within one day of your return to class the absence will be considered unexcused. Please communicate with me early about potential absences.**

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC).

**Please be aware that you are bound by the Honor Code when making a request for a University approved absence.**



Notes

**The work that you submit is what will be graded. No exceptions.**

**Late Work:** The maximum grade that can be attained for a late assignment (e.g., exercise, project, etc.) will be reduced by 15% for every day that it is late. You have a maximum of one class period to submit late work, otherwise you will receive a zero for the assignment.

You are required to participate in critiques and reviews in class. Reviews are intended to stimulate thought and discussion between you and your colleagues. It is a forum for learning as well as a standard practice for developing ideas.

Please be aware that I reserve the right to reduce grades at the end of the semester in some cases based upon your class attendance, participation in critiques and reviews, and the overall quality of your work.



		Topic/Theory*	Assignment
8-21	Monday	Introduction to MEJO 585/ Digital Scuplting	
8-23	Wednesday	Introduction to MEJO 585/ Digital Scuplting	
8-28	Monday	Digital Scuplting/ Modeling	
8-30	Wednesday	Digital Scuplting/ Modeling	
9-4	Monday	HOLIDAY	
9-6	Wednesday	Digital Scuplting/ Modeling	
9-11	Monday	Digital Scuplting/ Modeling	
9-13	Wednesday	Digital Scuplting/ Modeling	
9-18	Monday	Digital Scuplting/ Modeling	
9-20	Wednesday	Digital Scuplting/ Modeling	
9-25	Monday	WELLNESS DAY	
9-27	Wednesday	Retopology	Display Mudbox Model
10-2	Monday	Retopology	
10-4	Wednesday	Retopology	
10-9	Monday	Rigging and Animation	Display Retopologized Model
10-11	Wednesday	Rigging and Animation	
10-16	Monday	Rigging and Animation	

\*This is meant to be a guide for topics discussed in the course this semester. Some dates for topics may fluctuate depending upon the class' progress.



		Topic/Theory*	Assignment
10-18	Wednesday	Rigging and Animation	
10-23	Monday	Rigging and Animation	Exercise 1 is Due
10-25	Wednesday	Rigging and Animation	
10-30	Monday	Dynamic Phenomena	Display Rigged Model
11-1	Wednesday	Dynamic Phenomena	
11-6	Monday	Dynamic Phenomena	
11-8	Wednesday	Dynamic Phenomena	
11-13	Monday	Dynamic Phenomena	
11-15	Wednesday	NO CLASS	
11-20	Monday	Dynamic Phenomena	
11-22	Wednesday	HOLIDAY	
11-27	Monday	Matte Painting	
11-29	Wednesday	Matte Painting	
12-4	Monday	Advanced Topics in Maya/ Compositing	Project 1 and Project 2 are due
12-6	Wednesday	Advanced Topics in Maya/ Compositing	
<b>FINAL CRITIQUE</b>			
12-8	Friday	Final Critique @ 8am	Project 3 is due

\*This is meant to be a guide for topics discussed in the course this semester. Some dates for topics may fluctuate depending upon the class' progress.



## Assignments and Grading

### Workload

Throughout the academic term, students will spend approximately two hours per class period (e.g., face-to-face or remote live session) completing assignments associated with course instruction including readings, software demonstration tutorials, and other exercises.

**This course requires effort and perserverance.**

**The class will be held face-to-face and attendance is required.**

**Due to production requirements you cannot wait until the last minute to complete assignments.**

**All grades are final, non-negotiable, and will not be approximated. No exceptions.**

**You must remain attentive and demonstrate professionalism during each class.**

**All students are required to participate in critiques.**

**If your completed work is not submitted on time you will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. No exceptions.**

**You are expected to remain in class until class is dismissed.**

**All assignments are to be completed as detailed by the instructor and all assignment requirements must be followed.**

**If you are absent for more than 25% of the class periods during the term you will automatically fail the course.**





## Instructional Methods

Face-to-Face Synchronous Instruction (live classroom session)

Live classroom sessions will begin on the week of August 21, 2023 during the course's scheduled time and at the course's scheduled location. It is expected that students will adhere to UNC community and safety standards. Students will have access to a lab computer to utilize during instruction while in the classroom.

**+++++++ ALWAYS BACKUP YOUR FILES! +++++++**

LOST FILES AT A DEADLINE ARE NOT EXCUSABLE AND WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT YOUR FINAL GRADE.

## UNC Honor Code

The Honor Code (<https://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/honor-code/>) forms a bond of trust among students, faculty, and administrators. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill operates under a system of self-governance, as students are responsible for governing themselves. As such, our University is transformed into a powerful community of inquiry and learning. The Honor Code embodies the ideals of academic honesty, integrity, and responsible citizenship, and governs the performance of all academic work that a student conducts at the University. Acceptance of an offer of admission to Carolina presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in our century-old tradition of honor and integrity.

## Seeking Help

If you need individual assistance, it is your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.



## Diversity and Policy on Non-Discrimination

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions. More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements with accompanying goals. These compliment the University policy on prohibiting harrassment and discrimination. In summary, UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] 966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies.

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu)) or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office, or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

## Title IX

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall at [titleixcoordinator@unc.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu).



## Special Accommodations

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs, and activities.

Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

## Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short-term or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

## Final Exam

Final exam times are based on the Hussman final exam schedule. Exams are scheduled according to the day and start time of the first meeting of the course each week and are held in the regularly assigned meeting room unless the instructor is otherwise notified. If you are unable to hold your final exam at the assigned time, contact Professor Jules Dixon to check rescheduling options.

## Syllabus Changes

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.



## Accreditation

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here: <http://hussman.unc.edu/accreditation> . No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. The specific values and competencies addressed in this course are listed below:

- **Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;**
- **Think critically, creatively and independently;**
- **Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;**
- **Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;**
- **Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;**
- **Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.**