
Design Course Outline
DESN 261 DS16 | Motion Graphics I**Winter | 2025**

Instructor	Matthew Satchwill, BDes (University of Alberta)
Instructor Email	satchwillm@macewan.ca
Office Number	11-415
Office Hours	By appointment Instructors no longer have individual telephones. If you wish to have a voice or video call, you will need to arrange a Microsoft Teams call with your instructor.
Prerequisite(s)	DESN 131 and DESN 260
Corequisite(s)	None
Course Credits	3 Credits
Course Days & Times	Mondays 8:00 AM - 11:50 AM
Location	11-209/316
Calendar Description	Students create visual narratives with motion typography and animation. The principles of motion, time, colour, sound and space are explored as students learn to apply the tools and techniques of the motion graphics designer to creative animated visual sequences.
Learning Outcomes	Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the communicative values of motion graphics• Plan visual and sound elements of an animation• Create visual elements• Produce sound elements• Narrate visual elements using the tools and techniques of animation• Demonstrate narrative control over motion, sound, time and space in an animated sequence• Critique technical quality and effectiveness of communication of

an animated composition

**Textbooks and
Learning Materials**

There is no required textbook.

Instructor-developed handouts prepared in accordance with academic policy D7215 Reproduction and Use of Copyright Material.
Online videos and tutorials

Evaluation

Project 1	20%
Project 2	25%
Project 3	30%
Exercises	(5 total, each worth 5%) 25%

Evaluation is criterion-referenced. Projects are assessed according to these criteria, which derives from the Bachelor of Design program learning outcomes:

Design Process & Research

Use of comprehensive design processes, theories, and research methods, when applicable and within the parameters of each project. The evaluation of design process and research may include, but is not limited to, the following: problem analysis and definition; consideration and use of human-centered approaches; ideation; editing; implementation; production; evaluation; and the application of responsible practices in design as they relate to sustainability, social responsibility, and cultural preservation.

Formal Aspects

Creation of a visual response to the communication problem, when applicable and within the parameters of each project. The evaluation of the visual response may include, but is not limited to, the successful application of design elements and principles, colour, typography, composition, image, sound, and narrative.

Conceptual Aspects

Creation of a conceptual response to the communication problem, when applicable and within the parameters of each project. The evaluation of the conceptual response may include, but is not limited to, the following: application of communication theory; appropriateness of content as it relates to context and audience; originality of idea; and

integration of a historical and contemporary understanding of visual and material culture.

Technical Aspects

The evaluation of technical aspects may include, but is not limited to, the use of industry-standard production methods, tools and technologies for the creation, reproduction and distribution of visual responses across various media, when applicable and within the parameters of each project.

Professionalism

The evaluation of professionalism may include, but is not limited to, the following: communication of ideas, information, arguments and analyses, and design proposals, orally and in writing, to team members, peers, instructors, clients and stakeholders; adherence to project briefs; active participation in discussion and critiques; meeting of interim and final deadlines; professionalism in the presentation of final work; and working collaboratively as a member or leader of a team.

Due Dates and Penalties

Projects are due at the beginning of the class in which the project is due — this applies to all deliverables (digital files, mounted work, etc.). Late projects will immediately receive a full letter grade reduction of the project grade (ex. A to B, B- to C-), and then a partial letter grade reduction (ex. A to A- or B+ to B) per day after that (including weekends).

Extension of deadlines will only be considered under circumstances such as medical problems or serious personal difficulties (death in the family, accident, etc.) and then only if arranged before the deadline.

If your medical problem or serious personal difficulty (death in the family, accident, etc.) happens the same day as the due date - preventing you from making a submission - you are expected to contact your instructor as soon as possible to discuss a deadline extension.

Projects due on the final submission day of the term will not be accepted late; no exceptions.

Marking and Return of Assignments

Unless otherwise informed, students can expect projects for assessment to be returned with a grade, within two weeks.

Final assignments will be returned at the end of the semester, usually

after the exam period or the first week following final grade submission. Students will be emailed with locations and dates of pick-up. Please note, projects/papers not picked up by the deadline will not be retained by the program.

Attendance

Design is a collaborative activity with in-class exercises, critiques, and discussions. Regular attendance will improve your final grade and lack of attendance can negatively impact you and your fellow students. Your attendance will be noted and the course instructor may ask you to change attendance habits.

The Design program defines attendance as a student's physical or virtual (ie. Google Hangouts, Blackboard Collaborate) presence during the entire class time, unless explicitly specified by instructor in class (ie. work period, open lab, consultation). A student who comes late to class (5 minutes after the beginning of the class), leaves during class, or leaves class early without prior consent of the instructor is considered absent.

The following attendance policy guidelines applies to all regularly scheduled courses in the Design program:

- only 3 absences will be accepted; after 3 absences, the instructor will provide a formal warning via email
- after 4 absences, the student will receive a full letter grade reduction of the final grade for the course (ex. B+ to C+, D to F). The instructor will provide a formal notice of this reduction via email and will advise to meet to discuss your potential for success in this class.

MacEwan's commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

MacEwan is committed to providing a safe and inclusive teaching and learning environment in all programs/classes/labs/studios. As a signatory of the Canadian Code of Conduct for the Performing Arts, programs in the Faculty of Fine Arts and Communications commit to creating safe, inclusive, and respectful spaces where artists can thrive, free from all forms of harassment (including sexual harassment), discrimination, bullying, and violence. Although this Code of Conduct was developed primarily in consultation with the performing arts, we adhere to its principles in all our programs, regardless of discipline.

Information, support and resources are available at [Safe at MacEwan](#).

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is defined in policy as: "A commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. From these values flow principles of

behaviour that enable academic communities to translate ideals into action.”

[MacEwan University's Academic Integrity Policy](#) promotes honesty, fairness, respect, trust, and responsibility in all academic work.

The policy defines *Academic Misconduct* as:

“Participating in acts by which a person gains or attempts to gain an unfair academic advantage thereby compromising the integrity of the academic process, including, without limitation, Cheating, Fabrication and Falsification, Improper Collaboration, Multiple Submissions, Plagiarism, or helping or attempting to help another person commit an act of Academic Misconduct, and any other form of Obtaining an Unfair Advantage.”

Unauthorized sharing or uploading of material related to an assessment event (e.g., assignment, exam) to note sharing websites is Academic Misconduct. Outsourcing academic work to a third party (contract cheating) is considered Severe Academic Misconduct.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic misconduct. All incidents of academic misconduct are reported to and recorded by the Office of Academic Integrity. Information and resources are available on [MacEwan's Academic Integrity Website](#).

Use of artificial intelligence (AI)

AI is permitted as stipulated in each project brief. In one or more projects in this course, students are allowed to use generative artificial intelligence tools such as, but not limited to, ChatGPT, Firefly, DALL.E, and Midjourney. However, for the project where AI is permitted and used, students must include an explanation of AI use. This can be done in various ways through various deliverables such as: rationale, report, process book, reflection on project, etc. Your instructor will provide project-specific instructions for how to provide this explanation. At a minimum, students must:

1. List all AI tools used in their process: Make the use of AI tools in the process transparent, disclaim and elaborate on the usage.
2. Explain why this tool is appropriate for this project, what is the potential downside to using it.
3. Provide initial AI prompts, and revised prompts.
4. Provide AI process / screenshots to show concept development, rendering, and refinement
5. Explain why your concept is “original”, if it is based on something, or looks like something you must be able to explain why it is appropriate
 - a. Novelty, modification, originality (what makes it original)
 - b. If the final project has a “look” or “style”... why is that the case, was it your choice?

Please be aware of the limitations of AI. For instance, generative AI tools like Chat GPT and others are known to have issues with providing incorrect and false information. The information from these tools should not be used without confirming it with another source. It is your responsibility to check the information provided for errors or omissions. Additionally, image-based generative AI is known to have issues with biases and stereotypes. Therefore, it is your responsibility to avoid these issues.

Reassessment of Marks

All registered students of the University will have access to a fair process to appeal a decision or ruling that affects them as it pertains to academic matters, matters of student discipline, and student rights and responsibilities. Policies governing these matters stipulate whether or not matters are able to be appealed or marks reassessed. For more information on the reassessment of marks process, please see the grading procedure [here](#).

Students with Disabilities

Students who may require special accommodations due to a disability are advised to discuss their needs with the Access and Disability Resources office. In order for accommodations to be made, students must advise their instructor(s) at the beginning of the course or immediately after the disability is identified. For more information, please see [Access and Disability Resources](#).

Grading

As a final grade in a course, students at MacEwan University are assigned a **letter grade** (A+ - F) which corresponds to the official 4 point grading system. While instructors may use percentages to mark assignments and examinations, percentages are not part of the official grade (see Policy on Grading).

Marks will be converted to a letter grade according to this table:

Percentage	Grade	Grade Point	Descriptor
93-100	A+	4.0	Outstanding
87-92	A	4.0	
80-86	A-	3.7	
77-79	B+	3.3	Good
74-76	B	3.0	
70-73	B-	2.7	
67-69	C+	2.3	Satisfactory
64-66	C	2.0	
60-63	C-	1.7	

57-59	D+	1.3	Poor
50-56	D	1.0	
49 or less	F	0.0	Fail
	WF	0.0	Failure to Withdraw

Note: Students thinking of transferring to other institutes should be aware that many universities consider a grade of D+ or D a failing grade.

Departments and programs at MacEwan University apply different tables to convert marks to a final grade. Please carefully read every course outline you receive for the details about how the final grade will be calculated.

For more information on grading, please see the policy and procedures found [here](#).

Instructional Strategies

- Topics and concepts will be introduced using various formats such as slide presentations, lectures, discussions, existing examples and/or demonstrations.
- Students are expected to practice and apply concepts or techniques through in-class exercises and through projects.
- To fully participate in class, students are required to complete any assigned readings.
- Some personal research will be necessary to expand on topics introduced in class.
- Course projects will be critiqued in an open group discussion through various stages of project development.
- This course builds on concepts and principles covered in previous courses (prerequisites, core courses and design foundations).
- Students are responsible for applying all prior learning to the materials, discussions and projects covered in this class.
- Students, with guidance from faculty, are responsible for relating and implementing the material learned throughout their experience in the Design program to all aspects of their education.

Final Assessment

Students are expected to be available for scheduled assessments in this course. Only a documented and compelling reason such as serious illness, hospitalization, domestic affliction or religious observance will be considered a valid reason to make an application for a deferred examination. Personal vacations are not a sufficient reason. For more information, please read the [Student Assessments Policy](#).

Important Dates	New Student Orientation	Jan 3
	Regular Session Classes begin	Jan 6
	Last day to add or drop. No refunds after this date	Jan 15
	Term Break No Regular Session Classes	Feb 18-21
	Last day of classes. Last day to withdraw from regular session classes without academic penalty	Apr 4
	https://calendar.macewan.ca/academic-schedule/	
Policies	Students are responsible for reviewing and understanding all policies stated in this course outline. For further information and a complete list of policies, please visit MacEwan.ca/Policies .	
Recording	In this class, students may not make audio or video recordings of any course activity, except for those students who have approved accommodation from Access and Disability Resources permitting the recording of class meetings. In such cases, the accommodation letter must be presented to the instructor in advance of recording. Students who are permitted to record classes are not permitted to share audio or video recordings. Distribution or sale of class recordings is prohibited; distribution without permission is a violation of copyright law.	
mêskanâs	MacEwan employs a digital learning environment called paskwâwi-mostos mêskanâs (mêskanâs). View this short video to learn more about the naming of mêskanâs and its pronunciation. Blackboard has now been retired. You can find your courses at meskanas.macewan.ca or through Quick Links on the MacEwan portal.	
	Please contact the Help Centre if you have any questions or technical issues. A collection of helpful guides is provided through the Help Centre . MacEwan Help Centre can also be accessed on Quick Links on the MacEwan portal.	
Content Outline and Schedule	The University reserves the right to modify or replace the method of delivery for the course, including a temporary or permanent suspension of in-person learning in favour of virtual or online learning at any time before or during the course where the University determines that the delivery of in-person learning presents a risk to the health or safety of the University or to a member of the MacEwan University community, or for any other reason as determined by the University. Any change in the method of delivery for the course will be announced via email notification to students' MacEwan email addresses.	

<i>Date</i>	<i>Class Content</i>	<i>Location</i>
Monday, January 6	Introduction to After Effects and Motion Graphics + Exercise 1 Assigned	In person
Monday, January 13	Project 1 Assigned Brand Motion Design & Thumbnailing and Motion Sketches	In person
<i>Wednesday, January 15</i>	<i>Last day to add or drop regular session classes. No refunds after this date.</i>	In person
Monday, January 20	Shape Tools in After Effects	In person
Monday, January 27	Project 1 Due Motion Graphics Design for complex communication + Exercise 2 Assigned	In person
Monday, February 3	Project 2 Assigned Communicating with Motion Graphics & planning for Motion Design.	In person
Monday, February 10	Exploratory motion design + moodboards and style frames + Exercise 3 Assigned	In person
<i>Monday, February 17</i>	<i>Family Day - University closed</i>	
Monday, February 24	Interim review of project 2	In person
Monday, March 3	Project 2 Due, Project 3 Assigned 3d Workspace in After Effects + Exercise 4 Assigned	In person
Monday, March 10	Development of project 3	In person
Monday, March 17	Interim review of project 3	In person
Monday, March 24	Character Animation, 3D, and Blender + Exercise 5 Assigned	In person
Monday, March 31	Last Class	In person
<i>Friday, April 4</i>	<i>Last day of classes. Last day to withdraw from Regular Session classes without academic penalty.</i>	In person
Monday, April 7	Optional attendance class.	In person
Monday, April 14	Project 3 due by 3pm	In person

