Friends of Design

One Year Full Time Course in Concept Art

COURSE OUTLINE

Purpose, Methodology, Breakdown

1   PURPOSE

The course aims to be the first accredited centre of training for concept artists in the country.

The aim is to create an avenue for students to pursue concept art as a standalone career as well as to enhance the skillset of existing students of design who wish to pursue more intensive conceptual and rendering skills needed in the entertainment design area of the visual communications industry.

The course is designed to prepare students to be able to conceptualise and render any of the items that they are commissioned to create using traditional and digital media, as well as to enhance this artwork with state of the art tools and techniques used by concept artists in the industry today.

For a more in depth description of the above, please see:
FoD_HC_Concept_Art_Curriculum_Statemen_2019.

Exit level outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

Demonstrate an understanding of fundamental tools and concepts on which digital design is based.
Conceptualize and render inorganics objects, lifeforms and environments using digital software tools
Apply concept art skills in industry related scenarios
Produce and present a body of evidence demonstrating concept art skills

2   METHODOLOGY

Theoretical concepts will be gained primarily through the lecturer during the theory part of each module and self-study with lecturer support through research by the students and the module guide.

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Students are required to achieve minimum of 50% for each module of the course in order to submit their final summative assignment.

The final project for each student consist of picking a specialized field to focus on, working through the prescribed course notes, doing additional research needed for the project, taking part in 10 mentoring session throughout the 2nd semester, using the knowledge and skills achieved throughout the year, planning and scheduling the project, and handing in the completed final project for marking.

A comprehensive online study help guide is provided on the Learner Management System (LMS) to students containing subject/topic outlines and tasks for the whole course.

The lecturer will post extra material, links to resources and exercises on the LMS. Each subject/topic will have a discussion forum or chat app on LMS where students will post problematic areas from the assignments or tasks for open discussion and feedback from the lecturer.

3   MODULE AND SUBJECT BREAKDOWN

All modules are compulsory, core modules.

Module 01. Concept Art Fundamentals

Subject 01. Theory & Conceptual Skills
Subject 02. Perspective
Subject 03. Drawing & Anatomy
Subject 04. Digital Painting

Module 02. Concept Design & Rendering

Subject 05. Character & Creature Design
Subject 06. Industrial Design
Subject 07. Environment Design

Module 03. Applied Concept Design

Subject 08. Visual Development
Subject 09. Final Project

Module 04. Portfolio

Subject 10. Portfolio

Descriptions below:

MODULE 01. CONCEPT ART FUNDAMENTALS

This over-arching module aims to provide context for the year's work as well as build the conceptual and technical skills required to render concept art including studies in anatomy, an understanding of perspective as well as basic digital painting and 3D skills which are all used throughout the year. In addition, students learn basic conceptual skills in order to develop their creative thinking.

Subject 01: Theory & Conceptual Skills

This module introduces students to concept art as a standalone field of expertise introducing students to the various design industries in which concept artists function. These industries are explored in terms of their production pipelines giving students an overview of the entire design process and where the concept artist fits in. Students are during this module required to do a research assignment on a given concept artist in terms of their area of work, area of expertise and will present their research to the class.

With an overview in place of the production process and having explored examples of concept art in various applications, students are introduced to each module of the course and given an introduction to how each of these fits into the bigger picture.

The module also introduces the basic mediums that concepts artists may use to create their artwork and includes demonstrations in pencil, blue pencil, pastels and mid-toned paper, markers and explores other traditional media as well. Extended equipment is also introduced here such as light tables, equipment such as protractors and French curves and then explores technology in terms of software and hardware used by concept artists and what will be used in the course. The module also introduces basic college workflow procedures on presenting work which include handing in printed work as well as digital work.

The second component of this module works exclusively with conceptual skills. Students are introduced to the concept of the narrative and its role in the creation of concept art. Students explore various story archetypes and are given basic exercises to help them develop creative writing skills.

By the end of this module, students should have a good understanding of the role of the concept artist in the design industry, an overview of the various concepts and ideas they are going to be learning throughout the year as well as basic conceptual and creative writing skills.

Outcomes:

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

• Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the concept artist in the design industry
• Display a knowledge of traditional and digital media used by concept artists
• Demonstrate basic conceptual and creative writing skills
• Correctly present college work digitally and printed.

Subject 02: Perspective

This module introduces perspective as the basis for rendering all 3D forms in 2D. Students learn that the process of converting objects we see in a 3D world onto a 2D surface, whether it be screen or paper, has rules and essentially all drawing has hidden perspective embedded in it. Students are taught the fundamentals of perspective and are shown how the horizon line remains fixed at the viewer's eye level no matter how high or low they are off the ground when viewing a scene. They are introduced to the concept of vanishing points and how parallel lines converge at these fixed positions when viewed from a static viewing point.

With these fundamentals ideas in place, students learn how to construct drawings in 1, 2 and 3 point perspective. Students are shown to construct basic grids, which include orthographic view grids, a type of perspective in which vanishing point remain parallel, sketch freehand perspective as well as how to construct the basic building blocks of all drawing. Finally, students are taught how to construct curves in perspective allowing them to create more organic shaped forms.

Students should be the end of this module be able to construct forms in any type of perspective as well us set up a basic scene using these forms as building blocks.

This module also extends into basic 3D software training as well as correct use and ethics to from a foundation for the creation of frameworks for creating complex objects in the later design modules.

Outcomes:

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

• Identify the perspective in any drawing scenario
• Identify differences between one, two and three-point perspective as well as orthographic view
• Display basic penmanship skills
• Render basic primitives in one, two and three-point perspective as well as orthographic view
• Construct grids that can be used to scale to real life in perspective
• Use basic primitives as frameworks to create simple objects in perspective
• Create complex objects in perspective
• Create curves in perspective
• Create shadows for forms in perspective
• Demonstrate basic 3D software skills
• Render a single object in multiple perspectives

Subject 03: Drawing & Anatomy

This module aims to build the student's visual awareness of the components that make up organic objects, allowing them to have reference points to work from when rendering these organic life forms from the imagination. Students are required to do studies of human anatomy, animals and other organic life which include rendering from provided materials, analytical studies as well as participating in life drawing sessions using actual models.

One of the main areas of focus in this module is that students learnt to study analytically. While simple copying exercises are great to build visual awareness and rendering ability, having an understanding of what you are drawing is more important in the long term. Students are essentially taught how to study first and explore methods of doing so in order to gain a deeper understanding of the objects they are drawing. The anatomy component of this module extends further than the study of human anatomy and becomes more a study of the components that organic forms are built on.

Students are in this module introduced to commonly used techniques to draw heads from any angle and bodies in any pose using no reference material. Once students can easily construct basic human figures, methods are taught to adapt these techniques for drawing other organic forms such as animals and other organic life. Advanced techniques covered in this module include rendering expressiveness in figures and how to draw with foreshortening.

Outcomes:

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

• Render anatomy realistically
• Draw eyes, mouths, noses and ears
• Draw complete faces
• Draw heads from any angle
• Render different expressions
• Draw hands and feet in various positions
• Drawing arms & legs
• Draw the torso
• Draw the male and female body
• Draw complete bodies in various poses
• Demonstrate an understanding of foreshortening
• Draw the human figure from real life
• Draw animals
• Draw other organic forms

Subject 04: Digital Painting

This module introduces digital painting software allowing students to translate hand rendering skills into a digital workspace for speed and quality purposes. Students are taught to use graphic tablets with pressure sensitivity, allowing a far greater level of control for executing concept art than a standard mouse input. Students are guided to create a core brush set which include brushes for sketching digitally, shading forms, creating textures and adding special effects.

Students are then taught how to assign values to basic forms through a series of light studies and value assignment exercises. Students are taught how to construct the basic forms learnt in the Perspective module and how to modify them and it terms how to render the organic forms studied in their Drawing & Anatomy module.

Students are taught a basic workflow which progresses from line art to greyscale shaded forms and then color is added afterwards once the form is constructed. Students also do a series of studies to increase their speed and accuracy using the software as well as build visual awareness. These include texture, material and detail studies.

Extended studies include commonly rendered elements in concept art such as portraits, rock, cloth studies and other related items and explore painting only in values as well as directly in colour.

Students are also sequentially introduced to the specialized uses for blending modes and how they can be used to simulate texture, lighting conditions or special effects.

Students should at the completion of this module be able to replicate any given raster image digitally, have a good workflow in place that allows them to transform line art into final digital concept art as well as have built a good visual library of basic forms they can use in their design modules. They should also be able to paint objects by using analytical studies to determine key characteristics of an object and how to render it.

Outcomes:

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

• Use digital software as a tool for shading and colouring line work
• Use graphic tablets for digital painting
• Create their own core brush set
• Shade forms accurately
• Create extended forms
• Simulate light sources on forms
• Simulate textures
• Effectively colour greyscale forms
• Replicate any given image
• Render advanced forms such as facial features, rock, hair and clothing.
• Digitise line work.
• Use shortcuts to speed up their workflow
• Use analysis to break down forms for easy rendering
• Render using only value and only in colour

MODULE 02. CONCEPT DESIGN & RENDERING

This over-arching module aims to teach students the conceptual and technical skills for designing across all areas of concept art including industry specialized techniques for creating organic life forms such as creatures and characters, inorganic objects which include objects and vehicles and interior and exterior environments which depict nature as well as man-made structures.

Subject 05: Industrial Design

This module centres around the design of custom inorganic objects ranging in complexity from simple household objects to vehicles.

This module is designed to firstly introduce students to the basic design principles they will need to be aware of in all their design modules. It then focuses on the conceptualisation techniques they will use to create their first set of custom objects. These techniques include basic ideas for advancing concepts using line drawings as well as using silhouettes and incorporation of photo textures to start a design and then advancing it into a 3D rendering. Students are also taught finishing techniques to apply decals and textures to their objects.

Students are required to design increasingly more complex objects in varying perspectives with the module culminating in the design of a custom vehicle for a project in the entertainment design sector.

Outcomes:

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

• Demonstrate basic conceptualisation techniques
• Assign values correctly to line art
• Use silhouettes for conceptualization
• Use 3D frameworks to conceptualize inorganic objects
• Building simple inorganic objects
• Building complex inorganic objects
• Finish artwork using specialized industry related techniques
• Demonstrate a body of evidence that show their ability to conceptualize and render inorganic forms.

Subject 06: Character & Creature Design

This module is designed to introduce students to the conceptualization process and technical skills they will need in order to design characters and other related organic forms.

Students are taught the importance of a planning and research phase before the start of any project and the proper use of reference materials. A component of this module is also dedicated to the creation of archetypes in their relevant stories and how they can be used to enhance the character creation process.

Students are taught various workflows in the character design process which include developing from sketches and working from silhouettes. Students are then taught through a series of studies and tutorials and rendering techniques to work with commonly rendered elements in character design including working with hair, facial features and muscle structures.

This module also features a segment on costume design which is vital to the character design process which includes tutorials for rendering clothing, armor and related items. Students are also introduced to basic creature design in this module which draws on their understanding of anatomy and basic character design skills to design more complex organic forms.

Outcomes:

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

- Plan and research reference material for design projects
- Demonstrate an awareness of basic story and character archetypes
- Create and render character from sketches
- Conceptualise and render characters from silhouettes
- Create and render characters using sketches and silhouettes.
- Design creatures using a variety of methods
- Demonstrate a body of evidence that show their ability to conceptualize and render creatures and characters

Subject 07: Environment Design

This module is designed to instruct students on industry specialised techniques used by concept artists globally to create digital renderings of environments. These techniques cover the creation of basic organic based landscapes and become increasingly more complex moving onto environments with architecture and complex 3D scenes.

Students are instructed on different conceptualisation techniques that are used to create environments, which include painting from a blank canvas, incorporating photography for texturing as well as using photo plates as a starting point. Students are taught basic composition rules and how to create digital perspective grids that will allow them to ensure their scenes are technically correct. In addition, students are taught basic painting, photo manipulation skills and special effects used for rendering and enhancing their scenes.

Students are also taught to adapt techniques learnt in the industrial design module using 3D software tools to create basic frameworks for complex environments and interiors which they can use as a photo plate for creation of their environments.

Outcomes:

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

- Create custom environment brushes
- Demonstrate and understanding of basic composition
- Create custom environment brushes
- Create digital perspective
- Incorporate photography seamlessly into their environments
- Use photo plates as the starting point for environments
- Render organic environments
- Use 3D frameworks to create inorganic environments
- Demonstrate a body of evidence that show their ability to conceptualize and render environments.

MODULE 03. APPLIED CONCEPT DESIGN

This over-arching module provides students with practical scenarios so that students may refine their workflow as well as produce work in industry related scenarios.

Subject 08: Visual Development

This module is designed so that students may use all the skills they have learned in the year to complete common industry related tasks they might encounter in the concept art industry. The assignments they are presented with allow them to refine a workflow that is effective for them personally and allow them the opportunity to start developing a personal style. These practical assignments include projects in game design, film design and standalone digital painting.

After this module, students should demonstrate a strong set of complete concept art skills they can use in any given scenario, have experience creating concepts for given campaigns and will have developed an efficient workflow they can use to render ideas.

Outcomes:

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

• Efficiently execute concept art from start to finish
• Demonstrate a unique workflow that suits their own personal style
• Create concept art for video games
• Create concept art for film
• Create standalone digital paintings

Subject 09: Final Project

This module is designed to give students the opportunity to manage an entire concept art campaign. The module is purely practical and requires that students develop concept art for a film or game.

The artwork required will include character design, environments, vehicles and any other relevant design work to illustrate the look and feel of the project. Students are given no restrictions as to medium or workflow and are encouraged to use any and all off the techniques learnt in the year to maximize the overall impact of their final project.

Students should by the end of this module have a complete campaign that represents the totality of their skills so far.

Outcomes:

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

• Create concept art for an entire campaign.
• Demonstrate strong visual continuity across a campaign

MODULE 04. PORTFOLIO

Subject 10: Portfolio

The final book portfolio is a collection of work demonstrating the skills that students have developed throughout the year.

This module allows students to revisit any of their former projects and correct or modify work, giving the highest reflection of their skill set possible. Students are required to arrange their artwork in Adobe Indesign, export it in A3 size and assemble in a book format.

Outcomes:

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

• Produce a body of evidence demonstrating the skills they have developed throughout the year.
• Present this body of evidence in a professional manner

4   RESOURCE MATERIALS

Additional resources and class handouts – will be available on the Learner Management System

Software used in practice:

• Adobe Creative Suite
• Blender

Recommended Reading:

Legend:

••• marked next to the name indicates a prescribed text.
No marking indicates recommended reading.

01: Theory & Conceptual Skills

Christopher Booker, 2005. *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*. Continuum.

02: Perspective

Ernest R. Norling, 2012. *Perspective Made Easy (Dover Art Instruction)*. Dover Publications.

Scott Robertson, 2013. *How to Draw: Ddrawing and sketching objects and environments from your imagination*. Design Studio Press.

03: Drawing & Anatomy

Andrew Loomis, 2012. *Successful Drawing*. Titan Books.

Andrew Loomis, 2011. *Drawing the Head and Hands*. Titan Books.

Andrew Loomis, 2011. *Figure Drawing for All It's Worth*. Titan Books.

Stephen Rogers Peck, 1982. *Atlas of Human Anatomy for the Artist*. Oxford University Press.

Terryl Whitlatch, 2015. *Science of Creature Design: Understanding Animal Anatomy*. Design Studio Press.

04: Digital Painting

Brian Wood, 2016. *Adobe Photoshop CC Classroom in a Book (2017 release)*. Adobe Press.

Nykolai Aleksander, 2012. *Beginner's Guide to Digital Painting in Photoshop*. Slp Edition. 3DTotal Publishing.

Magazines: ImagineFX Magazine, 2D Art Magazine

05: Industrial Design

Scott Robertson, 2013. *How to Draw: Drawing and sketching objects and environments from your imagination*. Design Studio Press.

Scott Robertson, 2014. *How to Render: The fundamentals of light, shadow and reflectivity*. Design Studio Press.

06: Character & Creature Design

Scott Robertson, 2005. *The Skillful Huntsman: Visual Development of a Grimm Tale at Art Center College of Design*. 3rd Edition. Design Studio Press.

Terryl Whitlatch, 2015. *Science of Creature Design: Understanding Animal Anatomy*. Design Studio Press.

2017. *Sketching from the Imagination: Characters*. 3dtotal Publishing.

07: Environment Design

James Gurney, 2010. *Color and Light: A Guide for the Realist Painter*. 2nd Edition. Andrews McMeel Publishing.

08: Visual Development

Eliott J. Lilly, 2015. *Big Bad World of Concept Art for Video Games: An Insider's Guide for Students*. Design Studio Press.

09: Final Project

Any Concept Art collection books. Examples:

Blizzard Entertainment, 2015. *The Art of World of Warcraft*. Edition. Insight Editions.

Hayao Miyazaki, 2002. *The Art of Spirited Away*. VIZ Media LLC.

Phil Szostak, 2015. *The Art of Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. Harry N. Abrams.

Pablo Hidalgo, 2015. *Star Wars: The Force Awakens The Visual Dictionary*. DK Children.

10: Portfolio

Marc Taro Holmes, 2016. *Designing Creatures and Characters: How to Build an Artist's Portfolio for Video Games, Film, Animation and More*. North Light Books.