# Syllabus

Fall 2009
Prof. Malcolm Kesson MA London, MA Middlesex

| | |
|---|---|
| **Office building, room:** | 435 |
| **Office phone:** | 912-525-8557 |
| **Office hours:** | 1.30-2.30 |
| **Email:** | mkesson@scad.edu |
| **Building/Room:** | MONTGO 223 |
| **Meeting Times:** | Monday / Wednesday 8:00 AM - 10:30 AM |


SCAD®

The University for Creative Careers®

*School of Film,Dig Media, Perf, Department of Visual Effects, Savannah*

# VSFX 705, Section: 01 Programming Concepts for Visual Effects

**Mission of the College:**
The Savannah College of Art and Design exists to prepare talented students for professional careers, emphasizing learning through individual attention in a positively oriented university environment.

**Course Description:**
Students gain introductory knowledge of the LINUX/UNIX environment and how it relates to text editing and file management. In addition, the foundations of programming languages are covered utilizing LINUX/UNIX shell scripting, PERL, MEL, C++ or similar programming.

**Course Goals:** The following course goals articulate the general objectives and purpose of this course:

To develop the concepts and skills to enable students to modify, combine and write scripts that achieve specific production tasks.

To gain a sound understanding of procedural programming using the 'C' language and object oriented methodologies using 'C++'.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** The following course outcomes indicate competencies and measurable skills that students develop as a result of completing this course:

1. Students will write scripts to automate file filtering and batch mode tasks.
2. Students will write scripts for a GUI application that reads and responds to command line inputs.
3. Students will create an application that performs color space conversions.
4. Students will create an application that outputs a 3D scene description.

## Course Materials:

**Required Text(s):**

Professional MEL Solutions for Production
By Kevin Mnnens
WordWare Computer Books
ISBN: 9781598220667

Learning Python
By Mark Lutz
O'Reilly
ISBN 10: 0-596-51398-4 | ISBN 13: 9780596513986

**Recommended Text(s):**

none

**Required Material(s):**

A notebook and pen.

## Grading Opportunities:

Your overall course grade will be computed according to the following breakdown:

No Assignments have been entered

| Grading Standards | Range |
|---|---|
| Letter grade: **A** = excellent | 90 —100 % |
| Letter grade: **B** = good | 80 — 89 % |
| Letter grade: **C** = * | 70 — 79 % |
| Letter grade: **D** = * | 60 — 69% |
| Letter grade: **F** = failing | 0 — 59% |

*Refer to the student handbooks and departmental standards for minimal acceptance for passing grade.

## Schedule of Classes:

Key events including assignments, projects due dates/exam dates:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Class 1:** | Class 1 Monday, September 14: Discussion of assessment criteria and the web based portfolio. Review of Mel documentation, how to source Mel files; Mel commands, flags and data types. Mel modeling I assignment given (due class 2). |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Class 2:** | Class 2 Wednesday, September 16: Using groups, duplicates and instances. Getting and setting attributes, creating custom procedures. Mel modeling II assignment given (due class 3). |
| **Class 3:** | Class 3 Monday, September 21: Introduction to the python mel bindings. Re-work assignments I and II but scripted entirely with python (due class 5). |
| **Class 4:** | Class 4 Wednesday, September 23: Studio session devoted to the python-mel assignment. Note: the majority of Maya scripting from class 4 onwards will be done using python. |
| **Class 5:** | Class 5 Monday, September 28: Reading and writing text files from Maya. Outputting curve data assignment given (due class 7). |
| **Class 6:** | Class 6 Wednesday, September 30: Studio session devoted to the curve data assignment. Introduction to converting data to RenderMan blobbies and rendering with RenderMan. |
| **Class 7:** | Class 7 Monday, October 5: Introduction to the use of python as a stand-alone scripting language ie. not in the context of Maya. Text handling assignment given (due class 8). |
| **Class 8:** | Class 8 Wednesday, October 7: Making simple interfaces in Maya. Interface assignment given (due class 11). |
| **Class 9:** | Class 9 Monday, October 12: Studio session devoted to the interface assignment. |
| **Class 10:** | Class 10 Wednesday, October 14: Introduction to RenderMan Studio and its various scripting environments. |
| **Class 11:** | Class 11 Monday, October 19: Introduction to MEL insertion points. Polymesh replacement assignment given (due class 14). |
| **Class 12:** | Class 12 Wednesday, October 21: Studio session devoted to developing solutions to the polymesh replacement assignment. |
| **Class 13:** | Class 13 Monday, October 26: Studio session devoted to developing solutions to the polymesh replacement assignment. |
| **Class 14:** | Class 14 Wednesday, October 28: Begin developing individual student projects. |
| **Class 15:** | Class 15 Monday, November 2: Studio session devoted to individual projects. |
| **Class 16:** | Class 16 Wednesday, November 4: Studio session devoted to individual projects. |
| **Class 17:** | Class 17 Monday, November 9: Studio session devoted to individual projects. |
| **Class 18:** | Class 18 Wednesday, November 11: Studio session devoted to individual projects. |
| **Class 19:** | Class 19 Monday, November 16: Students will make individual presentations of the solutions they developed for their final project. |

| Class 20: | Class 20 Wednesday, November 18: Discussion, feedback and transfer of work to the (dvd) dropbox for the end-of-quarter visual effects show. |
|---|---|

## Course Information:

**Field Trip(s):**

Field trips will be scheduled outside of the regular class hours; these will be announced as the quarter progresses.

**Extra Help Session(s):**

These will be scheduled on a weekly basis outside of regular class hours.

**Other Course Information:**

## College Policy:

**Academic Integrity:**
Under all circumstances, students are expected to be honest in their dealings with faculty, administrative staff and fellow students.

In class assignments, students must submit work that fairly and accurately reflects their level of accomplishment. Any work that is not a product of the student's own efforts is considered dishonest. Students must not engage in academic dishonesty; doing so can have serious consequences.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Cheating, which includes, but is not limited to, (a) the giving or receiving of any unauthorized assistance in producing assignments or taking quizzes, tests or examinations; (b) dependence on the aid of sources including technology beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems or carrying out other assignments; (c) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the college faculty or staff; or (d) the use of unauthorized assistance in the preparation of works of art.

2. Plagiarism, which includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. Plagiarism also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

3. Submission of the same work in two or more classes without prior written approval of the professors of the classes involved.

4. Submission of any work not actually produced by the student submitting the work without full and clear written acknowledgement of the actual author or creator of the work.

**Attendance and Personal Conduct:**
Only students who are properly registered for a course may attend that class. Students are expected to participate in all scheduled classes and examination periods. Absences in excess of four per quarter, or 20 percent of the course, result in a failing grade for the course. Tardiness, early departure or other time away from class in excess of 15 minutes is considered absence for the class period.

The student's appearance and conduct should be appropriate and should contribute to the academic and professional atmosphere of the college. The college reserves the right at its sole discretion to withdraw the privilege of enrollment from any student whose conduct is detrimental to the academic environment or to the well-being of other students, faculty or staff members, or to the college facilities.

***Flu-related absences:**
In an effort to reduce the spread of the H1N1 virus, the Savannah College of Art and Design is implementing various protocols suggested for colleges and universities by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Students who experience flu-like symptoms should not attempt to attend class until 24 hours after symptoms subside. Students who miss class due to the flu virus must contact their professors immediately, before class if possible but within 24 hours of the class meeting to discuss make up options if they are available.

Students should ensure that all absences are used wisely in case they become ill and need to miss class. Students who contract the flu virus may be granted leniency with the attendance policy, but must complete all required course assignments and attain all required learning outcomes. Individual circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the professor.

**Enrollment policies:**
Students are responsible for assuring proper enrollment. See the college catalog for information on add/drop, withdrawals, incompletes, and academic standing.

**Midterm Conference(s):**
Each student enrolled in the course will have a midterm conference scheduled outside of class time with the professor. Students are expected to keep this appointment.

**Learning Support Resources and Academic and Safety Polices:**

Information about SCAD learning support resources and academic and safety policies, including the Learning Assistance Center, the Jen Library, the Writing Center, SCAD Helpdesk, the Visual Resources Center, and Student Counseling and Disabilities Services can be found in the menu area of the Blackboard web site for this course.

**Student Surveys:**
The SCAD Student Survey and the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory will both be administered in Week 6 of spring quarter and online course evaluations will be available every quarter during weeks 8-10. SCAD's office of institutional research is responsible for gathering and delivering survey results to decision-makers on campus. For more information or questions, contact us at surveys@scad.edu.

Please refer to the college catalog or the student handbook for all college policies and procedures.