



Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: <https://catalog.uvu.edu/>

Semester: Spring

Course Prefix: ART

Course Title: Sequential Illustration

Year: 2025

Course and Section #: 4270-601

Credits: 3

Course Description

Studies the practice and execution of drawings and lettering in pencil, ink or digital mediums to create visual narratives in sequence, commonly referred to in popular culture as comics or graphic novels.

Course Attributes

This course has the following attributes:

- General Education Requirements
- Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
- Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
- Discipline Core Requirements in Program
- Elective Core Requirements in Program
- Open Elective

Other: *Click here to enter text.*

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Rhyan Edmiston

Student Learning Outcomes

- 1 Create sequential illustration and narrative storytelling by making samples of comic pages and cover art that are portfolio worthy;
 - 2 Draw with form, perspective and figurative gesture by illustrating art done in sequence;
 - 3 Draw with traditional (pencil, pen, brush) and/or digital mediums at an advanced level;
 - 4 Letter comics using word balloons and typography that is unique to sequential art, using both traditional and digital techniques;
 - 5 Employ effectively digital painting/editing software to digitize and color comic art for student practice models engaging basic color theory/color psychology in sequential art;
 - 6 Discuss on interactive forums the professional practices, responsibilities and vocabulary used in the sequential illustration industry.
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Course Materials and Texts

None

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

Assignments

See 30 day schedule

Assessments

PLO #1- Industry readiness using traditional and digital tools to create concept art.

PLO #2- Industry readiness using modeling, texturing, and rendering for 3D.

PLO #3- Industry readiness using ideation for storyboarding and sequential art.

Grading Policy

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|----------------------|--------------------------|
| • A 94 - 100% | • A- 90 - 93% |
| • B+ 87 - 89% | • B 83–86% |
| • B- 80–82% | • C+ 77–79% |
| • C 73–76% | • C- 70–72% |
| • D+ 67–69% | • D 65–66% |
| • D- 65- 60% | • E 59% and below |

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

N/A

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion

Week 1: Introduction to Advanced Sequential Storytelling

Day 1

- Course Overview & Expectations
- Introduction to Visual Narrative Fundamentals
- The Importance of Pacing and Timing in Comics
- Reading: "Understanding Comics" by Scott McCloud (Intro to Chapter 3)

Day 2

- Review of Key Concepts: Visual vs. Verbal Storytelling
- In-class exercise: Panel Transition Practice
- Assignment: Create a 1-3 page story using six panels that focuses on visual pacing and transition.
- Reading: Chapter 4-6 of *Understanding Comics*

Week 2: The Language of Comics

Day 3

- Comic Panel Layouts: Composition and Flow
- Studying Classic Layouts: The Grid vs. Organic
- Lecture on "The Language of Comics"
- In-class discussion: Visual Metaphor & Iconography in Comics

Day 4

- Hands-on exercise: Creating a page using the 9-panel grid
- Analyze a comic page from *Maus* or *Persepolis* for layout and pacing
- Assignment: Create a page with a non-traditional layout that shifts pacing through irregular grids.

Week 3: Character Development through Visual Storytelling

Day 5

- Creating Characters through Visual Design
- Drawing for Personality: Clothing, Expression, and Gestures
- Case Study: How to portray character emotions visually (e.g., *Sandman* or *Ms. Marvel*)

Day 6

- Character Development Exercise: Create three character designs, each in a different emotional state
- Group critique and feedback on designs
- Reading: Character Design techniques in sequential art

Week 4: Visual Storytelling: Time and Motion

Day 7

- The Concept of "Time" in Comics: How to convey the passage of time visually
- In-class exercise: Silent storytelling - depict a short scene without words
- Discussion: Effective use of action lines, overlapping, and repetition in visual storytelling

Day 8

- Lecture on Motion and Action in Comics: Using panel transitions to indicate motion
- Drawing for dynamic action: Techniques for conveying speed and tension
- Assignment: Create a 3-panel sequence that demonstrates fast-paced action

Week 5: Structuring a Short-Form Comic Narrative

Day 9

- Developing a Strong Short-Form Story Arc
- Lecture on Beginning, Middle, End structure in comics
- In-class brainstorming session for individual comic story ideas
- Reading: *Short Story Writing for Comics*

Day 10

- Story Structure: From outline to thumbnails
- Review and feedback on individual comic ideas
- Assignment: Submit a 1-page outline and thumbnails for your short-form comic

Week 6: Scriptwriting and Dialogue in Comics

Day 11

- Comic Scriptwriting: Formatting, Writing Dialogue, and Text as Part of the Visual
- Analyzing comic dialogue: How to write dialogue that complements art
- In-class scriptwriting exercise

Day 12

- Dialogue and Caption Placement: How words interact with visual elements
- Critique of dialogue-driven comics (e.g., *Watchmen*, *Y: The Last Man*)
- Assignment: Write a 3-page script with dialogue and caption placement for your short-form comic

Week 7: Visual Symbols and Metaphors

Day 13

- Using Visual Symbols and Icons to Enhance Narrative Depth
- Case Study: Metaphor in Comics (e.g., *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan)
- Lecture on Semiotics in Comic Art

Day 14

- Create a page using a visual metaphor to represent a theme or concept
- Group critique on the use of symbols and metaphors in student work
- Assignment: Revise your page using a visual metaphor that reinforces your comic's themes

Week 8: World-Building and Setting

Day 15

- Creating a World: Drawing Environments that Support the Story
- Analyzing the importance of background and setting in storytelling (e.g., *Saga* or *Akira*)
- Lecture on world-building in sequential art

Day 16

- Exercise: Design the setting for your short-form comic
- Incorporating setting into storytelling through perspective and scale
- Assignment: Create 1-2 pages that showcase your world-building through environment design

Week 9: Color Theory and Its Narrative Implications

Day 17

- Color as Narrative: Understanding Color Theory in Comics
- Psychological impact of color in comics: Emotional color palettes
- Analyze color use in *The Walking Dead* or *Blue Is the Warmest Color*

Day 18

- Practical exercise: Using color to enhance mood and theme
- In-class project: Color a black-and-white comic page for mood
- Assignment: Submit a colored version of your short-form comic's key page

Week 10: Comic Page Layout and Composition

Day 19

- Advanced Composition Techniques: The Golden Ratio, Leading the Eye
- How page layout influences the reader's experience
- Analyze complex page layouts in *The Watchmen* or *Daytripper*

Day 20

- Exercise: Create a 2-page comic spread with complex panel arrangement
- Discuss the relationship between panel composition and emotional beats
- Assignment: Submit a 2-page comic spread for critique

Week 11: Sound and Lettering in Comics

Day 21

- Lettering and Sound Effects: How text shapes the sound of comics
- Lecture on different types of comic lettering styles and their impact on tone
- In-class exercise: Creating sound effects for action scenes

Day 22

- Critique of student work: How well do lettering and sound effects complement the visuals?
- Lettering practice: Create dynamic lettering for a specific scene
- Assignment: Apply appropriate lettering and sound effects to your short-form comic pages

Week 12: Pacing and Editing in Sequential Art

Day 23

- The Role of Pacing in Comic Book Storytelling
- Techniques for controlling the reader's rhythm through page turns, panel sizes, and transitions
- Critique session on pacing in student work

Day 24

- Revision and Editing: The importance of refining your story and visual flow
- Workshop on editing comic scripts and pages
- Assignment: Revise your short-form comic with feedback from the class

Week 13: Integrating Subtext and Theme

Day 25

- Exploring Subtext: How to convey complex ideas visually and through dialogue
- Case Study: Themes in *Persepolis* and *Maus*
- How to balance overt narrative and subtle subtext

Day 26

- Student presentations on how subtext is integrated into their comics
- Peer feedback on integrating theme and subtext effectively
- Assignment: Final revisions on thematic integration in your comic

Week 14: Preparing for Final Project

Day 27

- Final Project Overview: Short-form comic or graphic novel excerpt (6-12 pages)
- Review of project requirements and expectations
- Time for individual work and feedback

Day 28

- One-on-one check-ins with the instructor regarding final projects
- Review of work-in-progress: Layout, pacing, and visual style
- Final project deadline reminder

Week 15: Final Project Review and Critique

Day 29

- Final Project Critique: Group review of student comics
- Discuss the strengths and areas for improvement in each comic
- Peer feedback on how to polish their work for publication or presentation

Day 30

- Final Project Presentation: Students present their completed projects
- Instructor and peer feedback on final submissions
- Final thoughts on applying skills learned in this course to professional comic storytelling

Final Submission:

- *Short-form Comic or Graphic Novel Excerpt* (6-12 pages)
- Due at the final class (Session 30)

Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI

AI programs are not a replacement for your human creativity, originality, and critical thinking. Writing, thinking, and brainstorming are crafts that you must develop over time to develop your own individual voice. At the same time, you should learn how to use AI and in what instances AI can assist you.

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT) is permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Brainstorming and refining your ideas;
- Finding information on your topic;
- Refining Style direction.

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating your work in classroom contexts, such as by using AI tools to compose discussion board prompts/responses assigned to you or content that you put into a Teams/Canvas chat.
- Generating artwork for class assignments.
- Generating final artwork.

You are responsible for the information you submit and that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content. Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty.

Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate what work is the student's work and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than 25% of the student work should be generated by AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, please reach out to me for a conversation before submitting your work.

Using Remote Testing Software

This course does not use remote testing software.

This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

Required University Syllabus Statements

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities

Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at DHHservices@uvu.edu

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

Academic Integrity

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions

of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in [UVU Policy 541: Student Code of Conduct](#).

Equity and Title IX

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – TitleIX@uvu.edu – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

Religious Accommodation

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu. If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a [specially dedicated space](#) for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.