

# Fall 2011 Syllabus for CSC 111 Storytelling through Computer Animation

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**Office Hours:** MW 2:30 P.M. – 3:50 P.M.

Feel free to send e-mail for appointments at other times

**Primary Teaching Associate:** Daniel Redmond

## The CSC 111 Course Description

Technology has opened up new horizons in the creative art of storytelling by making it possible for stories to be interactive, blurring the boundary between the storyteller and the audience. Using a graphically-based object-oriented programming language, students in this course will learn to design and construct virtual worlds with 3D objects and characters. Students will gain knowledge in advancing plot, building themes, and developing characters while employing visual elements such as location, camera angle, lighting, and point-of-view, as they create interactive stories, animated movies, and simple video games set in these virtual worlds. No previous computer programming experience is required. This course satisfies the Arts Perspectives and the Practical Reasoning Perspective. Offered in alternate Spring terms.

## The Course Goals

- Explore the potential for meaning through interactive storytelling
- Develop understanding of the process of advancing plot and themes, and developing characters in an interactive story from idea to finished product
- Learn to evaluate and to modify the intent, content, and impact of both the choice of language and the components of computer animation in an interactive story
- Learn a computer language and reflect upon human language
- Recognize logical structures and learn to distinguish different patterns of logic and reasoning, including faulty patterns
- Discern the difference between reasoning and appeals to emotion
- Practice using appropriate criteria to evaluate reasoning
- Discover how to more effectively discuss logical, artistic, and computational ideas
- Become familiar with widely used programming structures, including structures such as variables, functions, looping, assignment, and conditional statements
- Reflect upon the impact personal stories as well as computer animations are having on our society

## The Course Home Page

Our course home page is located at <http://faculty.berea.edu/pearcej/CSC111/>. Use this page as a resource to find this syllabus, course readings, homework, and other course-related information.

## Required Text and Work:

- *Learning to Program with Alice* by Wanda Dann, Stephen Cooper, and Randy Pausch, 3.0 Ed. ISBN: 0-13-212247-2, Prentice Hall (2012).
- The majority of the learning in this course will take place in doing the assigned computer work and other homework. Thus, the assignment descriptions themselves should prove a valuable resource.

## Technology Policies

Much of the work in this course will require use of the computer, so these policies are designed to help students better understand how to be effective in a technology-rich environment.

- **Laptop and Software:** In this hands-on environment, we will be learning to animate with our computers as well as running as paperless a course as possible, so each student is required to bring his or her appropriately equipped laptop to class every day except when otherwise announced. In addition, each student laptop must have the course software installed for all in-class work. Please be aware that this means that if you change computers or get a loaner during the term, you will need to reinstall the software BEFORE class.
- **Unapproved Technology:** The in-class use of unapproved technology will not be tolerated and in certain cases will constitute a violation of academic honesty. For example, no games are ever acceptable and communication programs, such as e-mail or instant messaging programs, are only acceptable for class work during class, so must otherwise be disabled before class. Likewise, cellular phones and pagers must be disabled before class. To help students to appreciate the gravity of this policy, each and every in-class use of unapproved technology will result in a 1% reduction of the student's homework assignment grade.
- **Citing:** Team participation is a proven and useful means by which students can learn material. In addition, much information is easily accessible by searching the web. Students are encouraged to appropriately use information from other students, the web, and other resources. However, any information used from other students, from the web, or from any other resource MUST BE CITED. This includes images, tables, program code and other multimedia. (See below for more information on this serious topic.)
- **Email and Web:** On the other hand, electronic communication programs are useful when used appropriately, so each student is required to use the course web page to access assignments and to use a Berea College e-mail account which is not too full to receive emails in order to facilitate electronic communication outside of class.
- **Backups:** All students are expected to back-up their work, which includes assignments, quizzes and exams daily. The best way to do this is to store a copy of all work on a DVD, CD, flash drive, or some other media, and **not in another location on their laptop**. The normally understanding instructor will not be at all sympathetic to loss of electronic work, so it is the student's responsibility to protect his/her work from such heartbreaking loss.
- **Exceptions:** Exceptions to any of these technology policies will be considered on an individual case-by-case basis but will only be granted under extremely unusual circumstances.

## The Attendance Policy

Class lectures, discussions, and in-class work are considered to be a vital key to success in this course. It is the hope of the instructor that class sessions are both informative and useful. Therefore, attendance is expected at each class session unless a specific exception is made. If you are sick with flu-like symptoms, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. Therefore, please do not come to class if you show flu-like symptoms. Instead, e-mail me from your room and go to health services immediately. When you return to class, bring paperwork showing that you sought medical attention that day and your absence will be excused. Students who arrive late, leave early, or fail to fully participate during the class will be considered absent for that portion of the period, and such partial absences will accumulate. The final grade may be lowered by one third of a letter grade for each unexcused absence beyond the third. Thus, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor about each absence from class. This should be done via email, as soon as possible, and if at all possible before the absence occurs. Students who miss class are held responsible for all of the material covered, assigned, and collected during their absence. Quizzes will be announced and/or occasionally "popped," and because I will drop the lowest quiz grades before computing your overall quiz score, so under nearly all circumstances, make-up quizzes will not be given.

## System of Evaluation

### Maximum Grading Scale

Grade $\geq 93\%$	A
$90\% \leq \text{Grade} < 93\%$	A-
$87\% \leq \text{Grade} < 90\%$	B+
$83\% \leq \text{Grade} < 87\%$	B
$80\% \leq \text{Grade} < 83\%$	B-
$77\% \leq \text{Grade} < 80\%$	C+
$73\% \leq \text{Grade} < 77\%$	C
$70\% \leq \text{Grade} < 73\%$	C-
$67\% \leq \text{Grade} < 70\%$	D+
$63\% \leq \text{Grade} < 67\%$	D
$60\% \leq \text{Grade} < 63\%$	D-
Grade $< 60\%$	F



Evaluated Items	Grading Percentages
Class Participation	5 %
Exam 1	15 % *
Exam 2 @	15 %
Exam 3	15 %
Quiz Total	15 %
Assignments	20 %
Final Animation Project	15 %

\* The lowest score of the exam and quiz total grade items may be dropped if all conditions are met (explained below).

Please refer to the GRADING section of the current Berea College Catalog for the College-wide interpretations of these letter grades.

### Grading Policies

For the benefit of the students in the class, all course grade computations are continually updated by the instructor, so students may check frequently on their in-progress course grade during the term. Any questions/concerns regarding grading of any component of the course are to be addressed to the instructor **only**, never to a teaching assistant.

\* After having completed all course work and before dropping any points or receiving any bonuses, students who satisfy all of the following conditions will have their lowest exam score or quiz total dropped:



- The student has not been excessively tardy to or absent from class.
- The student has not had any noted incidents of disruptive behavior.
- The student has completed **all** coursework, including all homework assignments, and all exams. Note that students who are absent from an exam will not qualify for this policy except in a truly extraordinary case which includes a valid and verifiable extenuating circumstance which is deemed truly extraordinary and is excused by the instructor. Such cases might include an extreme situation such as an overnight hospitalization but would never include an avoidable excuse such as oversleeping or an out-patient doctor's appointment.



The instructor may raise the grade of a student who has demonstrated significant improvement in his or her performance. *This is the sole discretion of the instructor, but a student is welcome to bring this possibility to his/her attention.*

## **Class Participation**

Participation includes multiple elements: attendance, engaging in discussion, productive work in workshops, productive work in groups, and keeping up with the assigned readings.

Discussion: As a class, we will construct a set of discussion rules that all participants will be expected to follow, and the discussion grade will be as follows:

- Productive contribution to the discussion without monopolizing it: Frequently—A; Moderately—B; Occasionally—C; Rarely—D; Never—F
- Interest and respect for the contributions of other class members: Always—A; Almost always—B; Sometimes—C; Occasionally—D; Rarely—F

Workshops and Group Work: Learning to revise stories is crucial to developing good storytelling skills. The expectations for workshop and group participation is that you arrive fully prepared and provide honest, useful feedback to your partners.

## **The Tests and Quizzes**

Three tests and frequent short quizzes will be given in this course. Quiz questions will include questions relating to the reading assignment for that lesson. Students will take these quizzes individually at the start of the class period. After everyone has completed taking the quiz individually, students will take the quiz again in groups, coming to consensus on the answers to each of the questions. Thus, evidence that you have engaged and retained the information you have read will be reflected in your quiz scores. By keeping track of group and individual scores separately, you will have measures of your ability to listen and to learn from others as well.

The most likely time of the tests will be:

- Exam 1: Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup>
- Exam 2: Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>
- Exam 3: Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>

Problems that appear on the tests will be more varied in nature, ranging from homework-like problems to problems that require a deeper synthesis of ideas and from true or false questions to short-answer questions.

## **On Assignment Collection**

All written work should be neat, organized, and should show sufficient documentation and explanation to demonstrate a clear understanding of the techniques used. Homework assignments are due at the beginning of class on the announced date due. If a student must miss class due to either a sickness or a planned absence, homework assignments are still expected to be submitted on time. Homework is posted on the web and may be requested in advance.

Late homework assignments will only be accepted for reduced credit up until the homework assignment is returned. Late work is typically accepted but must be labeled as late. Written or printed homework assignments may be turned in before class or at the instructor's office, but should NOT be sent through the CPO, attached in e-mail, or given to a student assistant. A selection of the homework problems will be graded for credit, and homework submissions not meeting the above standards will receive reduced credit. In addition, no late work will be accepted after the last regular class session on Thursday, December 8, 2011.

## The Assignment Bonus



Homework assignments will be assigned on a near-daily basis, since doing relevant work thoughtfully and conscientiously is one of the keys to success in this course. Through homework students get the needed practice of application of the concepts. Because the instructor desires to strongly encourage a diligent effort on homework, students who turn in each of their assignments with no more than two assignments submitted late, will be awarded an additional 5% on the assignment grade!

## The Final Animation

There will not be a final written comprehensive exam in this course. However, there will be a final animation project instead, including a required public viewing of this final animation project during the last week of classes. The final course reflection must also be publically submitted by the date of the College's scheduled Final Exam time of 1:00 pm on Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>.

## On Teamwork

Learning to work in teams effectively is strongly encouraged. Some assignments will be specifically designed for teamwork, others for individual work, and on some homework assignments you can choose to work alone or in a team. All homework assignments must clearly include all of the authors' names at the top of each page. On any homework assignment in which half or more of the work was completed in a team, a single copy of the homework submission should be handed in with all of the team's participants listed as authors. Teams can generally consist of no more than two members for any computer programming work, and unless otherwise stated, teams shall not consist of more than three members for most work. On any homework assignment where less than half of the work was completed in a team, individual homework assignments should be handed in with the author acknowledging all of the help received for each problem. This includes significant help received from the instructor or in the Math/CS Lab Consultants. Note that the instructor or a Math/CS Lab Consultant may help with homework, and while this help should not be acknowledged as co-authorship, it should still be mentioned. This is meant to be a sharing process; do not "give credit" to other students who have not attempted to contribute to the work or to the team's work, because it is ultimately not a help for the student who did not contribute to the work. Thoughtful practice, not (even mindful) copying, is ultimately the best way to learn. Note that on all team-completed homework assignments, students must describe the roles played by each author on the homework submission.

*Warning:* Please be careful to conform to these standards for teamwork, since they are designed to encourage good learning practices. (Furthermore, copying another person's work or otherwise failing to adhere to these standards may even result in a charge of academic dishonesty.)

## Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is the use of anyone else's work or ideas without adequate citation. It is a sin which is easy to avoid. Ideas taken from other people include those from published or unpublished books, articles, websites, TAs, or friends' homework. **The best way to avoid plagiarism is to cite ALL your sources!** If you are not sure whether or not to cite a source, you should cite it! Simply put, plagiarism is not only cheating, it is stealing because it constitutes theft of someone else's ideas. It is a serious offense, and Berea College takes it seriously. ***Plagiarism will not be tolerated!*** At the first offense, the student will receive an F for that assignment. At the second offense, the student will fail the course. In addition, ALL offenses of plagiarism, including the first, will be reported to the Associate Provost for Academic Services as detailed in the Berea College *Student Handbook*.

## **The Class Atmosphere**

The members of this class constitute a learning community. Learning in such a community best takes place in an atmosphere in which instructor and the students treat everyone with mutual respect. Students need not always raise their hands in order to ask questions or to make comments, but they should not interrupt the instructor or fellow students in doing so. Students typically find the atmosphere set by the instructor to be a sometimes playful and nearly always relaxed one, but students will still need to work hard and consistently both in and out of class in order to do well. If at anytime you have thoughts, comments, or suggestions about how the class atmosphere could be improved or made into one which is more supportive of your learning, please come by or drop me a note about it. I welcome such suggestions.

## **Additional Support and Disability Accommodation**



Topics in this course build throughout the course, so students should be sure to do their best to keep up with the class, so as to not get behind and possibly forever lost. No question to which one does not know the answer is "dumb" unless it goes unanswered because it remained unasked. The teaching associate, Daniel Redmond, and other teaching associates will be able to answer questions about the computational content in the course during consultations in the Math/CS Lab. Located in Hutchins Library room 230, the Math/CS Lab is open Sunday through Thursday from 7:00 to 9:15 PM (except on evenings of convocations when it closes early). Students are strongly encouraged to make use of the help available in the Math/CS Lab, as well as in the instructor's office hours. Best results are obtained trying to solve problems alone or in a group before asking for help, so in either place, students should be prepared to show what they have already tried.

Students who have a disability that may prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should contact Cindy Reed, MSW, LCSW, the Disability Services Coordinator at (859) 985-3212, or by email at [cynthia\\_reed@berea.edu](mailto:cynthia_reed@berea.edu), to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation in this course. Upon request, this syllabus can be made available in alternative forms.