SYLLABUS | ART 373 | Motion Design

OVERVIEW

Per the catalog, Motion Graphics is the exploration of two-dimensional digital motion graphics with an emphasis on identity applications, internet motion graphics, and animation. You will combine design principles, industry software like Adobe After Effects, and creative storytelling. You will learn kinetic typography, keyframing, and compositing to produce professional visual assets for digital media and video production.

In this course, you will learn the fundamentals of motion design and experiment with both motion graphic concepts and how to apply those in Adobe After Effects.

Software like Adobe After Effects is essential for commercial projects requiring high-end visual polish, complex compositing, kinetic typography, and animated branding elements that standard video editors cannot efficiently produce.

The first half of the semester will be spent developing your technical skills in motion graphics and Adobe After Effects while applying your creative skills to compelling technical and visual problems.

The second half of the semester will continue skill building, while working on more comprehensive, project based creative solutions.

Class time will involve lectures, application demos and technical instruction, exercises, viewings and discussions of related practitioners, artists and designers, work time for projects, as well as individual and group critique sessions.

You are expected to work outside of class. Homework will include research, and work time for projects. To excel at this program and in the field you will need to apply yourself beyond the minimum hours required.

Core Learning Outcomes

- Implement the Principles of Art/Design.
- Create art concepts that demonstrate critical and analytical thinking.
- Develop creative solutions to artistic and intellectual problems.
- Demonstrate awareness of diverse audiences.
- Communicate process and intention through the full realization of one's work.
- Integrate skills and knowledge that reflect a broad engagement with art and design perspectives and approaches.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Software and Technical Skills
    - *Operate industry software*: Navigate programs like Adobe After Effects to build and export animations.
    - *Manage digital assets*: Import, layer, and manipulate vector art, photography, video, and audio.
    - *Utilize keyframing and timing*: Apply keyframes, easing, masks, and track mattes to control movement and pacing.
- Design and Animation Theory
    - *Apply animation principles*: Demonstrate foundational concepts like timing, squash and stretch, anticipation, and visual hierarchy.
    - *Integrate core design rules*: Combine color theory, typography, and composition into moving layouts.
    - *Execute visual storytelling*: Translate static concepts or scripts into dynamic, narrative-driven screen graphics.
- Professional Workflow and Critique
    - *Plan projects effectively*: Research visual styles, draft storyboards, and develop conceptual prototypes before animating.
    - *Critique and collaborate*: Give and receive constructive peer feedback to refine creative work.
    - *Build a portfolio*: Produce a polished demo reel or collection of completed projects for clients or employers.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Complete your work on time

Late assignments are not permissible and are not your friend. Designers work for clients who expect to see the work on time.

Late work only hurts your ability to learn as the semester progresses. We build on skills obtained throughout the semester. Turning in work late or (worse) skipping an assignment can put you behind in many ways.

Late assignments,

- will be given a zero (0) grade until submitted.
- are docked points(three percentage points) per class period until submitted.
- will be assigned a permanent zero (0) after two weeks have passed since the due date..

Students have an option that they may use only *once* during the semester to withdraw a project prior to grading in order to refine it before the next class meeting.

Participate in Class

Participation is a great way to support your fellow classmates and receive critical feedback on your own work. Participation makes up for 10% of your final grade in this class, so please be an active participant. Ask and answer questions.

Critiques

It is important to rehearse visual evaluative language in a safe, supportive community of creators. I will guide you through the critiquing process in class. Your participation in—and contribution to— critiques will be a portion of your assessment on each project.

Quizzes

We will likely not have any quizzes in this class, but we may have exercises to complete within a class period!

Attendance

Make ups for missed class activities, exercises, etc, etc. will be provided when due to authorized absences, **per the definition provided by the University of Eau Claire**.

It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of all absences ***prior*** to class. Students may need to provide documentation to assist in qualifying an absence as authorized. Students will need to consult with instructors regarding the nature of the make-up and the due date for an authorized absence.

Although students will not be penalized when absences are authorized, it is important to understand that in some cases the makeup work may be significantly different from the original assignments, exams, etc.

Since attendance is so critical to your success in this class, I will only allow two unexcused absences for the semester where you won't have to tell me why you are missing the class without it impacting on your course grade. Beyond that I will need appropriate documentation for excused absences.

Should you have more than two unexcused absences (and for each two absences after that), your course grade will be lowered by one letter grade after considering the grades you earned on course assignments (so if the cumulative grades you earned for assignments were an "A", you would receive a "B" course grade if you had more than 2 unexcused absences; if you received a cumulative "B" for assignments, you would receive a "C" course grade; etc.).

Access to Course Materials

Nearly all course materials will be posted on Canvas. This includes but is not limited to: syllabus, schedules, server access information, presentations, assignment descriptions, discussions, and resources/links. Students are expected to review the course content on Canvas.

Digital File Policy & Digital Documentation

Good digital file management is expected for this course. Keep quality digital documentation of your sketches, design process, and all final projects. ***Lost files due to lack of organization, personal hard drive failures, or computer re-imaging will not be accepted as excuses for late or un-submitted project work***.

It is important to back up your projects both on a cloud-based server(One Drive), flash drive and/or a hard drive to avoid any loss of content.

You may revisit these early projects in the future and you will want access to all design files for portfolio purposes. *This is another skill I will be helping you to improve over the semester*.

Assignments are defined within the context of specific tools. *Not using prescribed tools (Adobe, Word, etc.) or not being able to show evidence of their use may result in a significant point reduction for assignments or a grade of zero (0).*

Final Evaluation

A final project evaluation and in-class critique will be conducted at the end of the course (date/time in course schedule).

MATERIALS

- Sketchbook, pen, pencil (required)
- USB external hard drive or thumb drive (at the very least 32GB) (optional)
- Access to a digital photo/video camera (smartphone and/or equipment checkout). (required)
- LinkedIn Learning Access (here)
- Digital Tablet and Stylus (optional)

Associated Textbooks

No textbook is required for this class.

Grading

Individual student grades will consist of several elements including:

- Contributing and participating in class discussions
- Assignments and Exercises

Students are also evaluated on

- understanding and application of concepts
- improvement over the semester
- craftsmanship & presentation of assignments
- originality and concept development
- appropriate use of class time
- classroom participation
- work ethic
- overall attitude

Not participating or showing up will mean a lower grade -- or not passing.

The grade numerical cutoffs are listed below:

A	A-	B+	B	C+	C	D	F
93%+	90-92%	87-89%	80-86%	77-79%	70-76%	60 - 69%	All Else

A – Exceptionally exceeds requirements of the course

B – Exceeds requirements of the course

C – Satisfactorily meets the minimum requirements of the course

D - Barely passing

F – Not enough proficiency or production to fulfill requirements—must retake the course

Personal Integrity and Academic Conduct

Per the Blugold Student Conduct Code under student academic misconduct, 'Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for the respect of others' academic endeavors.' These student responsibilities are important, and deviations from these responsibilities have consequences. (* Insert AI statement). The disciplinary procedures and penalties for academic misconduct are described on the UW-Eau Claire Dean of Students web site: https://kb.uwec.edu/articles/blugold-student-conduct-code.

Use of generative AI for ANY image, illustration or written materials is not allowed under any circumstances in this course.

I reserve the right to question and require evidence AI was not used for an assignment should I suspect it.

And finally,

- Treat your classmates with kindness. Don't discriminate against your classmates or anyone else.
- Be nice! Don't say things you will regret.
- Mind your language - let's try to keep this a PG-13 classroom.
- Respect people's boundaries.
- Turn off your phones in class.
- Avoid checking your email, TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube in class.

Be respectful of the wonderful diversity we get to enjoy at UW Eau Claire. Show respect. Have respect. Be kind.

ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSIVITY AND CULTURE

In keeping with the university's strategic goals of fostering a campus climate that is equitable, diverse, and inclusive, a policy for inclusive language was approved by the student and university senates in 2013. The University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire encourages its students, faculty, staff, and administration to use non-sexist language in instances where sex is irrelevant; and to use non-gendered language in instances where gender is irrelevant. The full policy is available on pages 121-122 of the FASRP, and this link provides examples as well as suggestions for linguistic solutions. UW-Eau Claire strives to make learning experiences accessible to all. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office. You can contact them at: https://www.uwec.edu/offices-services/student-success-center/services-students-disabilities.

Implementing reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities is a shared responsibility between the faculty and student. Students need to inform faculty of their SSD approved academic accommodation as soon as possible so that faculty can work in coordination with the Services for Students with Disabilities Office to implement approved accommodations in each course.

Sexual Harassment

Please note, as a Wisconsin State employee, I am obligated to report any claims of sexual harassment or sexual assault. Please know that any such information revealed to me will be forwarded to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students' office may reach out to you to offer resources and support. If you wish to disclose this information to a confidential resource, you may speak to someone in the Center for Awareness of Sexual Assault, Counseling Services, or Student Health Services.

Helpful Info!

Technology

If you need in-depth training on technology, LTS Training is awesome! Email training@uwec.edu. Remember, Canvas Help is available 24/7/365 by clicking the "Help" area in the global navigation and chatting or calling with support. They will be able to help quickly, so contact them first!

For other tech questions, contact the LTS Help Desk by calling 715-836-5711, or emailing helpdesk@uwec.edu.

Academic and Personal Support

If you find yourself struggling academically or personally, please talk with me! I am here to support you; I understand that you have A LOT going on in your life. Most of you are involved with so much: clubs, activities, jobs, friends & family obligations, and rigorous coursework. It can be a lot to balance, so please take care of and be kind to yourself. Please reach out if there is anything I can do, or if there is someone I can help to connect you with.

Each student is enrolled(via Canvas) in the Bluprint for a Blugold: Resources for Successful Students Course. In this course,

you will find resources for all your student needs including academic support, technological help, mental health resources, and more.

File Labeling

In general please label all course files & emails using the following naming convention and formatting. Assignment documentation will give you directions on file naming:

Lastname_Firstname_Assignment_No_Desc.<filetype>

ART 373 - FA26 - Motion Graphics

August/September 2026

Week 1 - 8/31 - 9/4
Introductions/Overview, Canvas, Tour

Lecture - Introduction to Motion Design

Assignment 1 - Motion Design Sample Research Discussion

Week 2 - 9/7 - 9/11
Discussion - Motion Design Sample Research Discussion

Lectures - Motion graphics history, the Twelve Principles of Animation

Assignment 2 - Single Shape Animation

Week 3 - 9/14 - 9/18
Critique - Assignment 2

Lectures/Demo - Timing, easing and spatial graphs

Assignment 3 - AE Workspace, Keyframing Five Basic Transformation Properties

Week 4 - 9/21 - 9/25
Critique - Assignment 3

Lectures - Creating narrative flow and visual hierarchy through timing

Assignment 4 - The “Tri-Force” Matte Transition

Week 5 - 9/28 - 10/2
Critique - Assignment 4

Lectures - Readability, typographic hierarchy, and kinetic text history

Assignment 5 - Expressive Type in Motion

October 2026

Week 6 - 10/5 - 10/9
Critique - Assignment 5

Lectures - Parentings, Nulls, Expressions and

Assignment 6 - Mini-Projects

Week 7 - 10/12 - 10/16
Critique - Assignment 6

Lecture: Character Animation basics. Project 1 overview.

Exercises: Animation

Project 1 - **Character Animator Speech**

Week 8 - 10/19 - 10/23
Review - Group reviews of Project 1 progress

Lectures - Techniques in character animation, sound, samples.

Exercises - Animation

Work time.

Week 9 - 10/26 - 10/30
Critique - Project 1

Lectures - Visiting Designer - Motion Graphics. Project 2 overview.

Project 2 - **Music Video**

Exercises - Rhythm, audio synchronization, typography, and stylistic editing

November 2026

Week 10 - 11/2 - 11/6
Critique - Group Reviews of Project 2 progress

Lectures - Techniques in music video creation and transitions, samples

Work time.

Week 11 - 11/9 - 11/13
Critique - Project 2

Lectures - Iconography, symbols, color and motion graphics. Project 3 overview.

Exercises: :

Project 3 - Motion GIF Files

Week 12 - 11/16 - 11/20
Critique - Group reviews of Project 3 progress

Lecture - Exploration of GIFs, history, usage in design

Work time.

Week 13 - 11/23 - 11/27
Critique: Project 3

Lecture - Project Overview.

Exercises - Infographic animation techniques!

Project 4 - Animated Infographics Poster

Week 14 - 11/30 - 12/4
Critique: Group review of Project 4 Animated Infographics Poster progress

Work time

Fall Recess!

December 2026

Week 15 - 12/7 - 12/11
Critique - Project 4

Project 5 - Personal Interest Project

Week 16 - 12/14 - 12/18
Critique - Project 4

Work time.

Week 17 - Finals week
Critique - We meet one day this week and will review each student's personal project.