

**Regent University**  
**School of Communication and the Arts**  
**Spring 2009**

*CTV 650 Special Effects for Film & Television*

**Prof. Name** Peggy Southerland

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**Class Times:** Mondays 1:30p - 4:30p

**Class Location:** Screening Room B & Film Stage

**Personal Note from Professor**

My primary mission is to prepare the next generation of directors and producers working in this field. Using the latest in software and techniques, I will combine directing, producing, imaging, editing and sound to help you find tomorrow's solutions to our ever-changing media based world. My goal for each of you is that you learn to create with your heart while listening to a higher voice and keep your mind open to innovation.

**Course Description**

This course is designed to give students an overview of the history of special effects in film and television as well as hands-on projects that demonstrate the techniques needed to work with green screen, miniatures, CGI, lighting techniques, cloud tanks/liquids, glass mattes, editing tricks, shooting tricks and color correction. Motion capture, motion control and stunts and wire tricks will also be discussed.

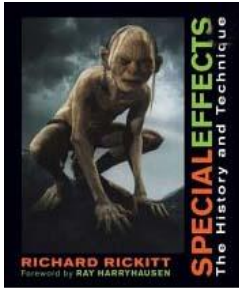
**Integration of Faith and Learning**

The school seeks to provide graduate education for aspiring servant leaders seeking to integrate their Christian faith with communication skills, creative abilities, and with their knowledge of communication and the arts. Our vision is to infuse the presence of Christ into popular culture by enabling our graduates to teach and study communication and produce redemptive messages through film, television, theatre, multimedia, print and broadcast media. The College seeks to teach Christians how to develop a strong voice in our society and powerful means of communicating biblical truth.

**Course Competencies & Learning Objectives**

The Student who completes with a passing grade will be able plan & execute special effects for film & Television.

## Required Texts:



### *Special Effects: The History and Technique*

by Richard Rickitt

Publisher: Billboard Books; (April 3, 2007)

ISBN 10: 823084086

ISBN 13: 978-0823084081

## Suggested Readings:



### *Special Effects: An Oral History--Interviews with 37 Masters Spanning 100 Years*

by Pascal Pinteau (Author), Laurel Hirsch (Translator)

Publisher: Harry N. Abrams (January 1, 2005)

ISBN-10: 0810955911

ISBN-13: 978-0810955912

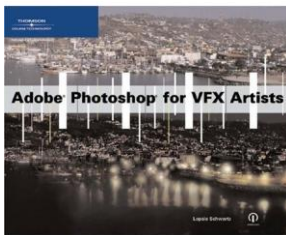


### *The Invisible Art*

by Mark Cotta Vaz (Author), Craig Barron (Author): Publisher: Chronicle Books (November 2002)

ISBN-10: 0811831361

ISBN-13: 978-0811831369



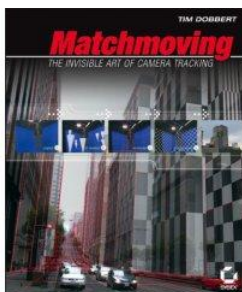
### *Adobe Photoshop for VFX Artists*

by Lopsie Schwartz (Author)

Publisher: Course Technology PTR; 1 edition (Dec. 30, 2004)

ISBN-10: 1592004873

ISBN-13: 978-1592004874

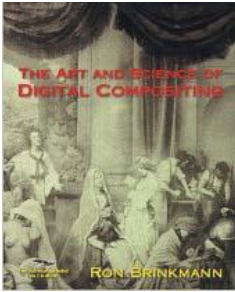


### *Matchmoving: The Invisible Art of Camera Tracking*

by Tim Dobbert

Publisher: Sybex; Pap/Cdr edition (February 11, 2005)

ISBN-10: 0782144039  
ISBN-13: 978-0782144031



*The Art and Science of Digital Compositing*  
by Ron Brinkmann  
Publisher: Morgan Kaufmann; 1st edition (May 1, 1999)  
ISBN-10: 0121339602  
ISBN-13: 978-0121339609

### **Grading Breakdown**

Weekly labs:	15 %
Script Outline:	3%
Picture of Model:	2%
Production Schedule:	5%
Scheduling List & Confirmation of Schedule:	2%
Model Shot Breakdown	1%
Miniature Models:	5%
Mid Term:	10%
Shot List/Storyboard:	4%
Sound Plot:	3%
Final Project:	50%

### **Things to consider (penalties):**

Any time a student will not be in class, he/she must call the instructor IN ADVANCE of not showing up. If the student just doesn't show up without any prior warning, it will be an F for the attendance portion of the grade of that class. (This pertains very much to the working world-- You must show up for meetings.)

If the student has more than 2 pre-warned absences, his/her next project's grade will be lowered by 1 letter grade. We're only meeting 15 times, so missing 20% of the classes doesn't help the student, or his/her fellow students.

When a project is turned in on time, it gets an automatic C. I appreciate timeliness. However, if you'd like a better grade, each project must show the effort befitting a better grade, and incorporate an understanding of principles discussed in class.

### **Course Policies**

It is assumed that each student will take graduate education seriously and strive toward excellence in all things. The following policies are not meant to discourage creativity, but

to clarify the standards expected. Do not let the biblical mandate of mercy keep you from striving toward the biblical mandate of excellence.

### **Academic Honesty**

As should be expected particularly from a Christian University, students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. This includes the avoidance of plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as the use of written and oral words or ideas of another person, including another student, without the expressed acknowledgment of the speaker's or writer's indebtedness to that person. This applies to the use of papers or other materials previously submitted to instructors in other classes. Plagiarized materials could include video and audio recordings of others.

### **Integrity**

All work must be your own and have been created explicitly for this course. Plagiarism—the use of written and oral words of another without the expressed acknowledgement of that source - is cause for dismissal from the course. Sources that have informed your ideas must always be cited. There is also a great temptation for students to draw upon their own work from other classes when composing papers for this course, in other words, recycling papers. While drawing on one's own work is not exactly plagiarism, to merely edit a previous paper to gain credit for assignments in this course does not meet the academic requirements. Do not recycle your work. If you have questions as to whether you may be breaching this standard, contact the instructor.

### **Class Schedule**

#### **Week 1 – Overview**

Intro to class procedures, explanation of class expectations, review of syllabus, description of special effects as they apply to this class, assigned readings. Discuss miniatures & models. We will view clips from *Godzilla*, *Gamera*, *Clash of the Titans*, *Star Wars*, *Titanic*, *Fifth Element*, *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. Discuss model requirements, aspect ratio, screen sizes. Hardware instruction, cameras, lights, tape machines, green screen usage, detailed tour of facilities will begin the second half of class. Class will be broken into groups for models & the end of semester project. Graduate Students will be placed in charge of each group. They are responsible for script, production schedule, and will assume the position of director/producer for a 3-5 minute project that is due on the last day of class. This project will include at least 4 of the special effect techniques discussed and demonstrated during the semester and the model due on week 6. CGI & model must be incorporated.

Location: Screening Room B

Assignment for week 2: Read Chapters 1 & 3 in *Special Effects: The History & Technique*. Read Chapter 1 in *Special Effects: How to Create a Hollywood Film Look on a Home Budget*.

Meet with your group and plan your project. I want a script outline and a picture of the model to be used on week 6.

### Week 2 – Early Special Effects

Discuss readings. Show plan of model in class and explain script concept. Be prepared to defend. We will begin our discussion of early special effects. There will be a screening and explanation of films that use green/blue screen from the earliest we can find to *The Perfect Storm* & *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*. Clips will be shown from *Anchors Away*, *Spy Kids 3D*, *The Great Train Robbery*, *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* and *The Wizard of Oz*. Green screen set up. Lighting and working with keys and cameras. Come in work clothes.

Location: Screening Room B & Green screen area (Studio control room hot, studio camera, portable camera & lights, Monitor)

Assignment for week 3: Work on Model. Read chapter 2 in *Special Effects: The History & Technique*. Read Chapter 2 in *Special Effects: How to Create a Hollywood Film Look on a Home Budget*.

Graduate Students: Have production schedule ready for next week.

### Week 3 – Green Screen 1

Discuss readings. Show progress of model via digital pictures. Discuss planning of special effects, making breakdowns and editing of special effects. There will be a screening and detailed explanation of clip from *True Lies*. Clips from *Mary Poppins*, *Roger Rabbit* and *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid*. There will be a demo of editing using Adobe Premiere & After effects. Make a breakdown and shoot on green screen with provided elements.

Location: Screening Room B & Green Screen area (Camera, Monitor & Lights)

Assignment for week 4– Read Chapter 5 in *Special Effects: The History & Technique*. Work on Model. Read Chapter 3 in *Special Effects: How to Create a Hollywood Film Look on a Home Budget*.

Graduate Students: Have any additional shoots and equipment list for each ready.

Schedule all needs thru Rick Hall and/or equipment office.

### Week 4 – Matte Effects

Discuss readings. Show progress of model via digital pictures. Discuss glass and other mattes. There will be screening and explanations of clips from *Intolerance*, *Star Wars*, *Indiana Jones*, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, *History of the World, Part I*, *Kate & Leopold*, *Titanic*, *Swan Princess*, *The Ten Commandments*. Setup & shoot glass matte.

Location: Screening Room B & Outdoors, (Cameras, monitor and Lights for outside)

Assignment for week 5 – Work on Model. Read Chapter 4 in *Special Effects: How to Create a Hollywood Film Look on a Home Budget*

Bring in objects for your project that need to be shot on green scene.

Grad Students – shot breakdown for miniature green screen shoot for your project.

### Week 5 – Multi-Layer Effects & Green Screen 2

Show progress of model via digital pictures. Discuss multi-layered effects. Clips will be shown from *Star Wars*, *The Ten Commandments*, *Swan Princess*, *Titanic*, *Harry Potter*, and *Lord of the Rings*. Set up and shoot student provided elements.

Location: Screening Room B & Green Screen area, (Cameras, monitor and Lights)

Assignment for week 6: Finish models and have breakdown for shoot ready.

Grad students: Have model shot breakdown ready for Week 6

### Week 6 – Model Shoot

Setup and shoot models

Location: Green Screen area, (Cameras, monitor and Lights)

Assignment for week 8: Finish edits from Week 5

### Week 7 – Lighting Effects

Show composites. Discuss lighting techniques. Clips will be shown from *Time Bandits*, *The Haunted Mansion* (“Pepper Ghost”). Discuss final projects. Setup and shoot Pepper ghost effect.

Location: Screening Room B & Green Screen area, (Cameras, monitor and Lights)

Assignment for week 8: Study for Mid term.

### Week 8 – Midterm

Midterm exam. This will cover all terms covered up to this point.

Location: Screening Room B

Assignment for week 9: Read handout. Work on plan for final project. Figure out how to incorporate cloud tank effect and week 5 elements into final project.

Grad Students: Have full shot list/Storyboard ready for presentation.

### Week 9 – Clouds and Liquids

Discuss readings. Discuss final project plans. We will discuss cloud tanks/ liquids. Clips will be shown from *The Perfect Storm*, *Ten Commandments*, *Independence Day*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Flash Gordon*, and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. Setup and shoot cloud tank and Waterfall.

Location: Screening Room B & Green Screen area, (Cameras, monitor and Lights)

Assignment for week 10: Find a composited space clip from a movie – it can’t be among the ones listed below. Each group will bring in a model spaceship to shoot. Work on final project.

### Week 10 – Star Fields and Sci-fi

Show progress on final project. Show student found clips. We will discuss the various special effects typically found in Sci-Fi/Space shows. Clips will be shown from *The Last Starfighter*, *Star Wars*, *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*, *Night of the Comet*, *Close Encounters Of the Third Kind*. Setup and shoot star field, model planes and starships. Screening Room B & Green Screen area, (Cameras, monitor, and Lights)  
Assignment for week 11: Read chapter 4 in *Special Effects: The History & Technique*.

### Week 11: CGI & Motion Capture

Discuss reading. Show progress on projects. Discuss the preparation needed to incorporate CGI into a film. Demonstrate rotoscoping, 3D model building, camera tracking. Discuss motion capture. Clips will be shown from *Titanic*, *Star Wars*, *2001; A Space Odyssey*, *Battlestar Galactica*. Show clip for sound class.

Assignment for week 12: Work on final project. Read chapter 8 in *Special Effects: The History & Technique*. Find object to make sound effects for Week 12.

### Week 12 – Sound & Color Correction

Show progress on projects. Discuss sound effects. Discuss how sound works, discuss how to alter sound. Clips will be shown from *For the Birds*, *Star Wars* (Ben Burtt), *Pepe LePew* and others. We will do a Foley for an old film in lab. We will discuss Color Correction. Clip will be shown from *O Brother, Where Art Thou*, *Pleasantville*, *Robin Hood*.

Assignment for week 13: Work on final project. Finish sound project. Work on sound plot for final project. Class will need to be available on Friday afternoon in order to help set-up cameras for effect.

### Week 13 – Shooting for Special Effects

Show progress on projects. Present sound plot for final project. We will discuss shooting for special effects. Clips will be shown from *Matrix*, *Royal Wedding*, *Rope*, and *The Indian in The Cupboard*. Lab for Shooting for Special Effects. (Matrix “bullet time” effect)

Assignment for Week 14: Work on final project. Sound should be finished. Gather Materials for Week 14 (TBD).

### Week 14 – Make-up

Show progress on final projects. Discuss problems and get class critiques.

Week 15

Presentation of final projects

This syllabus is subject to change without notice and is not to be considered a contract.

Updated: October 6, 2008