

FICTIONAL WORLD BUILDING IN ANIMATION

CTAN 543 : SPRING 2024

DESIGN AND BUILD THE UNIQUE IMAGINARY CINEMATIC WORLD

Worldbuilding is crucial to the creative process of where your story takes place.

Throughout the course, students will create their own 'blue sky' concept arts to lay the groundwork for an immersive world that is fantastic yet as believable and grounded as possible.

And learn the following principles:

1. Hard Worldbuilding vs. Soft Worldbuilding
2. Three Different Types of Narratives
3. Five Fundamental Elements of Visual Design

USC School
of Cinematic Arts

John C. Hench Division of Animation + Digital Arts

FRIDAYS: 07:00PM - 09:50PM

INSTRUCTOR: JANG LEE



Course Description

For the course project, students will pick an existing film, game, or book and change the story's setting: time, place, and environment (both physical & social). What if Lord of the Rings is not set in the Middle-Earth but in the city of Los Angeles? How would you build the new look of the world based on Tolkien's original story structure?

Note: Students also have an option to create their own story concept.

Classes will alternate between lectures, in-class practice, and critiques. Students are encouraged to explore various World-building techniques with their unique cinematic voices.

This course introduces you to the world of 'blue sky' concept art and gives you a glimpse into the types of artworks you will be asked to design. Discover the production process and how you can start your journey as a concept artist.

The following creative tasks will be assigned to students throughout 15-week sessions:

1. Story: Decide where to start. Pick a film, game, or book of your choice.
2. Cartography: Create a map for your world.
3. Environment Layout Design: Determine different layouts based on your focus.
4. Prop Concept: Design iconic props (weapons, vehicles, monuments, etc.) that show the world's culture.
5. Character Concept: Design a cast of an entire class of your choice.
6. Costume Design: Design iconic costumes that show the culture of the world.
7. Cinematic Scene Illustrations: Create two scene illustrations in full color and value.

Note: A detailed syllabus with weekly course assignments and grade breakdowns will be sent to students registered for the course on the first day of the class. Students enrolled in this class should have a fundamental knowledge of drawing and painting skills and aspirations of becoming concept designers and creative producers within the animation and game industry.

About the professor: Jang Lee has over two decades of experience working as an Art Director, Matte Painter, and Visual Development Artist at Netflix Feature Animation Studios, Walt Disney Feature Animation Studios, Sony ImageWorks. Jang is currently a Production Designer at Sony Pictures Animation Studios.