

# USC Iovine and Young Academy

*Arts, Technology and the Business of Innovation*

## ACAD 178 - Digital Toolbox: Motion Graphics

**Units:** 2

**Day-Time:** Spring 2025, Wednesday, 8:00am - 9:50am

**Location:** IYH 212/213

**Instructor:** Aaron Siegel

**Office:** IYH 212 or Zoom meeting room listed on Blackboard.

**Office Hours:** In person: Wednesdays, 12:00pm - 2:00pm.

Zoom: Wednesdays, 5pm - 7pm.

**Contact Info:** [aaronsie@usc.edu](mailto:aaronsie@usc.edu)

### IT Help:

<https://uscedu.sharepoint.com/sites/IYASStudent/SitePages/IT-Resources.aspx>

**Hours of Service:** M-F, 8:30am - 6:30pm

**Contact Info:** [iyahelp@usc.edu](mailto:iyahelp@usc.edu), 213-821-6917

### Course Description

ACAD 178 - Motion Graphics intends to introduce students to tools for the creation of video based graphic animation using Adobe After Effects. Students will concentrate on conceptual elements of animation, visual composition, graphic design, timing, color, typography, tracking, rotoscoping, and video compositing.

### Learning Objectives and Outcomes

1. Understand concepts and principles related to visual composition, typography, timing, video compositing, rotoscoping, and motion tracking.
2. Learn the fundamentals of linear animation and digital video manipulation.
3. Become familiar with the history of motion graphic design for film and television titles.
4. Develop creative ideas around the implementation of patterns, typography, and video.

**Prerequisite(s):** None.

**Co-Requisite(s):** None.

**Concurrent Enrollment:** None.

**Recommended Preparation:** Have Adobe After Effects installed prior to the first day of class.

### Course Notes

The class will be a mix of technical demonstrations, software workshop exercises, lectures on the history and contemporary applications of motion graphics, as well as collective critique sessions. Technical demonstrations may be recorded and shared with the students afterward for further review. Lecture materials will be made available on Blackboard or via class email.

### Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

- Laptop with authorized installations of Adobe After Effects, Illustrator, Photoshop and Audition.

### Supplementary Learning Materials

- [Mark Christiansen - After Effects CC 2021 Essential Training: The Basics](#)
- [Alan Demafiles - After Effects CC 2021 Essential Training: Motion Graphics](#)
- [Alan Demafiles - After Effects CC 2021 Essential Training: VFX](#)

## Assignments

1. Project #1: Top Five Title Sequences (4%)
  - Visit Art of the Title and select five of your favorite title sequences from the site and write a short description for each one (100 - 200 words) outlining the characteristics you like about it. Include an image of the title as well as a link to the art of the title page.
2. Project #2: Looping Animation (20%):
  - Create an animated composition following the description and guidelines in the rubric. The description and guidelines must be followed explicitly, but any room for interpretation is encouraged to be played with.
3. Project #3: Kinetic Typography (25%):
  - Use 8, 16, or 20 lyrical measures of a song (ie: a verse) to create a short video using kinetic typography animated in sync with the music following the description and guidelines in the rubric. Use After Effects and the various text, shape and effects tools to implement the appropriate styles and animations to match the style of music and content of the lyrics.
4. Project #4: Interface Mockup (25%):
  - Use rotoscoping, tracking, and compositing techniques to create a short (minimum of 10 seconds, maximum 60 seconds) video of a fictional graphic user interface experience, either touchscreen/surface based or holographic (think Minority Report or Tron 2). Your interface should be an original design that you have created in Adobe Illustrator and After Effects, and the footage of the user interaction should be original footage you film yourself.

Grading Breakdown		Grading Scale		
Top Five Title Sequences	4%		A = 100 - 95	A- = 94 - 90
Looping Animation	20%	B+ = 89 - 87	B = 86 - 83	B- = 82 - 80
Kinetic Typography	25%	C+ = 79 - 77	C = 76 - 73	C- = 72 - 70
Interface Mockup	25%	D+ = 69 - 67	D = 66 - 63	D- = 62 - 60
Lab Exercises (13x 2%)	26%	F = 59 and below		

## Weekly Class Schedule

Week	Content	Assignments
1	<b>1/15:</b> Syllabus / Schedule / Assignments. After Effects Interface. Timeline, Layers, Keyframes. Shape Layers. Exporting and Compressing Media. Motion Blur.	<b>LAB #1: Ball Bounce and Roll.</b>
2	<b>1/22:</b> Shape Layer Modifiers, Layer Styles. Footage, Compositions, Assets. Photoshop / Illustrator Pipeline. Importing Illustrator files as Compositions.	<b>DUE: Project #1: Top Five Title Sequences.</b> <b>LAB #2: Shape Modifier.</b>

3	<b>1/29:</b> Track Mattes and Masks. Nesting Compositions. Parent/Child Layer Relationships.	<b>LAB #3: Masked Animation.</b>
4	<b>2/5:</b> Presentations & Critique.	<b>DUE: Project #2: Looping Animation.</b>
5	<b>2/12:</b> Audio in Audition & After Effects. Snapping & Alignment. Text Layers, Text Styles, Text Animations.	<b>LAB #4: Text Property Animation.</b>
6	<b>2/19:</b> Audio Analysis, Expressions.	<b>LAB #5: Audio Visualizer &amp; Expressions.</b>
7	<b>2/26:</b> 3D Transforms, Lights, Materials.	<b>LAB #6: 3D Transforms, Lights, and Materials.</b>
8	<b>3/5:</b> Camera & Depth of Field.	<b>LAB #7: 3D Camera.</b>
9	<b>3/12:</b> Cinema4D Renderer. Extruded Geometry. Raytracing, Reflections.	<b>LAB #8: Extruded Geometry.</b>
<b>3/19:</b> <b>Spring Break: NO CLASS!</b>		
10	<b>3/26:</b> Presentations & Critique.	<b>DUE: Project #3: Kinetic Typography.</b>
11	<b>4/2:</b> Chroma Key.	<b>LAB #9: Chroma Key.</b>
12	<b>4/9:</b> Rotoscoping.	<b>LAB #10: Rotoscoping.</b>
13	<b>4/16:</b> One, Two, and Four Point Motion Tracking. Mocha AE Motion Tracking.	<b>LAB #11: 1, 2, and 4-point Motion Tracking.</b>
14	<b>4/23:</b> Stabilization & Camera Tracking.	<b>LAB #12: Stabilization and Camera Tracking.</b>
15	<b>4/30:</b> Generative AI in Photoshop.	<b>LAB #13: Generative AI.</b>
<b>FINAL</b>	<b>Monday, 5/12, 11am - 1pm:</b> Presentations & Critique.	<b>DUE: Project #4: Interface Mockup.</b>

### **HOW TO PURCHASE SOFTWARE AT THE DISCOUNTED ACADEMY RATE THROUGH THE USC BOOKSTORE:**

The following first year software are now available for purchase online through the USC Iovine and Young software catalog at the Academy discounted rate:

<u>Software</u>	<u>IYA Short-Term License at USC Bookstore</u>
Adobe Creative Cloud	\$70 2024-2025 annual license (active through July 2025)

To purchase:

- Visit: <https://commerce.cashnet.com/IOVINE>
- Select the software license(s) you would like to purchase by clicking “View Details” or the software title, and make your purchase.
- You will receive an order confirmation receipt at the email address you provided.
- You will be notified by email when the software license has been activated.

If you have any questions about this process, please do not hesitate to contact Academy IT Support at [iyahelp@usc.edu](mailto:iyahelp@usc.edu).

### Assignment Rubrics

Student work will be assessed based on:

- Level of understanding and execution of software skills on assignments.
- Degree of complexity of the assignment goal both creatively and technically.
- Innovative application of tools and concepts covered in class.

### Assignment Submission Policy

Submit all of your digital assets for your assignments via the team Google Drive at least one hour prior to the start of the class session. Make sure you submit the original project file (After Effects project file and resources) as well as a static exported file (compressed .mp4 using h.264 or h.265 compression). Each in-class lab exercise is due at midnight the day it is assigned. **Templates or plugins are not allowed on any assignments or in-class lab exercises. All work (including images, illustrations, footage, and 3d models) must be created from scratch by you.**

### Late Submissions

Projects will be accepted after the deadline with the following grade penalties. Do not ask for extensions.

- Submission in the 24 hours after the deadline 10% deduction
- Submission between 24 and 48 hours after the deadline 20% deduction
- Submission between 48 hours and 3 days after the deadline 50% deduction
- Submission more than 3 days after the deadline 100% deduction
- Late lab exercises will not be evaluated or graded.

*Keep copies of all your files and emails until the end of the semester.*

### Grading Timeline

Checkpoints and assignments will be reviewed, graded, and provided with feedback within a week of submission.

### Course Attendance Policy

The Academy maintains rigorous academic standards for its students and on-time attendance at all class meetings is expected. Each student will be allowed **two absences** over the course of the semester for which no explanation is required. Students are advised not to waste absences on non-critical issues, and to use them carefully for illness or other issues that may arise unexpectedly. Except in the case of prolonged illness or other serious issue (see below), no additional absences will be excused. Each additional absence will result in the lowering of the final grade by 1/3 of a grade (e.g., an A will be lowered to A-, and A- will be

lowered to a B+, etc.). In addition, three tardies will equal a full course absence. Students remain responsible for any missed work from excused or unexcused absences. Immediately following an absence, students should contact the instructor to obtain missed projects or lecture notes and to confirm new deadlines or due dates. Extensions or other accommodations are at the discretion of the instructor.

Automatically excused absences normally may not be used for quiz, exam, or presentation days. Using an excused absence for a quiz, exam, or presentation, such as in the case of sudden illness or other emergency, is at the discretion of the instructor. In the case of prolonged illness, family emergencies, or other unforeseen serious issues, the student should contact the instructor to arrange for accommodation. Accommodation may also be made for essential professional or career-related events or opportunities. All accommodations remain at the discretion of the instructor, and appropriate documentation may be required.

### **Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies**

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

### **Classroom Norms**

Students are requested to stay off of their phones during the class session. All discussion in class should be focused on the course material currently being covered. Students should be considerate and respectful of their classmates and ensure that any criticism of work is constructive and delivered in a positive manner.

### **Zoom Etiquette**

There will be no attendance on Zoom unless the instructor is sick and needs to teach remotely, in which case everyone will be on Zoom for that class session. There will be no option for hybrid attendance. Class sessions will use Zoom to record lessons that will become accessible via the cloud.

### **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

#### **Academic Integrity**

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity’s website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

### **Policy for the use of AI Generators**

Since creating, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually. Students may not have another person or entity complete any portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated tools is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

### Important University Dates for Spring 2025 Semester ([Registration Calendar](#))

Jan. 2-10	Registration for spring semester continues
Jan. 10	Last day to register and settle without late fee
Jan. 13	Spring semester classes begin for Session 001 and Online Session 060
Jan. 13-17	Late registration and change of program for Session 001
Jan. 20	Martin Luther King Day, university holiday
Jan. 31	Last day to register and add classes for Session 001 and Online Session 060
Jan. 31	Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001 and Online Session 060
Jan. 31	Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001 and Online Session 060
Jan. 31	Last day to purchase or waive tuition refund insurance
Feb. 4	Last day to add/drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund or change to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001
Feb. 17	Presidents' Day, university holiday
Feb. 28	Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the official transcript only. Mark of "W" will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply. *Please drop any course by the end of week three for session 001 and Online Session 060 (or the 20 percent mark of the session in which the course is offered) to avoid tuition charges.
Feb. 28	Last day to change a Pass/No Pass to a letter grade for Session 001 and Online Session 060
March 16-23	Spring recess
April 11	Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001 and Online Session 060
May 2	Spring semester classes end
May 3-6	Study days
May 7-14	Final examinations
May 14	Spring semester ends
May 14-17	Commencement Week

## Statement on University Academic and Support Systems

### Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](https://osas.usc.edu). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

**Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:**

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate-](#) and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

**Support Systems:**

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-2500

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or [otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu)

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.