

**IMPORTANT:**

Please refer to the [USC Center for Excellence in Teaching](#) for current best practices in syllabus and course design. This document is intended to be a customizable template that primarily includes the technical elements required for the Curriculum Office to forward your proposal to the UCOC.

**TAC 215: Introduction to 3D Modeling, Animation, and Visual Effects****Units:** 2**Fall 2025****Lecture:** Monday 12:00 pm to 01:50 pm**Lab:** Wednesday 12:00 pm to 01:50 pm**Location:** RTH109

**Remote:** There is no remote version of this class, students are expected to attend class in person.

**Instructor:** Rashi Sinha**Office:** Online**Office Hours:** By request**Contact Info:** [rashisin@usc.edu](mailto:rashisin@usc.edu)**Teaching Assistant:** TBD**Office:** Online**Office Hours:** By request**Contact Info:****IT Help:**Viterbi IT: <https://vsoeweb.vsoe.usc.edu/helpdeskpro/>USC ITS: <https://itservices.usc.edu/>**Hours of Service:**

Phone: 24 hours per day, 7 days per week

Email: M-F, 8am – 6pm

**Contact Info:** 213.740.5555

## Course Description

An applied introduction to the techniques used for modeling, animating, texturing, rendering, and creating 3D content for games, cinematics, visual effects, animation, and visualizations.

## Learning Objectives

Gain a thorough applied foundation in the practice of 3D modeling, texturing, animation, surfacing, and visual special effects. Understand the processes involved in the creation of 3D content for animation, games, entertainment, and design. Use industry leading software and tools to explore the production cycle of animation, how pipelines are implemented to support the production process, and how to manage vision, budget, and time constraints. Develop an understanding of the diverse methods available for achieving similar results and the decision making processes involved at various stages of project development. Gain insight into the differences among the various animation tools. Understanding the opportunities and tracks in the field of 3D animation.

**Prerequisite(s):** No Prerequisite

**Recommended Preparation:** Experience with 2d graphics, 3d modeling, or CAD useful but not required.

## Course Notes

There is no text for the course, however each student is expected to make use of the many resources available online, including Autodesk learning documentation, Linda.com resources, and course materials on Brightspace. Course materials, assignment submissions, lecture slides, and updates will be posted on Brightspace. This course is for a letter grade. The grading scale for the course is listed below. Students should plan to bring note taking materials, sketchbooks, or other materials for brainstorming, note taking, sketching, and design work.

## Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software

- Autodesk Maya 2025
- Adobe Photoshop or Pixlr Editor or Photopea

## USC technology rental program

We realize that attending classes online and completing coursework remotely requires access to technology that not all students possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university's equipment rental program. To apply, please [submit an application](#). The Student Basic Needs team will contact all applicants in early August and distribute equipment to eligible applicants prior to the start of the fall semester.

## USC Technology Support Links

[Brightspace help for students](#)

[USC Computing Center Laptop Loaner Program](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

## Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Materials available on Brightspace

## Description and Assessment of Assignments

Projects will be assigned and submitted via Brightspace. Many assignments will have a deliverable set of 2d and 3d assets but should be supported with the supplementary files and assets required in the assignment details.

## Grading Breakdown

All assignments and grading criteria will be posted and submitted via Brightspace.

Assignments	Points	% of Grade
1. Pball Modeling	10	5
2. Pball Model UV layout & Texturing	20	10
3. Vehicle Modeling (Half)	10	5
4. Vehicle Model UV Layout & Texturing	20	10
5. Dorm Prop (Model, UV, Texture)	10	5
6. Vehicle with auto-expression wheels	10	5
7. Scene 1(movie): Animated Car, Camera on rails, renders with Arnold	20	25
8. Finished movie from storyboard	40	25
9. Participation	20	10
TOTAL	160	100

## Attendance/Tardiness Policy:

Students should be in class every day and for every lab session. If you are not able to attend, you must contact your advisor and instructor. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade. Students must arrive to class promptly. Points will be deducted for tardiness. Repeat tardiness will increase the points deduction per instance of tardiness. Additionally, any student who does not show up within 15 minutes of the start of either the morning and afternoon sessions will be reported to the summer program advisor. Please set an extra alarm and show up on time!

## Grading Scale (Example)

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A 95-100

A- 90-94

B+ 87-89

B 83-86

B- 80-82

C+ 77-79

C 73-76

C- 70-72

D+ 67-69

D 63-66

D- 60-62

F 59 and below

## Assignment Rubrics

Assignments and Rubrics will be available on Brightspace.

## Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments, submission rules, and details will be published on Brightspace.

### **Grading Timeline**

Assignments will be graded as quickly and efficiently as possible. Due to the five day per week course schedule, grades may not be posted until the weekend following each week.

### **Synchronous session recording notice**

The synchronous sessions will be recorded and provided to all students asynchronously. Information for faculty on recording class sessions can be found on the [Academic FAQs for Faculty](#) on the USC COVID-19 Resource Center.

### **Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment**

Sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment is prohibited.

*SCampus Section 11.12(B)*

*Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. 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. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).*

### **Residential and Hybrid Streaming Model Courses**

Continuously updated requirements about COVID-19 can be found on the [USC COVID-19 resource center website](#).

### **Course evaluation**

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. The process and intent of the end-of-semester evaluation should be provided. In addition, a mid-semester evaluation is recommended practice for early course correction. See CET support document [Mid-semester Evaluations](#).

### **Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

Below is the detailed course calendar that includes a list of deliverables (homework assignments, examinations, etc.) broken down on a weekly basis. It includes:

- Subject matter, topic and activity
- Required preparatory reading or tasks (e.g., viewing videos)
- Deliverables and when each deliverable is due.

	Topics/Daily Activities	In Class/Study	Deliverables
<b>Week 1</b> Aug 25  Aug 27	<b>Introduction to course:</b> Special hours to accommodate orientation:  <b>Content:</b> USC code of conduct USC Brightspace, USC Lynda.com	<b>Areas of Interest:</b> Describe favorite aspects of games or movies you are interested in.  <b>Expectations of Class:</b> What you will learn, what is graded and handed in and at what time.	<b>Homework:</b> Download Maya (version will be told in class) successfully onto your local laptop or desktop and have it dependably working for next class.
<b>Week 2</b> Sep 1 (NO CLASS, Labor Day Holiday)  Sep 3	<b>Introduction to Maya</b> Maya and web support resources: Online help, class webpage, tutorials, etc.	<b>Part 1:</b> Basic 3d objects, manipulating both objects and components.  <b>Part 2:</b> Finish 3d model of Pball	<b>Homework:</b> <u>Assignment 1: Pball Modeling</u>  Finish 3d model of Pball using lab time and online tutorial.  Refer submission instructions and due date provided by TA.
<b>Week 3</b> Sep 8  Sep 10	<b>Complex Maya modeling</b>	<b>Part 1:</b> UVs versus polygon modeling. (Unwrapping)  <b>Part 2 Lab:</b> Sort out the UVs in pBall 3d model for existing texture.	<b>Homework:</b> <u>Assignment 2: Pball Model UV layout &amp; Texturing</u>  Finish UV layout of Pball using lab time and online tutorial.  Refer submission instructions and due date provided by TA.
<b>Week 4</b> Sep 15  Sep 17	<b>Laying out 'Shoebox Garage'</b>	<b>Part 1:</b> Use polygons as guides with orthographic images for accurate construction of 3d models.  <b>Part 2 Lab:</b> Construct 'Shoebox Garage' 3d image guides.	<b>Homework:</b> Choose a vehicle for creation, set up image guides using polygons.

<p><b>Week 5</b> Sep 22</p> <p>Sep 24</p>	<p><b>Modeling Vehicle from Guides</b></p>	<p><b>Part 1:</b> Using 'hinges' in poly planes to set angles and bends in 3d construction.</p> <p><b>Part 2 Lab:</b> Model half of the digital vehicle using guides.</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b> <u>Assignment 3: Vehicle Modeling (Half)</u></p> <p>3d model half of the vehicle, using guides to show significant changes in the geometry and keeping the construction low poly.</p> <p>Refer submission instructions and due date provided by TA.</p>
<p><b>Week 6</b> Sep 29</p> <p>Oct 1</p>	<p><b>Advanced UV Layout</b></p>	<p><b>Part 1:</b> Use advanced UV techniques of snapping rotating/moving by degrees for arrangement</p> <p><b>Part 2 Lab:</b> Organize all UVs on the half-car model</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b> Slice and arrange UVs from the modeled car into a perfect square.</p>
<p><b>Week 7</b> Oct 6</p> <p>Oct 8</p>	<p><b>Texturing Vehicle using online images.</b></p>	<p><b>Part 1:</b> Exporting UV layout image into pixlr.com or Photoshop as guide for found images to texture the vehicle.</p> <p><b>Part 2 Lab:</b> Texture the half vehicle 3d model, mirror geo.</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b> <u>Assignment 4: Vehicle Model UV Layout &amp; Texturing</u></p> <p>Texture the car, mirror the geometry. combine chassis with separate wheels, delete all shoebox guides and save the model in the 'Final' folder.</p> <p>Refer submission instructions and due date provided by TA.</p>

<b>Week 8</b> Oct 13  Oct 15	<b>Animation:</b> <b>Keyframes and motion paths</b>	<b>Part 1:</b> Write expressions on all four wheels to get them to automatically roll as the vehicle moves on the motion path and groups to make 'differential'.  <b>Part 2 Lab:</b> Make another expression to guide steering	<b>Homework:</b> <u>Assignment 5: Dorm Prop (Model, UV, Texture)</u>  Finish modeling/UV unwrapping and texturing dorm prop.  Refer submission instructions and due date provided by TA.
<b>Week 9</b> Oct 20  Oct 22	<b>Animation:</b> <b>Expressions</b>	<b>Part 1:</b> Construct complex expression for locator to be 5 frames ahead of vehicle, use aim constraint to guide steering  <b>Part 2 Lab:</b> Use motion path and constraints to animate camera to look at car	<b>MIDTERM:</b> <u>Assignment 6: Vehicle with auto-expression wheels</u>  <b>Submit your Maya file of 3d modeled and textured vehicle, with rotating wheels on motion path with steering wheel.</b>  Refer submission instructions and due date provided by TA.
<b>Week 11</b> Oct 27  Oct 29	<b>References</b>	<b>Part 1:</b> Projects and References and how they are used to create large scenes with consistency  <b>Part 2 Lab:</b> Set up shelf icons to go to your project, references to make room scene.	<b>Homework:</b> Use references to create an environment from several dorm props and a table in use with your vehicle.
<b>Week 12</b> Nov 3  Nov 5	<b>Animation: Camera Motion Path</b>	<b>Part 1:</b> Motion paths in use with cameras for rendering multiple scenes with same BG  <b>Part 2 Lab:</b> Set up references to work with motion path camera in three	<b>Homework:</b> Create motion path for camera, set up three separate 'clips'

		separate Maya scenes	
<b>Week 13</b> Nov 10  Nov 12	<b>Playblast and Rendering</b>	<b>Part 1:</b> Rendering out image sequences from maya to become movies. Custom tools to make clips into movies.  <b>Part 2 Lab:</b> Set up three clips to render in Maya to be movies.	<b>Homework:</b> Release of final assignment: Storyboard.  Start rendering out final clips according to the storyboard.
<b>Week 14</b> Nov 17  Nov 19	<b>Rendering in Arnold</b>	How to utilize Arnold renderer for images with HDMI background, use new toolsets to sew movie together	<b>Homework:</b> <u>Assignment 7: Scene 1(movie): Animated Car, Camera on rails, renders with Arnold</u>  Render scenes in Arnold, continue rendering clips. Set up the 3 shots of Scene 1 of the storyboard in Maya and sew them together into 1 video.  Refer submission instructions and due date provided by TA.
<b>Week 15</b> Nov 24  Nov 26 (NO CLASS, Thanksgiving Break Nov 27-Dec 1)	<b>Utilizing custom python script to make movies from images</b>	How to utilize custom script to convert rendered images into movies	<b>Homework:</b>  Continue setting up remaining clips from the storyboard.  Begin Combining rendered images into movies
<b>Week 16</b> Dec 1 Dec 3	<b>Study week, lab catchup</b>	<b>LAST WEEK OF Class</b>	
<b>Final</b> Dec 10-17	<b>Combining Clips and uploading final movie</b>	<i>Finish final movie – NO CLASS</i>	<b>Homework:</b> <u><b>FINAL:</b> Finished movie from storyboard</u>  Refer submission instructions and due date provided by TA.



## Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](https://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

### Support Systems:

*Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

[engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

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

*Student Health Leave Coordinator – 213-821-4710*

Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed.

<https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/>

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*

[engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086*

[equity.usc.edu](https://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](https://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

*Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421*

[studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](https://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with

architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*

[studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssu](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssu)

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

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

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*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

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) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Diversity and Inclusion are foundational to the SCA community. We are committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all identities and backgrounds can flourish. The classroom should be a space for open discussion of ideas and self-expression; however, SCA will not tolerate verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, intimidation or violence against person or property. If students are concerned about these matters in the classroom setting they are encouraged to contact their SCA Diversity and Inclusion Liaison, <http://cinema.usc.edu/about/diversity.cfm>; e-mail [diversity@cinema.usc.edu](mailto:diversity@cinema.usc.edu). You can also report discrimination based on a protected class here <https://equity.usc.edu/harassment-or-discrimination/>

### **Disruptive Student Behavior:**

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

**FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX**