

CASE STUDY
Whitman College



Online Courses from lynda.com Offer Whitman Art Students a Kick Start in Digital Media



School:
Whitman College

City & State:
Walla Walla, Washington

Grade Level:
Higher Education

"Teaching technology skills via lynda.com online videos is more efficient and thorough than it could ever be if I was trying to cover program features in class."

Ben Bloch,
Assistant Professor of Art
Art Department
Whitman College

CHALLENGE

The Art Department at Whitman College created an innovative series of courses in new genre art practices, introducing students to emerging contemporary formats like video and digital art. Assistant Professor Ben Bloch accepted the challenge to teach the courses that cover theory as well as design skills.

"It's difficult to meet the requirements of a class that covers both art philosophy and technical skills," said Bloch. "We spend a lot of in-class time discussing contemporary art theory as well as screening films. Trying to find the time to also demonstrate imaging, sound, and video software is a challenge."

SOLUTION

Bloch looked into several supplemental training solutions including CD- and web-based media. He ultimately selected online courses from lynda.com as a way for students to learn the technical skills that were such an important component of the class. Using lynda.com's Student Multi-User Program, Bloch was able to choose five titles from the Online Training Library®. His students could access these training courses online at any time, along with the accompanying exercise files.

Part of the class experience was not only to learn about contemporary fine arts genres through lecture, discussion, and demonstration, but also to experiment with formats like video art, installation, digital sound, the internet, and conceptual and performance arts.

In the fall of 2006, Bloch's students began the semester studying photo imagery, followed by video production. For both subjects, students used lynda.com's online courses to learn industry-leading imagery and video software, such as Adobe® Photoshop® and After Effects® and Apple® Final Cut Pro®, Soundtrack®, GarageBand™, and DVD Studio Pro®.

BENEFITS

Once the students completed this initial overview, they applied their newly acquired skills to create a series of art projects.

Adobe Photoshop. By using layer masks and the Liquify feature in Photoshop, students were able to create series of digital stills showing manipulations to their own bodies and faces.

Apple Final Cut Pro. To gain familiarity with basic video camera functionality, Final Cut Pro was used to log, capture, edit, and produce a short video that the students imagined would be placed in a time capsule and opened up in 100 years.

Apple Soundtrack and GarageBand. Students used Soundtrack and GarageBand to alter the tone of a video by applying different types of music to it.

Adobe Photoshop and After Effects. For another project, Bloch provided his students with a still image of a simple robot figure and asked them to parse up the parts in Photoshop, then import the .psd file as footage into After Effects. Then they animated the robot using motion design techniques.

Apple DVD Studio Pro. At the end of the semester, students were asked to use DVD Studio Pro to archive their work, creating an electronic portfolio of the projects completed throughout the semester.

RESULTS

"Teaching technology skills via lynda.com online videos is more efficient and thorough than it could ever be if I was trying to cover program features in class," said Bloch. "The software programs run so deep now, it's great for students to at least get a solid overview."

Although most of the students who took Bloch's Beginning New Genre Art Practices class were inexperienced in the use of digital media, the lynda.com training offered them a way to go beyond the basics and learn as much as they wanted to. Also, he found that students using the online courses took more ownership of their own learning. Many of them chose to use their newfound knowledge to produce projects that were extraordinarily creative.

"The online format offers a valuable and amazing resource for learning these software programs that can have a scary learning curve for novices," said Bloch. "It's great that students can begin to learn video art and all of the new software that's available to support it, like basic editing, compression, and effects composing. I haven't found another resource like this that is so comprehensive and user-friendly."

- › Makes thorough teaching of basic and advanced technology skills more efficient.
- › Provides self-paced learning environment for beginning students.
- › Lets students take more ownership of their learning.
- › Extends the learning environment beyond the classroom walls.
- › Offers user-friendly and comprehensive software application training.

MORE INFORMATION

Whitman College
www.whitman.edu

Whitman College Art Department
www.whitman.edu/content/index/acad/art

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