



# P A R K L A N D C O L L E G E

---

To: CSC 187 Students  
From: Paul Young  
Date: January 10, 2006  
Subject: Welcome

Welcome to the world of digital media and 3D animation. Please record the following for your records:

- Class web site: <http://virtual.parkland.edu/young/csc187/>
- Class web site password: \_\_\_\_\_
- D227 lab key: \_\_\_\_\_
- Server directory: graphics \_\_\_\_\_
- Server password: \_\_\_\_\_

This is the first in a series of four courses in 3D computer animation. Four courses are required because learning 3D animation is a challenge with a steep learning curve. To do 3D animation well, a student has to draw upon many disciplines and experiences: art, design, photography, movies, writing, storytelling, performance, sound, music, history, culture, programming, math, and more. Most successful professionals working in digital media specialize in only one or two specialties within their discipline.

The focus of this series of courses is project-based learning. Each project will teach you fundamental skills in design as well as technology. Each project is also an opportunity to add a piece to your portfolio. By the time you graduate, you should have a portfolio of about 10 pieces you are proud of. Your portfolio is your entry into employment in the entertainment, marketing, broadcast or gaming industries. Competition in these industries is stiff. Therefore, you should strive to do your best when creating work for your portfolio.

Doing 3D animation requires the use of very sophisticated software. Although there are software tutorials as part of the coursework in this class, real software skills are learned through practice, exploration, trial and error. There is not enough time in class to cover all the features of Maya, even in four semesters. In fact, that is not the goal of this series of classes. Instead, we prefer to teach software concepts (why things work the way they do) so that you can begin to explore on your own.

As seductive as the computer is, we must not forget that the computer is only a tool not much different than a hammer. Just as a carpenter will use his or her tools to create functional pieces with aesthetic value, artists use the computer to create beautiful visual communication that entertain, enlighten, inspire and even help sell products. Because this class will be taught as a studio art class, I will be expecting your work to have a high level of craftsmanship and demonstrate an understanding of design principles and visual literacy.

I am aware that there are different students with different learning preferences. If you are having difficulties learning the material being presented in this class, I highly encourage you to see me during my office hours. My personal goal is to make sure that each and every one of you have a fulfilling learning experience here at Parkland. Let's have a great time doing that.