Welcome!

We are back at it! w0000000t!!!! After many long years of sweat and toil in the spice-mines of academia, the School of Informatics and Computing and I are proud to present the ADVANCED version of the Creature Design Class. It is the next chapter exploring what it takes to craft creatures for games, movies, stories, etc. This class aims to educate its participants in the amazing and varied approaches one can take to craft an original organic being and give it meaning through a work of media. It will look at how creatures and their environments, mechanics, and stories have affected you, pop culture, and society-at-large. We will examine the people who make creatures and the worlds they live within and how these creators and their creations have help shape our culture and our understanding of being outside ourselves.

Each class consists of a lecture by the instructor followed by class time for discussions, activities and the viewing of nature/fantasy/sci-fi documentaries. These activities are designed to get you out of your seats, experience creatures in a whole new light, and deepen your creative powers. Discussions concerning lectures, assignments, and newly acquired information will be held during class. There will also be time for student concerns and topics. Students will be expected to work on their projects outside of class and develop them each week. It is highly recommended that you give this class as much attention as you can. You should be here to study and craft creatures and fuel your passion for them and their potential.

In this class you will be expected to work quite hard, explore, participate in discussions, but most of all have fun with the subject matter and the tools required to create it. This is a chance to be energized by what opportunities your imagination can offer. Most of all, you should be motivated and open to new ideas and practices and be able to create, create, create!

Class Philosophy:

The more a human creates outside of their everyday, through prisms of nature and the mind creative, the greater an acceptance of themselves can be found in addition to an increased understanding of what is, what could be, and of those who they share worlds with.
IUPUI Mission:
The Mission of IUPUI, is to provide for its constituents excellence in
• Teaching and Learning
• Research,
• Scholarship, and Creative Activity
• Civic Engagement
With each of these core activities characterized by
• Collaboration within and across disciplines and with the community
• A commitment to ensuring diversity, and
• Pursuit of best practices
IUPUI’s mission is derived from and aligned with the principal components –
Communities of Learning, Responsibilities of Excellence, Accountability and Best
Practices – of Indiana University’s Strategic Directions Charter.

Statement of Values:
IUPUI values the commitment of students to learning; of faculty to the highest
standards of teaching, scholarship, and service; and of staff to the highest standards of
service. IUPUI recognizes students as partners in learning. IUPUI values the
opportunities afforded by its location in Indiana’s capital city and is committed to serving
the needs of its community. Thus, IUPUI students, faculty, and staff are involved in the
community; both to provide educational programs and patient care and to apply learning
to community needs through service. As a leader in fostering collaborative relationships,
IUPUI values collegiality, cooperation, creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship as
well as honesty, integrity, and support for open inquiry and dissemination of findings.
IUPUI is committed to the personal and professional development of its students, faculty,
and staff and to continuous improvement of its programs and services.

Principles of Undergraduate Learning (PUL):
• Oral presentation • Writing skills
• Critical thinking • Application of knowledge
• Intellectual depth, breadth, and adaptive-ness
• Understanding of society and culture
• Values and ethics

University Expectations/Guidelines/Policies:
University Regulations state: “Students are expected to be present for every
meeting of the classes in which they are enrolled.” Only the instructor can excuse a
student from classes or course responsibilities. There are always legitimate reasons for
missing class. Personal illness, accident, a death or serious illness in the immediate
family, athletic trips, scheduled interviews, plant visits, and field trips, or other
circumstances may make your class attendance impossible. Each of these situations will
be evaluated on an individual basis. Students should make direct contact with his/her
instructor preferably before a class. If the instructor cannot be reached in person, by e-
mail, or by telephone, the student should leave a message in the instructor’s department
mailbox. Students can only make up work from an authorized absence and permission from the instructor.

**Attendance and Participation:**

IUPUI policy is that class attendance is mandatory. Attendance is taken at the start each class by the professor. Any student missing TWO classes without an approved excuse will lose five points from the final grade. An additional five points will be removed for every missed day after the third missed day. Be on time to class. Lateness is assessed 15min after class begins. Every three “lates” equals one absence that in turn counts towards the final grade reductions. If you are unable to attend, please send me a notice through email before class. Absences may be excused with valid doctor’s documentation or other extenuating circumstances. More than four absences without a “legitimate” the reason, will result in a lowered semester grade. Students are expected to actively participate in class by asking questions and sharing any relevant experiences.

**Administrative Withdrawal:**

Administrative Withdrawal: A basic requirement of this course is that you will participate in class and conscientiously complete writing and reading assignments. Keep in touch with me if you are unable to attend class or complete an assignment on time. If you miss more than half our class meetings within the first four weeks of the semester without contacting me, you will be administratively withdrawn from this section. Our class meets once per week; thus if you miss more than two classes in the first four weeks, you may be withdrawn. Administrative withdrawal may have academic, financial, and financial aid implications. Administrative withdrawal will take place after the full refund period, and if you are administratively withdrawn from the course you will not be eligible for a tuition refund. If you have questions about the administrative withdrawal policy at any point during the semester, please contact me.

**Incompletes:**

The IUPUI Campus Bulletin presents the campus policy on incompletes, noting that a grade of incomplete may be assigned by an instructor when exceptional circumstances, such as illness, prevent students from finishing all works required in a course. The grade of I will be awarded only if the work is mostly complete, generally 75 to 80 percent, and of passing quality. The key decision in deciding whether or not to give an incomplete involves assessing whether or not the student has completed, at a passing level, enough of the course and whether "exceptional circumstances" apply. Exceptional circumstances can include the serious illness of the student, spouse or partner, child, or parent; or a fire or accident that interrupts the end of the semester. Note that an incomplete is never warranted as a remedy for procrastination.

**Academic Honesty:**

All students in Media Arts & Science should aspire to high standards of academic honesty. This class encourages cooperation and the exchange of ideas. However, students are expected to do their own work.
**Plagiarism:** (adapted from the definition by the School of Liberal Arts)

Plagiarism is the use of the work of others without properly crediting the actual source of the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, entire articles, music or pictures. Using other students’ work (with or without their permission) is still plagiarism if you don’t indicate who initially did the work. Plagiarism, a form of cheating, is a serious offense and will be severely punished. When an instructor suspects plagiarism, he/she will inform the student of the charge; the student has the right to respond to the allegations. Students whose work appears to be plagiarized may be asked to produce earlier drafts of the work. Students should, for this reason and as a protection in cases of lost papers, diskettes, retain rough drafts, notes and other work products for 2 or 3 weeks after the end of each semester. The penalties for plagiarism include reprimands, being failed for a particular exam, paper, project or the entire course, disciplinary probation, or dismissal. Faculty, after consulting with their chair and or the dean must notify students in writing of their decision. Students have the right to appeal such decisions by the submitting a petition. All students are responsible for reading the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct of IUPUI. *Please see Powers about previous issues.

**Liability Warning:**

Your student ID and password are private! Under no circumstance are you to give them out to anyone. If another person uses your ID or password you will be held personally responsible for any and all activity on your computer account. If plagiarism is involved you run the risk of being dismissed from the school. If a computer or software is damaged you are responsible for repair and replacement. Loaning out your ID or password involves too much risk. “A student must not violate course rules as contained in a course syllabus, which are rationally related to the content of the course or to the enhancement of the learning process in the course.” [Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct, page 29]

**Classroom Behavior, Respect, Edicts, & Policies:**

**Respect for your Fellow Creature Creator:**

Cell phones, pagers (really?), blackberries, iPods, Zunes (does anyone actually have one of these?) and all other personal devices are to be turned off and not used during class times. I mean it. They. Are. Annoying! They may be used only during breaks or at the consent of the instructor. Anyone using these devices in a disruptive manner will be asked to leave the class. “Social sites” such as Facebook.com, MySpace.com, their illegitimate child MyFace.com, Friendster.com (again, is anyone on this?), Twitter, or Instant Messenger are not allowed during class. These sites are disruptive and a distraction. And for God’s sake you get to be on them 21 hours a day outside of class so give yourself a break. No one cares how your cousins status on how she is moving into her new place and that Tweet from your best friend’s brother about the roller-derby is going to be there when class gets out. Anyone caught using these will be asked to cease and if not will then be asked to leave the class.
Students are expected to be respectful of the instructor and each other during lectures and presentations. Unless asked a question, talking should not interfere with whoever is speaking at the time.

**Respect Triangle – Prof > Student, Student < Prof, Student >< Student**
(from my regional-district-manager, who thinks-outside-the-box)

Do to a complete abuse of the class time provided in previous semesters, no student is allowed to leave early without permission of the instructor. Family emergencies, religious activities, personal extreme sickness will be allowed and excused if told to the professor in a timely manner. Any student(s) found leaving early will be marked late for that day. Remember, three lates will count as one absent. Also, any students who disappear during break just randomly will be treated in the same manner.

**Professional Courtesy:**
One of the more important “Meta” aspects of working in a class, and indeed is the practice of professional courtesy. This set of manners goes a long way in keeping the gears of any endeavor greased and moving with efficiently. It also helps minimize hurt feelings and encourages pride in one’s own work. Everyone working in this class is expected to maintain and practice professional courtesy. It is a simple formula and consists simply of; Thank-You, Please, and Sorry. These four simple words should be used during interactions within the class and over email. This is practice for the real-world where these behaviors are expected and reflect on one’s station, advancement, and ability to connect with others. Please make sure to practice them and maintain an air of professionalism at all times.

**No Phone Zone:** Due to the growing plague of individuals obsessed with and hypnotized by their own personal communication devices, (combined with the fact that this entire team will only meet for two hours and forty minutes once a week), the professor kindly asks that all students refrain from using their phones during class/meetings times. Much work and communication must be created, analyzed, debated, and worked on during these brief windows and, unless it is a family emergency or is in some way related to the project, I ask you to stay off your phones. Repeated offenses will result in your being asked to leave the class.

**Drama-Llamas: THERE WILL BE NO DRAMA-LLAMAS!**
(Further explained in class – Creationism vs Evolution vs Personal Beliefs)

**Email Response Time:**
Due to the complete overload of the current academic schedule, all students must allow 24 – 48 hours for a response from the instructor. Email may not be returned with 24 hours due to current backlogs. Student patience is greatly appreciated and sending out the same email 20 times in one day will not garner a quicker response. All email is answered in order that it is received. **All email needs to be sent over the Class Canvas site.** Basically, I will get to everyone, there just does not need to be any panic. The greatest words ever spoken were:
DON’T PANIC!

**Lateness: There are NO Late Assignments!** No projects will be accepted after the due date expressed in the syllabus class schedule below, unless there is a death in the family, a religious holiday, or a grave personal matter that you can show worthy proof of. Any work turned in after the due date will receive a 0 though may still receive corrective commentary and critique.

**Playing the Game-Class:**
This class is going to be fun! Fun is a most crucial element of creation and the class will reflect that. But a part of fun is challenge. This class will be equally challenging. To survive in this class you need to not see it as a tired-old class, but a new game for you to conquer, beat, and win! Think of the various assignments as levels. Levels that are going to throw all sorts of baddies, open pits, and power-ups your way. These assignments/levels want to challenge you. They have all sorts of minions at their command like software comprehension, code, animation, writing, creating, etc. But with enough determination and insight you will recognize the patterns and amounts of effort needed to strategize around and navigate through them triumphantly. This game/class has multiple level/assignments and each one gets harder and more challenging. Yet, when you get past one and best it, the taste of victory will be sweet. You will then be ready for the next one. Getting better and stronger as you go.

The grades you receive are the points/coins you collect along the way. You may not collect all the points on a particular level but that’s why there are extra-credit assignments and random projects. These act as those hidden zones filled with coins as far as the eye can see. You need to be ready for them and know your standing in the class with your point/coin tally.

The three absences in class are your three lives. You have three chances to make it through this game without a penalty. I would use these wisely if you hope to finish in good standing. The final grade in the class is your ranking in this game. If you find all the coins, secrets, hidden widgets, beat all the enemies, pass all the levels, and make it past the boss you will come out with a high game ranking. One that is worthy of your mom taking a picture of it and posting the photo on the fridge.

And finally, there is the ever-present Boss. Think of your kindly instructor as your smiling, neighborhood Bowser. Large, aggravating, helpful, and someone you can’t wait to beat. The boss is always the paradox in a game. He is the one you must get past to truly complete the game. Without him and his endless waves of minions you would not be able to prove yourself to yourself and those around you. A sharp sword always needs a heavy anvil to be smithed on. He may be in the way, but the boss of any game is always the best teacher. Remember this paradox. The boss may roar, kidnap the princess, and challenge you but he does it with a smile of happiness when you send him into the boiling lava. I will challenge you, help you, assist you, say things you may not want to hear and things you want to hear, and push you to your greatest potential. I will be by your side through all of this. I take this material very seriously. Games and created works say a lot about the culture and people who make them. They are a true expression of self, fun, and play. All
things needed for a balanced, meaningful, and rich life. I am honored you have taken this class and chosen to play this game. I want you to win. You want to win. So let’s go get this thing started.

CREATURE ON!

Creature Culture: This is not just a technical class. You must have culture to have context for content creation. This class is not just a place where you will learn boring, age-old facts and it is not a sterile, dry place for you to simply learn some tech and run off. It is a place of deep study and reflection on the topics at hand. A place to study the myriad forms that creatures and life itself can take. This class takes a serious look at outside resources such as Nature Documentaries both real and fantasy, a trip to the Zoo, interviews with Creature Designers, and the movies/media content that have helped shape and define our approach and attitudes affecting beings outside ourselves. Videos, articles, and discussions will be held to challenge your insights into creatures and their potential.

Why do some creatures cause an immediate response of like or dislike or revulsion on some people? How will creatures and characters we create shape our world and ourselves? These reflections and questions will deeply enrich your comprehension of organic beings and make you a truly better creature designer.

P.S. Sometimes its just fun to watch some engaging videos to stir up the creative juices! You have no idea how much this helps.

Course Description:
This class looks at the history, concepts, construction, production, and development behind the creation of original fantasy creatures and the stories that define them and how they may be applied to outside media content for the purposes of entertainment and education. It will examine how creatures and their original aspects have become a major factor in popular culture, our personal stories, and mass imaginations. Additionally, the class will study how creatures can add nuance and depth to interactive projects, learning situations, and storytelling. A myriad of sources will be utilized to help develop students to create their own original creations and be able to adequately describe as many facets of these creations as possible.

Course Goals, Outcomes & Core Competencies:
This course will give students a fundamental grasp of:

Creature creation and their underlying narratives, world creation/development, basic design solutions, character, creature, and environmental design choices, an understanding of creature design, and a comprehensive working knowledge of the history, development, and evolution of the creature creation from the dawn of our civilization to the present day. Additionally, there will be a focus into individual designers, creators, and tinkerers who create(d) and developed the modern history of creatures across modern media avenues. These skill sets will endorse students’ knowledge of the professional creature construction and allow them to have a working knowledge of creature and their production. Other goals that the class will produce in students include the following:

• Express personal ideas and facts to others effectively in a variety of formats
• Comprehend, interpret, and analyze texts, animations, and imagery
• Communicate orally in group settings
• Discuss creature related problems and solutions
By the end of the semester students should have knowledge pertaining to the above information. This will be delivered through readings, discussions, and activities. Students will learn about new and emerging technologies and begin to develop creative practices to incorporate them as possible towards the purpose of creature engagement and its results on society.

**Additional Class Goals and Expected Outcomes:**
For students to have a deep knowledge, comprehension, and appreciation of:
- The history of life on this planet and how through the study of it can stimulate new original character and creature ideas.
- The ability to analyze and discuss the merits of what makes a believable creature.
- Understanding the complex process required for the creation of a believable and convincing original creature creation.

**Core Communication and Quantitative Skills learned in this class:**
• Express personal ideas and facts to others effectively in a variety of formats;
• Comprehend, interpret, and analyze texts, animations, and imagery;
• Communicate orally in one-on-one and group settings;
• Solve creature related creation problems and logistical reasoning’s.
• Make efficient use of information resources and technology for personal and professional needs.
By the end of the semester the student should have knowledge pertaining to the above information. This will be delivered through readings, discussions, hands on activities, and other methods of learning. Students will learn how to adapt current, new and emerging technologies and best practices to incorporate as many human senses as possible for the purposes of engagement.

**Grading Scale:**
A+ = 98 – 100%, A = 94 - 97%, A- = 90 – 93%
B+ = 87 – 89%, B = 84 – 86%, B- = 80 – 83%
C+ = 77 – 79%, C = 74 – 76%, C- = 70 – 73%
D+ = 67 – 69%, D = 64 – 66%, D- = 60 – 63%
F = below 59%.
Super F = under 9% (Yes, this has actually been given out, multiple times! Current record = -9%)
A = Excellent (Wow!), B = Good (Hmmm, Not bad, shows potential)
C = Average (Meh, it’ll pass but….), D = Below Average (Really?)
F = Fail (Why are you here?!!), Super F = Epic Fail (nuff said.)
In the case of borderline grades, factors such as respect, attendance, tardiness, attitude, and class participation will be considered.
Documentation: All work will be appropriately documented and follow professional standards. All files are to have your name, date, and class number ON and IN them. Further details will be explained in Assignment Handouts.

Computer Degradation Policy:
Over the past few years students have begun to show an increasingly disturbing dependence on their phones and computers. This is fine and dandy outside of class but our sessions only meet for 3 hours 12 times this summer semester. It is beyond crucial that I have your full attention during this time. This is so I may help mold and teach you the principles of Creature Design and for you to work with your fellow Creature Creators on assignments and in-class exercises. There is no reason to be watching YouTube videos or viewing Facebook during class time. Also, the notes will be given out each class so there is no reason to be looking at them over your computers. Every student is expected to have their computers and phones down and away during class lectures, exercises, videos, etc.

Anyone caught with their computers up and open after it has been announced for them to be away will be asked to close them once. If this does not achieve the desired effect then the professor will make note of the student in question and their grade will experience a point degradation per infraction. Everyone is an adult here and is expected to be fully involved with the class. I want to draw the very best out of you this semester and I can only do that if you are fully along for the adventure.

Extra Credit: Extra credit work will be given out during the course of the semester and will be fully explained during class times.

Live Animals: Occasionally this class has had students who have brought in their pets so that their fellow students can physical interact with a species outside of their own. This is by no means required (in terms of bringing in animals or touching them) and if anyone has issues with this aspect please see the professor. This aspect has been encouraged to help students identity with the subject matter and expose them to new experiences.

*** Religion and Evolution Clause.
Grading Information & Assignments:
(Assignments will be further explained on Assignment Sheets given out during class)

A. Alpha Assignment:
1. Final – (nickname: The Mega-Elder) – This Creature is the conclusion of your Creature Design studies. It is the pinnacle of the design practices and creations you have experienced over and practiced these past two classes. This final project will include extensive information and visuals on this, your most original creature. It builds on top of the Beta Assignments, previous class, and has been the main creature you have worked on all semester. It is to be the most detailed and explanatory of all your creations and the main jewel in your Creature Design Crown. This assignment will also have a public-display component. More explained in future assignment handout. – 100 points.

B. Beta Assignments:
1. Cryptid Creature – Intro assignment. For this assignment, you will research a particular region of the planet Earth and create a cryptological creature that suits the region and partakes in local customs and tradition. The creature must be within the Earth-realm of believability and have a long and storied legend behind it. Additionally, it must straddle the realms of belief and non-belief. You should be able to almost convince people it exists while at the same time giving enough room for skeptics to be able to deny its existence. It is a creature of the grey and neither light nor dark. Examples to look for include the Yeti, Loch Ness Monster, Kongamato, Chupacabra, Mokele-mbembe, and Bunyip. – 100 points.

2. Ecosystem Creatures – Intermediate assignment. This work will call on you to partner with a fellow student to create a working ecosystem of alien creatures. A set environment will be given so that you and your partner can create a food-web and a series of connections between a good number of creatures. For example, a marsh ecosystem has the following food-web and ecosystem connections:
   Marsh grass feeds grasshoppers who in turn feed shrews who in turn feed hawks. When hawks die and plummet to the earth their decomposing bodies nourish the soil the marsh grass grows in. A balanced ecosystem must be created and consequences of that ecosystem being out of balance will also be explored, i.e. When there are no wolves, deer overpopulate, which leads to fewer healthy deer, inbreeding, and a high level of destruction to the environment. Bring wolves back and the system balances back into place. – 100 points

C. Gamma Assignments:
1. Weekly Creature-Feature Readings – Every week there are assigned readings.
2. Reading Quizzes
To assess the weekly readings there will be a weekly quiz = 25 points.

3. Random Assignments – Who knows? These will be fun. - ??? points.

4. Showing up for Critiques and Final – 50 points each + Review Points = 25

Explanation of Chosen Creature Class Aspects:
This class seeks to explore all available avenues towards the creation of new creatures in this world and for others to be engaged by them. Students in this class take on the role of a Creator. Not every Creator shares the same talents as their kin. Each Creator has a unique road that they follow. In order to encourage as much creation as possible and prevent any creative hindrances, this class recognizes several formats of creation. **Students are able to select one of these designations at the start of the semester for their Alpha and Beta Assignments.** This is so their individual talents may shine and to maximize class feedback and critique. This system has been created so that students may use the information presented in class and apply it all towards their created works.

All students in the class will be expected to have some aspect of all components in their work (i.e. A writer will be expected to produce some visual piece to accompany their writing and an artist will be expected to have some amount of writing to accompany their visuals) but the majority of grading and critiques will focus on the area of expertise that the student has chosen for themselves. Students are asked to choose wisely at this time so that their foundation in the class is set and set strong.

**Creator Creation Choices:**

**2D Artist** – Creators of this classification are to pick a 2Dimensional medium of their choice (or several) to help them fully visualize what creatures they are seeing in their mind’s eye. The medium can be digital or traditional and though some writing will accompany each work these creators will be primarily judged on the visuals first and the writing second. In addition to this, 2D Artists are highly encouraged to create as many images pertaining to their creatures as humanly possible. The benefit of 2Dimensional work is that it does not always require computer rendering time or other reasons that technology is waited upon. 2D Artists are expected to show their work in as many angles, poses, and situations the medium allows.

**3D Artist** – When one finds themselves in this category they find that the entire world of 3D is at their fingertips. Creators on this path are allowed to use any 3D medium (i.e. Maya, Max, Rhino, Blender, etc.) that they have access to. Writings will always accompany these creations though the actual models made will take top billing in the grading. As experienced in the past, texturing is only required for the primary Hatchling and Elder assignments. Due to the enormous amounts of time required for UV unwrapping and rendering, Creators who have chosen the 3D path will be scrutinized on their modeling above everything else. The details of their creatures’ outer forms need to be rich and engaging like the technologies and Creators producing them.

**Storyteller** – These creators are expected to let their writings flow more freely than their visual kin and have their words cascade upon the class like the waters of a waterfall. Their primary focus will be the creation of stories and writings surrounding their created
creatures. Students in this category will be primarily graded on their writings but will be expected to have some sketch-visuals to accompany their works. Students on this path are highly encouraged to actually perform and read their writings to the class so audiences can go on the journey with them during class critiques.

**Calendar and Schedule:** Vague Schedule is Vague! – Travis Dickens, 2012.
(Explained in class – Topics are constantly in flux.)

**Calendar and Schedule:**

**May:**

**Week 1.**
Class 1. – May 11th - Introductions and Examining Experience-Creatures

**Week 2.**
Class 2. – May 16th - Lecture & Activity Time.
Class 3. – May 18th - Lecture & Activity Time.

**Week 3.**
Class 4. – May 23rd - Lecture & Activity Time.
Mega-Alpha Ideas Discussed.

**Week 5.**

**June:**
Class 7. – June 1st - Lecture & Activity Time.

**Week 6.**
Class 8. – June 6th - Lecture & Activity Time.
Mega-Alpha Progress Presented.

**Week 7.**
Class 10. – June 13th - Lecture & Activity Time.

**Week 8.**
Nasty Weather, Junky Car Breakdown, Prof. Sick - Cancellation Policy:

If for some other reason I cannot make it to class I will send out a group email stating the situation. Make sure to check your email at least once a day.

World of Warcraft Right-of-Play Clause:

Any student found assisting or in any way playing on the Alliance side of WoW on any server will be promptly ganked and banished from class. We have no need for any-goody-two-shoes in this realm! Consequently, any student found assisting or playing on the Horde side of WoW may receive bonus points on every assignment. We need to encourage the right way to play at all times! FOR THE HORDE!!!!!!!

Right of Revision Statement

The instructor in this course reserves the right to change the sequence of material and/or dates as outlined in this course syllabus.