Computer Science 417
Computer Animation
Fall 2025
Syllabus

Instructor
> Dr. Timothy Davis
> McGlothlin-Street 133
> Office hours: MWTh 5:00-6:00
> **tadavis@wm.edu**

Course Webpage
> **http://www.cs.wm.edu/~tadavis/cs417**

Teaching Assistant
> Zaiyu Cheng (**zcheng06@wm.edu**)
> Office hours: Tuesday 9:00-10:00 a.m. (Zoom)

Class Meetings
> Section 1: TTh 2:00–3:20, Washington 306
> Section 2: TTh 3:30–4:50, Washington 308

Textbook
> Dariush Derakhshani, *Introducing Autodesk Maya 2024*, CRC Press, 2024. (recommended)

University Policy
> **Accommodation** William & Mary accommodates students with disabilities in accordance with federal laws and university policy. Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis should contact Student Accessibility Services staff at 757-221-2509 or at sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. For more information, please see www.wm.edu/sas.

Course Description
> Introduction to principles and practice of 3D computer animation within the context of digital production. Primary topics include modeling, keyframe animation, procedural animation, shading, rigging, and effects. Course projects will be time-intensive and completed using production-level software, complemented by Python scripting.

Grading
> Final grades will be based on projects and a final exam with appropriate weights based on difficulty. Letter grades will be based on a 10-point scale with +/- designations awarded accordingly.

Projects	80%		
Final Exam	20%	Section 1: Friday	December 12, 2:00–5:00
		Section 2: Tuesday	December 16, 2:00-5:00

> Last day to drop: Monday, September 8, 2025
> Last day to withdraw: Monday, October 27, 2025

Course Policies

To be successful in this course, you must follow several guidelines, listed below.

- **Attendance** Attendance is not required, but strongly recommended. The student is responsible for acquiring class notes for any lectures missed.

- **Class Cancellation** Students are expected to wait for 15 minutes after the scheduled class starting time before leaving if the instructor is late.

- **Professionalism** All students are expected to act professionally during class, which includes not distracting other students with conversations or electronic devices, such as laptops, cell phones, tablets, etc. Additionally, any sort of audio/video recording is forbidden, unless prior permission has been obtained.

- **Independent Work** Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in significant penalties and/or academic integrity charges. Cheating involves any misrepresentation of another's work as your own. Additional clarifications on cheating may also be made during the course of the semester. You may seek help from me or the TA.

- **Deadlines** Deadlines will be enforced, with late work accepted only under extreme circumstances. Submissions will not be accepted after three days past the due date.

- **Grade Disputes** Scores for graded work will be posted on Blackboard. Any questions or disputes concerning projects must be presented to me no sooner than 24 hours after the assignment has been returned and no later than one week after the date the graded work is posted/ returned; otherwise, all grades are final.

Projects

- All projects will be posted on student webpages for viewing by the class.   Projects can be completed on your home computer or laptop, or on the lab machines.

- You may discuss projects with the instructor, TA, and classmates, but your submissions must be your own work.

- You may consult books, publications, and the internet, with proper attribution. AI (e.g., ChatGPT) will be allowed for some work; however, AI is prohibited by default; i.e., an assignment must explicitly state that AI is allowed.

- Remember the William & Mary Honor Code!