

# Advanced Character Design

## Syllabus:

Instructor: Christina Wu

Course Duration: 14 Weeks

Course Description: Learn how to create unique and compelling characters with interesting backstories and inspirations in this 14 week character design class! Dive into shape language, design, posing, color, and much more! Students will create multiple unique and finished characters, complete with turnarounds and final creatively posed illustrations based on the characters' personalities!

### Objectives:

- Learn how to create unique and interesting character designs based on specific specifications
  - Learn about design as it pertains to character design
  - Learn how to create a character that conveys personality and traits
  - Create your own final, full color characters with turnarounds and creatively designed poses
- 

### Week 1:

Watch Lessons:

- Welcome: Anime Art School!
- Your Syllabus
- Materials
- Shape Language
- Big, Medium, Small
- Close Together, Far Away
- Simple and Complex
- 70 - 30 and Unevenness
- Homework: Shape Design Exercises

Objective:

- Get introduced to the class
- Learn about the basics of design
- Do the homework

#### Homework:

- Draw 30 simple characters using the shape languages of circle, square, triangle.
- Implement the design principles (such as: big, medium, small, and close together, far away, and simple & Complex, and unevenness) in your designs.
- Make them very simple, refer to the demo in the lesson. Don't go into detail. Keep the characters very graphic.

Assignment Due: (at the beginning of the following class)

(Post Homework in the discord channel #Homework tab)

Note: Assignments will NOT be graded. This is not a class with live feedback from the instructors.

---

## Week 2:

#### Watch Lessons:

- What Makes a Strong Silhouette
- Shape Language and Personality (Shapes Within Shapes)
- Body Types - Female
- Body Types - Male
- How to Extract Design Elements
- Repetition (Repeating Shapes Throughout the Design)
- Homework: Character Design Exercises

#### Objective:

- Learn about advanced design principles
- Do the homework

#### Homework:

- Analyze 10 Disney / Pixar Character Silhouettes. Identify how the shapes are being used.
- Design 5 characters that utilize shape language. Think about the shapes of the silhouette, and also the shapes on the inside of the design.
- Create 3 characters with a combination of 2 different shapes. (Example: Square Silhouette, circular inside shapes. or, Circular silhouette, sharp interior features.
- Remember: This is a design exercise to help you stretch your design muscles. These characters should look very extreme in their designs.
- Total drawings: 8.

Assignment Due: (at the beginning of the following class)

(Post Homework in the discord channel #Homework tab)

Note: Assignments will NOT be graded. This is not a class with live feedback from the instructors.

---

### Week 3:

Watch Lessons:

- Character Design Poses Versus Flashy Poses
- How to Have Strong Poses
- Personality Based Gesture Drawing
- Counter-Shape
- Pushing Poses
- Poses Within Shapes
- Homework: Personality Based Posing

Objective:

- Learn all about posing and planning characters.

Homework:

- Draw 15 poses (fast) that give off a certain story or expression. For example: 3 Sneaky poses, 3 heroic poses, 3 scared poses, 3 embarrassed poses, 3 angry poses.
- Draw 5 poses using shapes as a starting point.
- Include a counter-shape in at least 5 of the poses for the week.
- Total drawings: 20 poses.

Assignment Due: (at the beginning of the following class)

(Post Homework in the discord channel #Homework tab)

Note: Assignments will NOT be graded. This is not a class with live feedback from the instructors.

---

## Week 4:

Watch Lessons:

- Where to Find References
- How to Extract Design From a Reference
- Translating Your Reference Into a Design
- Making Variations of Characters Using Reference
- Homework: Inspiration Boards

Objective:

- Learn about Reference Gathering and Inspiration
- Do the homework

Homework:

- Create 3 Inspiration boards based on three different moods that you like. Examples: Goth, Art Deco, Japanese Harajuku, lolita fashion, medieval knight, steampunk, wizard, dark academia.
- Use websites like: Pinterest, Google, Clothing and fashion design websites. (Pinterest is my personal favorite, also create pinterest boards)
- Take 3 references of a specific object or inspiration, and translate the design into a character. Use a different reference and vibe for each one. Make sure you use the actual shapes and literally translate them into a design. This is a design exercise, so get crazy with it!
- Total drawings 3. + 3 reference inspiration boards (recommended at least 10 images each)

Assignment Due: (at the beginning of the following class)

(Post Homework in the discord channel #Homework tab)

Note: Assignments will NOT be graded. This is not a class with live feedback from the instructors.

---

## Week 5:

Watch Lessons:

- Part 1: Picking Inspiration and Making Rough Sketches
- Part 2: Picking Inspiration and Making Rough Sketches

- Part 3: Picking Inspiration and Making Rough Sketches
- Part 1: Choosing our Favorites and Refining
- Part 2: Choosing our Favorites and Refining
- Rough Colors
- Homework: Character Design Assignment

Objective:

- Start to design your characters
- Do the homework

Homework:

- Create 3 Characters based on a specific style or vibe. (Example: Candy Girls, Maids, Beast inspired guys, western sheriff, yakuza member, medieval blacksmith, etc.) Collect reference (or use your existing reference boards) Create a rough sketch, refine the sketch and add colors. Note: these characters can be part of a set, but make them very different in size / shape / design.
- Total drawings: 3 drawings with rough colors.

Assignment Due: (at the beginning of the following class)

(Post Homework in the discord channel #Homework tab)

Note: Assignments will NOT be graded. This is not a class with live feedback from the instructors.

---

## Week 6:

Watch Lessons:

- Crafting a Color Palette for Your Characters
- Primary, Secondary, and Accent
- Shadows and Highlight Color Choices
- Homework: Palettes

Objective:

- Learn about crafting a color palette for your characters
- Do the homework

Homework:

- Collect 10 images of different things, (sunset, pictures of a city, forest, photography etc) and extract color palettes from them. (Don't color sample directly from the image, match colors by eye to create your own palettes)

- Method for matching colors: Make an initial guess, then decide whether the color you are looking at is warmer or cooler, push it in that direction, then repeat until you have a color you think is accurate.
- Make 15 different color palettes 10 from the images 5 of your own. Get creative with the color choices. There is no right or wrong.
- Consider having a primary color, secondary color, and an accent. But use whatever you like.

Assignment Due: (at the beginning of the following class)

(Post Homework in the discord channel #Homework tab)

Note: Assignments will NOT be graded. This is not a class with live feedback from the instructors.

---

## Week 7:

Watch Lessons:

- Intro to Final Project
- Homework - Rough Character Designs
- Picking a Theme for our Characters
- Reference Gathering
- Sketching out Snow White
- Sketching out Huntsman
- Sketching out Evil Queen

Objective:

- Start your final project
- Start the homework for week 7 & 8

Homework:

- Gather reference for the final project, you will be creating 3 characters that all live in the same story world. This can be your own story or a re-imagining of an existing story.
- Gather 1 reference board (and color references) for each character.
- Sketch out 3 rough designs for each character. Be creative and make each character unique from the others.
- Total drawings: 9 + 3 reference boards (color reference included, can be the same images)

Assignment Due: (at the beginning of the following class)

(Post Homework in the discord channel #Homework tab)

Note: Assignments will NOT be graded. This is not a class with live feedback from the instructors.

---

## Week 8:

### Watch Lessons:

- Homework - Refined Character Designs
- Refining Snow White
- Rough Colors - Snow White
- Refining Huntsman
- Rough Colors - Huntsman
- Refining Queen

### Objective:

- Refine your designs

### Homework:

- Choose 1 of each character's sketches and refine the linework
- Do a rough color pass based on your color reference. Consider primary, secondary, and accent colors. Do simple lighting.
- Total Drawings: 3 (refined lineworks) with rough colors underneath.

Assignment Due: (at the beginning of the following class)

(Post Homework in the discord channel #Homework tab)

Note: Assignments will NOT be graded. This is not a class with live feedback from the instructors.

---

## Week 9:

### Watch Lessons:

- Snow White - Prop Sketches
- Huntsman - Prop Sketches
- Queen - Prop Sketches
- 3 Props - Refine and Color
- Homework: Character Props

### Objective:

- Learn to create props for your characters

- Do the homework

Homework:

- Find inspiration and create a prop for all 3 characters. This can be whatever you want, a weapon, a book, a staff, a tool, glasses, a gun, a chair, etc.

Assignment Due: (at the beginning of the following class)

(Post Homework in the discord channel #Homework tab)

Note: Assignments will NOT be graded. This is not a class with live feedback from the instructors.

---

## Week 10:

Watch Lessons:

- Homework - Character Sheets
- Planning our Character Sheet Layouts
- Character Expressions

Objective:

- Plan your character sheet
- Learn about how to make a back view for your character
- Start the Homework for week 10 & 11

Homework:

- This homework spans week 10 and 11.
- Plan and create your character sheet layouts.
- Each character sheet needs: Front View, Back View, Prop Callout.
- Total character sheets: 3. 1 for each character.
- Present each on a 11x17 (US) or A3 (European) piece of paper laid out landscape format.
- Include any relevant callouts on the side. (if they have a big jacket, show them with and without the jacket, etc)

Assignment Due: (at the beginning of week 12)

(Post Homework in the discord channel #Homework tab)

Note: Assignments will NOT be graded. This is not a class with live feedback from the instructors.



---

## Week 11:

### Watch Lessons:

- Refining Snow White
- Coloring Snow White
- Refining Huntsman
- Coloring Huntsman
- Refining Queen
  
- Coloring Queen Part 1
- Coloring Queen Part 2
  
- Final Character Sheet Presentation

### Objective:

- Refine your characters
- Present your final characters on the sheets

### Homework:

- Homework as assigned in week 10.

Assignment Due: (at the beginning of the following class)

(Post Homework in the discord channel #Homework tab)

Note: Assignments will NOT be graded. This is not a class with live feedback from the instructors.

---

## Week 12:

### Watch Lessons:

- Homework for Weeks 12 - 14
- Sketching Poses - Snow White
- Sketch Refinement - Snow White
- Color Rough - Snow White
  
- Final Linework - Snow White
  
- Base Flat Colors - Snow White
  
- Shadows - Snow White

- Lights - Snow White
- Effects - Snow White

Objective:

- Watch the refinement of Snow White
- Illustrate your first character
- 

Homework:

- Illustrate all three character designs in an expressive and fun pose!
- Create an illustration that shows your character in a fun and expressive pose that represents them accurately.
- Each character design should take roughly 1 week, but work at whichever pace you want. Each character design should be full color and full detail.

Assignment Due: (at the end of class)

(Post Homework in the discord channel #Homework tab)

Note: Assignments will NOT be graded. This is not a class with live feedback from the instructors.

---

## Week 13:

Watch Lessons:

- Sketching Poses - Huntsman
- Sketch Refinement - Huntsman
- Color Rough - Huntsman
- Final Linework - Huntsman
- Base Flat Colors - Huntsman
- Shadows - Huntsman
- Lights - Huntsman
- Effects - Huntsman

Objective:

- Watch the refinement of Huntsman

- Illustrate your second character
- 

Homework:

- As given in week 12

Assignment Due: (at the beginning of the following class)

(Post Homework in the discord channel #Homework tab)

Note: Assignments will NOT be graded. This is not a class with live feedback from the instructors.

---

## Week 14:

Watch Lessons:

- Sketching Poses - Queen
- Sketch Refinement - Queen
- Color Rough - Queen
- Final Linework - Queen
- Base Flat Colors - Queen
- Shadows - Queen
- Lights - Queen
- Effects - Queen
- Congrats on finishing Advanced Character Design!

Objective:

- Watch the refinement of Queen
- Illustrate your third character

Homework:

- As given in week 12

Assignment Due: (at the end of class)

(Post Homework in the discord channel #Homework tab)

Note: Assignments will NOT be graded. This is not a class with live feedback from the instructors.

---

