

# Digital illustration course unique to the market

Companies, ad agencies and publishers are regularly on the hunt for qualified illustrators, and Centennial College is meeting this demand with an innovative new program, Digital Illustration: From Concept to Execution.

Launching this fall, the four-semester continuing education certificate program, which will be offered by the college's Media and Design department and taught at its Centre for Creative Communications in East York, will provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in this competitive industry.

"Students will explore a variety of illustration styles, and we will help them cultivate their own style. They will also develop their own portfolio and become prepared for the marketplace," says Derek Lea, a seasoned graphic illustrator who conceived of, helped design and will teach in the program.

Earlier this year, Lea, who already teaches some full-time Media and Design programs at the college, observed that there was no post-secondary continuing education offering in Ontario that focuses strictly on the profession.

"This market is a huge area and there is a big demand for skilled individuals. While there are other programs out there in digital illustration, most are not as comprehensive or as oriented to what someone in the profession would actually do," says Tracey Dyer, Centennial's chair of continuing education and corporate training. "For those who want to learn it without quitting their jobs and going to school full time, or for those who want to change careers, this is a great option."

To be taught evenings and weekends, the program is geared towards individuals who possess a creative streak, basic drawing and composition skills, an entrepreneurial spirit, and who have an Art & Design Foundation Studies certificate or diploma, or an equivalent educational credential.

Participants will learn about conceptualization techniques that integrate traditional and digital media in order to visually express ideas to a wide and diverse audience. Practical training will enable students to create professional-quality illustrations for commercial use in advertisements, books and magazines, websites, product packaging, billboards and more.

The seven, 42-hour courses that will comprise the program will focus on key areas such as understanding the creative process and how to develop multiple solutions for commercial illustration projects; developing a personal illustration style; combining image-based, vector-based and traditional media; creating a portfolio of professional-quality work; and self-marketing through a variety of approaches.

"They will learn how to integrate digital tools with tactile mediums, and gain a strong understanding of professional practises," Lea says. "Participants will learn and get real-world feedback from industry professionals — marketers and people

from ad agencies — and get experience in developing a business plan."

Students with previous industry experience may qualify to skip one or two courses and fast track through the program.

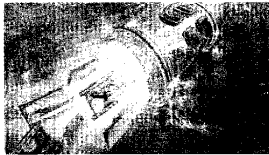
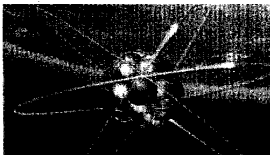
Throughout his own graphic illustration career, which has included writing about the subject for industry books and magazines, Lea has observed that most working graphic illustrators are freelancers. To this end, he says, those considering entering the field should feel comfortable with the idea of self-employment.

Successful graduates, he says, will encounter a market ripe with a wide range of opportunities.

"I've been working as a full-time freelance illustrator for 11 years, so there is plenty of work out there," he says. "But you have to be willing to be a visionary, to keep good clients, and to work at staying busy all the time."

— Sharon Aschalek,  
SPECIAL TO SUN MEDIA

## 10 CONTINUING EDUCATION



Images designed by Derek Lea.

The Sunday Sun ■ AUGUST 9, 2009

**Digital illustration course unique to the market**

**The fall goes back to school but not the classroom!**