Virtual Theatricality integrates traditional stagecraft with virtual characters, scenery and props for live theatre production. Henry Ford Community College’s Virtual Theatricality Lab is a dynamic, risk-taking institute that combines artistic and technological disciplines in a pace-setting program that redefines the nature of live theatrical performance. The Virtual Theatricality Lab has established itself as a cutting-edge leader with the development of a revitalizing curriculum that unites the disciplines of computer science, art, music, theatre, dance, film, and video. The VTL is dedicated to forging the live performance technologies of the 21st century and beyond.

In 1994 virtual reality and 3D stereo were utilized as multimedia teaching aids in HFCC Theatre Arts classes. After experimenting with processes and techniques for approximately four years, the Virtual Theatricality Lab began production of William Shakespeare’s The Tempest. The Tempest (2003) used 3D stereoscopic projection and real-time VR navigated scenery to give new life and meaning to Shakespeare’s classic and make it accessible to a new generation of theatre-goers. The Tempest was a regional winner in The Kennedy Center’s American College Theatre Festival. The Tempest was featured in many Michigan newspapers and on the Associated Press, including a 4-page feature article in the Detroit Free Press' Sunday Entertainment Section.

The Skriker (2006) was the first full-length theatrical production in the world of a stage play to successfully combine real-time motion capture and 3D stereoscopic projection. The Skriker was featured in many Michigan newspapers and on the Associated Press, including articles in state and national entertainment magazines. Following the VTL’s trend-setting lead, several major Michigan Universities attempted theatrical productions using Motion Capture and 3D stereo.

In January, 2009, a Motion Capture Certificate was developed and the first courses were offered to students, spring semester, 2009. During 2009 and 2010, VTL classes filled to capacity and the first Motion Capture Systems Certificate students graduated. As the film industry moved into Michigan, the VTL became a central hub for Motion Capture Animation activities. The VTL formed a relationship with the Screen Actors Guild and offered workshops and training to SAG members and Cadets. Major universities, such as the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor sent its faculty and staff to VTL for training. Additionally, the VTL began artistic collaborations with other HFCC artistic areas, such as the HFCC Full Circle Dance Company.

After several years of research and development, production on the VTL’s next show, Dinosaurus! began in 2013.

Questions? Email or call: Dr. George Popovich, Henry Ford Community College, Dearborn, MI. popovich@hfcc.net; 313-845-6478.
VTL Website: http://vtl.hfcc.edu
HFCC Theatre Website: http://theatre.hfcc.edu
VTL 150: SPECIAL AND VISUAL EFFECTS FOR STAGE AND SCREEN
A course designed to introduce students to the major types of practical and computer generated visual effects utilized in motion pictures, video, and film production for stage and screen.

VTL 235 SCIENCE FICTION AND HORROR FILMS
A survey of fantastic films from 1900 to present. Emphasis is placed on those films that use visual effects to unify the filmic elements.

VTL 262 INTRODUCTION TO MOTION CAPTURE
Prerequisite: ART 209
A lab-based computer class dealing with the principles of Motion Capture Performance and Motion Capture Production for use in Virtual Theatricality, Motion Pictures, Gaming, and Motion Studies. This course is the final sequence in the Henry Ford Community College Motion Capture Course Sequence. Focuses on advanced application of Mo-Cap for voice and body.

VTL 265: INTRODUCTION TO MOTION CAPTURE PERFORMANCE
A lab-based class dealing with the principles of Motion Capture Production for use in Virtual Theatricality, Motion Pictures, Gaming, Televison, Web Media and Motion Studies. This course provides an introduction to the motion capture pipeline from setting up the lab and capturing data to applying the data to an animated character in Motion Builder. This introductory class will be limited to body capture only. First class in HFCC’s Motion Capture Systems Technician Certificate.

VTL 263 INTERMEDIATE MOTION CAPTURE
Prerequisite: VTL 262
A lab-based computer class dealing with the principles of Motion Capture Performance and Motion Capture Production for use in Virtual Theatricality, Motion Pictures, Gaming, Televison, Web Media and Motion Studies. This course provides an intermediate bridge to the final class in the Motion Capture Systems Technician Certificate sequence. This course will focus on cleaning and editing data, hand capture, and facial capture.

VTL 264 ADVANCED MOTION CAPTURE APPLICATION
Prerequisite: VTL 263
A lab-based computer class dealing with the principles of Motion Capture Performance and Motion Capture Production for use in Virtual Theatricality, Motion Pictures, Gaming, Television, Web Media and Motion Studies. This course will focus on body and facial performance.

VTL 266: GREENSCREEN PRODUCTION FOR STAGE AND SCREEN
A lab-based class dealing with the principles of compositing and greenscreen application for use in Virtual Theatricality, Motion Pictures, Gaming, Television and Web Media.

VTL 267: STEREOSCOPIC 3D FOR STAGE AND FILM
An overview of present stereoscopic 3D processes for use in Virtual Theatricality, Motion Pictures, Gaming, Televison and Web Media.

VTL 268: FILM ACTING 1
A course designed to introduce actors to film acting techniques. This course will focus on relating and communicating as developed in the theories of Sanford Meisner.