Principles of Animation Syllabus

Prerequisites: There are no course prerequisites. We will be working with a variety of materials. Some photography, sculpting, drawing, photography, and computer experience would be helpful.

Instructor:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John Griffith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>msj office phone = (513) 244 – 4369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email = <a href="mailto:John_Griffith@mail.msj.edu">John_Griffith@mail.msj.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faculty homepage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My office hours are Mon., Tues., Thurs. 4:30 - 6:30
My office is located on the ground floor of the main classroom building next to the copier center. My door is always open to discuss any problems you may be having with the course.

Class Meets: Monday 12:15 – 3:05 in Library 22 (The TV Studio in the basement of the library)

Required Text: The Complete Animation Course by Chris Patmore (ISBN 0764123998)

In addition to the primary text I use numerous online readings and handouts. These readings are important as they give detailed background material as to where, how and why a particular technique developed.
Course Objectives:
Before the completion of the course the students should be able to:
- Describe and evaluate the eight major classical types of animation (individual objective)
- Produce a short film using each of the eight major classical animation types (collaborative objective)
- Identify modern day examples for each classical animation type (individual objective)
- Create an individual short animated film (individual objective)

Course Description:
Students will study animation using the following perspectives: historical, aesthetic, technological, cultural, and social. This course will cover classic film animation from around the world. There is the obvious global connection that comes from the study of animation history around the world. In our country animation is most often used for entertainment, but in other countries it has served a much different purpose. Animation was a perfect method for the disadvantaged in society. It could reach a large audience, and it was a low budget way of making films. Students see the world in a different light as they view animation from around the world. They see that different cultures will often have identical themes and concerns as expressed in their own films. In Art 280 we study the ways that an animated film can reflect and influence the path a particular society takes.

Students will experiment with a wide variety of animation techniques. They will use math skills to control timing, physics to control lighting and optics, chemistry for development, writing skills for storytelling, art talents to create characters, and computer skills for editing. Every single film requires a multitude of skills drawn from different disciplines.

Animated films often follow moral and ethical themes. The class critique and discussion periods explore these themes, as well as discussing the techniques used to create the sample films. When making their own films, all students are revealing a portion of their personal belief system to the rest of the world.

Students develop their abilities to listen, speak, read, and write effectively during the critique portions of each unit. The review discussions and writings are required. The skills for thinking critically and creatively, making decisions, and solving problems are vital when doing the lab portions for each style. The student is responsible for everything that happens on screen during their lab.

Learning Outcomes and Performance Indicators for Art 280
During this course you will have an opportunity to address the following learning outcomes and performance indicators. For a complete listing of undergraduate learning outcomes and performance indicators see your college catalog and handbook.
Ethics
Understand ethical responsibility from the perspective of duty, consequences, or virtue
- Define your personal ethical responsibilities
- Describe your professional ethical responsibilities

Question = What are the ethical concerns for an artist who works with animation?

Almost anything is possible in an animated world. This creates an enormous gap between what is possible and what is ethical. The ability to have a character do just about anything carries with it a serious responsibility. You will also deal with copyright issues during this course. Every project involves making choices. The choices you make and actions you take are at least as important as the final products you create.

Interdisciplinarity
Solve a problem by integrating the perspectives of multiple disciplines
- Create a solution to a problem by integrating the perspectives of multiple disciplines

Question = In what ways is animation interdisciplinary?

Every project requires many skills from different areas. You will bring your prior knowledge and skill to play in each project.

Communication
Write and speak effectively
- Speak using language appropriate to the audience
- Write using language appropriate to the audience
- Document sources properly
- Construct a message that is relevant to its purpose

Question = How can you use animation to communicate a message?

Learners will intentionally control the messages they are sending as they create and edit their projects. This is particularly true for the final project wherein learners will target a specific audience and create a piece for the student show.

Critical Thinking
Develop an appropriate response to a problem or question
- Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information
- Support a position with appropriate evidence

Question = Can you work collaboratively and creatively to solve a problem for a specific audience?
The projects require critical thinking. We can do almost anything in an animated project. This is a double edged sword. Just because we can do something does it mean that we should do something. Everything that appears on screen or in print will be under your control. In this class you will become a member of a community of practice and as such you will assist others in reaching their creative visions.

Teaching Methodology (Learning Strategies):
This course uses a modular case study and lab format. Sample films, videos, and readings will be presented during an initial lecture session. Between class sessions each student will do independent online research, discuss, and critique the style using the five perspectives listed above in the course description. The class period immediately following a lecture are laboratory sessions used to explore the latest technique and to create short animation clips. Once a particular module has been completed we move onward to explore another new technique. Most modules will require two weeks to complete.

This course uses Blackboard as a course management platform. You will find the handouts and other course materials stored within the Blackboard space for this class. Learners will log into Blackboard and enter the course workspace. The course homepage contains links to the online materials needed for course completion. Two of the more important icons are the assignment list and the assignment drop box. The assignment list outlines the learning tasks and contains support materials for each learning module. The drop box is a secure place to turn in your assignments in a digital form. It is critical that learners check these tools weekly.

Method of Evaluation:
All photo projects are graded on a 0-4 scale. This corresponds with the standard 4.0 system. A project score is based on how well you meet the objectives listed on the project sheet and printed in the text. I am always willing to discuss your work along with any other concerns you may have. Project scores and comments are available online via Blackboard.

Your final grade for the course will be derived from four areas.
25% = quiz scores
Students demonstrate knowledge of how animation has developed around the world over time by answering quiz questions correctly.

25% = written and oral critiques
Students demonstrate the ability to think, discuss, and write critically about their own films, and those of others, when giving oral and written critics using the five perspectives.

Hands on projects:
25% = weekly project scores
25% = final project score

Students demonstrate the ability to think creatively while planning their films.
Students demonstrate knowledge of the scientific principles and fundamentals of camera function by using different cameras.
Grade Definitions and Descriptions

The grading system, with quality points assigned each grade, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Quality Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Excellent achievement of course objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>High achievement of course objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Satisfactory achievement of course objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Minimal achievement of course objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Failure due to absence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers do not give grades...students must earn them!

Due Dates

The class calendar lists the tentative due date for each assignment. Most assignments are due before the start of the following class period. Digital projects should be uploaded into Blackboard before the class begins. Late assignments will be marked as such in the grade book and will lose one letter per week.

Always check the assignment requirements before project submission to be sure your project meets all of the requirements. Your project grades and critique comments are available in Blackboard.

Incomplete Grade Policy

A student must initiate a request for an "I" (incomplete) grade with an instructor by the last week of classes for traditional semester courses or before the last scheduled date of accelerated classes. The completed form must be submitted by the student to the Office of the Registrar prior to exam week or the final scheduled accelerated class meeting. Use this link to read the full incomplete policy in the college catalog: Incomplete Grade Policy

First/Second Semesters and All Summer Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>No record of dropped class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Grade of “W” for dropped class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>No drops accepted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Attendance Policy**

Attendance at all class sessions is highly recommended. Attendance is a factor in grading. It is very difficult to complete an assignment if you were not present during the lecture or lab sessions. Students are expected to arrive on time and remain for the entire class session. If you must miss a class session it is your responsibility to find out what material was covered. Blackboard tracking contains very accurate records of your online participation.

**Student Disabilities:**

If you have specific physical, psychological or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know as early in the course as possible so that your learning needs may be met.

Students with documented disabilities are encouraged to speak to course faculty at the beginning of the semester. In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the College of Mount St. Joseph provides academic adjustments and auxiliary aids for students with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit or restrict one or more of such major life activities as walking, seeing, hearing, or learning. Students with disabilities should contact Susan Brogden, Director of Academic Support, to present documentation and develop individualized accommodation plans. Phone: 244-4524 or email: susan_brogden@mail.msj.edu Additional information can be found on the disability services web page.

**Academic Integrity:**

When we use the information and language of others to enrich our reflection and research papers we must:

- tell the reader when we are quoting and indicate the source (person, book, article, etc.) or the quotation
- tell the reader when we are paraphrasing and indicate the source (person, book, article, etc.) of that information

Quoting or paraphrasing the information and/or language of a source without naming the source is plagiarism. Plagiarism is unacceptable in an academic institution and is subject to penalty.

Please consult the College Catalog and the Student Handbook for additional information and policies regarding academic honesty. [Academic Honesty Policy Undergraduate](#)

**Lab Fees**

We are given a portion of the lab fees to spend on basic supplies. This includes but is not limited to the materials used during lecture, presentation, and printing demonstration classes. A portion of the lab fee is also used to support the art department and gallery operations. Each student is responsible for some subject material costs.
Advice -
- Your success will depend upon your ability to be inventive, creative, and determined.
- Animation takes self-motivation. Successful animators literally will life into a project.
- You are about to enter a world where anything is possible . . . dogs talk, people fly, credit cards dance, and clay raisins sing. Your only limits are those that you are willing to accept.
- Plan each project on paper before beginning to do any animation.
- Good animation takes time, sometimes a great deal of time. It is important to budget your time wisely.
- If you have any favorite films feel free to bring them in to share with the rest of the class.

Tentative Class Schedule

January
23 - Historical Animation Devices (See Blackboard)
30 - Historic Devices Due / Hand Drawn Film lab (Norman McLaren)

February
6 - Hand Drawn Films Due / Pixillation and Canadian National Film Board
13 - Pixillation shooting lab
20 - Cut Out Films (magazines, and other cutouts, Frank Film)
27 - Cut Outs shooting Lab

March
5 - Shadow Puppets shooting lab
12 - Spring Break No Classes
19 - Claymaton (Will Vinton Studios)
26 - Claymation Lab

April
2 - Cell I Animation Lecture & Cell Painting Lab
9 - Easter Break No Classes
16 - 3D Blender Tutorial and Final Exam Project Lab
23 - 3D Blender Tutorial and Final Exam Project Lab
30 - 3D Blender Tutorial and Final Exam Project Lab

May
Tuesday May 8th 2:45 - 4:35 Final Exam Project Show

NOTE THE UNUSUAL DAY AND TIME FOR THE EXAM WEEK SESSION.