CP 470A & MCMA 552
Understanding Animation: History, Theory & Technology
Mondays 1-4:50
ASA 118c

Instructor: Dr. Michele Leigh
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TA: Soumik Pal, spal@siu.edu
Office: 1121L, Communications Bldg.
Office hours: Dr. Leigh – M/W 10-12pm, T 1-3pm

Required Texts:
Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics by Maureen Furniss, John Libbey, 2007 isbn 9780861966639

Recommended Texts:
Understanding Animation by Paul Wells, Routledge, 1998 isbn 978041511597
Animated Worlds by Suzanne Buchan, John Libbey 2006, isbn 0861966619

All other readings can be found on http://www.micheleleigh.net/teaching/cp-470a/ (just follow the links for each week)

Course Description:
This course will serve as an introduction to the history of animation, its practitioners and its major technological developments. Our studies will take us from pre-cinematic visual toys of the late nineteenth century to current digital animation technologies. Students will learn to pay attention to the aesthetics of the animated image and its relation to animation’s unique ability to communicate. Additionally, we will discuss some of the major theoretical constructs surrounding the study of animation. Finally, students will be encouraged to explore a variety of animation formats and techniques: puppet, claymation, cel animation, CGI, and so forth in order to provide them with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the work involved in creating animation.

Course Goals:
Students in this course will:
* comprehend and discuss theoretical approaches to the art of animation
* be able to outline the basic history of animation styles and technologies
* analyze the significance of animated media and its impact on culture
* learn rudimentary animation techniques

Expectations:
Students are expected to attend class sessions, participate in class discussions, and complete all assignments and projects on time. Active participation means prior reading of assigned materials and sharing of relevant thoughts and experiences both in class and on-line in your blogs. Students are
encouraged to bring to class examples of visual material from a variety of sources to further class discussions. Everyone must log on to our course website at Assignments are due as indicated on the course calendar. Late assignments will lose 5 points for each day they are late. ALL assignments MUST be turned in, regardless of how late they are. Failure to turn in an assignment will result in an F for the course.

All cell phones MUST be turned off prior to entering class. Texting and IMing during class are NOT permitted. Please be considerate of your fellow classmates.

Class Assignments:

Blog Postings – Each student is required to post comments on the reading and films screened on the class blog for this class. The undergraduates will be divided into two groups (A/B). On alternating weeks, each group member (will be expected to post a three-paragraph (or so) entry the blog for that week's readings. These entries must be posted before class each week. All students are expected to read and comment of their fellow classmates posts (this contributes to your participation grade.)

Animation Assignments – You will be given several assignments that will introduce you to some of basics of animation techniques and analysis. Don't worry if you are not artistically inclined, these will be simple assignments that will provide you with some appreciation for the work involved in creating and analyzing animation. This will include at least one group project.

Midterm Exam - You will have a take home midterm exam that will test your comprehension of concepts and issues raised in class.

Final Project – Each student will be required to complete a final project. You will have two options: you can either write a critical paper, 10-15 pages in length or complete a longer animation project (done in groups of at least 3 – this option will require a proposal, details plans for finishing the project, as well as bi-weekly updates).

Class Presentations – you will each have to give a presentation on your final project. Presentations should be 10 minutes in length.

Participation – Occupying a seat does not constitute participation, though attendance will affect your participation grade. Students are expected to have read the course readings and to participate in discussions in and the blogs of your fellow classmates.

More detailed guidelines will be handed out in class.

Grades:

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Graduate Course Requirements

Class Assignments:

Blog Postings – Each week you will be expected to post a 4-5 paragraph entry on the class blog about readings for that week. These entries must be posted before class each week. You will be required each week to comment on two of your classmates’ blogs.

Animation Assignments – You will be given several assignments that will introduce you to some of basics of animation techniques. Don’t worry if you are not artistically inclined, these will be simple assignments that will provide you with some appreciation for the work involved in creating and analyzing animation.

Midterm Exam - You will have a take home midterm exam that will test your comprehension of concepts and issues raised in class.

Final Project – Each student will be required to complete a final project. You will have two options: you can either write a critical paper, 15-20 pages in length or complete a longer animation project (done individually and groups, accompanied by an analytical essay on the theoretical, aesthetic underpinnings of your work).

Class Presentations – Grad students will have to give two class presentations. You will each have to give a presentation on your final project; these presentations should be 10-15 minutes in length. In addition to this you will each have to prepare a 30-minute lecture for the class on one of the assigned topics in class (you must notify me by week two which week you choose to present).

Participation – Occupying a seat does not constitute participation, though attendance will affect your participation grade. Students are expected to have read the course readings and to participate in discussions in and the blogs of your fellow classmates.

More detailed guidelines will be handed out in class.

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**Attendance:**
ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY! Many of the animations shown in class come from my personal collection. The library does not own them and therefore they cannot be put on reserve. However, you are responsible adults, if you should happen to miss class; you are responsible to getting notes from fellow classmates. Missing class however, does not exempt you from completing work that was due.

**Academic Misconduct:**
Southern Illinois University, the College of Mass Communication and Media Arts is committed to academic and professional ethics. Should any student be guilty of plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation, or other forms of dishonesty in any assigned work, they will be subject to a failing grade, and to additional disciplinary action as may be recommended pursuant to University regulations. Academic misconduct includes the following:

- **Cheating**, or the improper taking or giving of information, which includes copying graded homework assignments from another student, looking at another student’s paper during an examination, giving your work to another student to be used or copied, giving answers to exam questions either when the exam is being given or after taking an exam, and providing a term paper or project to another student.
- **Plagiarism** involves submitting the words, work or ideas of another and representing them as your own, without citation. SIU subscribes to the anti-plagiarism services of TurnItIn.com, where you can find out more about how to avoid missteps in your writing.
- **Misrepresentation** includes lying or misrepresenting facts to affect your grade.

**Course Calendar:**

**Week 1** Jan 18
No Class Martin Luther King Day
Read: Maureen Furniss
Due Jan: Introduce yourself on the class blog -

**Week 2** Jan 25
What is Animation?
Read: “What is Animation” by Philip Denslow (on line)

**Week 3** Feb 1
Theories of Animation and Animation Aesthetics
Read: Furniss & Wells
Due: Animation Assignment #1, Blog post Group A, comment on other blogs

**Week 4** Feb 8
In the Early Days
Read: “Crafton & Moritz
Due: Blog post Group B, comment on other blogs

**Week 5** Feb 15
Narrative Strategies
Read: Wells & Moritz
Due: Animation Assignment #2, Blog post Group A, comment on other blogs

**Week 6** Feb 22
Experimental
Read: Furniss, Moritz & Harris
Due: Blog post Group B, comment on other blogs
Week 7  Feb 29  Issues of Representation
Read:  Furniss, King, & Williams-Rautiola
Due:  Animation Assignment #3, Blog post Group A, comment on other blogs

Week 8  Mar 7  The Disneyfication of Animation
Read:  Furniss, Davis & Meagan Davis
Due:  Midterm Exam, Blog post Group B, comment on other blogs

Week 9  Mar 14 – SPRING BREAK

Week 10  Mar 21  Animating the Boob-Tube
Read:  Furniss & Langer
Due:  Blog post Group A, comment on other blogs

Week 11  Mar 28  Anime Changes the Face of Animation
Read:  Ruh & Raffaelli
Due:  Animation Assignment #4, Blog post Group B, comment on other blogs

Week 12  Apr 4  100 years of Puppet and Claymation
Read:  Furniss & Frierson
Due:  Blog post Group A, comment on other blogs

Week 13  Apr 11  Animation for Adults
Read:  Wells & Chaney
Due:  Blog post Group B, comment on other blogs

Week 14  Apr 18  The Computer Revolution and Pixar
Read:  Furniss, Manovich & Manovich
Due:  Animation Assignment #5, Blog post Group A, comment on other blogs

Week 15  Apr 25  Gaming
Read:  Wolf & Schleiner
Due:  Blog post Group B, comment on other blogs

Week 16  May 2  The Future of Animation
Due:  Class Presentations

Final Projects Due May 9th at 3pm.

Final Exam  May 13th from 12:30-2:30
We will use this time to finish presentations