

COMM 299-201 Themes in Film & Digital Media

Topic: Introduction to Animation - Fall 2018

Meredith Leich mleich@luc.edu Mailbox: SOC building, 51 E. Pearson, WTC Office hours: Thursdays 2 – 3 pm in TBD Location	Thursdays 4:15 - 6:45 pm SOC building 51 E. Pearson Street WTC Room 015 --
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Description

The COMM 299 topic Introduction to Animation will introduce students to fundamental terminology, concepts, methods and practices in animation. The course will provide an overview of animation techniques ranging from handdrawn animation, cut-out image animation, and 2D digital animation using After Effects.

The course will consist of lectures, screenings, demonstrations, hands-on studio work, and critiques. Students will learn about preproduction for animation and be asked to demonstrate ideas for their work visually through storyboarding and concept sketches. Students will also learn about sound design as it relates to animation, and production and post-production techniques using Dragonframe and applications in the Adobe Creative Suite. Students will create a variety of projects including storyboards and short animations. Participation in class discussions and critiques are an essential part of the course.

Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the principles of animation
- Describe and realize the animation production process from conceptualization to a finished project, from storyboard to final film
- Construct and capture animation using stop-motion techniques
- Construct and render basic 2D animation in After Effects
- Use sound in animation

Prerequisite

COMM 135 Intro to Video Production

Readings

Periodic readings and suggested readings for this course will be made available to students via Sakai.

Attendance

This is a production class, and we will address a large amount of material in each class. Please be present and prompt. If you are more than 20 minutes late, it will be counted as an absence, and three or more absences or frequent tardiness, whether or not for a reasonable cause, may result in the student failing the class if the student does not withdraw from the class prior to the deadline for withdrawal with a

grade of "W." University authorized absences for travel (e.g., travel for a club or team) must be cleared with me in advance and documentation must be provided - please let me sooner rather than later. In the case you are absent, you are responsible for getting notes from another student. **You may NOT miss the final exam meeting period Thursday 12/13/2018.**

Classroom Conduct

- Please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices such as iPods before entering class.
 - Be respectful of other people's opinion in discussions and especially during critiques. Listening and choosing one's words thoughtfully are key. We can disagree without disrespecting each other.
 - We will be watching animations in the late afternoon, ie. prime conditions for feeling drowsy. Please try not to fall asleep — do what you need to before coming to class to stay present. If you sleep during class, you may be asked to leave and your participation grade will be negatively affected.
 - If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know as soon as possible.

Grading

At the end of the course, you will receive a letter grade. Your grade is based on a cumulative point system, which is outlined in the next section

Letter Grade	Total Cumulative Points
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	0-59

Assignments, Points, and Due Dates

Assignments are due fifteen minutes before the start of class (4:00 pm) on their assigned Thursday due date, unless noted otherwise. If you miss class on the day an assignment is due, you are still responsible for ensuring that an assignment is submitted by the due date and time. For animation assignments, please upload and share your works with on your Loyola One Drive account.

The majority of your grade for each assignment will be based on the completion of the work rather than the skill displayed. Animation has a steep learning curve, and I certainly don't expect everyone's work to

look the same. But assignments that have been assembled hastily (and it will be evident) or are incomplete will be penalized.

The table below outlines the major deadlines and the cumulative point system for establishing your grade in this class.

Category	Description	Points	Due Date
Project 1	Bouncing Ball Animation Exercise	8	9/13
Project 2	2D Paper Stop Motion Animation using Dragonframe	17	10/4
Project 3	After Effects "Exquisite Corpse" Clip	8	10/11
Project 4	After Effects Character Animation	17	11/1
Project 5	Final Animation	20	12/13
Presence	Attendance & Promptness	15	Cumulative
Participation	In Class Contribution	15	Cumulative
Total		100	

Late Assignments

For Projects 1, 2, 3, and 4, and the Pre-Production and WIP portions of the Final Project, three (3) points will be deducted each day an assignment is late. (A day begins/ends at the start of our class.)

The Final Project may not be submitted late and is due at the start of the final exam meeting **4:15 pm Thursday 12/13/18**. You will receive zero (0) points for the Final Project if you fail to submit it on time. There is no make-up work for class Participation.

Extra Credit

There may be opportunities for extra credit points throughout the semester. If an extra credit assignment is offered, it is at my discretion whether a student has fulfilled the assignment criteria.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Plagiarism of any form, of any kind and of any length will be reported to the Dean of Students and the student will automatically receive a failing grade for the course. Cheating on in-class assignments or any other work associated with this class will receive a similar punishment. Note: cheating includes - but is not limited to - submitting the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes without the expressed prior permission of all instructors. For more information see Loyola University Chicago's

undergraduate student catalog section on Academic Integrity: http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml.

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a learning disability that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

Equipment, Materials and Supplies

External Hard Drive or Flash/USB Drive

You will need an external, portable hard drive or a USB/flash drive that allows you to back up your media. I recommend a hard drive over a flash drive, especially if plan on doing more digital / time-based work. The drive should meet the following specifications:

- USB 2 or 3 (3 is preferred). It works best to not have a drive that you have to plug into external AC power. Look for a drive that powers off the computer
- Minimum of 120GB (the larger, the more versatile)
- Some brands to consider would be LaCie, G-Technology, Toshiba, Maxtor, Seagate, and Western Digital. (I personally tend to use G-technology.)

Headphones

You will be incorporating sound into some of your projects, so you will need headphones. They can be checked out from the OWL Lab, if you do not own any.

Physical Materials

You will need some good old fashioned art materials for this class as well:

- You will need a pad of at least 9 x 12" tracing paper (bigger is fine too) for the second week. This should cost as little as \$5 at Blick
- Pens and pencils for storyboarding, character design and concept art
- Paper for drawing on (computer paper is fine)
- Construction paper / magazines / other found materials for paper cutout animations
- Any other art supplies that aid your creative process (markers, watercolors, found materials)

Lab Hours and Locations

- OWL Lab, SOC Building Room, Basement Level
 - Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday 10:00 am – 10:00 pm
 - Checkout of Equipment is subject to OWL Lab rules and procedures; OWL Lab has final say.
 - Relevant Equipment:
 - Animation Table for Project 1 (Reserve in OWL lab for 4 hour blocks; link to be provided to reservation request sheet)
 - Canon T3 DSLR
 - Copy Stand
 - Light Box
 - Side Lights
 - iMac with Dragonframe

- Portable PC laptop setup with Dragonframe for Project 2 (24 hour check-out; weekend check-out)
- For list of Loyola Labs with scanners for scanning in pre-production materials:
 - <http://luc.edu/digitalmedia/digitalmedialabs/lablocations/>
 - SOC 002 definitely has a scanner.
- For list of Loyola Labs with Adobe After Effects, Photoshop, and Illustrator:
 - <http://luc.edu/digitalmedia/digitalmedialabs/softwareapplications/>

Some Notes for this Class

Animation takes time

Animation is the awe-inspiring act of bringing inanimate lines, shapes, and things to life. Be prepared: this takes time! Expect to spend 3 - 4 hours minimum per week on assignments; some weeks will require even more time, some less. There are very few shortcuts in animation, and sometimes the "shortcuts" end up leading a longer route...

The role of drawing

You will be drawing in this class, both for our bouncing ball exercise and in storyboarding / demonstration of concepts. Please don't panic! This is not a drawing class, and you will be evaluated on your effort and your ability to visually plan out your work, not your ability to draw representationally.

Backing up your work

As another animation professor succinctly put it, we are working with computers that will crash, fail, and eat your work. File management and backing up your work are keys to "digital hygiene," which, if you don't practice initially, you will learn the hard way. Losing work is not an excuse for incomplete or late work.

To that end:

- Save often. Save often. Save often. This is your new mantra!
- Save incrementally/Save in versions: Leich_project1_v001.aep, Leich_project1_v002.aep,...
- Back up your files onto your external hard drive/flash drive at the end of each work session
- BUT – do not work directly off of your hard drive/flash drive. These external drives should only be used for back up and transport
- Do not save on the school's computers
- Consider creating a second back up in an online storage site, like Microsoft's One Drive, Dropbox, or Gdrive

Schedule

**** Please note: this schedule is subject to change throughout the semester and will be adapted to fit the needs of our class.****

Assignments are due at the start of class on their due date.

Class 1 (8/30)

- Introduction to course and each other
- Course logistics/syllabus review
- Pre-Animation and Early Animation History

- Activity: Group Pixilation with Stop Motion Studio
- **Homework:** Class Assessment on Sakai — please note: this assignment (and only this one!) is due **TUESDAY 9/4** at 10 pm. Thank you for your prompt completion of this assessment.

Class 2 (9/6)

- Early Handdrawn Animation History - Fleischer Brothers and Disney
- Introduction to the Owl Lab with Andi
- Dragonframe demonstration
- **Homework - Project 1:** Bouncing Ball Animation Exercise, due 9/13 (next week)

Class 3 (9/13)

- **Due:** Bouncing Ball Exercise
- Introduction to stop motion with paper cut outs - Lotte Reiniger and Oskar Fischinger
- The role of storyboarding and strategizing in advance
- **Homework - Project 2:** 2D Paper Stop Motion Animation using Dragonframe; Storyboard due 9/20 (next week); WIP due 9/27; Final Project due 10/4

Class 4 (9/20)

- **Due:** 2D Paper Stop Motion Storyboard
- Troubleshooting animation concerns / Dragonframe
- **Homework:** 2D Paper Stop Motion WIP (both still images and short animated clips)

Class 5 (9/27)

- Due: 2D Paper Stop Motion WIP
- Introduction to After Effects Interface; layering and keyframes
- **Homework:** 2D Paper Stop Motion Final

Class 6 (10/4)

- Due: 2D Paper Stop Motion Final
- Using sound in animation and After Effects
- Abstract versus narrative animation
- **Homework - Project 3:** After Effects "Exquisite Corpse" Clip set to music, due 10/11 (next week)

Class 7 (10/11)

- **Due:** After Effects "Exquisite Corpse" Clip
- Screen composited Exquisite Corpse
- Introduction to Character Design and Puppets in After Effects
- **Homework - Project 4:** After Effects Puppet Animation; Storyboard / character sketches due 10/18; WIP due 10/25; Final due 11/1

**** Recommended Screening:** *Chicago International Film Festival* — once the programing is announced, I will let you know when the animation block is screening

Class 8 (10/18)

- **Due:** After Effects Puppet Animation Storyboard / character sketches

- Diving deeper into After Effects' puppets and background
- "Acting" in animation
- **Homework:** After Effects Puppet Animation WIP

Class 9 (10/25)

- **Due:** After Effects Puppet Animation WIP
- Incorporating sound effects - diegetic versus non-diegetic sound
- Using sound libraries
- **Homework:** After Effects Puppet Animation Final

Class 10 (11/1)

- **Due:** After Effects Puppet Animation Final
- Introduction of final project
- Incorporating different styles of animation - digital and analogue
- **Homework - Project 5/Final:** Conceptualizing final animation through sketches and writing due 11/8 (next week); Full storyboard due 11/15; WIP due 11/29; Final due 12/13

Class 11 (11/8)

- **Due:** Final Project animation concept sketches and writing
- Cinematic construction of animation - shots; camera angles; pacing; transitions
- Style and mood - how to create a "feel" in your animation
- **Homework:** Thorough storyboard for Final Project, incorporating cinematic conventions

**** Recommended Screening:** *Eyeworks Animation Festival at the Block Museum, November 10th*

Class 12 (11/15)

- **Due:** Final Project animation storyboard
- Group in-class critiques

No Class! - Thanksgiving Break - 11/22

Class 13 (11/29)

- **Due:** Final Project WIP
- Continue working on final projects

Class 14 (12/6)

- Continue working on final projects

Final Exam Period (12/13) – Same time and place as normal

- **Due:** Final Project
- Screening, critique, and celebration of final projects by class