

## **Introduction to the Art of Animation (CTAN 544)**

Fall 2009, Tuesdays, 10am–12:30pm, G138

Instructor: Lisa Mann <emann@usc.edu>

S.A. Tim Garbutt <tgarbutt@usc.edu>

Required textbook: The Animation Book by Kit Laybourne

### Grades:

Completion of all weekly assignments = 50%

Class attendance = 10% (A student may have one excused absence. Three unexcused absences mean the student fails the class. Students are marked late if they arrive after 10:10. Three late marks are equal to one absence.)

Participation in class discussion = 10%

Journals = 5%

Group roto assignment = 5%

Field trip assignment = 5%

Final presentation = 15%

### September Field Trip to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (date/time TBA)

#### 1. August 25: Introduction to Animation Techniques

Class objectives and expectations

Screening:

Animando, Marcos Magalhaes

Moray McLaren "We Got Time" by David Wilson

Your Face, George Plympton

Viewmaster, George Griffin

Assignment: 2 zoetrope strips (1 walk cycle and 1 metamorphosis) and 2 flip books, 50 pages each (1 metamorphosis and 1 journey), due next week in class.

Read: The Animation Book, Chapter 2; and pps. 179–192

#### 2. Sept. 1: Timing: The Reality of 24 frames per second

Screening and discussion:

Previous week's assignment

Early Abstractions 1–5, 7 and 10, Harry Smith

Begone Dull Care, Norman McClaren

Mothlight, Stan Brakhage (16mm)

Roots or Algorithmen, Barbel Neubauer

Grassland, Eric Darnell

Assignment: Draw directly on 10' of clear film leader. Experiment with timing and rhythms.

Read: Maureen Furness and William Moritz hand-outs.

3. Sept. 8: Choreography and Composition

Screening and discussion:

Previous week's assignment

Blinkety Blank, Norman McClaren

Free Radicals, Len Lye

Passage, Moonlight, Barbel Neubauer

Two Sisters, Caroline Leaf

Assignment: Scratch directly onto 10' black leader. Explore directional movement and composition.

4. Sept. 15: More Timing: Bringing Objects to Life

Screening and discussion:

Previous week's assignment

Jabberwocky, Jan Svankmejer

Alice, sock clip, Jan Svankmejer

Street of Crocodiles, screw clip, Brothers Quay

Moth, Pes ([www.eatpes.com](http://www.eatpes.com))

Assignment: Each Student will animate under the camera during their one-hour lab session. This week, you will animate a single, 3D, found object of your choice, giving it emotions and a personality.

Read The Animation Book, Chapter 4

**Introduction to Group Assignment: Rotoscoping a 10 second cycle on the Oxberry.**

Screening:

Commuter, Michael Patterson

Milk of Amnesia, Jeffrey Noyes,

Boogie Woogie, The Square of Light, Shadrach

The Fly, FerInc Rofus

Snack and Drink, Bob Sabiston and Tommy Pallotta

Read: The Animation Book, Chapter 13

5. Sept. 22: Replacement Animation and Animated Transitions: Special Properties of Animation

Screening and discussion:

Previous week's assignment

Dimensions of Dialogue, Jan Svankmejer

Candy Jam, Joan Gratz and Joanna Priestly

Time Out, Priit Parn

Game Over, Cake Countdown, Pes ([www.eatpes.com](http://www.eatpes.com))

Assignment: Animate food and include at least one replacement animation. Work with the students who come before and after you to make smooth animated transitions. This is a group Exquisite Corpse assignment without cuts. You will use the HD video camera for this assignment.

**Also this week: Organize live action shoot for the Rotoscope Project.**

6. Sept. 29: Cut-outs: The Medium for your Message

Screening and discussion:

Previous week's assignment

Terry Gilliam's Monty Python shorts

Duo Concertantes, Larry Jordan

Frank Film, Frank Morris

The Garden Without Flowers, Alyssa Sherwood

Dog's Nightmare, Hsin-Ping Pan (FL 2005)

Fast Film, Virgil Widrich

<http://www.gregaraya.com/html/crimenals.html>

Assignment: Students will animate cut-outs to make a convincing political statement, create a surreal world, or explore comic possibilities. Incorporate at least one articulated cut-out puppet and attempt one replacement style transition. Use found images or create your own. Text is optional.

Read: The Animation Book, Chapter 5

**Also this week: Screen the live action footage and decide as a group how to structure the rotoscope project and edit as necessary.**

7. Oct. 6: Exploring the Possibilities of Clay: Transformation and Metamorphosis

Screening and discussion:

Previous week's assignment

Darkness Light Darkness, Jan Svankmeyer

The Arnold Waltz, Craig Bartlett  
Home Things, Jose Miguel Ribeiro  
Mona Lisa Descending the Staircase, Joan Gratz  
Pro and Con, excerpt, Joan Gratz

Assignment: Explore the special qualities of clay, including texture, weight, elasticity, and “morphability.” Incorporate one morph and one replacement animation. Also try to incorporate a special effect, like water or fire.

**Rotoscope Project is loaded on the OX over the weekend. Sign up for 1-hour time slot.**

Read: The Animation Book, pps. 150–154

8. Oct. 13: Sand: Animated Chiaroscuro

Screening and discussion:

Previous week's assignment

Particle Man, Christine Ferriter

Tracks, Corrie Francis

The Owl Who Married the Goose, Caroline Leaf

Dramolet, Brothers Quay

Assignment: Explore sand's amazing qualities. Working with contrast and light, negative and positive, to create at least two environments/figures and animate the transitions between them.

**Continue working at your desk on the roto project. Finish all artwork by Nov. 6!**

Read: The Animation Book, Chapter 11.

9. Oct. 20: Painting on Glass: Creating a 3-Dimensional Space

Screening and discussion:

Previous week's assignment

The Street, Caroline Leaf

The Cow, Alexander Petrov

A Conversation with Harris, Sheila Sofian

Sleepwalker, Brian Coffee, (FL 2003)

Assignment: Using the paint medium, create spatial depth and take the viewer on a journey through the space, as if from the character's POV.

10. Oct. 27: 3-D Puppets: Creating Another Reality

Screening and discussion:

Previous week's assignment

Mr. Resister, Wil Vinton Studios

The Coiling Prankster, Garri Bardin

Lint People, Helder Sun

The Woman in the Attic, Chansoo Kim (FL Retro 2005)

Lolly's Box, Valerie LaPointe (FL 2006)

Dia de los Muertos, Vinton Studios

<http://usc-vfx.blogspot.com/2007/11/madame-tutli-putli.html>

Assignment: Students will build a simple set and a simple 3-D puppet and animate using a video camera on a tripod. Focus on creating an original environment. (Use lunchbox for this assignment.)

Read: The Animation Book, pps. 154–161

11. Nov. 3: Rhythm, Pattern, and Structure

Screening and discussion:

Previous week's assignment

Photocopy Cha Cha, Chel White

Creation, Thomas Meyer–Hermann

Five Improvisations, Paul Glabicki

Words, Words, Words, Michaela Pavlatova

Repete, Michaela Pavlatova

Assignment: Students choose any medium to experiment with rhythm, pattern, and structure. Plus: Find an example of contemporary stop motion that impresses you on You Tube and send me the URL by Monday Nov. 9.

Read: handouts

**Rotoscope projects should be shot between Nov. 6 and Nov. 16!**

12. Nov. 10: The Relevance of Stop Motion

Screening and discussion:

Previous week's assignment—rhythm

Contemporary commercial applications of stop motion:

Features: Corpse Bride, Aardman, Nightmare, James/Peach....

Commercials: Gratz' United, Pes' Bacardi, Coinstar, Sony

playdoh bunny, Pika Pika, Sony Bravia, Absolut,

TV shows: Action League Now

Games: claymation game “Neverhood” by Doug Tennapel  
 Music videos: “Sledgehammer” (Peter Gabriel), “Crooked  
 Teeth” (Deathcab for Cutie), “Oh, Mandy” (the Spinto Band,  
 Waverly Films)

Assignment: Choose any stop motion medium on the Oxberry to  
 explore one of your favorite artists or artworks from the museum.

**Rotoscope projects must be shot by Nov. 16!**

\*13. Nov. 17: Introduction to Production 1

Screening and discussion:  
     Rotoscope projects (unedited)  
     Various Production 1 films  
 Discuss treatments

Assignment: Write treatment for Production 1. During your lab time,  
 experiment with your Production 1 technique.

\*14. Nov. 24: Treatment Presentations

Screening and discussion:  
     Previous week’s lab assignment  
 Crit the treatments  
 Discuss storyboards

Assignment: Production 1 storyboard

**Thanksgiving Break: no regular labs this week.**

\*15. Dec. 1: Storyboard Presentations

Crit the storyboards  
 Discuss animatics  
**DUE: JOURNALS ARE TO BE COLLECTED TODAY** and returned  
 same day.

Assignment: Production 1 animatics. Extra lab time will be allotted  
 for shooting this week. You are required to record a rough  
 soundtrack for the animatic.

\*16. Dec. 15: Animatic Presentations

Presentations and critiques

\* The last four classes will be co-taught with Professor Sheila Sofian

\*\*\* NOTE: STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure that the letter is delivered to the Professor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

**MISSING AN EXAM OR FINAL PRESENTATION, INCOMPLETES:**

The only acceptable excuses for missing an exam or taking an incomplete in the course are personal illness or a family emergency. Students must inform the professor before the exam and present verifiable evidence in order for a make-up to be scheduled. Students who wish to take incompletes must also present documentation of the problem to the instructor or teaching assistant before final grades are due.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** The School of Cinematic Arts expects the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical performance from USC students. It is particularly important that you are aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, submitting a paper to more than one instructor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade and be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. If you have any doubts or questions about these policies, consult "SCAMPUS" and/or confer with the Professor or your T.A.