



CTAN 586: ANIMATION STORYBOARDING PRACTICUM
UNITS: 2
FALL 2023

THURSDAYS 7-9:50PM (PST)

LOCATION: SCB 205

INSTRUCTOR: Justin Copeland
OFFICE: Available upon request
OFFICE HOURS: Available upon request
Contact Info: justinc4@usc.edu

Student Assistant: Cherry Guo
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IT Help: Creative Tech Help Desk
Contact info: creativetech@sca.usc.edu or
213-821-4571

THIS IS AN IN-PERSON CLASS

In accordance with university recommendations, all meetings of this class will be held in person. Students who become ill and need to self-isolate will be supported in their efforts to stay current with classwork and assignments, to the extent possible. Please contact Prof. Copeland and your SA Cherry Guo at least one hour prior to class start time if you become ill and need to self-isolate. Do not come to class if you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses. Requests for longer term exemptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and must be supported by a written accommodation request from the USC Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS).

Course Description

This course will introduce students to the ideas and concepts behind creating compelling visual stories for film and tv. Techniques learned in this classroom aim to prepare students for the demanding environment of film and tv animation, as well as to build confidence to tell a story in

any form or visual format. The instructor will seek to educate the students on the many technical aspects that go into creating effective storyboards, however, heavy emphasis will be placed on extracting the powerful and invisible inner aspects that make good stories work. Students will also be introduced to a realistic professional environment where they will be challenged to tell creative and entertaining stories within a defined amount of time, as well as recreating the fun and collaborative atmosphere of an animation studio! Students will receive one-on-one instruction and guidance throughout the semester to ensure understanding of concepts and measure growth. Students will hopefully **see their confidence grow** as they learn to place emphasis on telling a great story.

For class demonstration purposes, the instructor will be working on a digital tablet and/or animation storyboard software. (IMPORTANT NOTE: This class is NOT designed to teach the technical aspects or techniques of any digital storyboarding or design software, such as Photoshop, Sketchbook, Toon Boom or Storyboard Pro.)

Grades

Grades will be determined based on student participation in group activities, demonstrating growth as measured by homework assignments and one-on-one instructor time and the students ability to complete homework assignments on time. Students will **NOT** be graded on drawing ability. However, emphasis will be placed on clarity within the storyboard. The final project will be graded on timed delivery, the students demonstrated personal growth as a storyteller and the entertainment value of the storyboard.

Grading Breakdown

40% - homework and assignments

40% - Participation during one-on-one and group assignments

20% - Final Project

Electronic Media in Class

You may use your laptops and/or portable digital drawing tablets for notes and/or translation, but NOT for social media or YouTube (except for research purposes approved by the instructor) during lectures. Absolutely no social media or texting during lectures. Keep phones on mute.

Supplies

Digital Storyboarding preferred. Storyboard software such as Storyboard Pro, Adobe Photoshop, or Procreate are encouraged for those students who know how to use them. Presentation of assignments using Preview, Adobe Bridge, or the like are also encouraged.

Required Texts

Over the past few decades, several books have been written that give a detailed glimpse into professional storyboarding and the animation process. While nothing can replace what can be learned from creating storyboards day in and day out, books help to supplement the learning process because they immerse us into the minds of professional storytellers. The intent will be to help guide the students through books to help speed up the learning process with tools that have been developed and handed down since animation was invented. The selected books for this course are an eclectic mix that not only break down the storyboard and animation process, but will also help the students learn how to write film scripts and understand how to create memorable performances.

-***Directing the Story***” Francis Glebas

-***Timing for Animation***” Harold Whitaker, John Halas, Tom Sito;

-***Directing Actors***” Judith Weston; 1996,2021

-***Framed Ink***” Marcos Mateu-Mestre; 2010

Below is a list of supplemental books that are helpful in developing story tools. These books are NOT required for class, but will be referred to throughout the semester.

-***The Anatomy of Story***” John Truby

-***Invisible Ink***” Brian McDonald

-***Save the Cat***” Blake Snyder

-***The Animator’s Survival Kit***” Richard Williams

-***Cartoon Animation***” Preston Blair

-***The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation***” Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston; 1996

Course Schedule:

- Week 1: **Intro to Story Foundations - (08/24/23)**
 - Introduction to basic story concepts and foundational ideas that all great stories are built on top of! **PLUS: How to turn in homework assignments.**
 - HW: due week 2.

- Week 2: **What's the story about? The power of theme - (08/31/23)**
 - Theme is the deep and invisible DNA that the bigger story is built on. Learning how to mine it out of a script is essential to telling a simple and powerful story! Group discussion: Create a theme together!
 - HW: Due week 3.

- **Week 3: Storyboard Deep Dive - intro to drawing with clarity - (09/07/23)**
 - What goes into a modern storyboard? Learn the ins and outs of professional boarding and industry expectations.
 - HW: Due week 4.

- **Week 4: The power of Genre and tropes. - (09/14/23)**
 - Genre and tropes help create clarity in your story without complicated setup.
 - Wk 3 HW due.

- **Week 5: Intro to composition and camera movement - (09/21/23)**
 - Placing your subjects with purpose gives power to your narrative. Plus, learn simple camera movement that isn't wasted.
 - Learn to utilize light within your composition
 - Composition that always works.
 - HW Due week 7

- **Week 6: Drawing actors, Utilizing the Power of acting, movement and performance! - (09/28/23)**
 - Acting, or character performance is the underrated weapon of a good board artist.

- **Week 7: Bg's, lighting, FX and props. Everything tells a story! - (10/05/23)**
 - Every created element should be utilized to help tell your story.
 - Composition part II
 - Week 5 HW due. HW: Due week 11.

- **Week 8: Fall Recess - No class! - (10/12/23)**

- **Week 9: In-Class instructor DEMO: - (10/19/23)**
 - Guest teacher: Chris Copeland
 - Putting it all together: Thumbnails, roughs, and layouts. Plus learn how to pitch a storyboard!

- **Week 10: The Power of Editing and In-Class discussion - (10/26/23)**
 - Learn edit concepts that bring your boards to life.
 - Review homework, ask questions and clarify previous concepts.

- **Week 11: Workshop pt1 - (11/02/23)**
 - Let's write a story together!
 - Wk 7 HW due.

- **Week 12: Workshop pt2 - (11/09/23)**
 - Let's board a story together! Instructor will discuss drawing, using 3d tools, utilizing photos and PNG files as well as reusing elements effectively.
 - HW due week 13

- **Week 13: In class working session - (11/16/23)**
 - One-on-one working sessions to go over final assignments to ensure that completion is possible.
 - Honing Skills and concept review
 - Learn tips and tricks to complete assignments on time.

- **Week 14: No class, Thanksgiving Holiday! - (11/23/23)**

- **Week 15: The ins and outs of being a pro board artist - (11/30/23)**
 - Storyboard pitching
 - Studio life and working as a pro - how to keep your job
 - Building a portfolio, networking and Social Networking

- **Study Days - (12/02/23 - 12/05/23)**

- **Final Exam - (12/07/23, 7-9pm)**
 - Final Storyboard is due.
 - -Boards are due before end of class session
 - -Format: PDF or Storyboard Pro
 - -We WILL have class. In person storyboard pitch NOT REQUIRED, but recommended for practice.
 - -I will pitch through some of the final boards to cover learned concepts

- **Winter Recess - (12/14/23 - 01/07/2024)**

Assignment format:

Storyboarded scenes should be delivered as both layouts and individual boards. To get credit for the assignment, these files should be placed into the designated class folder on the day of the pitch. The individual boards will be used for in-class pitching and the layouts will be for the purpose of grading. Layout pages should be 8 1/2 x 11 inches (landscape mode), with approx. 20–25 panels per page. These should be turned in on the day of the pitch. If you need assistance on how to quickly create layout pages there will be instructions in the “class tools” folder. Please have your files uploaded BEFORE CLASS on the day of the pitch.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

AI may be used as reference or inspiration for your work but we do not accept AI-generated art as your own original work as it is deemed derivative of other works whose originators may not have granted permission for its use.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

Student Health Leave Coordinator – 213-821-4710

Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed.

<https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298 equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the

following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

**Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report**

**Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.
The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776 dsp.usc.edu**

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

Campus Support & Intervention - (213) 821-4710 campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101 diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

**USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call dps.usc.edu,
emergency.usc.edu**

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

**USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu**

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC) ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

PLEASE NOTE:

FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACE IN THE SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX