COURSE DESCRIPTION

This media studies course will present a survey of the history, theory and practice of animating visual imagery from its pre-cinematic forms to the present day. We will approach the subject matter from a variety of perspectives:

**Chronologically** – by tracing its origins before the invention of film to the digital techniques of the present day.

**Formally** – by investigating a wide variety of animation techniques and visual styles.

**Culturally** – by comparing animation made in the United States with that created in Europe and Asia.

**Critically** – by discussing and assessing contemporary scholarship in the field of Animation Studies.

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

Students in this course will gain an understanding and appreciation of animated filmmaking and its unique position in the realm of film studies. By screening and writing about a wide variety of animated works – commercially produced and independent projects from different parts of the world - students will be able to follow the trajectory of technological innovation in animated filmmaking and discover the diversity of artistic expression that have come to define animation as a distinctive form of visual communication. Students will be introduced to the critical study of animation and will be able to identify contemporary scholars and discourse in the field of animation studies. Students will undertake original research to contribute new perspectives to the study of American and world animation.
COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:
(1) Define and identify animation as a particular form of visual communication.
(2) Identify the major technological developments and aesthetic movements in the history of animated filmmaking.
(3) Discuss a variety of genres and visual styles in animated filmmaking.
(4) Understand how political events and cultural trends have influenced animation created in the United States and in other parts of the world.
(5) Identify contemporary scholars and criticize contemporary theoretical research within the field of animation studies.

CLASS DATES AND MEETINGS

Students can access this online course using Blackboard (BB) from May 10 – June 17, 2010. Every aspect of this course will require the use of the internet and is designed with both asynchronous and synchronous online components. This means that most of the time students will be working independently according to their own schedules (within a framework of deadlines) and other times the professor and students will be interacting ‘live’ in a virtual classroom at a specific date and time.

Asynchronous Host: Blackboard
https://blackboard.american.edu
Part road map, part library, part screening room, part discussion forum: students will go here to start the course. All essential information and access will be found here: course calendar, links to online readings, links to required screenings, discussion forums, grades, etc.

Synchronous Host: WIMBA Classroom
https://blackboard-test.american.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_tab_group_id=_2_1&url=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2Flauncher%3Ftype%3DCourse%26id%3D_4564_1%26url%3D
At least twice times during the course students and professor will meet in this ‘virtual classroom’ to share information (see dates and times below). Simply click on “Enter this room” If time and interest permit, we may meet more often. * Headphones and microphone (internal or external) are required.

Dates and Times of required LIVE WIMBA Sessions:
Mon, May 10 (6:00-7:30pm EST) or Tues, May 11 (9:00-10:30am EST)
Wed, June 16 (7:00-9:00pm EST) and/or Thurs, June 17 (9:00-11:00am EST)

* If students expect to have conflicts with these dates and times, professor may elect to change this schedule.

Learn more about WIMBA here http://www.american.edu/provost/ctrl/Wimba.cfm
WIMBA Technical Support 866.350.4978
AU Blackboard Help 202.885.3904
WIMBA Technology Drop-In Team 202.885.30924 (9-5 EST)
The course is designed around 10 LEARNING MODULES that begin and end on specific dates and 3 ASSIGNMENTS that span across the length of the course. Participation in two WIMBA sessions is also required.

10 LEARNING MODULES
(40 points, 40% of final grade)
The 10 Learning Modules are clearly defined in the COURSE OUTLINE below (and on BB). For each module, students are required to complete the listed readings and screenings within the specified time period. Required readings are found in the required text (Bendazzi, 1996) or on BB in the specific module. Links to all media for screenings is also found on BB in the specific module.

Students are also required to participate in one online discussion per module. Online discussions are accessed through BB. Full participation in each online discussion requires at least one initial post and two responses by specific deadlines.

Guidelines for Posts/Responses:
Initial Post must contain at least three salient points from the required readings and should refer to at least half of the required screenings. Each initial post should be 500-800 words. (Each initial post must also be attached to the post as a Word (.doc) document so that other students can print and read offline as needed.)

Responses: Each student must respond to the initial posts of two (2) other students in the class. Each response should be approximately 150-300 words. (Responses do not have to be attached as word docs.)

The evaluation of your performance in online discussions will be similar to that of an essay or research paper: your ability to read and understand the text, the amount of effort you put into assimilating what you’ve read, grammar, spelling, originality of thought. Your response should be proofread and polished. It’s fine to express a personal opinion but it should be supported by reference to the text.

Grading and Due Dates for Learning Modules:
Each module’s discussion (initial post and responses combined) will be graded individually. Each module discussion is worth a total of 4 points. Combined, the 10 discussions are worth 40 points (40% of the final grade).

Module 1 Discussion – Initial Post (5/12), Response (5/13)
Module 2 Discussion – Initial Post (5/15), Response (5/17)
Module 3 Discussion – Initial Post (5/19), Response (5/20)
Module 4 Discussion – Initial Post (5/22), Response (5/24)
Module 5 Discussion – Initial Post (5/26), Response (5/27)
Module 6 Discussion – Initial Post (5/29), Response (5/31)
Module 7 Discussion – Initial Post (6/02), Response (6/03)
Module 8 Discussion – Initial Post (6/05), Response (6/07)
Module 9 Discussion – Initial Post (6/09), Response (6/10)
Module 10 Discussion – Initial Post (6/12), Response (6/14)

3 ASSIGNMENTS

(1) Assignment: Collaborative Webpage Content (Due dates: 5/21, 5/28, 6/4, 6/11)
(2) Assignment: Written Critical Review (Due dates: 5/24, 5/31, 6/7)
(3) Assignment: World Animation Presentation (Due dates: 5/18, 6/1, 6/16)

ASSIGNMENT 1: COLLABORATIVE WEBSITE CONTENT
Perspectives of American Animation
(25 points, 25% of final grade)

Students will work collaboratively (in groups no larger than 3) to research alternative perspectives and less studied topics concerning animation created in the USA.

Students will compile and synthesize their research to create original content for an educational webpage entitled Perspectives of American Animation. When the course is finished, our webpage will ‘go live’ to serve as an online educational tool for others.

Student-created content must include both original writing and researched text (with clearly cited sources, MLA Style preferred http://www.mla.org/). Supporting materials such as links (to published material, relevant webpages, media clips, etc.) and media (such as digital images or graphic elements, video/audio, podcasts, etc.) are strongly encouraged. Students will only be responsible to create content; teaching assistant will design the webpage and upload the content to the site.

Written peer reviews will also be required for each working group. Professor will supply peer review guidelines. Peer review will be due along with final draft on 6/11.

Grading and Due Dates for Assignment Collaborative Website Content:
The Collaborative Webpage Assignment must be submitted in 4 parts and will be graded in 3 parts:
Part 1 – Due Fri, May 21 (un-weighted but must be submitted for approval): Who is in the pair/group? What is your focus? What sources have you identified to use for research (articles, books, websites)? What is 'out there' already concerning your area of focus (provide links)? Ideas for original content (interviews, reviews, critical analysis)?
ASSIGNMENT 2: WRITTEN CRITICAL REVIEW
Contemporary scholarly work in Animation Studies
(15 points, 15% of final grade)

Students will write a critical review of a scholarly article published in the field of Animation Studies within the past 5 years. Scholarly articles can be found in academic journals - published or online - such as Animation Studies – The Peer-Reviewed Online Journal for Animation History and Theory (http://gertie.animationstudies.org/), Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal (http://anm.sagepub.com/current.dtl). The student is responsible for finding and accessing the chosen article, subject to Professor approval.

Examples of recent scholarly articles include:
Leslie Bishko: The Uses and Abuses of Cartoon Style in Animation (2007)
Sheuo Hui Gan: To Be or Not To Be – Anime: The Controversy in Japan over the ‘Anime’ Label (2010)
Laura Ivins-Hulley: The Ontology of Performance in Stop Animation (2008)
Paul St. George: Using Chronophotography to replace Persistence of Vision as a theory for explaining how animation and cinema produce the illusion of continuous motion (2009)

The critical review must be 2 - 3 pages in length (double-spaced, 12 pt, Times New Roman). Students should include a bibliography and footnotes if outside research is incorporated. Links to animation clips are welcomed.

Grading and Due Dates for Assignment 3: Written Critical Review

Part 1 – Due Mon, May 24; (unweighted but must be submitted for approval): Which article have you chosen and why? Submit article itself, brief summary of article (max 5 sentences) and statement of interest.
Part 2 – Due Mon, May 31; (weighted: 5 points out of 15): Rough Draft of Critical Review. Professor may suggest changes/revisions/new directions.

ASSIGNMENT 3: WORLD ANIMATION PRESENTATION
(20 points, 20% of final grade)

Students will work alone or in pairs to create a 5-minute (10-min if in pairs) PowerPoint presentation (sorry, that’s all WIMBA will accommodate!) to effectively illustrate individual research concerning the animation history and traditions of a particular country or geographical region outside the USA. Each presentation will be narrated LIVE during a synchronous WIMBA session and will be followed by a short discussion.
If pair work is completed, written peer review will also be required. Professor will supply guidelines for peer review. Peer review will be due with Final Draft on 6/15.

Grading and Due Dates for Assignment 3: World Animation Presentation:

Part 1 – Due Tues, May 18 (weighted: 5 points out of 20)
Are you working alone or in a group? What is your chosen country or region? Submit short paragraph describing the reasons for your chosen subject.

Part 2 – Due Tues, June 11 (weighted: 5 points out of 20)
Rough Draft of Presentation (.ppt) and 5-min narration script (.doc). Professor may suggest changes/revisions.

Part 3 – Due Wed, June 15 (weighted: 10 points out of 20)
Final Draft of Presentation (.ppt) and final narration script (.doc).

Required WIMBA Session (Pick one)
Wed, June 16 (7:00-9:00pm EST) or Thurs, June 17 (9:00-11:00am EST)
Students/pairs will conduct 5-min (10-min if pairs) presentation with .ppt slides and live narration during WIMBA session.

COURSE OUTLINE

Module #1 (Mon, May 10 – Thurs, May 13)
Animation History: Where do we begin?
Origins and Principles of Animation
Optical Toys and Non-Cinematic Forms
Defining Animation

Live WIMBA Session (Pick one)
Monday, May 10, 6:00 – 7:30pm EST
Tues, May 11, 9:00- 10:30am EST
Introduction to WIMBA interface.
Instructor and Student introductions.
Syllabus Review.
Questions & Answers.

Required Readings for Module #1

Additional Suggested Readings for Module #1 (not required)
Required Screenings for Module #1:
All Screenings will be available on Blackboard.

Dates for Online Discussion #1
Initial Posting Due Wed, May 12
2 Responses Due Thurs, May 13

Module #2 (Fri, May 14 – Mon, May 17)
Animation Pioneers from Europe & North America / Intro Animation Studies


Required Readings for Module #2

Additional Suggested Readings for Module #2 (not required)

Required Screenings for Module #2
All Screenings will be available on Blackboard.

Dates for Online Discussion #2
Initial Posting Due Sat, May 15
2 Responses Due Mon, May 17

WORK DUE Tues, May 18
Assignment: World Animation Presentation
Part 1 of 3: Submit country choice to professor by approval and short paragraph outlining interest. Post on BB.

Module #3 (Tues, May 18 – Thurs, May 20)
The Golden Age of American Animation Begins
Required Readings for Module #3

Suggested Additional Readings for Module #3 (not required)

Required Screenings for Module #3
All Screenings will be available on Blackboard.

Dates for Online Discussion #3
Initial Posting Due Wed, May 19
2 Responses Due Thurs, May 20

WORK DUE BY Fri, May 21:
Assignment: Collaborative Website Content: Part 1 of 4: Groups and Topic Ideas, Possible Sources Submitted for Approval

Module #4 (Fri, May 21 – Mon, May 24)
American Animation During WWII

Required Readings for Module #4

Suggested Additional Readings for Module #4 (not required)
(1) Explore the Blog “Toons at War”
http://www.toonsatwar.blogspot.com/

**Required Screenings for Module #4**
All Screenings will be available on Blackboard.

**Dates for Online Discussion #4**
Initial Posting Due Sat, May 22
2 Responses Due Mon, May 24

**WORK DUE by Mon, May 24**
Assignment: Written Critical Review: Part 1 of 3
Selected article submitted to Professor for Approval

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**Module #5 (Tues, May 25 – Thurs, May 27)**
**Post WWII: Russian & Eastern European Animation**

**Required Readings for Module #5**

**Suggested Additional Readings for Module #5 (not required)**
“Jan Svankmajer” (181-186).
http://www.animationblog.org/2008/04/priit-parn-breakfast-on-grass.html

**Required Screenings for Module #5**
All Screenings will be available on Blackboard.

**Dates for Online Discussion #5**
Initial Posting Due Wed, May 26
2 Responses Due Thurs, May 27

**WORK DUE BY Fri, May 28:**
Assignment: Collaborative Webpage: Part 2 of 4:
Submission of Outline and Preliminary Research
Module #6 (Fri, May 28 – Mon, May 31)
Animation Revolution: UPA & NFB Canada

Required Readings for Module #6

Suggested Additional Readings for Module #6 (not required)

Required Screenings for Module #6
All Screenings will be available on Blackboard.

Online Discussion #6
Initial Posting Due Sat, May 29
2 Responses Due Mon, May 31

WORK DUE by Mon, May 31
Assignment: Written Critical Review: Part 2 of 3
Rough Draft of Critical Review

WORK DUE by Tues, June 1
Assignment: World Animation Presentation
Part 2 of 3: Rough Draft of Presentation

Module #7 (Tues, June 1 – Thurs, June 3)
Experimental, Non-Objective and Under-Represented Animation

Required Readings for Module #7
Suggested Additional Readings for Module #6 (not required)

Required Screenings for Module #7
All Screenings will be available on Blackboard.

Dates for Online Discussion #7
Initial Posting Due Wed, June 2
2 Responses Due Thurs, June 3

WORK DUE by Fri, June 4
Assignment Collaborative Webpage: Part 3 of 4
Submission of Rough Draft

Module #8 (Fri, June 4 – Mon, June 7)
Animation in Asia

Required Readings for Module #8
(3) Brophy, Philip. 100 Anime. London: British Film Institute, 2005. 1-16.

Suggested Additional Readings for Module #8 (not required)

Required Screenings for Module #8
All Screenings will be available on Blackboard.

Dates for Online Discussion #8
Initial Posting Due Sat, June 5
2 Responses Due Mon, June 7

WORK DUE by Mon, June 7:
Assignment: Written Critical Review: Part 3 of 3
Final Submission of Critical Review

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Module #9 (Tues, June 8 – Thurs, June 10)  
Digital Animation and the resurgence of traditional techniques

Required Readings for Module #9

Required Screenings for Module #9
All Screenings will be available on Blackboard.

Dates for Online Discussion #9
Initial Posting Due Wed, June 9
2 Responses Due Thurs, June 10

WORK DUE by Fri, June 11
Assignment Collaborative Webpage: Part 4 of 4: Final Content Due

Module #10 (Fri, June 11– Mon, June 14)  
The Future of Animation

Required Reading for Module #10

Required Screenings for Module #10
All Screenings will be available on Blackboard.

Dates for Online Discussion #10
Initial Posting Due Sat, June 12
2 Responses Due Mon, June 14

WORK DUE by Wed, June 15
Assignment: World Animation Presentation - Part 3 of 3: Final Presentation and Narration script for Live Presentation

Required: Live WIMBA Session (pick one)
Wed, June 16 (7:00-9:00pm EST) or Thurs, June 17 (9:00-11:00am EST)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE
All students are required to follow the standards of academic conduct outlined in American University’s Academic Integrity Code. Should a violation occur, the student will receive a failing grade for the course and disciplinary action may be taken. Please consult with the Professor if you have questions about the standards of the Academic Code. You can also review the Code online:  [http://www1.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.htm](http://www1.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.htm)
Or to test your knowledge, take the Quiz on the Academic Integrity Code: [http://www1.american.edu/academics/integrity/question1.htm](http://www1.american.edu/academics/integrity/question1.htm)

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**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR DISRUPTION OF CLASSES**

In the event of an emergency, American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of an emergency, students should refer to the AU Student Portal, the AU Web site ([www.prepared.american.edu](http://www.prepared.american.edu)) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean’s office for course and school/college-specific information.