

Spring 2016  
T 2-4:50 (CAC 333)  
T 6-8:30 Screening (CAC 333)

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### **COMM 369: Topics in Film: History of Animation**

We often dismiss cartoons as simple diversions for children, but the medium of animation has, since before the advent of cinema, signified far more than that: animation allows us to realize our dreams (and nightmares), to quite literally vivify our imaginations, bringing images to life. In an age when the sky is the limit—CGI has made it possible to animate photorealistic scenes indistinguishable from live-action—a look back at the development of the medium will allow us to interrogate the ways in which animation’s aesthetic, narrative, and formal qualities have changed in response to a variety of factors. This class will examine animation in the context of industrial practices, technological constraints, art and film movements, and notable artists and personalities, in addition to cultural, historical, social, and economic considerations. Though our primary focus will be on U.S. animation, we will also explore the animation of Western and Eastern Europe, Japan, and elsewhere.

By the end of this course, students should:

- Demonstrate an understanding of social, political, cultural, technological, historical, and economic factors that shaped and continue to shape the diverse medium of animation
- Demonstrate an understanding of the changing structures of animation industries
- Identify and analyze the aesthetic (formal and stylistic), narrative, and thematic characteristics of animated films
- Demonstrate an understanding of animated expression by critiquing films and clips
- Develop critical reading and writing skills by engaging with a variety of readings, screenings, and class discussions

#### **Requirements (total of 100 points)**

Participation/attendance	15 points
Weekly assignments (total of 5, 5 points each)	25 points
Class presentation	10 points
Midterm paper (due 3/9)	25 points
Final paper (due 5/13)	25 points

#### **Grading Scale**

A: 94-100	B-: 80-83	D+: 67-69
A-: 90-93	C+: 77-79	D: 64-66
B+: 87-89	C: 74-76	F: 0-63
B: 84-86	C-: 70-73	

#### **Readings and Weekly Journal Assignments**

Readings: Stephen Cavalier, *The World History of Animation* (Berkeley, U of CA Press, 2011) is available in the bookstore and online; all other readings will be posted on Desire2Learn. All readings should be completed by the week they are listed.

Each week, a question for your journal assignment will be available on D2L; this question might address the readings, the screenings, or something we’ve discussed in class. During

the semester, you are expected to turn in **FIVE** journal responses of 300-400 words each; these will be due to me at the start of class on Tuesday in **hard copy**.

### **Midterm paper**

Guidelines for the take-home midterm paper will be handed out and discussed in more detail by week 6.

### **Final paper**

You will have a choice between a take-home essay exam and writing a research paper. Either way, it will be due during our exam period, Thursday, May 19. More details on the final paper will be provided after the midterm.

### **Presentations:**

Each student will be required to present a short clip of an animated film during the course of the semester. More details about the presentation will be discussed in class.

### **Requirements for Written Assignments:**

Papers must be typed, in 12-point font, double-spaced, page-numbered, and stapled. I reserve the right to deduct points for violations of these requirements. Late papers drop by 10% for each 24 hours it's late, whether it's the weekend or a weekday (i.e., a 100-point paper one day late will be penalized 10 points before I grade it). Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis for personal emergencies, but **ONLY** if you ask me **IN ADVANCE** of the actual due date. This goes for the weekly journal assignments, as well.

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance is mandatory, and will be taken at the beginning of every class. If you are late, it is your responsibility to make sure I've marked you down as present. If you need to miss class for an emergency, let me know *in advance*. Absences will be excused on a case-by-case basis. You are allowed one unexcused absence, then after that each unexcused absence reduces your attendance/participation grade by one point (out of 15).

### **Class Environment**

Students are expected to contribute to a respectful, productive learning environment. This includes being on time, being attentive, participating in class discussions, and being nice to everyone, regardless of their views. Technology is a big issue these days, but rest assured that it's pretty easy to tell whether a student is actually taking notes on a laptop or checking email/whatever. If you're going to use a laptop, please use it for class purposes only, and please turn your cell phone off. Also, no texting in class, please. Any violation of the above will impact your attendance/participation grade.

### **Guidelines for Assessing Participation Grades**

- Tardiness; degree and frequency
- Not just frequency, but quality of comments. Is it evident that the student has done the readings and engaged with the material?
- Consideration for other students and their points of view
- Technology use: disrespectful or reasonable?

### **Disability Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions

to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, check here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center and then contact me at the beginning of the course. I am happy to help in any way that I can. For more information, please visit the Disability and Assistive Technology Center, located on the 6th floor of the Learning Resource Center (the Library). You can also find more information here:

<http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>

### **Statement of Academic Integrity**

UW-Stevens Point values a safe, honest, respectful, and inviting learning environment. In order to ensure that each student has the opportunity to succeed, we have developed a set of expectations for all students and instructors. This set of expectations is known as the Rights and Responsibilities document, and it is intended to help establish a positive living and learning environment at UWSP. Click here for more information:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Pages/rightsandresponsibilities.aspx>

Academic integrity is central to the mission of higher education in general and UWSP in particular. Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) is taken very seriously. Don't do it! The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. For more information, see the UWSP "Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures" section of the Rights and Responsibilities document, Chapter 14, which can be accessed here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>

I should add that if you use Wikipedia, or anything online, you have to CITE IT. I don't care whether you use MLA or Chicago style citations, but please be consistent. When in doubt, CITE THE SOURCE. I cannot stress this enough. Consequences for plagiarism are severe: the first time a student is caught, they receive an F on the assignment, and the second time results in failure of the entire course.

### **Terms of Enrollment**

This syllabus is a contract. By taking this class, you agree to the policies listed here. I reserve the right to change the syllabus, but only within reason, and with notification to students.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Week One: Animation: The Art of Giving Life**

Tuesday, 1/26

Readings: --Cavalier: 8-11, 14-31

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#### **Week Two: Early Animation Experiments; the Origins of Pictorial Animation**

Tuesday, 2/2

- Readings:** --Cavalier: 35-42  
--Cavalier: 48-53, 62-64 (sections on McCay)  
--Lutz, *Animated Cartoons* (3-31)
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**Week Three: The Origins of Abstract Animation and Early European Animation**

Tuesday, 2/9

- Readings:** --Cavalier: 54-57, 80, 82-84, 88-91, 92, 104, 110, 112, 114, 116-117  
--Lotte Reiniger, an interview

**EVENING SCREENING:** Selected shorts and excerpts

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**Week Four: The U.S. Studio System**

Tuesday, 2/16

- Readings:** --Cavalier: 60-75  
--Furniss, "Foundations of Studio Practices"  
--Lehman, *The Colored Cartoon* (excerpt, 1-14)
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**Week Five: The Transition to Sound**

Tuesday, 2/23

- Readings:** --Cavalier: 76-79, 81, 95-99  
--Eisenstein on Disney  
--Crafton, "Infectious Laughter"  
--Elza, "Alice in Cartoonland" (optional)
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**Week Six: Disney's Early Empire**

Tuesday, 3/1

- Readings:** --Cavalier: 118-120, 128-135, 138, 143, 148, 154-55, 177, 198  
--Smith, "New Dimensions"  
--Merritt, "Little Girl/Little Mother Transformation"  
--Crafton, "Animation Performance Spaces" (optional)

**EVENING SCREENING:** *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* (1937, Disney, 83 min)

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**Week Seven: American Studios in the 40s and 50s: Authorship, Caricature, Parody**

Tuesday, 3/8

- Readings:** --Cavalier: 100, 105-106, 115, 121-123, 126, 141-142, 160, 193

- Crafton, "The View from Termite Terrace"
  - Curtis, "Tex Avery's Prison House of Animation" (optional)
  - Lindvall and Melton, "Toward a Postmodern Animated Discourse"
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### Week Eight: UPA and Limited Animation

Tuesday, 3/15      **MIDTERM DUE**  
Readings:      --Cavalier: 144-145, 156-157, 186-187  
                    --Bashara, "Cartoon Vision"

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### Week Nine: SPRING BREAK

Tuesday, 3/22

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### Week Ten: Norman McLaren, the NFB, and Animation for Grown-Ups

Tuesday, 3/29  
Readings:      --Cavalier: 124-125, 146-147, 158-159, 162-163, 167, 171, 209, 260, 300

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### Week Eleven: Eastern European Animation and Puppet Animation

Tuesday, 4/5  
Readings:      --Cavalier: 58-59, 172-175, 185, 188, 202, 211, 222-223, 252-253, 268  
                    --Sibley, "The Medium"  
                    --Moritz, "Narrative Strategies for Resistance and Protest"  
                    --Wells, "Body Consciousness in the Films of Jan Svankmajer" (optional)

**EVENING SCREENING:** *Alice*, (1985, Jan Svankmajer, 85 min)

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### Week Twelve: Animation for Television (and more Animation for Grown-Ups)

Tuesday, 4/12  
Readings:      --Cavalier: 155, 170, 204-207, 230-231, 284, 288, 292, 296, 319, 330  
                    --Perlmutter, *America Toons In* (excerpt)

**EVENING SCREENING:** *TBA*

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### Week Thirteen: Japanese Animation

Tuesday, 4/19

- Readings:** --Cavalier: 190, 203, 208, 212, 224, 240-241  
--Drazen, *Anime Explosion* (excerpt)  
--Patten, "TV Animation in Japan" and "Full Circle"

**EVENING SCREENING:** *Akira* (1988, Otomo, 121 min)

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**Week Fourteen: Japanese Animation, cont.**

Tuesday, 4/26

- Readings:** --Cavalier: 257, 273, 278-279, 280, 306, 311, 332, 336, 357, 361  
--Miyazaki reading TBA

**EVENING SCREENING:** *Princess Mononoke* (1997, Miyazaki, 133 min)

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**Week Fifteen: Feminist, Independent, and International Animation**

Tuesday, 5/3

- Readings:** --Cavalier: 178-179, 218-219, 225, 228, 246-247, 261, 270, 277, 344, 366-367  
--*Women in Animation* excerpts

**EVENING SCREENING:** Chomet film TBA or *Nocturna* (2007, Garcia/Maldonado, 88 min)

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**Week Sixteen: The Animation Renaissance and Computer Animation**

Tuesday, 5/10

- Readings:** --Cavalier: 189, 238-239, 244-245, 248, 255, 264-265, 292, 298, 308, 311, 314-315, 318, 328-330, 333-335, 343, 348, 369  
--Davis, "Disney Films 1989-2005: The Eisner Era"  
--Moszkowicz, "To infinity and beyond"

**EVENING SCREENING:** TBA; Student animation projects

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**EXAM PERIOD:** Thursday, May 19, 8-10am