

Communication 356 (Section 1): Animation

Spring 2020

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00-10:50am in CAC 301 (computer lab)

Course website: Canvas

Instructor: Alex Ingersoll - alex.ingersoll@uwsp.edu

Office Hours: (CAC 309) Tue & Thur 2:00-3:00pm

Course Objectivesⁱ

"Animation is not the art of drawings that move but the art of movements that are drawn."

-Norman McLaren

Through this course, students will utilize industry-standard techniques such as timing, weight, and anticipation to create a range of animated content and other forms of visual design. This workshop will enable students to research, analyze, interpret, and question animation methodologies through the process of creative problem solving and visual communication.



This course will help students expand their production skill set by introducing them to the fundamental terminology, concepts, and techniques of creating moving images through traditional animation and digital media practice. Through various projects including hand drawn, rotoscoping, stop-motion, and digital timeline animation, students will integrate the basic concepts such as timing, weight, and anticipation with professional video production techniques through the use of locations, actors, storytelling, and visual effects. After taking this course, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of traditional 2D animation processes and tools from thumbnails and storyboarding to finished animation and gain experience with digital video development processes and tools that are used from preproduction to post effects and final output.

Required Materials

- Williams, Ken. *The Animator's Survival Kit: Expanded Edition*. New York, NY: Faber and Faber, 2009
 - Other course readings available on Canvas.
 - An external hard drive (NOT a flash drive) and a camera memory card.
-

Communication

Due to the collaborative nature of media production and the limited time available to complete each project, effective communication among all classmates and the instructor is CRITICAL. I will often send emails to the class through your UWSP account or Canvas. You will need to have and regularly check an active UWSP email account. Much of the work in the course is geared toward group coordination and

ⁱ This syllabus is subject to change as my opinions change and evolve, especially with your help and guidance.

therefore necessitates a willingness to cooperate. This course requires each student to commit to the success of every other student's project at each step of the production process.

Lab & Equipment

You are responsible for knowing and adhering to all Lab Policies and you are responsible for all equipment you check out. Failure to abide by the rules of the equipment check-out room, besides being inconsiderate to your fellow classmates or staff, may affect your borrowing privileges. A final grade for this course will not be issued until any and all equipment you have checked out or have made complete arrangements for replacement restitution. Please remember to always be respectful and courteous to the staff members.

Evaluation

Your final grade in this course is a composite of the different projects listed below. Detailed explanations of each assignment will be given in class at the appropriate times. Late work will not be accepted past the assigned due date. All work will be collected at the beginning of class unless stated otherwise. All projects turned in on flash drives or online filesharing (in Quicktime format) must be clearly labeled with your name, the project number, and the title of the project (if applicable) with the file name itself.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Total</u>
(1) Flip Book Project	10%
(2) Bouncing Ball Project	10%
(3) Walk Cycle Project	10%
(4) Rotoscoping Project	15%
(5) Stop Motion Project	15%
(6) Final Animation Project	30%
Participation & Write-ups	10%

Grade Breakdown

A (100-93.5%) A- (93.4-89.5%) B+ (89.4-86.5%) B (86.4-83.5%) B- (83.4-79.5%) C+ (79.4-76.5%)
C (76.4-73.5%) C- (73.4-69.5%) D+ (69.4-66.5%) D (66.4-59.5%) F (<59.4%)

Evaluation Cont.

Since the success of this class depends upon your presence in class, it is expected that you will come to every class on time and ready to engage in the day's materials. Students who attend every single meeting will see their diligence reflected both in their participation grade, and most likely, in the quality of their work. For an absence to be considered excused, you must present University-approved documentation. Your second and third unexcused absences will result in 1 full letter grade deduction from your participation grade. Your fourth will result in 1 full letter grade deducted from your overall grade. Lateness of more than ten minutes will count as 1/2 of an absence. (Repeated lateness of less than ten minutes will also add up to an absence, at my discretion). **If you have five unexcused absences, you will fail the course.** If you do miss a class, please be sure to check with me and/or your classmates for what you missed and make sure you receive any assignments, handouts, etc.

Some production work will happen during class time using lab equipment. When working outside of class *be sure to make arrangements that includes full participation by your group members.* You will be responsible for extra lab work that must occur outside of class, whether in CAC or the library. When working on lab projects, you will be expected to pull your weight and participate in each aspect of the

production process. At the conclusion of the production cycle we will hold a brief in-lab “critique” in which groups will share and respond constructively to each other’s work.

Again, this course focuses on media production as a collaborative process. Creating an environment of mutual respect is *paramount* to successful work. While difference of opinions and vigorous debate are highly encouraged, you will be expected to refrain from using disparaging remarks (e.g., sexist, racist, homophobic language) in class, lab, or written work. **Finally, classes often include screenings of short films or clips from longer works. This material may challenge you as an audience member (or potentially offend) and I expect you to approach these materials in the spirit of the wider educational environment. The selection of these materials are intended to spark a healthy discussion and I expect mature and respectful interactions.**

Communicating with Me

The best way to talk to me is during my office hours. I am available over email but it may take me a day to respond. This means that you will need to ask questions about assignments more than 24 hours before they are due. If you are having problems completing the assignments, you need to communicate the issues with me at least 24 hours before the assignment is due so we may lay out alternative courses of action.

Computers, Procrastination & Murphy’s Lawⁱⁱ

Late assignments will not be accepted. Please don’t come to class without homework due to technical difficulties. (My computer crashed, printer ran out of ink, not enough batteries, etc.) Don’t wait until the last minute to carry out your work. If you do, you will be rushed, your work will suffer and you won’t have time to deal with the inevitable computer issues. Expect equipment to malfunction, batteries to run down, and hard drives to crash. ALWAYS make a redundant copy of your work. Save your media into a master directory on your external drive. REMEMBER to save your work to your external drive every time you launch it.

Community Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

UW-Stevens Point values a safe, honest, respectful, and inviting learning environment. In order to ensure that each student has the opportunity to success, 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.

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: <https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Student-Conduct.aspx>

Assistive Accommodations

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: <https://www.uwsp.edu/hr/Pages/ADA-Resources.aspx>

ⁱⁱ The 4th law of thermodynamics: “Anything that can go wrong will go wrong.”

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: <https://www.uwsp.edu/datc/Pages/default.aspx>

Advice From Students in Previous Versions of the Course

At the end of every semester I ask my students to reflect on what they learned in the course and to give advice to students who will take this course in the future. Here is a small sample of the most common replies:

“Animation is difficult, at times you will think you’re going crazy. But, if anything, animation is a good tool to use time management and patience. You ‘kin do it!”

“Plan accordingly. Keep it simple.”

“Don’t blow your assignments off until the last minute. They take a long time to complete and Alex probably has more projects to announce soon.”

“Time is of the essence. Hope you’ve told your loved ones that you love them.”

“DON’T PUT THINGS OFF! For the love of god just don’t!”

Course Scheduleⁱⁱⁱ

Week 1 - Introduction & Overview

Tue. 1/21	Introduction and course overview	
Thur. 1/23	Drawing in Time	Read: Williams pp. 1-34 Read: "Inside the Persistent Boys Club of Animation," by Ariane Lange (Canvas) Assign: (1) Flip Books

Week 2 - Timing, Spacing, and Photoshop

Tue. 1/28	Timing & Spacing	Read: Williams pp. 35-83
Thur. 1/30	Adobe Animate Basics	Assign: (2) Bouncing Balls

Week 3 - Spacing and Walks

Tue. 2/4	Spacing Continued Adobe Animate (and continuing)	Read: Williams pp. 84-101 DUE: (1) Flip Books Pt. 1
Tue. 2/4	EVENING SCREENING (6pm, CAC 333)	Selected shorts and excerpts
Thur. 2/6	Walks pt. 1	Read: Williams pp. 102-135
Thur. 2/6	EVENING SCREENING (7:30pm, Spectral)	Spectral 15: Weird Animation IV (7:30pm)

Week 4 - Walks, Runs, and Jumps (with Inverse Kinematics)

Tue. 2/11	Walks pt. 2	Read: Williams pp. 136-175 DUE: (2) Bouncing Balls DUE: (1) Flip Books pt. 2
Thur. 2/13	Runs, Jumps, & Skips	Read: Williams pp. 176-316 Assign: (3) Walk Cycle

Week 5 - Flexibility, Weight, & Anticipation

Tue. 2/18	Flexibility	Read: Williams pp. 217-255
Thur. 2/20	In Class Lab	

Week 6 - Takes, Accents, Timing, Stagers

Tue. 2/25	Weight & Anticipation	Read: Williams pp. 256-284
Tue. 2/25	EVENING SCREENING (6pm, CAC 333)	<i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i> (1937, Disney, 83 min)
Thur. 2/27	Takes, Accents, Timing, Stagers	Read: Williams pp. 285-303

Week 7 - Dialogue and Rotoscoping

Tue. 3/3	Dialogue & Acting	Read: Williams pp. 304-326 DUE: (3) Walk Cycle
Thur. 3/5	Rotoscoping in Adobe Animate	Assign: (4) Rotoscoping Project

ⁱⁱⁱ All evening screenings are optional but highly recommended.

Week 8 - Rotoscoping Cont.

Tue. 3/10	Rotoscoping Continued	
Thur. 3/12	Rotoscoping Continued	

Week 9 - Stop Motion

Tue. 3/23	Stop Motion - Introduce Dragonframe Review: Dragonframe User Guide	Assign: (5) Stop Motion Project
Tue. 3/23	EVENING SCREENING (6pm, CAC 333)	<i>Yellow Submarine</i> (1968, George Dunning, 87 min)
Thur. 3/26	Building Puppets	Read: Priebe pp. 75-150 DUE: Rotoscoping Project

Week 10 - Stop Motion - Character Animation & Visual FX

Tue. 3/31	Character Animation	Read: Priebe pp. 203-227
Thur. 4/2	Visual Effects	Read: Priebe pp. 237-276

Week 11 - Stop Motion Cont.

Tue. 4/7	Foley Sound	DUE: (5) Stop Motion Animatic
Tue. 4/7	EVENING SCREENING (6pm, CAC 333)	<i>Alice</i> (1985, Jan Svankmajer, 85 min)
Thur. 4/9	Stop Motion	DUE: (6) Final Animation Project Pitches

Week 12 - Stop Motion/Final Projects

Tue. 4/14	In Class Lab	
Tue. 4/14	EVENING SCREENING (6pm, CAC 333)	<i>Akira</i> (1988, Otomo, 121 min)
Thur. 4/16	In Class Lab	DUE: (5) Stop Motion Project

Week 13 - Works-in-Progress

Tue. 4/21	In Class Lab	
Tue. 4/21	EVENING SCREENING (6pm, CAC 333)	<i>Princess Mononoke</i> (1988, Miyazaki, 133 min)
Thur. 4/23	In Class Lab	DUE: (6) Final Project Animatics

Week 14 - Final Editing

Tue. 4/28	In Class Lab	
Tue. 4/28	EVENING SCREENING (6pm, CAC 333)	<i>TBA</i>
Thur. 4/30	In Class Lab	

Week 15 - Final Editing

Tue. 5/5	In Class Lab	
Tue. 5/5	EVENING SCREENING (6pm, CAC 333)	<i>TBA</i>
Thur. 5/7	In Class Lab	
Fri. 5/8	Final Projects DUE	DUE: (6) Final Animation Project
Final Projects		
Wed. 5/13	12:30pm - Screen & Celebrate Final Projects!	