

E f344L • The Animated Film as Text

Instructor: Kornhaber, D.
Unique #: 83075
Semester: Summer Session 1, 2010
Cross-lists: n/a

Areas: Area V
Flags: n/a
Restrictions: n/a
Computer Instruction: N

Prerequisites: Nine semester hours of coursework in English or rhetoric and writing.

Description: From its origins in the 1910s to the rise of Pixar Studios, animation has proved one of the most enduring and versatile artforms of the past century. In this class, we will take a broad perspective on the history and theory of animation in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, both in America and internationally. Students will also be introduced to the theoretical study of the animated film as a cinematic text and to key works on animation in film theory. Key topics and themes to be discussed include early animation of the 1910s and 1920s, major animation studios (Bray, Disney, Warner Brothers, MGM, Hanna Barbara, Pixar) and figures (Harman and Ising, Leon Schlesinger, Chuck Jones, Tex Avery, Max Fleischer), television animation, wartime animation, documentary and non-fiction animation, the rise of computer animation, anime and other movements in European and non-Western animation. Ongoing consideration will also be given to transhistoric issues including animation's shifting place in children's culture and adult culture, animation's relationship to popular culture and to high culture, and animation's intersections with and influence on other media and genres. By the end of the course, students will be able to recount the history of animation, including the role of major figures, trends, and movements, and they will be able to perform close-readings of animated films as cultural artifacts and artistic texts. Assessment will be in the form of two short papers and one longer paper as well as class participation, as described below.

Texts: Required texts for this course are as follows:

- Paul Wells, *Understanding Animation*
- Paul Wells, *Animation and America*

Assignments from the books above will be made throughout the class based on overall course progression. In addition to the books listed here, additional readings may be provided by the instructor throughout the course as handouts.

Requirements & Grading: The requirements for this class are as follows:

- Attend all scheduled classes and arrive on time
- Complete all assigned readings/viewings
- Complete all written assignments

The policy regarding attendance is as follows:

- **Missed Classes:** In the event you must miss a class, you can do so on 2 instances without it affecting your final grade. These 2 missed classes do not need to be excused, but please let me know of your absence as far in advance as possible. Beyond these 2 classes, all absences must be excused. Reasons for excused absences include illness (with doctor's note), team sports or approved activities, and family emergencies. Any unexcused absences beyond the allowed 2 missed classes will lower your final class grade by 1/3 of a letter.

The policy regarding assignments is as follows:

- Papers and other assignments are due at the start of class on the dates listed in the Schedule unless otherwise rescheduled by the instructor
- Unless arrangements for an extension are made in advance with the instructor, late papers or assignments will be marked down 1/3 of a letter for every day they are late

Grades will be based on:

- (a) Class Participation 10%
- (b) Short essay #1 (3 pages) 25%
- (c) Short essay #2 (3 pages) 30%
- (d) Long essay (5 pages) 35%

Participation will be evaluated based on frequency of engagement in the classroom discussion. Engagement does not, however, mean verbal expression for its own sake. Active listening and responding to peers are critical components of classroom engagement. There is no particular quota for discussion contributions; rather the expectation is that all students will be continuously engaged in listening and responding to one another's thoughts and opinions.

A list of potential topics for short and long essays will be distributed by the instructor prior to the due date for each assignment. Students are welcome to develop their own paper topics for any of the assigned essays but must receive approval from the instructor for their topic prior to beginning the paper. Papers will be evaluated not only on the quality of the ideas and supporting analysis presented but also on the effectiveness of the organization and communication of those ideas. More specific expectations will be discussed in class at the time that paper topics are distributed. Any student with questions regarding paper expectations should speak individually with the instructor or teaching assistant prior to beginning the paper.

Schedule:

- *Thursday, June 3:* Animation's Beginnings: J. Stuart Blackton, Emile Cohl, and the Non-Narrative Short
- *Friday, June 4:* Animation Becomes an Art: Winsor McCay and the Early Pioneers of Animation
- *Monday, June 7:* Animation Becomes a Business: Commercialization and Industrialization in Animation of the 1910s and 1920s, from Bray Studios to "Felix the Cat"
- *Tuesday, June 8:* Walt Disney, 1922-1937: The Utopian Real
- *Wednesday, June 9:* The Fleischers, 1923-1936: Reflexivity and Personality
- *Thursday, June 10:* A Challenge to Disney: Harman/Ising, Freleng, and the Beginnings of Warner Brothers' "Termite Terrace"
- *Friday, June 11:* The "Anti-Disney": Tashlin and Clampett at Warner Brothers
- *Monday, June 14:* The Animator as Auteur: Chuck Jones, Looney Tunes, and the "Animated Masterpiece" – **First Short Paper Due**
- *Tuesday, June 15:* The Animated Surreal: Tex Avery at Warner Brothers and MGM
- *Wednesday, June 16:* A Synthesis of Animation Styles: Lantz Studios and Early Hanna-Barbera
- *Thursday, June 17:* War Comes to Animation, Animation Comes to the War: World War Two and the Major Animation Studios
- *Friday, June 18:* A Dynasty Begins: Walt Disney and the Animated Feature Film
- *Monday, June 21:* Animation Turns to Television: Terrytoons and The Jay Ward Studio
- *Tuesday, June 22:* The Rise of a TV Dynasty: Hanna-Barbera, 1950s-1980s
- *Wednesday, June 23:* The End of an Era: Saturday Morning Cartoons and the Decline of the Animated Short
- *Thursday, June 24:* A Tradition Reborn: The "Disney Renaissance" of the 1980s and 1990s
- *Friday, June 25:* Innovations and Re-Discoveries: Rotoscope, Stop-Motion, and Specialized Animation Techniques
- *Monday, June 28:* Animation Extends Its Boundaries: Puppetry, Animation, and Adult Humor – **Second Short Paper Due**

- *Tuesday, June 29*: The Return of Sarcasm: Early Alternative Animation in the 1990s
- *Wednesday, June 30*: An Apotheosis of Apathy: Contemporary Alternative Animation
- *Thursday, July 1*: The Animated Tradition Abroad: Genre Experiments, Cultural Commentary, and Social History in French Animation
- *Friday, July 2*: The Animated Tradition Abroad: Israeli Animation and the Documentary Aesthetic
- *Monday, July 5*: The Animated Tradition Abroad: Aesthetics and Artistry in Russian Animation
- *Tuesday, July 6*: The Animated Tradition Abroad: Anime and the Animated Film as Genre Piece
- *Wednesday, July 7*: The Animated Feature Reborn: The Rise of Pixar Studios and the Revolution in Computer Animation
- *Thursday, July 8*: Animating the World: Animation and Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) – **Final Papers Due**

Policies:

Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Academic Integrity: Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. For additional information on Academic Integrity, see <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint.php>

Documented Disability Statement: The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>

Religious Holy Days: By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Instructor: Professor Donna Kornhaber
 Calhoun 18
 Office Hours: TBD
 Teaching Assistant: Rachel Wise