

ANI 421
Animation Mechanics
syllabus
2021 - Autumn Quarter

DEPAUL
CDM

Animation Mechanics

Autumn 2021
Monday 5:45 pm - 9:00 pm
CDM 527

Instructor: Brian Ferguson

ANI 421

Office: CDM 461 or <https://depaul.zoom.us/j/99492459130>
Email: bfergus3@cdm.depaul.edu (best way to reach me)
office phone: (312) 362-1422 (during office hours)
cell phone: (310) 713 - 9380
Office/Advising hours:
Monday: 9 am - 10:00 am
Thursday: 9 am - 12:00 pm, 1pm - 3:00pm

**Course
Description**

A graduate level production class that covers classic hand-drawn techniques in the art of animation, including transformational animation, squash and stretch, anticipation and overshoots, walk and run cycles, and various techniques used by artists over the past century. Students will complete weekly assignments that focus on learning these advanced skills and then apply these to their own, personal animated projects in all future production.

Prerequisites MA or MFA Animation status

**Course
Objectives**

1. Students will create original animated exercises that apply the core principles of mechanics.
2. Students will apply these mechanics to their personal work in the Masters Program.

**Learning
Outcomes**

1. Students will gain an understanding of fundamental and essential elements of putting things in motion
2. Students will increase their understanding of making animation more aesthetically pleasing
3. Students will hone their eye for finding ways of making animation more exciting to watch

Texts and Materials

Required Texts

"The Animator's Survival Kit"
by Richard Williams
Publisher, Faber and Faber Inc.

Recommended Texts

"Stop Staring"
by Jason Osipa

Texts you might really find useful, if you have the means

"The Illusion Of Life"
by Frank Thomas & Ollie Johnston

Online Software Reference

Lynda.com for all work in *Flash* and *AfterEffects*

Video Reference on D2L

CoTube will link you to the entire *Richard Williams Animation Masterclass* videos and files. This link is on the bottom right side of the D2L home page. This is an incredible resource that passes down the craft developed during the golden age of Disney and Warner Brothers, and you will be expected to watch these videos outside of class to prepare for lectures.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class. We cover an enormous amount of material in every class, and missing even one can be a huge setback. Any student missing 3 classes or more will be given a grade of "F" for the semester.

The student is responsible for any lectures or assignments missed. If an assignment is due a week that you are absent, it is your responsibility to make sure it still arrives on time. This is for your benefit. A good portion of our class time will be spent doing hands on tutorials, screening films, and critiquing work. Lecture notes will not make up for these missed learning experiences.

You may not miss the midterm or final class date. Doing so will equal an automatic two letter grade reduction of your final grade. If for some reason you cannot make one of these dates you must contact your instructor BEFORE the class that you must miss. Excuses given after the fact will not be accepted.

No incompletes will be given without documented proof of circumstances beyond your control.

Participation

One of the best ways to learn in a classroom environment is through *active* participation in discussions and critiques. In general, we will be following a pattern of creating animation and then discussing it in critique in the following week. When I open up the floor for you to speak, please make the effort to voice your honest and constructive opinion. This will help you learn from your mistakes and progress with your animation skills. It will also prepare you for the professional arena.

Class Work

Assignments

- Must be handed in on time. Late assignments will be accepted with teacher discretion only. On time means submitted through D2L one hour BEFORE class on the day the assignment is due. Students who use class time to finish assignments the day they are due will forfeit the right to hand in that assignment. Class time is for working with the material at hand, not finishing late assignments.

Late work:

- o Late work will not be accepted unless approved of PRIOR to the class in which it is due or accompanied by a valid medical excuse.
- o You are allotted one “freebie” per term that allows you to turn ONE assignment late for full credit (up until the 10th week of the term). You only get one of these per term. All other late assignments are forfeited.

Written Assignments: Must be typed.

Digital Assignments: All assignments handed in digitally must be in the following format

- o firstname.lastname_projectname.extension
- o example: donald.trump_morph.m4v

* Special Accommodations: If you have any special considerations please see the instructor.

* BACK UP YOUR WORK: Failure of computer software and or Hardware will not be accepted as an extenuating circumstance for late projects or incomplete grades so back up your work daily.

Critiques

Unless I tell you otherwise, assigned work must be completed and submitted through D2L the midnight BEFORE class starts. This will keep us from wasting valuable class time. In most cases (I'll let you know the exceptions) I request that you use **a universally readable movie** format unless discussed with me previously. This could include .mov, .avi, .m4v. **Handing in something unfinished is always better than nothing at all.** Due to the large size of our class, and the limited class time, not everyone's work will get a full review during class. If you'd like more feedback, arrange to discuss your work with me during my office hours. We will view and discuss everyone's final project during the last class.

Grading

Assignments	90% of grade
participation in class discussions and attendance	10% of grade
Total	100%

A = 93-100

A- = 90-92

B+ = 88-89

B = 83-87

B- = 80-82

C+ = 78-79

C = 73-77

C- = 70-72

D+ = 68-69

D = 63-67

D- = 60-62

F = 0-59

Your grade will depend on the following criteria:

- **Meeting Project Deadlines:** It is vital to have your work available for critique. Work unavailable for critique will be considered late and will not be accepted unless you are using your one "freebie."
- Creativity and personal input into execution of project
- Coming prepared to class, including assigned reading and assignments
- Showing in-progress work, which can benefit from suggestions, rather than presenting entirely new work at critiques
- Effective visually aesthetic solutions to all problems assigned
- Taking initiative to work outside of class and research
- Hard work and sweat
- Participation in critiques and discussions

Cell Phones

Use of cell phones in the class and the lab is prohibited. Please turn your phone off before entering class. Mistakes will happen (to me too), but repeated failure to turn your phone off will result in a lowered grade for the class. All phone conversations should be conducted outside the class – don't disturb those working in the lab and put others in an uncomfortable situation.

Headphones

Whether working with sound in your project, or simply listening to music while working, you need to be considerate of others and wear headphones. Be aware that if the volume is high enough, others can still hear what you're listening to despite the headphones. Inconsiderate behavior will result in a lowered grade.

Academic Integrity

Work done for this course must adhere to the DePaul University Academic Integrity Policy, which you can review in the *Student Handbook* or by visiting <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html>.

Plagiarism

The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course, as well as all other courses in which independent research or writing play a vital part in the course requirements, should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report, or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

Materials and Supplies

All assignments in this class will be transmitted digitally online through D2L unless otherwise noted.

Any assignment handed in late or when not present in class may be put on a flash drive and delivered to the 4th floor desk of CDM to be put in my mailbox.

All flash drives must be labeled clearly with the following information:

- Your name
- The name of the assignment
- The class number and name you are submitting the assignment for
- The term (ex. Winter 2018)

COVID-19 Health and Safety Precautions

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic. Students, faculty and staff are expected to:

- (1) wear a mask as required at all times while indoors on campus;
- (2) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms;
- (3) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions;
- (4) stay home if sick;
- (5) participate in any required COVID-19 testing;
- (6) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training;
- (7) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Advisory.

By doing these things, we are Taking Care of DePaul, Together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who do not abide by the mask requirement may be subject to the student conduct process and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with any requirements should register with DePaul's Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).

Schedule (subject to change)

week	Mon	class	assignment
1 but not yet	9/6 not yet	University closed (no class)	
1	9/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro, review of syllabus, • review of basic terms, • discuss good drawing for animation • also, inbetweening demo 	Morph animation
2	9/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique Morph scene. • discuss ball bounce • arcs of motion • squash & stretch • vibrations 	Bouncing Ball
3	9/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique Ball Bounce scene. • Discuss anticipations • overshoots • accents • exaggerated impact 	Anticipation and Overshoot
4	10/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique Anticipation and Overshoot assignment. • Discuss follow throughs • smears • Discuss overlapping action • secondary action • vibrations 	Follow Through and Overlapping Action
5	10/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique Follow Through and Overlapping Action assignment. • Discuss abstract animation 	Abstract Animation
6	10/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique Abstract Animation assignment. • Discuss walks 	Walk

week	Mon	class	assignment
7	10/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique Walk assignment. • Discuss smoke • fire • explosions 	Explosions, Fire, and Smoke
8	11/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique Explosions, Fire and Smoke assignment. • Discuss lightning • Discuss water drops and splashes • rain 	Lightning and Rain
9	11/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique Lightning and Rain assignment. • Discuss lifting and weight 	Lifting and Weight
10	11/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique Lifting and Weight assignment • Discuss endless cycles 	final assignment: endless cycles
11	11/22 final	critique of animation final assignment	- final critique, by students and teacher.

Final Critique

Date: Monday, November 22nd, 2021,

Time: from 5:45 PM to 9:00 PM

Location: regular classroom (CDM 527)

Your final critique is on November 22nd, 2021, from 5:45 PM to 9:00 PM