

**DePaul  
SCA**

**ANI 355**

## **Stop Motion Animation**

Fall 2023 | M/W 1:30pm-3:00pm | In Person class; CDM 803

shooting spaces: CDM 818 & The IRL (14 E. Jackson room 310)

Instructor: Devin Bell (he/him/his)

Office: 512

Email: [devin.bell@depaul.edu](mailto:devin.bell@depaul.edu)

Office hours: M/W 12:00pm-1:00pm, and 3:00-3:30pm

Advising hours by appointment only via email or Bluestar

<https://campusconnect.depaul.edu/>: Tues 9:00am-12:00pm

### **Course Description:**

The principles of stop motion character animation in real space are the emphasis of this intermediate level course. Students are introduced to basic armature building, lighting and scene composition, and the designing and fabrication of characters with a variety of materials. Contemporary uses of digital technology to enhance stop motion production will be explored. PREREQUISITE(S): ANI 201 (or ANI 101)

This course is repeatable.

### **Learning Outcomes**

- 1) Students will be able to implement basic principles of stop-motion animation
- 2) Students will be able to utilize a range of physical tools and materials to explore puppet-making, props and miniature sets
- 3) Students will be able to use lighting and shooting techniques to explore cinematography applied to animation
- 4) Students will be able to shoot a series of stop-motion animations with an emphasis on developing personal style and creating character performances

### **Texts and Materials**

#### RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

“Cracking Animation: The Aardman Book of 3-D Animation”  
Lord, Peter and Sibley, Brian.

### **Attendance Policy:**

After two absences, your final grade for the course will automatically be lowered by one-letter grade per absence. Two instances of either being late to class or leaving early counts as one absence. Any student missing five or more classes will receive the grade of "F" for the quarter. Any requests for exceptions for extenuating circumstances must be made in writing in a timely manner, preferably before class begins.

You are responsible for any missed lectures, notes, and assignments. If you miss a class, it is still your responsibility to turn in the assignment on time. We have very tight deadlines that are in place to benefit you and your projects. Lecture notes alone will not make up for missed work.

**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 any reason you cannot make one of these dates you must contact me BEFORE the class meets. Excuses given after the fact will not be accepted regarding late assignments or absences.**

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

**Important dates:**

<https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx>

- **September 12- Last day to add (or swap) classes**
- **September 19- last day to drop with no tuition penalty**
- **October 24- last day to withdraw**

## **Participation**

One of the best ways to learn in a classroom environment is through *active* participation in discussions, activities and critiques. In general, we will be following a pattern of creating sculptures or animations and then discussing them in a 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 in your filmmaking.

There may be certain circumstances when we do not have enough time to critique each student's work in the class. I encourage students to volunteer their assignment early when a critique begins, or if time does not allow, make an appointment with me during my office hours for a thorough discussion of the work. Late submissions miss the benefit of the in-class critique, so it is always better to turn in a work in progress than nothing at all.

Please silence your phone before entering class. All phone conversations should be conducted outside the class –this also applies to audible music and loud side conversations. Do not disturb those working in the lab and put others in an uncomfortable situation.

**It is unacceptable to use computers or phones during class for anything other than taking notes or drawing/painting/animation activities relevant to the class being taught that day. Browsing the internet, watching videos, texting, gaming, working on submitting your late assignment during a critique, etc. in class is distracting to me and your peers, and is unprofessional. Unless instructed otherwise, turn monitors off during critiques. Misuse of class time will result in a warning; if the issue continues, you will be asked to leave class and be counted as absent.**

## **Class Work**

### Assignments

- Must be completed and fully uploaded through D2L one hour BEFORE class starts. To receive any credit for a late assignment, it must be submitted within 24 hours of the deadline. Late assignments will be accepted with teacher discretion only. For most of the projects, you will submit digital files such as multi-page Word docs, pdfs or jpegs. For all time-based projects, ensure rendered movie files play properly. Class time is for working with the material at hand, not finishing late assignments.

- 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.
- Written Assignments: Must be typed.
- Digital Assignments: All assignments handed in digitally must be in the following format (please note upper and lower case usage)
  - lastnameFirstname\_projectname.extension
  - example: bellDevin\_projectOne.mov

\* 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.

<b>Grading</b>	<u>Assignments</u>	60% of grade	
	<u>Final Project</u>	40% of grade	
	Total	100%	
	A = 100-93	A- = 92-90	
	B+ = 89-88	B = 87-83	B- = 82-80
	C+ = 79-78	C = 77-73	C- = 72-70
	D+ = 69-68	D = 67-63	D- = 62-60 F = 59-0

Standards for Achievement:

Grade A:

Student performs in an outstanding way. Student exhibits achievement and craftsmanship in all work. Design criteria is exceeded and student challenges him/herself in project design. Student exhibits commitment to expanding ideas, vocabulary and performance.

Grade B:

Student performs beyond the requirement of the project. Student exhibits above average progress and craftsmanship. A design criterion is exceeded. Student exhibits above average interest in expanding idea, vocabulary, and performance.

Grade C:

Criteria of assignment is met, and all requirements are fulfilled. Student shows average quality work and minimum time and effort on projects. Student shows moderate interest.

Grade D:

Student performance is uneven and below average. Requirements for projects are only partially fulfilled. Minimal interest is shown and attendance, participation and involvement are inadequate.

Grade F

Student fails to meet minimum course requirements and shows no interest. Levels of participation and craftsmanship are extremely poor. Student's attendance is inadequate.

Requesting an incomplete grade:

An incomplete grade may only be assigned to a student if the student has experienced an extenuating circumstance near the end of the term, the student is in good standing in the class, and the request is made in a timely manner.

Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>

## **Materials, Supplies & shooting**

You will need some basic sculpting supplies including 11-12 gauge aluminum wire, pliers, and ½ lb. of plastacine modeling clay. You will be notified about other required materials as projects call for them. There will be some communal materials available while supplies last. It is recommended you bring your own preferred sculpting tools, xacto blades, safety glasses etc. See the attached supply list for requirements and recommendations.

**Be prepared with materials, and be ready to draw and sculpt every time our class meets.**

**Camera and lighting-** All photographic work must be shot using a DSLR camera and strong attention to lighting. Low quality images with poor lighting will be marked down, therefore it is strongly recommended to shoot every assignment using our school's facilities (CDM 818 and the IRL Animation Stages at 14 E. Jackson, room 310.) Additional gear, including stop-motion camera/computer kits and lighting kits may be checked out from CDM's "cage" at 14 E. Jackson, Suite LL106. Be aware that check out policies are strictly enforced, find details here (click "Equipment" tab):

<https://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Production-Resources.aspx>

**Work space-** We have different areas for fabrication and shooting animation: CDM 803 is for building puppets and sets, CDM 818 and the IRL animation stages (located at 14 E. Jackson, room 310) are exclusively for shooting. The IRL does have community space for building puppets and sets as well, but storage is limited. Do not use the shooting spaces for messy construction of any kind; be ready to set up your finished puppets and sets quickly when you have time reserved (3 hours max/week.) It is common courtesy to stay on schedule for this shared precious commodity, and contact your classmates politely if a delay is impacting you or someone else. If someone ahead of you is running overtime, talk to each other and work something out within reason, i.e. an extra ½ hour-1 hour. It is not alright to ask for more than that unless there is absolutely no demand for the space. It is your responsibility to make the time to shoot; scheduling conflicts will not be accepted as an extenuating circumstance for late projects or incomplete grades.

Regarding both the shooting and the building spaces- clean up and store your work every day, lock up your tools and supplies and label everything with your name, date and contact information. Students responsible for repeatedly leaving a mess in either space face a two letter grade reduction.

**Signing up for Stage Time-** You may sign up for shooting time in 818 or the IRL (3 hours max/week) via signup sheets provided each quarter. When a class is not using the IRL, you may request more time for bigger projects by contacting the stage coordinator (currently me) with details about the project and shooting schedule. Be aware that these stages require you to sign and adhere to a safety and equipment policy contract for each and every shoot.

## **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

This course requires original content authorship for all visual and written material; plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism can occur when referencing source material too closely when creating your own work, copying an image with only slight modification (to color, line, pose, etc.), tracing an image or parts of an image, or submitting work that you did not create by hand. We all reference other artwork, but you must understand how to use this reference only as a springboard and generate your own take on the subject. If you have a question about using reference material, ask me before turning in your projects, not after. Any exception will be expressly stated. Plagiarized work will result in an academic integrity violation and may result in an "F" for the quarter.

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

## **Academic Policies**

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the [University Academic Calendar](#). Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: [cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment](http://cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment).

\* Special Accommodations/Disabilities: Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).

Please see <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx> for Services and Contact Information.

### **Incomplete Grades**

An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval. Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>

**Emergency Plan.** An emergency can occur at any time, suddenly and without warning. The following link provides detailed information on Emergency Evacuation and Fire Alarm safety: <https://resources.depaul.edu/emergency-plan/emergency-evacuation/Pages/Evacuation.aspx>. The University will use the DPU Alert to announce school closing or other emergencies. In the event of an emergency evacuation, the primary outdoor assembly area for CDM will be Grant Park (Southeast corner of Jackson and Michigan Ave).

### **COVID-19 Health and Safety Precautions**

The health and safety of everyone at DePaul depend on the cooperation of all who come to campus. By taking care of yourself, you protect the entire community. DePaul's COVID-19 response plans are based on the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Chicago Department of Public Health and the university's medical advisor from AMITA Health. Mandatory protocols must be followed by DePaul students, faculty and staff at all times on both campuses <https://resources.depaul.edu/coronavirus/Pages/default.aspx>

### **Respect for Diversity and Inclusion at DePaul University as aligned with our Vincentian Values**

At DePaul, our mission calls us to explore "what must be done" in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. We value diversity because it is part of our history, our traditions and our future. We see diversity as an asset and a strength that adds to the richness of classroom learning. In my course, I strive to include diverse authors, perspectives and teaching pedagogies. I also encourage open dialogue and spaces for students to express their unique identities and perspectives. I am open to having difficult conversations and I will strive to create an inclusive classroom that values all perspectives. If at any time,

the classroom experience does not live up to this expectation, please feel free to contact me via email or during office hours.

### **Content Warnings**

As this is a course to practice visual art and storytelling, controversial subject matter may be brought up. Students should expect to see, read, hear, and discuss some content which may include sex, drugs, alcohol, violence, politics, religion, etc. Students have the right to express themselves artistically and address challenging issues, but should be compassionate and thoughtful with any difficult discussions that arise. Trigger/content warnings are helpful considerations, and should be given before sharing potentially challenging content with the class whenever relevant.

I aim to facilitate a safe and open learning environment. If you become uncomfortable with any content for any reason, communicate with me and I will work to find a solution.

### **Online Course Evaluations**

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Please see <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/Pages/online-teaching-evaluations.aspx> for additional information.

**Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns.** Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Please let me know your preferred name and pronoun, and be respectful of the preferences and identities of your peers. For more information, see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at <http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>

### **Schedule**

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and/or sent via email. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments will be submitted online at least 1 hour prior to class.

	<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Assignment given</b>
<b>Week 1</b> Sep 6	<b>Introduction</b>	Select Found Objects

<b>Week 2</b> Sep 11	Stop-motion, basic tools	Begin Found objects animations
Sep 13	Styles of lighting and basic movement <b>Lighting Workshop</b>	Found objects animations
<b>Week 3</b> Sep 18	<b>Critique found objects animations</b> Fun with clay- replacements and straight-ahead animation	Begin Clay Animation
Sep 20	Clay animation workshop	Final Clay Animation
<b>Week 4</b> Sep 25	<b>Critique Clay Animation</b> Puppet fabrication basics- armatures	Begin Armatures
Sep 27	<b>Armature workshop and troubleshooting</b>	Final Armatures
<b>Week 5</b> Oct 2	<b>Critique Armatures</b> Basic physics and performance in stop motion	Begin "Walks"
Oct 4	Mid-shooting repair guide, Adding character to get more complex walk	Final "Walks"
<b>Week 6</b> Oct 9	<b>Critique "Walks"</b> Character design for sculpture	Begin character sculpt
Oct 11	Replacement mouth shapes and amazing eyeballs!	Final character sculpt
<b>Week 7</b> Oct 16	<b>Critique character sculpt</b> Acting, improv, reference and lip sync	Begin expression/lip sync
Oct 18	More on character performance; exaggeration	Final expression/lip sync

<b>Week 8</b> Oct 23	<b>Critique expression/lip sync</b> Introduce Final Project	Final checkpoint 1
<b>Oct 25</b>	<b>Pitches for final project (checkpoint 1)</b> Maquettes- characters and locations	Begin Final checkpoint 2
<b>Week 9</b> Oct 30	Complex character/puppet design Schematic drawings, rigging	
Nov 1	Detailing characters, establishing art direction and designing coherent worlds	Complete Final checkpoint 2
<b>Week 10</b> Nov 6	<b>Critique Checkpoint 2</b> Special effects, compositing	Begin Final checkpoint 3
Nov 8	Troubleshooting and puppet repair mid-shot	
<b>Week 11</b> Nov 13	<b>Individual progress critiques</b>	Complete Final checkpoint 3
<b>November 15</b>	<b>Final ATTENDANCE MANDATORY</b> NOTE: Class will be held in same room <b>Wednesday, March 15, 11:30am-1:45pm</b>	<b>Final Projects</b> <b>NOTE: Submission is due the night before</b>

Stop-motion tools and materials (\* items you will need to purchase- all other items are optional, so feel free to wait until we learn about them!)

*Aluminum wire (11.5-12 gauge)
*steel wire or "floral wire" (20-26 gauge)
*needle nose pliers
*modeling clay (oil-based plasticine)
*xacto blade
*Small glue gun
*glue sticks
wing nuts
machine screw nuts
machine screws
Aluminum foil
super-sculpey
clay (water based)
plaster
silicone
foam
Vinyl or nitrile gloves
cups (plastic and paper)
liquid epoxy
Square tubing
mixing sticks
liquid latex
Polyurethane foam
Industrial glue gun
epoxy putty
dental/sculpture tools
Toaster oven
scissors
Drill
safety glasses
chicken wire
burlap
plastic mixing containers
foam core
wood (various)
Heat Gun
Jig saw
Dremmel tool