

**DePaul
SCA**

ANI 390

Topics in Animation- Nickelodeon Storyboarding

Winter 2024 | M 5:45pm –9:00pm | **CDM room 536** (in-person)

Instructor: Devin Bell (he/him/his)

Office: CDM 512

Email: devin.bell@depaul.edu

Office hours: M/W 11:30am-1:00pm

Advising hours (appointment only- Bluestar or email): Tues 9:00am-12:00pm

Course Description:

This is an advanced storyboard workshop run in partnership with Nickelodeon Animation Studio. The course provides a practice environment, simulating a television production pipeline, while allowing time to learn new processes. Students will be given content based around an existing Nick show, and be expected to make thousands of character drawings, acting tests, and translating scripts to storyboards. There will be several checkpoints with presentations of works in progress to Nick directors for feedback on how to improve as a storyboard artist.

Learning Outcomes

- 1)** Students will be able to draw a variety of characters in a specific style through hundreds of pose tests, and understand the overall visual vocabulary of the given show.
- 2)** Students will be able to analyze scripts, visualize individual scenes, and translate them to rough “thumbnail” storyboards.
- 3)** Students will be able to develop and improve more thorough storyboards into comprehensive scenes with detail and a high standard of drawing
- 4)** Students will learn about pitching, taking and implementing notes from Supervising Directors, and working collaboratively with a team following a pipeline used on a professional animated show.

Attendance Policy:

Arrive to class 10 minutes early every Monday. This is a special opportunity to practice storyboarding with guidance from Nick directors. Treat it like a job interview; you wouldn't show up even one minute late to an interview would you? Plan ahead, make accommodations, and to be present and ready to work each week.

You may only have one absence during the quarter. Two instances of either being late to class or leaving early counts as one absence. Any student missing two 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.

If for any reason you cannot make it to class 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>

- **January 12- Last day to add (or swap) classes**
- **January 19- last day to drop with no tuition penalty**
- **February 23- last day to withdraw**

Critiques and 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 storyboards or animations and then discussing them in a critique or discussion board in the following week. When I open up the floor, 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.

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 scanned drawings and/or 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 PRIOR to the class in which it is due. Any assignment handed in late or when not present in class should be accompanied by an e-mail to me.
- Written Assignments: Must be typed.

* 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.

Grading

Assignments

100% of grade

| | | |
|------------|------------|------------------------|
| 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.

Materials and Supplies

The two main tools we will use are Storyboard Pro and Adobe Photoshop (with boards as PSD files.) You will need access to (or own) a digital drawing tablet or interactive pen display and the Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop) or comparable painting and video editing software (but it must be compatible with PS and output as PSD file.)

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 any work that you did not draw yourself. 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, such as in-class drawing exercises from reference, and these must still be created freehand. 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.

* **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.

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.

Tentative Plan from Brandon Warren:

January 8th: Zoom Meeting Virtual Meet & Greet with Dave Cunningham & Brandon Warren

- Dave and I introduce ourselves and talk about our experiences in the animation industry.
- General overview of the workshop and the project we will be handing out to the students.
- Questions and Answers from the students.

January 9th – 19th: Character Drill Practice

- Students should continue the “trace, sight, and blind” drills.
- The students should practice drawing the characters “on form” (not necessarily “on model”)
- The students can also practice pushing their poses and expressions beyond what reference was provided to see if they can create their own expressions after becoming acquainted with the characters.

January 22nd: In-Person Workshop Kick Off

- Dave and I will give a short tutorial on the basics of storyboarding.
- We will provide “Tips & Tricks” on how to work efficiently and with intention.
- We will initiate the official “handout” by going over each student’s section of script individually and allowing time for each student to ask any questions about their section. We will be doing this in front of the entire class so that the students can learn from each other’s experience. This also allows everyone to be familiar with all the sections so that they can help each other with ideas and any problems they may encounter during the project.
- We will have dedicated time for more general Q&A’s

January 23rd-February 4th: Students Work on Thumbnails

- These are the weeks that the students should thumbnail their entire section in preparation for our virtual thumbnail review meeting on Feb. 5th.

February 5th: Virtual Thumbnail Review with Brandon

- I will go over every student’s thumbnail progress and give notes for them to incorporate into their project.
- More time for Q&A’s

February 6th – 16th: Students Continue to Work

- Students should work on incorporating Brandon’s notes into their storyboards and taking their boards from “thumbnails” to “roughs.”
- Students should start to pose out all of the action for their boards and make sure the story is working properly and is clear and easy to understand.

February 19th: Dave’s 1st Virtual Check-In

- Dave will go over every student’s progress and give any notes. Hopefully, these notes can become less broad and more detailed at each check in.

February 20th – March 1st: Students Continue to Work

- Students should work on incorporating Dave’s notes into their storyboards.
- Students should tie down their drawings and focus on adding nuanced acting and animation into their boards.
- They should begin to “clean up” all of their drawings and make sure their drawings are staying “on form.”

March 4th: Dave's Final Virtual Check-In

- Dave will go over every student's progress and give any final notes.

March 5th – March 15th: Students Finish Their Storyboards

- Students should finish incorporating Dave's notes.
- Students should finalize their clean-up process and add any subtle details to their boards.
- Students should make sure that all of their drawings are "on form" and acceptable to be "handed off to animation."

March 18th: In-Person Final Presentation with Dave

- Students will present their final storyboards to Dave.
- Dave will give any additional "could be better" notes to the students.
- Final Q & A about the animation industry in general.
- Hopefully, Nick recruiter can attend and can meet with all the students as well. (TBD.)