

University of Calgary  
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Film Studies FILM 305 L02/B02  
TOPIC IN GENRE: ANIMATION  
FALL 2015

Thurs., Sept. 9 – Tues., Dec. 8  
Lecture, Thurs. 15:00 – 16:50  
Lab (film screening), Tues. 14:00 – 16:50

**Instructor:** Ryan Pierson  
**Office:** SS 214  
**Office Phone:** 220-6720  
**E-Mail:** ryan.pierson@ucalgary.ca  
**Web Page:** D2L  
**Office Hours:** Tues. and Thurs., 12:00 – 13:00

### **Course Description**

This course will explore the role that animation has played in the history of moving-image culture. From the beginning of moving pictures, filmmakers have manipulated images frame-by-frame to create the impression of movement where none had originally existed. This course will study the different ways that filmmakers have made things move, in the context of their aesthetic and industrial histories. We will pay particular attention to different animation techniques (cel drawings, puppets, CGI, etc.) and to different national traditions

### **Objectives of the Course**

This course will focus on developing three major skills. First, observing and analyzing formal elements specific to animated films (such as the timing of movements); second, reading high-level historical and theoretical film scholarship; third, writing about film and developing an original argument. These skills will come together in the final research paper; shorter assignments will develop individual skills in more manageable ways.

### **Textbooks and Readings**

All readings will be posted on D2L.

### **Internet and electronic communication device information**

Laptops may be used only for taking notes and consulting the readings for discussion; they may not be out during screenings. (You will be given time to take notes on each short.) Handheld devices (cell phones, etc.) may not be used at any time. First offense will result in a verbal warning; further violations will affect your grade.

## Assignments and Evaluation

*Class participation (ongoing):*

10%

In-class discussion is an essential component of the course. Students must come to class prepared to discuss the readings and screenings. Class participation grades will be evaluated based on the quality of your contributions to in-class discussions.

*Reading Responses (ongoing):*

15%

Three times this semester, you will submit a response (~600 words) to one of the week's assigned readings. The response will have two parts. The first part will define the article's major concepts (e.g., plasmaticness) and summarize its major points or arguments. The second part will offer some original commentary on the article: testing its claims, applying it to other possible cases, extending its thoughts, etc. You will select your weeks from a sign-up sheet.

*Quiz (Oct. 8):*

10%

A quiz covering the first four weeks of material (lectures, readings, screenings). The format will be short answer, and will include answering questions about a short clip.

*Sequence Analysis (due in class Oct. 8):*

20%

A short paper (3-4 pages) that analyzes an aspect of the visual or auditory style of a short film (or sequence of a feature film) we've watched in the course. This will sharpen your observational skills, applying the technical vocabulary and analytical methods we've covered.

*Essay Proposal/Annotated Bibliography (due in class Nov. 5)*

10%

A short document (3-4 pages) proposing a topic and approach for your final research paper. The proposal should include a brief description (~300 words) of your major research questions or arguments, and roughly how you plan on executing them. It should also include a 2-3 page annotated bibliography that lists the primary and scholarly sources that you will use and provides a brief (2-3 sentence paragraph) explanation of the relevance of each.

*Final Research Project (due Dec. 14):*

35%

An 8-10 page research essay on an approved topic of the student's choice and related to the course themes and materials. Full details will be provided in Week 8.

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO**

**Submission of Assignments:** Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

**Note:** It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

**Policy for Late Assignments**

For late assignments, one-third of a letter grade will be subtracted from the assignment for each 24-hour period.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of the course.

**Writing Skills Statement**

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

**Grading & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film**

Final grades are reported as letter grades. However, assignments, exams, and other work in this course will be graded using letter grades.

The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department. If letter grades are used for an assignment or other course component, the percentage equivalent in the final column will be used for calculating the final grade:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department grade scale equivalents	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%

<b>2.70</b>		<b>B-</b>	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
<b>2.30</b>		<b>C+</b>	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
<b>2.00</b>	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	<b>C</b>	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
<b>1.70</b>		<b>C-</b>	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
<b>1.30</b>	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D+</b>	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
<b>1.00</b>		<b>D</b>	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
<b>0.00</b>	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	<b>F</b>	00 - 49.99%	0%

### **Plagiarism**

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people’s words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

### **Academic Misconduct**

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

### **Research Ethics**

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

## Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
<b>ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)</b>	SS 102 403-220-3580 <a href="mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca">artsads@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>CAMPUS SECURITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calgary Police Service</li> <li>• Emergency Text Messaging</li> <li>• Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</li> <li>• Safewalk Program</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> <b>403-220-5333</b> <b>403-266-1234</b> <b>Emergency: call 911</b> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</a> If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort ( <b>220-5333</b> ). For more information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a>
<b>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT help line</li> </ul>	<a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</a> 403-220-5555 or <a href="mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca">itsupport@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Support Services</li> <li>• Student Services Mobile App</li> </ul>	<a href="http://ucalgary.ca/ssc">http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</a> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents">http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</a>
<b>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Arts Reps</li> <li>• Student Ombudsman</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/">https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds">http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</a>
<b>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling Services</li> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</li> <li>• Online resources and tips</li> </ul>	<b>403-210-9355</b> (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</a> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a> <b>403-266-HELP (4357)</b> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</a> If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.

## Schedule of Lectures and Readings

### Week 1 (Sept. 10): Defining Animation

Reading: Norman McLaren, "The Definition of Animation"

Pierre Hebert, "Cinema, Animation, and the Other Arts: An Unanswered Question"

Screening: *Skeleton Dance* (Ub Iwerks, 1931), *Muratti Privat* (Oskar Fischinger, 1935), *Eager* (Alison Schulnik, 2014), *Neighbours* (Norman McLaren, 1952), *Tango* (Zygniew Rybszynski, 1980), *Recreation* (Robert Breer, 1959), *It's Such a Beautiful Day* (Don Hertzfeldt, 2012)

### Week 2 (Sept. 17): Early Animation

Reading: Donald Crafton, "Emile Cohl"

Scott Bukatman, "Labor and Anima"

Screening: short films by Emile Cohl and Winsor McCay

### Week 3 (Sept. 24): The Studio Cartoon, Plasmaticness, and Sound

Reading: Sergei Eisenstein, *Notes on Disney* (excerpts)

Lea Jacobs, "Mickey Mousing Reconsidered"

Screening: short films by Otto Mesmer, Disney, and Fleischer

### Week 4 (Oct. 1): Disney Realism

Reading: Frank Thomas & Ollie Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* (excerpts)

Casey Riffel, "Dissecting *Bambi*: Multiplanar Photography, the Cel Technique, and the Flowering of Full Animation"

Screening: *Bambi* (Disney, 1941) and short films by Disney and Fleischer

### Week 5 (Oct. 8): Fleischer Realism

Reading: J.P. Tellotte, "The Double-Space of the Fleischer Films"

J.P. Tellotte, "Man and Superman"

Screening: *Gulliver's Travels* (Dave Fleischer, 1939) and short films by Fleischer

\*\*\*Quiz (10%)\*\*\*

### Week 6 (Oct. 15): Vulgar Modernism and Cartoon Physics

Reading: Scott Bukatman, "Some Observations Pertaining to Cartoon Physics, or, the Cartoon Cat in the Machine"

J. Hoberman, "Vulgar Modernism"

Screening: short films by MGM and Warner Brothers

**Week 7 (Oct. 22): Full and Limited Animation in Japan**

Reading: Thomas Lamarre, *The Anime Machine* (excerpts)  
Marc Steinberg, *Anime's Media Mix* (excerpts)

Screening: *Castle in the Sky* (Hayao Miyazaki, 1986)

**Week 9 (Oct. 29): UPA, the NFB, and Design Aesthetics**

Reading: John Hubley and Zachary Schwartz, "Animation Learns a New Language"  
John Hubley, "Beyond Pigs and Bunnies"  
Michael Barrier, "Where the Yellow Went"

Screening: *Yellow Submarine* (George Dunning, 1968) and short films by the National Film Board of Canada, United Productions of America, and John & Faith Hubley

**Week 10 (Nov. 5): Puppets, Eastern Europe, and the Uncanny**

Reading: Michael O'Pray, "Surrealism, Fantasy, and the Grotesque: The Cinema of Jan Svankmajer"  
Ernst Jentsch, "On the Psychology of the Uncanny"

Screening: short films by Ladislav Starewicz, Jiri Trnka, Jan Svankmajer, Quay Brothers  
\*\*\**Essay proposal due (10%)*\*\*\*

Nov. 12: Reading day, no class

**Week 11 (Nov. 19): The Avant-garde**

Reading: Oskar Fischinger, "Absolute Film"  
Guy Cote, "Interview with Robert Breer"  
George Griffin, "Cartoon, Anti-Cartoon"

Screening: short films by Oskar Fischinger, Len Lye, Robert Breer, George Griffin, and others

**Week 12 (Nov. 26): CGI and Pixar**

Reading: Vivian Sobchack, "Animation and Automation, or the Incredible Effortfulness of Being"  
Lev Manovich, "Reality Effects in Computer Animation"

Screening: *WALL\*E* (Andrew Stanton, 2008)

**Week 13 (Dec. 3): Animation Redefining Cinema**

Reading: Andre Gaudreault & Philippe Marion, "Animage and the New Visual Culture"  
Lev Manovich, "Image Future"

Screening: *The Adventures of Tintin* (Steven Spielberg, 2011)  
\*\*\**Research paper due Monday, December 14*\*\*\*