MAR 335.01: Experimental Animation

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Experimental Animation  
MAR 335

Meets Tuesday and Thursday  
10 to 11:30 AM

Instructor: Andy Smetanka

Description

What is experimental animation? What isn't experimental animation? How many kinds of animation are there? Who are the gods and goddesses in the animation firmament? What kind of person is an "experimental animator? What are the prospects of old-school, hands-on animation in entertainment, and the commercial marketplace?

Here is this course in a nutshell: You will be exposed to lots of animation! You will produce lots of animation, and you will keep a journal describing what you see and do this semester. You will experiment with new techniques in the animation studio and on your own time, and at the end of the semester you will submit a 3-5 minute final project video incorporating your efforts into a satisfying short film.

Grades calculated from 100 possible points, distributed as follows:

Final project: 50 points  
Journal: 30 points  
Special projects: 20 points

92-100 points = A  
83-91 points = B  
74-82 points = C  
65-71 points = D  
64 points or less = F

Final project:  
Worth half the available points in this class, so worth every ounce of effort you can muster. Your final project should be more than just a demo reel of things you've tried over the course of the semester: it should represent a complete, cohesive, short-film whole that satisfies cinematically, one that you would confidently enter into an experimental animation festival. What that whole might be, and how you can this film, are questions you will be asked and be asking constantly this semester. Other criteria for grading include will include proficiency in the different techniques, editing and sound, professional presentation, and of course timely completion. Effectively I will be grading the amount of time and effort that went into it, and believe me I know what to look for. The project is absolutely due by the start of the last day of class.
Journal:
Please keep detailed notes about the animation you have been exposed to, and your own progress and thoughts on the various techniques and processes. There will also be occasional in-class writing assignments. Any notebook used solely for this course will do. Have fun with it, too.

Special projects:
From time to time you can be expected to get ambushed with special projects and challenges designed to stimulate your creativity and test your resourcefulness. They will be mostly in-class, often as part of a team or group. I will be try not to disrupt your plans, but these improvisational challenges are designed to help you act fast in an animation emergency!

Miscellaneous ground rules, tips and housekeeping matters:

*No exposed food or drink in the lab, please.

*Work together to pool your talents and energies. Barter, bargain for and steal each other's time and talents.

*Please use original material, created in and for this class, for your final project. No "goat-glanding," please!

*Stay in touch! If a project or assignment is getting you down, help and encouragement are all around you. You are not alone! I will generally be "around" on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and my email is given below:

*Work your face off in this course! Shoot as much as you can, experiment as much as you can, and create a final project that ties it all together somehow. Let this course inspire and challenge you as an animator. Away we go!

/Andy Smetanka
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