

1-2014

# MART 325.02: Fundamentals of Digital Animation I

Gregory D. Twigg

*University of Montana - Missoula*, [greg.twigg@umontana.edu](mailto:greg.twigg@umontana.edu)

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Media Arts 325  
**Digital Animation I**  
3 Credits  
Spring 2014 - The University of Montana, Missoula  
McGill 126  
Professor: Greg Twigg  
EMAIL: [greg.twigg@umontana.edu](mailto:greg.twigg@umontana.edu)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an introduction to the basic practices of animation, with emphasis on concept, planning of action, and sequencing of images. Basic production techniques, project planning, linear and non-linear narrative, and the integration of various styles of animation are fundamental components of this course.

This course is for the student interested in beginning to use animation as an expressive and communicative art form. Aesthetic, technical, historical and conceptual issues will be addressed through lectures, demonstrations, exercises, projects, and readings. Students are evaluated based on their contribution to the class discussions, critiques, and technical proficiency with various media.

This is a course that emphasizes the integration of aesthetic and technical issues related to animation. Students will be evaluated in these areas and are expected to acquire proficiency to create and produce a basic animation.

This class is titled “digital” but will be mostly rooted in the analog world. Today’s technological tools can help the creative process come too easy at times, causing the artist to miss out on some critical moments and ideas. It is critical that the student gets a solid foundation in the principals of animation by making most of the magic happen with his/her own hands. Students will use the computer for image-capture, audio and sound effects, editing and rendering final movies.

Students will view and critique a variety of animations and will participate in the process of animation through in-class workshops and demos. Each student will create four small exercise-based projects and one final animation.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will demonstrate understanding of the following principles and techniques through studio assignments:

- Imaging Concepts and Terminology
  - Motion aesthetics
  - Duration
  - Pacing/Tempo
  - Sequence
  - The Narrative/Storyline
  - Temporal Relationship

- Application of software for still image/time based media and animation (students are expected to obtain an intermediate knowledge of Final Cut Pro, Adobe Photoshop and iStopMotion)
- Project Development

### **TOPICS**

- An introduction to historical references, background, and contemporary concepts of animation
- Project Planning (including storyboarding and organizing clips)
- Basic Video Camera Use
- Framing & Composition
- Basic Lighting
- Professional Production Techniques (sizing for output, video and audio capture, photo import and animation of still images)

### **GRADING**

#### **Philosophy**

It is a common misconception that teachers assign grades when in reality it is the student who earns the grade. You are responsible for the effort put into each project therefore you assign your own grade. The purpose of grading, from a teachers perspective, is to clearly and accurately pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of your progress.

#### **Evaluation**

Your overall grade will be based on your understanding of the information and ideas discussed, your formal, technical, and conceptual progress as demonstrated in projects, your participation in class discussions, and professionalism during the course.

Grades will be based on the following formula:

Project 1 will account for 20%

Project 2 will account for 25%

Final Project will account for 40%

Final Exam will each account for 15%

Each project will be graded on the application of technique and story principles to the creative work, the organization of the production process, participation, technical proficiency with the various software applications, their aesthetic application, problem solving, project presentation and the ability to meet deadlines. The exercises/projects and descriptions are listed on the 15 week schedule sheet.

#### **Expectations for class participation**

Participation by all members is critical to the success of this studio. Excellent participation is a given and includes contributing to ongoing discussions and critiques, suggests alternative ways of approaching projects, along with a thoughtful process and strong work ethic.

### **Attendance & participation**

Good attendance and punctuality are expected for this course and will strongly affect your grade. Only three (3) unexcused absences will be allowed. Every unexcused absence beyond this will lower your grade by a letter grade. A total of seven absences, excused or unexcused, will result in you receiving a grade of "F" for the class. Excused absences include religious holidays, a verifiable death in the family or illness with a doctor's note.

### **Classroom etiquette**

You are expected to conduct yourself with proper respect for the classroom environment. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. **Turn off your cell phones** and beepers prior to class. (Does anyone even have beepers anymore?)

### **THE LAB**

• **What this lab is**..... This lab has been established so that students in the **Media Arts program** can have a dedicated lab in which to do their course work. You will have griz card access to this lab all day, every day. Be aware, however, that the building is not always open, so you may have to work around that. Our office will establish a class list with Campus Security, whom you may call to get in after hours.

• **What this lab is not**..... This lab will **not** be used to work on things that are outside of the course requirements and will not be used by students outside of the program. If you want to spend time fooling around with your friends, then do it at home. Abuse of this lab will not be tolerated.

### **SOFTWARE INFORMATION**

The primary software programs that you will be using are:

- **Adobe Photoshop**
  - a compositing program used in motion graphic production
- **Final Cut Pro**
  - a video editing program with audio capabilities
- **iStopMotion**
  - a digital stop motion capture program

You will also be using the internet and the network browser in the lab.

• It is important that throughout the semester you take advantage of the manuals, the program help menu, and related articles downloaded from the web.

**THIS COURSE SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE INSTRUCTOR.**

### **Academic Misconduct and the Student Conduct Code**

**All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at [www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/Index.cfm/page/1321](http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/Index.cfm/page/1321).**

**MAR 325 Introduction to Animation  
Production Schedule**

**Spring 2014**

Week 1 1/24	Week 2 1/31	Week 3 2/7	Week 4 2/14	Week 5 2/21
<b>Tues</b> Intro Materials Early animation <b>Hist Component</b>	<b>Tues</b> Flip book roughs due  <b>Hist Component</b>	<b>Tues</b> Capturing the images Importing Editing set-up	<b>Tues</b> <b>Hist Component</b>  Production day	<b>Tues</b> Intro to stop motion <b>Bouncing Balls</b>
<b>Thrs-----</b> <b>Project #1 Flip Book</b>  History of Flipbooks	<b>Thrs-----</b> Larger format Flip Book begins	<b>Thrs-----</b> Incorporating Audio  <b>Hist Component</b>	<b>Thrs-----</b> <b>Project #1 Presentations</b>	<b>Thrs-----</b> Continued

Week 6 2/28	Week 7 3/7	Week 8 3/14	Week 9 3/21	Week 10 3/28
<b>Tues</b> Silhouette and Experimental <b>Visiting Artist Andy Smetanka</b>	<b>Tues</b> Experimental workshop	<b>Tues</b> Basic lighting for animation Animating dolls/armatures found objects	<b>Tues</b> Basic Rotoscoping	<b>Tues</b> <b>Project #2 presentations</b>
<b>Thrs-----</b> Silhouette Workshop	<b>Thrs-----</b> Animating a person <b>Begin Project #2</b>	<b>Thrs-----</b> Replacement Animation	<b>Thrs-----</b> Production Day <b>Begin Final Proj</b>	<b>Thrs-----</b> <b>Project #2 presentations</b>

Week 11 4/4	Week 12 4/11	Week 13 4/18	Week 14 4/25	Week 15 5/2
<b>SPRING BREAK</b>  <b>YEEE-HAAW!!</b>	<b>Tues</b> <b>Hist Component</b>	<b>Tues</b> Project 3 Rough Cuts due	<b>Tues</b> <b>Hist Component</b>	<b>Tues</b> <b>Final Project #3 presentations</b>
	<b>Thrs-----</b> <b>Hist Component</b>	<b>Thrs-----</b> Project 3 Rough Cuts due	<b>Thrs-----</b> Studio Day	<b>Thrs-----</b> <b>Final Project #3 presentations</b>