

Modes of Animation Production
2D Digital Animation FST 333 Fall 2010
Mon 3:30 – 6:15 KE 1122

Instructor: Andre Silva
Office Hours: Monday 11am-1pm
<http://modesofanimation.blogspot.com/>

REQUIRED TEXT: After Effects CS3 Professional for Windows and Macintosh: Visual QuickPro Guide.

INTRODUCTION: In the digital realm, 2-D animation refers to working with images that are “flat,” or whose components exist along an x/y axis. This does not mean, however, that 2-D can only be used to create cel-type animation. In many cases our animations may possess a 3-D quality, *on screen*. This class explores a variety of 2-dimensional animation techniques that allow students to mix and match various software programs to create digital art that carries a unique aesthetic. A large misconception is that one must be “an artist” to be an animator. Though drawing skills are always an asset, in this class we will use photographs, live video and basically *any* images that can be imported into a computer as a base on which to build our animations. Those images will be traced over, cut out, composited and ultimately animated to create short projects.

OVERVIEW AND EXPECTATIONS: As you become more comfortable with the software, I encourage you to start viewing this software as a painter’s palette. How do you, in other words, create line and texture in your animations? Though the techniques we will learn in this class are relatively accessible and open to much creative exploration, be assured that these projects require a substantial time commitment. This type of work is not open to last-minute efforts and requires a consistent commitment, so please do not procrastinate. If you follow this advice, you will be rewarded by your results. It is also important to realize the level of detail that goes into creating short animated films and it becomes all too easy to *not* see the forest through the trees. Thus, in addition to exploring the technical aspects of 2-D animation, you will also learn production management techniques, unique to the realm of animation, so that you can always keep the big picture in mind while working on the small details.

I also anticipate a class environment where we share knowledge with each other. The possibilities offered by the software are limitless, so you will have several opportunities, throughout the semester, to share your discoveries with the rest of the class. In the spirit of collective teaching, you will also be expected to offer the class a fifteen-minute presentation on an animator/animated work of your choice. Show us clips, tell us what you like (or dislike) and give us a little background/history. I have also posted some tutorials specific to class projects on my website (silvacine.com > then click on the “COURSES” portion of the film reel).

For this class you must - at the very least - have your own 2GB flash drive. It would be preferable, however, to have an external fire-wire drive (which you can use for this and other classes). Your projects will be contained on this drive and I strongly suggest you periodically **back your work up**, elsewhere, should something happen to the drive.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT OF ME: My role is that of a facilitator. My role in discussions is to launch, describe, guide, ask questions, and summarize. I will also offer honest criticism of your work but not before the class has spoken.

I will also introduce you to the technology and the resources required to complete the assignments and will teach each software program starting from a basic level. In this class, I will offer instruction in Photoshop and After Effects and Final Cut Pro. If you have worked with one or

more of these programs, great! This knowledge will serve you well. But please be mindful of students to whom the software is completely new. As I have mentioned, the possibilities offered by the combination of these programs is limitless, so whether you are an expert or a beginner in one or more of the software programs, I assure you, you will leave this class having made many discoveries.

I will divide class time between software instruction, work-in-progress review (where you will have an opportunity to share your projects, questions and discoveries with the rest of the class), and student presentations.

OUTSIDE CLASS COMMUNICATION: Since this class meets only once a week, I will keep you updated on and reminded of any class-related issues via UNCW e-mail. *Please regularly check this e-mail* so that you are never out of the loop. I will also send any progress/project grades to this account.

GRADES: The recipe for making an A in this class is to devote the necessary time to projects, speak up in class and yes, sometimes fail. That's it! This class is about exploration so I am not looking for you to meet my aesthetic criteria. I will be looking for dedication that results in a solid product.

A=100-93, A-=92-90, B+=89-87, B=86-84, B-=83-80, C+=79-77, C=76-74, C-=73-70, D+=69-67, D=66-64, D-=63-60, F=59 and below

- A = Exceptional thought, creativity and extra effort have been applied; great understanding and application of concepts; all requirements are fulfilled.
- A- or B = Very good creativity and effort; all requirements are fulfilled.
- C = Average effort; one requirement NOT fulfilled.
- D = Poor effort and/or more than two requirements are NOT fulfilled.
- F = Not turned in; or, no attention to requirements, no effort

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is mandatory. Two unexcused absences will result in your being dropped a letter grade. Three unexcused absences will result in failure for the class. If you are 15 or more minutes late for class, you will be counted absent. Absences are excused only in the case of a family tragedy or documented medical emergencies.

TARDINESS: If you're late twice, those two tardies add up to one unexcused absence. After that, if you miss attendance, you're counted absent.

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TURNED IN ON THE ASSIGNED DATE. No late assignments will be accepted. Assignments turned in after the due date will receive a zero. Incomplete assignments will be graded as is. No exceptions other than for family tragedy or medical emergencies (with documentation).

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE: The University is very clear in regards to its academic honor code, including plagiarism, bribery, cheating and other student responsibilities. That code can be found in the Student Handbook and Code of Student Life as well as in the Faculty Handbook. It is the operative code, without exception, for this class.

MY OFFICE HOURS: Please make an appointment to visit me during my office hours if you have any questions about the assignments or your progress in the class.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

- **In-Class Presentation:** Bring some animation (2-D or 3-D) that interests you and take it apart for us. You have 15 minutes to present an account of its design principles, technical features, and how this piece – and pieces like it – operate in our culture or in the culture in which they were created. I have reserved a good portion of class time for this purpose. **(5pts)**
- **GIF Web Animation:** A common form of web animation. This is a multi-part assignment, which will introduce you to Photoshop and aspects of basic image design. **(5pts)**
- **Video Rotoscope:** (5 seconds) A standard technique in animation; live action acts as the underlying source for hand-drawn animation. This must have the final appearance of drawings, not the application of filters or other canned procedures to the photographic origin. This assignment uses Photoshop, Final Cut Pro and After Effects. **(10pts)**
- **Film Festival Bumper:** (10 – 12 seconds) Film festival trailers are minute-long teasers that play before a film (or films) at a festival to remind the audience that the film(s) they are about to see are brought to them by Festival “X.” Trailers are often imaginative, funny, provocative or visually captivating and convey the tone of the festival. A bumper is similar to a film festival trailer except that it is on average about 10 seconds long. **(15 pts)**
- **Final Project:** (1 minute) Freestyle. Your choice. Put together what you have learned in this class and surprise us. The only rules are that your project must be 100% animation and all the imagery must be your original work. **(40 pts)** * *The point value for this assignment will be broken down into smaller components within a project rubric to be handed out, later in the semester.*
- **AE Exercises:** To facilitate your understanding of After Effects, you will complete 3 short compulsory exercises that deal with After Effects fundamentals. The completion of these exercises should provide you with a foundation from which to create more advanced projects. Please note that these projects will be due to me mid-week so that After Effects is always relatively fresh in your memory **(15 pts)**
- **Pop Quizzes:** Based on a reading that was assigned the previous week. These will be very short 10-minute quizzes that will assess a general knowledge of the reading. You are asked to skim many of the readings but you should retain some very fundamental concepts **(2 X 5 pts each).**