

Animation I: Director

Essential information about the course, the instructor, assignments, and expectations.

NOTE: This material was developed for the 1 credit ART184AA course at Scottsdale Community College

Your instructor

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course description:

The art of animation using the computer. Construction of characters and background graphics. Screening and discussion of selected animated short films and videos.

course competencies:

These each describe what you will be able to do having completed this course.

1. Compare and contrast aesthetic characteristics of traditional animated film and computer animated video.
2. Describe hardware and software characteristics of electronic animation.
3. Describe the use of graphic files and file management in an animation program.
4. Construct graphic characters through tools, textures, rendering, fill, color, and design applications.
5. Design background graphics aesthetically and interface with outside sources.

disclaimer

I am a lousy artist. I cannot draw a realistic looking character if my life depended upon it. But I *can* animate, and modify, and work with other media, and do what it takes to create a visual story. You may have different strengths and skills that you can take advantage of in this course.

introduction to the course

How do you define Animation?

I refer to "Animation" as the simulation of movement via film or computer; these days the line is blurring between the two mediums, without even mentioning the Internet. It is a growing field fueled by the popularity of motion pictures, television, CD-ROM multimedia, virtual reality, and the Internet.

Why is Director so popular? It is not because of it's short learning curve!

Macromedia Director™, a leading software production tool for creating interactive multimedia, developed from a movie-making metaphor. Its time-based format is well-suited for the integration of multiple media types over time. A large number of CD-ROM titles and demo disks have been created with Director, and Macromedia is aggressively moving it into the Internet age.

Director animations can be put in a format that plays right in a web page.

This course should be fun. You are not expected to master Director software nor create Hollywood animation in a one-credit course! You will learn general animation techniques and styles, and how to visually express a story.

teaching methods

Most of your work will be hands-on in the computer lab. Each session will start with a short discussion and/or showing of an animation or video. In the beginning, you will be provided assignments that will help you learn computer animation techniques. Later on, the bulk of the time will be spent on your individual animation projects.

grading and attendance

Basically, if you show up to class and work on your animations, you can easily earn a good grade. Your instructor is an easy grader!

Attendance and participation is **critical**. The bulk of your grade rests on satisfying the requirements for the animation assignments. The exam will come directly from our in-class discussions. Grading will be out of 100 points as follows:

| | |
|-------|-------------------------------------|
| 15 | Attendance & in-class participation |
| 5 | Story Idea Proposal |
| 5 | Title/Credits Sequence Animation |
| 5 | Storyboards |
| 10 | Mid-Term Exam |
| 25 | Object Animation |
| 35 | Final Animation |
| <hr/> | |
| 100 | |

The field of animation requires that you are able to describe your ideas in oral, written, and visual formats.

Your goal is to create an animated story by the end of the semester. The assignments along the way all build toward this final animation and are similar to the steps of any multimedia production. In the first few weeks you will have to develop a written **Story Proposal**, a general description/outline of the story idea. Your first animation will be the **Titles and Credits** sequence. Next, you will develop **Storyboards**, rough sketches of the major scenes in the animation. The next animation will be of one **object** or scene in your story. At the end of the semester, you will present your **Final Animation**. Along the way, you will complete a take-home exam.

Critiquing is constructive and counts as part of your class participation.

Your classmates will help critique your animation. Along with this, your grade will depend NOT on the technical merit of the animation, but how well the animation satisfies the basic requirements, and how effective it is in delivering a visual message.

about the computer lab

The Computer lab at SCC is Macintosh based.

We will be doing all of our work on the PowerMacintosh computers in the Art Department Computer Lab. One of Director's strengths is that files are fully compatible across platforms, so even if you have a PC at home, you can work on your projects as long as you have a copy of Director at home. Talk to your instructor for other issues related to working across platforms.

Also, you should know your way around the Mac desktop, copy and manipulate files, and know how to switch between multiple programs.

This book is excellent for its examples, clear descriptions, and reasonable price. References to it in this course are labeled [VQG: xx] where "xx" are page or chapter numbers.

required materials

Visual Quickstart Guide: Director 5 for Macintosh, Andre Persidsky, Peachpit Press
<<http://www.peachpit.com/>>. Available at the SCC bookstore, Borders, Scottsdale Public Library. ~ \$18.

Iomega 100Mb Zip disk: ~\$10. You can store your working projects on the hard drive of the computers in the lab, but you should consider using a Zip disk for storage and backup of your projects.

course schedule

This schedule is tentative and may be modified to adjust for class pace. **You are responsible for knowing any changes announced in class.**

| | |
|---------|---|
| class 1 | What is Animation? Meet Director. Demos. Creating Cast Members. Members. What's a Story? |
| class 2 | Director's Score. Putting cast members on the stage, Inks. |
| class 3 | Animating Text. In-betweening. |
| class 4 | More Score Control. Tempo, Transition, Markers. Story treatment. |
| class 5 | Animation techniques. Step Recording, Film Loops. |
| class 6 | More Techniques. Onion Skinning, Paint Window Tricks. Trails. |
| | Even More Techniques. |
| | Working Session. Work on object animation. |
| | NO CLASS (spring break) |
| class 7 | Show n' Tell. Animated Object. |
| class 8 | Sound's Good to Me. Audio. Importing Sounds. |
| | Storyboard Review. Work on projects. |
| class 9 | Inputs and Outputs. Digital video, Projectors. |
| | Working Session. work on projects |
| | Working Session. work on projects |
| | Animation Showcase. Final (not an exam!) |

There is NO final exam, but we will assemble to showcase and critique the final animations.

attendance policy

Perhaps this is obvious, but to get something out of this course, *show up for class*. Attendance will be taken and counts for a small amount of points toward your final grade; you will learn the most from working in class on assignments, practicing exercises, and interacting with classmates.

But _____ happens, and if you cannot be in class, you may be excused if you contact the instructor ahead of time and make arrangements to get materials for that class.

Shhhhh. Here is the big secret for success in this class!