

**Art 326 Experimental Animation**

MW 3:35 pm – 6:05 pm  
Taylor Hall Room 022 & 016

**Instructor: Amy Hicks**

Contact: [amyhicks@udel.edu](mailto:amyhicks@udel.edu) / Office: Taylor Room 013  
Office Hours: MW 11:00 am - 12:00 pm and/or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*Any idiot that wants to make a couple of thousand drawings for a hundred feet of film is welcome to join the club.* – Winsor McCay (1869-1934)

This studio class explores experimental techniques in animation while addressing fundamental problems such as rhythm, timing, and sound. Emphasis is on conceptual idea and development, abstract and material processes, and locating narrative flow in technique. Students will research, discuss, and interpret the cultural and historical fascination with animating the inanimate through screenings, lectures, and readings. We will gain proficiency with digital cameras and audio recorders while working through a variety of techniques and formats that may include stop motion, hand drawn, rotoscoping, collage, pixilation and 3D animation. The final project output is in digital format.

The course's framework is centered on the idea of multiple iterations—designing and creating experimental animations frequently and with variety—as opposed to focusing on a single finished piece. I recommend that you make something you can ONLY do with animation; don't purely reiterate life, comment on it as well. Make this class an investigation of your inclination to animate. Make the impossible.

Intensive technical instruction is provided alongside a dynamic exploration of historical and contemporary techniques, aesthetics, and conceptual issues, within a supportive critical environment focused on the development of the student's own work. Please feel free to take an experimental approach to the projects, as our goal is to expand on the discourse of animation.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students will learn to:

- Individually and collaboratively create time-based work that engages audiences.
- Conduct research to develop original ideas for animations.
- Efficiently plan and critically shoot and edit animations independently using digital cameras, frame grabbing software, and non-linear editing software.
- Effectively compose using camera angle, exposure, lighting, rhythm, color, and sound.
- Prepare oral and/or written analyses of animation history and its relationship to student work, machine culture, game industry, and mechanical wonders.
- Interpret key concepts, techniques, and vocabulary at an advanced level to discuss readings and critique student work orally and/or in writing.
- Experiment and take risks with digital and/or analog media to investigate the relationship between maker and media culture.

**LAB AND EQUIPMENT USE POLICIES**

Equipment demonstrations and technical practice will take place in the digital project space. Although demos needed to complete assignments will be taught in class, self-guided Adobe Premiere tutorials are recommended. Software available in the Lab includes: Photoshop, Premiere, After Effects and DragonFrame among others.

Lab hours for Taylor 22 are posted on the door. In order to use either lab and/or any production equipment (cameras, mics, tripods, lights, etc.) you will have to abide by the Art Department's Equipment Loan policies and regulations. You are fully responsible for loss or intentional damage of equipment. Equipment will be available for use for two to three days at a time from the equipment cage in the basement of Taylor Hall.

The SMDC (basement of Morris Library) also provides cameras, tripods, lights, editing suites, etc. However, equipment is available on a first come, first serve basis! Plan your time accordingly. Policies are posted on your Canvas course site and also available from the equipment cage.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES & ATTENDANCE**

The whole point of this class is to learn from DOING, watching, listening, and discussing. You will learn from each other perhaps as much as you will learn from the artists' work presented, readings, discussions, lectures, and demos. All of these require PRESENCE in the classroom. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. One unexcused absence for the course will be permitted without impacting your grade, unless it is a day when projects are due. For every other absence, your grade will be impacted by 1/3 letter grade. Being more than 10 minutes late for class three times will equal one unexcused absence.

**PROJECTS**

There are four exercises and three projects. **Assignments are due at the start of class with videos uploaded to Vimeo and written reflections with Vimeo link on Canvas.** Save everything as you are required to turn in all of your completed work as compressed data files and on-line (website and Vimeo). Projects will be peer-critiqued in class. Be prepared to discuss your work and ideas.

**TUTORIALS**

I assign tutorials for most class projects. It is expected that you will follow these as listed on your homework expectations. For more information on accessing assigned tutorials as well as recommendations for further study go to: Adobe Video Training: <http://tv.adobe.com/>; Vimeo Help Center & School: <https://vimeo.com/help>, No Film School: <http://nofilmschool.com/> and DragonFrame: <https://www.dragonframe.com/tutorials/>.

**HOMEWORK EXPECTATIONS**

While it is often difficult to quantify the time needed to successfully complete an artistic project, you are expected to work on studio assignments outside of class at least the same number of hours the class meets per week. For this course, you are expected to work at least an additional five or more hours outside of class.

**LATE-WORK POLICY**

I will only accept assignments late if you have an excused absence from class or in an emergency situation, which you have spoken with me directly. If an assignment is turned in late, it will be given only partial credit.

**CONSUMABLES**

This class has a required consumable student fee of \$15.00 which must be paid by the drop/add date. If you do not pay this fee you must drop the class. Please go to the website, <https://commerce.cashnet.com/UDELART> and select the course(s) you need to pay a fee for, add to shopping cart and/or proceed to checkout. Please print the receipt and turn it in to your Instructor.

**PROCESS BOOKS**

Purchase a sketchbook or process book. This book is to be used for recording your working process, in the form of drawings, photos, writing, storyboards, and collage. I recommend the book not be smaller than 8.5x11" or 9x12".

**REQUIRED STORAGE MEDIA**

Back-up your work continuously. Lab computers are not a safe place to leave your work, as they may be periodically cleaned out or accidentally modified by other computer lab users. Therefore, it is required that projects are stored on removable hard-drives. Losing your files because you have not backed them up is not an acceptable excuse for tardy assignments.

You are required to purchase your own external hard drives for storing and editing your footage, which, depending on how much storage space you want, will cost you a minimum of \$125. [I suggest you purchase LaCie drives, as they are sturdy, reliable drives.](#) Specs required: minimum 1 TB, Thunderbolt and/or USB-C (match your computer interface), and 130MB/s rotational speed (SSD will be faster but pricier).

**SUGGESTED TEXTS AND READINGS**

*Edison’s Eve: A Magical History of the Quest for Mechanical Life* by Gaby Wood (Anchor, July 2003)  
*Comics & Sequential Art (expanded edition)* by Will Eisner (W. W. Norton & Company, Aug 2008)  
*New Media 1740-1915* edited by Lisa Gitelman and Geoffrey B. Pingree (The MIT Press, Oct 2004)  
*The New Media Reader*, edited by Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort  
*Animations* edited by Klaus Biesenbach and Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center 2003)  
*Re-Imagining Animation* by Paul Wells & Johnny Hardstaff (AVA Publishing Oct 2008)  
*The Animation Book: a complete guide to animated filmmaking* by Kit Laybourne (Three Rivers Press 1998)  
*The Animator’s Survival Kit: A Manual of Methods...* by Richard Williams (Faber & Faber; 2nd Edition 2009)  
*Timing for Animation 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* by Harold Whitaker and John Halas (Focal Press; 2 edition Sept 2009)  
*Creating 3-D Animation: Aardman Book of Filmmaking* by Peter Lord & Brian Sibley (Harry N. Abrams; Oct 1998)  
*Producing Animation*, Winder and Dowlatabadi, Focal Press 2001  
*Clay Animation: American highlights 1908 to the present*, Michael Frierson, Twayne 1994

**GRADING**

Grades are based on student’s full participation in critiques, discussions of readings, attendance, and class exercises as well as his/her individual progress and commitment to projects. Projects are evaluated with consideration of concept and development, technical execution, and presentation of work. Experimentation is encouraged.

<b>Projects</b>	<b>Percent of Grade</b>
Exercises 1 – 3 & Pixilation Experiment	20% (5% each)
Projects 1 and 2	20% (10% each)
Final Project (5% proposal, 10% rough-cut, 10% completion)	25%
Writing (artist research & TEFF) / Participation	35%

The following descriptions detail the criteria for earning grades. **To receive a grade of C- or better on any assignment, it must be turned in on time unless a PRIOR arrangement has been made or there is an emergency situation.**

<p><b>A</b>                      Outstanding Achievement                      Significantly Exceeds Standards                      Innovative &amp; Creative Thinking</p>	<p><b>C</b>                      Acceptable Achievement                      Meets Standards</p>	<p><b>D</b>                      Marginal Achievement                      Below Standards</p>
<p><b>B</b>                      Commendable Achievement                      Exceeds Standards</p>	<p><b>C-</b>                      Substandard                      You still receive elective credit.</p>	<p><b>F</b>                      Failing                      No credit received.</p>

**GRADING SCALE**

Students will be assigned a letter grade, based on the calculation coming from the course assessment.

Grade	Interval	Grade	Interval	Grade	Interval
A	94 and over	B-	80 to 83	D+	67 to 69
A-	90 to 93	C+	77 to 79	D	64 to 66
B+	87 to 89	C	74 to 76	D-	60 to 63
B	84 to 86	C-	70 to 73	F	59 and below

**A note on F** – F Represents **failure** and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is **not worthy of credit** or (2) was **not completed** and there was **no agreement** between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an “I”. Keep in mind that a student can turn in work, attend class and still fail the course if the work is **not worthy of credit** according to the clearly stated criteria for

passing work. “F” is for **“failed to get help.”** Anyone willing to make a sincere effort can pass this class. There are many resources available for assistance. The first step is to let me know that you need help. The second is to follow through on doing the work.

The F carries 0 (ZERO) grade points and the credits for the course do not count toward any academic degree program. The credit hours for the course shall count in the grade point average.

**Incomplete (I)** - Assigned **at the discretion of the instructor** when, due to extraordinary circumstances, e.g., hospitalization, the student was prevented from completing the work of the course on time. Student must have been passing the course before the emergency incident. Requires a written agreement between the instructor and student specifying the time and manner in which the student will complete the course requirements.

**Note: The requirements and objectives are clearly stated on canvas. This is the criteria you will be graded on. If you are not clear about the criteria or what you will be graded on, please ask. I encourage you to discuss your grades with me at any time.**

## DEPARTMENT EXPECTATIONS

**Statement on Attending Visiting Speakers and Gallery Exhibits:** Art Majors are expected to attend all Visiting Artist Lectures in the Department of Art & Design during the semester. In addition, students are expected to see all the art exhibitions in the department’s galleries. As a part of this course, you are asked to bring a sketchbook and take notes. Engaging in dialogue with our guests by asking questions is highly recommended.

**Field Trips:** Academic field trips are an important—and enjoyable—element of education. They often significantly enhance the content of a course by providing a type of information hard to convey in the classroom. Site visits to museums, galleries, contemporary art centers, design studios, and advertising agencies help to contextualize and enhance understandings of contemporary and historical practice. Students are strongly encouraged to attend.

## UNIVERSITY EXPECTATIONS

**Harassment and Discrimination:** The University of Delaware works to promote an academic and work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment. As a member of the community, your rights, resource and responsibilities are reflected in the non-discrimination and sexual misconduct policies. Please familiarize yourself with these policies at [www.udel.edu/oei](http://www.udel.edu/oei) . You can report any concerns to the University’s Office of Equity & Inclusion, at 305 Hulliher Hall, (302) 831-8063 or you can report anonymously through UD Police (302) 831-2222 or the EthicsPoint Compliance Hotline at [www1.udel.edu/compliance](http://www1.udel.edu/compliance). You can also report any violation of UD policy on harassment, discrimination, or abuse of any person at this site: [sites.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct/how-to-report/](https://sites.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct/how-to-report/)

**Faculty Statement on Disclosures of Instances of Sexual Misconduct:** If, at any time during this course, I happen to be made aware that a student may have been the victim of sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic/dating violence, or stalking), I am obligated to inform the university’s Title IX Coordinator. The university needs to know information about such incidents in order to offer resources to victims and to ensure a safe campus environment for everyone. The Title IX Coordinator will decide if the incident should be examined further. If such a situation is disclosed to me in class, in a paper assignment, or in office hours, I promise to protect your privacy--I will not disclose the incident to anyone but the Title IX Coordinator. For more information on Sexual Misconduct policies, where to get help, and how to report information, please refer to <https://sites.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct/>. At UD, we provide 24-hour crisis assistance and victim advocacy and

counseling. Contact 302-831-1001, UD Helpline 24/7/365, to get in touch with a sexual offense support advocate. For information on various places you can turn for help, more information on Sexual Misconduct policies, where to get help, and reporting information please refer to [www.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct](http://www.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct)

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Any student who thinks he/she may need an accommodation based on a disability should contact the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) office as soon as possible. Students who have documentation of their need for accommodation should register via the SAM platform: [andes.accessiblelearning.com/UDEL/](http://andes.accessiblelearning.com/UDEL/). Reach DSS in the following ways: Visit at 240 Academy Street, Alison Hall Suite 130, Phone: 302-831-4643, fax: 302-831-3261, [DSS website](#). Email: [dssoffice@udel.edu](mailto:dssoffice@udel.edu)

**Academic Integrity:** Students at the University of Delaware are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. It is the official policy of UD that all acts or attempted acts of alleged academic dishonesty be reported to the Office of Student Conduct for disposition within the University Undergraduate Student Conduct System. Any violation of this standard must be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

**Inclusion of Diverse Learning Needs:** Any student who thinks they may need an accommodation based on a disability should contact the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) office as soon as possible. The DSS office is located at 240 Academy Street, Alison Hall Suite 130, Phone: 302-831-4643, fax: 302-831-3261, DSS Website (<http://www.udel.edu/DSS/>). You may contact DSS at [dssoffice@udel.edu](mailto:dssoffice@udel.edu)

**Non-Discrimination:** The University of Delaware does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital status, disability, religion, age, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by applicable law in its employment, educational programs and activities, admissions policies, and scholarship and loan programs as required by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other applicable statutes and university policies. The University of Delaware also prohibits unlawful harassment including sexual harassment and sexual violence. For inquiries or complaints related to non-discrimination policies, please contact: Interim Director, Institutional Equity & Title IX Coordinator - Fatimah Stone [titleixcoordinator@udel.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@udel.edu), 305 Hullahen Hall Newark, DE 19716 (302) 831-8063

For complaints related to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact: Elizabeth Reed, Interim Director Office of Disability Support Services and University ADA Compliance Coordinator - [ecreed@udel.edu](mailto:ecreed@udel.edu), Alison Hall, Suite 130, Newark, DE 19716 (302) 831-4643 OR contact the [U.S. Department of Education - Office for Civil Rights](#).

## COURSE SCHEDULE SPRING 2022 – SUBJECT TO CHANGE

<p><b>WEEK 1 / Mon Feb 7 &amp; Wed Feb 9</b></p> <p>Introduction to course and each other. Overview of required materials. Experimental and Expanded Animation (vs Traditional).</p> <p>Facility and equipment procedures. Experience with Premiere, Audio Recording, Cameras, Tri-pods, long USB cables, etc.</p> <p><i>DragonFrame</i> camera support and tutorials  <a href="https://www.dragonframe.com/camera-support/">https://www.dragonframe.com/camera-support/</a> and <a href="https://www.dragonframe.com/tutorials/">https://www.dragonframe.com/tutorials/</a></p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Open a Vimeo account, join 326 group</li> <li>2. Check your DragonFrame compatibility</li> <li>3. Watch: <a href="#">The Illusion of Life (3 minutes)</a></li> <li>4. Read: <a href="#">Twelve Basic Principles of Animation</a> (Wikipedia)</li> <li>5. Shoot Exercise 1: Animated Loop (10 seconds) How many frames if shooting @ 15fps (or “twosies”)?</li> </ol>
<p><b>WEEK 2 / Mon Feb 14 &amp; Wed Feb 16</b></p> <p>Collaborations, workflow, and organization. Lighting for animation and silhouette.</p> <p>Introduce <i>Exercise 2: Mutable Morph (Soft Medium) workshop</i>. Additive / subtractive.</p> <p>Prep for 200-frame animation with mixed media charcoal, chalk, paint, or rice</p> <p>In-class work on <i>Exercise 2</i>.</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research artists from list.</li> <li>2. <b>Watch assigned artists:</b> Oskar Fischinger, Caroline Leaf, William Kentridge, etc</li> </ol> <p><b>**Bring Your Digital Single Lens Reflex Cameras, cables, tripod (if you have one) and materials for the shoot.</b></p>
<p><b>WEEK 3 / Mon Feb 21 &amp; Wed Feb 23</b></p> <p><i>Exercise 3: Multi-layer with Rigid Medium workshop.</i></p> <p>Lighting and Horizontal/Vertical Orientation. Background / foreground. Prep for 300-frame animation with mixed media paper collage or torn-paper silhouette.</p> <p>In-class work on <i>Exercise 3</i>.</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research artists from list.</li> <li>2. <b>Watch assigned artists:</b> Lotte Reiniger, Nicolas Brault, Brent Green, Kelly Sears, Martha Colburn, etc</li> </ol> <p><b>**Bring Your Digital Single Lens Reflex Cameras, cables, tripod and materials for the shoot.</b></p>
<p><b>WEEK 4 / Mon Feb 28 &amp; Wed Mar 2</b></p> <p>Audio Workshop. Add sound to your exercises.</p> <p><i>Introduce Project 1: Animated Collage</i></p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research artists from list.</li> <li>2. <b>Watch assigned artists:</b> Virgil Widdrich, Eric Dyer, Jan Svankmajer, Norman McLaren, EatPes, Allison Schulnik, etc</li> </ol>

<p><b>WEEK 5 / Mon Mar 7 &amp; Wed Mar 9</b></p> <p><i>CRIT: Audio versions of Exercises 2 and 3.</i></p> <p>Lab: Work on Animated Collage in-class.</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research artists from list.</li> <li>2. <b>Watch assigned artists:</b> Anthony Lucas, Kelly Gallagher, Norman McLaren, Jan Svankmajer, etc</li> <li>3. Bring materials for collage</li> </ol>
<p><b>WEEK 6 / Mon Mar 14 &amp; Wed Mar 16</b></p> <p>Lab: Work on Animated Collage in-class.</p> <p><i>CRIT Project 1: Animated Collage</i></p> <p><i>Introduce Project 2: Rotoscoping and Layers</i></p> <p>Discuss camera movement, image size, tracking, and rack focus as transition.</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Rotoscoping tutorials—do them.</u></li> <li>2. <u>Shoot over the weekend.</u></li> </ol>
<p><b>WEEK 7 / Mon Mar 21 &amp; Wed Mar 23</b></p> <p>Lab: Work on <i>Rotoscoping and Layers</i> in-class.</p> <p>Discuss Pixilation and lighting. In-class workshop. Outdoors if weather permits.</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Rotoscoping tutorials—do them.</u></li> <li>2. <u>Shoot over the weekend</u></li> </ol>
<p><b>WEEK 8 / Mon Mar 28 &amp; Wed Mar 30</b></p> <p>Spring Break – NO CLASSES</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p>
<p><b>WEEK 9 / Mon Apr 4 &amp; Wed Apr 6</b></p> <p>Discuss Pixilation and lighting. In-class workshop. Outdoors if weather permits. (Rain date)</p> <p><i>CRIT Project 2: Rotoscoping and Layers</i></p> <p>Introduce Final Project</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write Proposal for final project.</li> </ol>
<p><b>WEEK 10 / Mon Apr 11 &amp; Wed Apr 13</b></p> <p>Lab: Edit Pixilation Project. Review and Discuss.</p> <p>Individual Meetings (schedule TBD)</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Final Project proposals Due on Canvas by midnight Sunday April 10.</li> </ol>

<p><b>WEEK 11 / Mon Apr 18 &amp; Wed Apr 20</b></p> <p>Individual Meetings (schedule TBD)</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Shoot / prep for final project</u></li> </ol>
<p><b>WEEK 12 / Mon Apr 25 &amp; Wed Apr 27</b></p> <p>Trouble-shoot projects: Further ideation for final projects. Writing, storyboarding, and sketching. Bring notebooks to class.</p> <p><b>LAB:</b> Edit Final Project.</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Shoot / prep for final project</u></li> <li>2. <u>Attend Tues April 26 screening of Black Maria Film Festival at Colloquium</u></li> <li>3. <u>Written Response on TEFF and artists Due</u></li> </ol>
<p><b>WEEK 13 / Mon May 2 &amp; Wed May 4</b></p> <p>Rough-Cut Group 1</p> <p><b>LAB:</b> Edit Final Project.</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attend Friday May 6 Receptions: MFA Thesis &amp; Lynn Sharp Award Show at The Delaware Contemporary, Wilmington from 5-9PM</li> </ol>
<p><b>WEEK 14 / Mon May 9 &amp; Wed May 11</b></p> <p>Rough-Cut Group 2</p> <p><b>LAB:</b> Edit Final Project.</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Premiere Tutorials: Effects and filters, Color correction, audio mixing &amp; titles.</li> <li>2. <u>Tues, May 10: Fine Art &amp; Visual Communications-BFA Exhibitions</u> <u>Recitation &amp; Taylor Hall Gallery</u> <u>Receptions, 6:30 - 8:00 PM</u></li> </ol>
<p><b>WEEK 15 / Mon May 16 / Final Class</b></p> <p><i>Final Critique: Project 3 Final Project.</i></p>	<p><i>All projects DUE and posted on-line—Canvas and Vimeo.</i></p>