FMST 083 · Fall 2007
Class meetings: TTh 2:40-3:55, SCI 102
Screenings: T 7-10 p.m., LPAC Cinema

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Office: LPAC 204, x6204
Hours: TTh 1-2:30, W 10-12 & 1-4

ANIMATION AND CINEMA

Animation has been called everything from live-action's poor cousin to the ultimate expressive medium. Yet beneath these sweeping characterizations, the animated medium has a history as old and varied as cinema, and as contemporary as the latest in digital imaging technologies. (Indeed, some writers have argued that cinema is a subset of animation, rather than the other way around.) As animation becomes increasingly pervasive in contemporary media culture, it is important to understand the medium's historical roots as a way of understanding its future.

This course is designed in a seminar format with the emphasis on engaged discussion informed by close readings of animation scholarship and viewings of animated feature films. While the focus will be on animation in a U.S. context and following classical narrative form (i.e. possessing a diegesis, characters, and causal plot), we will roam outside this framework to consider animation produced in other countries and breaking with the Hollywood model. By the end of the course, students should be:

1. Knowledgeable about the aesthetics and practices of animation in a range of historical and cultural settings;
2. Conversant with trends in critical thought and scholarship around animation; and
3. Able to articulate your own sophisticated critical arguments on these topics.

Screenings

Attendance at Tuesday night screenings is mandatory; because we will often be viewing compilations of material from many different sources, films will not always be available on reserve. Most screenings will be in the two-hour range, but some will go longer.

Required texts

Donald Crafton, *Before Mickey: The Animated Film 1828-1928*
Michael Barrier, *Hollywood Cartoons: American Animation in Its Golden Age*
Carol Stabile and Harrison (eds), *Prime Time Animation: Television Animation and American Culture*
Susan J. Napier, *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*

Recommended texts

Kit Laybourne, *The Animation Book*
Beck, *Animation Art* (not at college bookstore – buy used)

Additional readings marked (X) are posted on Blackboard.

The small print

As this is an upper-level class, I won't belabor the obvious, just remind you of a few basic operating procedures. Attendance of classes and screenings is expected, but if you must miss a meeting, drop me an email to let me know what's up. Late work will be marked down, unless you have made prior arrangements with me. I am generally very understanding about the stresses of student life, so don't hesitate to get in touch if you anticipate missing a deadline. You are not to turn in any work that you have not created yourself, cite other authors without proper attribution, or recycle work written for another class. Finally, stay in touch with me – it's always better to keep me apprised of any difficulties. I am always available to meet or exchange email outside class and discuss questions pertaining to coursework and content, and to work with you on targeting specific areas for improvement.

Assignments

Item	Due	Value
Participation	**Throughout term**	**15%**

A seminar format means the emphasis is on engaged, informed discussion to which all students actively contribute. I expect you to share your ideas, play around with concepts, take risks. At the same time, listen to each other with a tolerant and kindly ear. There is a lot of reading in this class, and a fair amount of viewing; I expect you to approach both with an eye for detail, annotating books and articles and taking notes during screenings. Online participation also counts!

Wiki contributions	**Throughout term**	**20%**

This semester we'll be working with an animation class taught by Jason Mittell at Middlebury College. In addition to a networked class discussion on *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, our principal collaboration will be on an online reference database, the animation wiki at http://animation.wikia.com/wiki/. After signing up for an account, you will add to the wiki throughout the semester, making a minimum of 10 major contributions (creating new entries, greatly expanding an entry, creating a new format or template, or significantly rewriting entries for clarity) and at least 15 minor contributions (small additions, edits, discussions, formating, adding references, etc.). Finally, you are encouraged to participate in the forum to discuss issues pertaining to the wiki or animation. (We have also created a Facebook group, the Middlebury/Swarthmore Animation Connection, which you are welcome to join.) More details can be found on the wiki under "Guidelines: Student Editing."

Midterm exam **October 11** **15%**

This will cover material from the first five weeks of the course, from early animation history to the 1950s. It will also cover types and techniques of animation. Format is short-answer, identification, and short essay based on viewing of clips.

Critical journal **Weeks 7-13** **20%**

During Weeks 7-10, you will keep a viewing journal in which you research and respond to animation drawn from a list that I have provided. (You must watch these outside of class, in addition to the Tuesday night screenings.) Critical responses, in which you assess the animation you are watching in terms of its relationship to themes and concerns of the course, should be posted 2-3 times a week on Blackboard's discussion forum during the second half of the semester. Tip: research you do for this assignment can also inform your contributions to the animation wiki and your final paper!

Final paper **December 20** **30%**

In this 8-10 page paper, you will explore an aspect of animation that you have identified as a personally interesting or important question/issue arising from the course. It should center on specific shorts, films, TV episodes, or other animated texts, using legitimate and authoritative print and online sources to support its argument. The paper can be historical and/or technical in nature, but must also engage with theoretical and/or aesthetic questions.

Before writing the paper, you will give me a proposal. This 1-2 page document should identify your topic and thesis, describe why it interests you and how it connects and builds on specific screenings, readings, and ideas we have explored in the course. It must also include an annotated bibliography with at least five items. The proposal is due December 4 and is worth 5% of the total paper grade. On the final day of class, you will give a presentation of 10-12 minutes, giving us an overview of your project and illustrating it with a brief clip from one of your source texts.

CALENDAR

Only primary (feature-length) screenings are listed; many short films will be shown.

Week 1: Sept 3-7 Course intro & overview of animation techniques
Screen: *The Animated Centur*y (Margolina & Snyder, 2003, 92 min)

Week 2: Sept 10-14 Animation aesthetics & theories
Read: Wells, *Understanding Animation* (X); Darley, "Bones of Contention" (X)
Screen: *Waking Life* (Richard Linklater, 2001, 99 min)

Week 3: Sept 17-21 Birth of a Medium: Early animation
Read: *Before Mickey* 1-6, 8
Screen: Assortment of early animated films

Week 4: Sept 24-28 Empire Building: The Disney Dynasty
Read: *Hollywood Cartoons* 2-3, 5-7
Screen: *Fantasia* (Algar & Armstrong, 1940, 120 min)

Week 5: Oct 1-5 The 1950s: From Termite Terrace to Tex Avery
Read: *Hollywood Cartoons* 8-14
Screen: Assortment of 50s shorts

Week 6: Oct 8-12 Cartoons go to war
Read: Smoodin, "The Disappearance of Dissent" (X)
Screen: *Wizards* (Ralph Bakshi, 1977, 80 min)
Midterm exam, Oct 11

Fall Break

Week 7: Oct 22-26 Animation on TV I: Saturday Mornings
Read: *Prime Time Animation:* Wells, Mittell, Larson, Hilton-Morrow
Screen: Animated series, 1960-1990

Week 8: Oct 29-Nov 2 Animation on TV II: Saturday Nights
Read: *Prime Time Animation*: Sandler, Tueth, Farley, Alters, Van Fuqua, Ott
Screen: Animated series, 1990-2007

Week 9: Nov 5-9 Bodies Politic: European & Experimental Animation
Read: Weiner, "Metaphysics of Obscenity" (X); Moritz, "Resistance and Protest" (X); Wells, "Body Consciousness" (X)
Screen: *Allegro Non Troppo* (Bruno Bozzetto, 1977, 85 min); *The Triplets of Belleville* (Sylvain Chomet, 2003, 80 min)

Week 10: Nov 12-16 Closeup: Anime
Read: *Anime* 1-8, 12-13, Conclusion
Screen: *Princess Mononoke* (Hayao Miyazaki, 1997, 134 min)

Week 11: Nov 19-21
No class meeting or screening

Thanksgiving Break

Week 12: Nov 26-30 The Case of Roger Rabbit
Read: Ohmer, "The Presence of the Past" (X); Cholodenko, "The Framing of Animation" (X)
Screen: *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (Robert Zemeckis, 1988, 103 min)
Class discussion with Middlebury, Thursday, Nov 29

Week 13: Dec 3-7 FX; CG
Read: *Prime Time Animation:* Crawford; Sobchack, "Final Fantasies" (X); Langer, "The End of Animation History" (X)

Screen: *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* (Hironobu Sakaguchi, 2001, 106 min)
Final paper proposal & annotated bibliography due Tuesday, Dec 4

Week 14: Dec 10-11 Wrapup
Screen: Students' Choice

Final paper due Thursday, Dec 20

Note: there is no final exam in this course.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR BLACKBOARD READINGS (X)

Cholodenko, Alan. "*Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, or The Framing of Animation." *The Illusion of Life*, ed. Alan Cholodenko (Sydney: Power Publications & The Australian Film Commission, 1991). 209-242.

Darley, Andrew. "Bones of Contention: Thoughts on the Study of Animation." *animation: an interdisciplinary journal* (2)1: March 2007. 63-76.

Langer, Mark. "The End of Animation History."

Moritz, William. "Narrative Strategies for Resistance and Protest in Eastern European Animation." *A Reader in Animation Studies*, ed. Jayne Pilling (London: John Libbey & Co., 1997). 38-47.

Ohmer, Susan. "*Who Framed Roger Rabbit*: The Presence of the Past." *Storytelling in Animation*, ed. John Canemaker (Los Angeles: AFI, 1988). 97-105.

Smoodin, Eric. "The Disappearance of Dissent: Government Propaganda and the Military Film Bill." *Animating Culture: Hollywood Cartoons from the Sound Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993). 71-95.

Sobchack, Vivian. "Final Fantasies: Computer Graphic Animation and the [Dis]Illusion of Life." *Animated Worlds*, ed. Suzanne Buchan (Eastleigh, UK: John Libbey Publishing, 2006). 171-181.

Weiner, Steve. "The Quay Brothers' *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and the 'Metaphysics of Obscenity.'" *A Reader in Animation Studies*. 25-37.

Wells, Paul. "Body Consciousness in the Films of Jan Svankmejer." *A Reader in Animation Studies*. 177-194.

Wells, Paul. *Understanding Animation* (London: Routledge, 1998). 10-46.

Supplemental Viewing for Critical Journal & Wiki
(on 24-hour reserve at McCabe)

Early Cinema
Winsor McCay: The Master Edition
Comedy, Spectacle, and New Horizons (Part 5 of The Movies Begin)
Origins of American Animation (disk 2 of The Origins of Film)
The Cameraman's Revenge

Disney
Aladdin
Alice in Wonderland
Bambi
Beauty and the Beast
The Chronological Donald
Cinderella
The Complete Pluto, Vol 2
Disney on the Front Lines: The War Years
Disney Rarities, 1920-1960
Dumbo
The Emperor's New Groove
Fantasia
Mickey Mouse in Black and White, Vols 1-2
Pinocchio
Pocohontas
The Three Caballeros
Your Host, Walt Disney Memories

The 1950s & Wartime cartoons
Cartoons that Time Forgot – Ub Iwerks
Cold War Era: Cartoon Chronicles
Complete Uncensored Private Snafu
Cartoons from World War II (VHS)
Disney on the Front Lines: The War Years
Looney Tunes Golden Collection, Vols 1-3
Superman (Max Fleischer)
Tex Avery's Screwball Classics
Tom and Jerry, Spotlight Collection, Vol 1
Toons at War: 15 Classic Wartime Cartoons (VHS)

Animation on TV, 1960-1990
Animaniacs, Vol 1
The Flintstones, Vol 1
Free to Be … You and Me
The Jetsons, Vol 1
Pinky and the Brain, Vol 1
Schoolhouse Rock
SpongeBob SquarePants, Seasons 1-2
The Yogi Bear Show, Season 1

Animation on TV, 1990-2007
Aqua Teen Hunger Force, Vols 1-4
Best of Saturday TV Funhouse
Drawn Together, Season 1
Futurama, Seasons 1-4
Ren & Stimpy, Seasons 1-3.5
Robot Chicken, Vol 1
Samurai Jack, Seasons 1-3
Sealab 2021, Seasons 1-3
The Simpsons, Seasons 1-9
Venture Brothers, Season 1

European, Experimental, Adult
Alice
Allegro Non Troppo
Bitter Films: Animated Films by Don Hertzfeldt
Brothers Quay Collection
Creature Comforts
Fantastic Planet (VHS)
Faust
Fritz the Cat
Grendel, Grendel, Grendel (VHS)
Happy Tree Friends, Vols 1-2
Heavy Metal
Heavy Traffic
Jordan Belson: 5 Essential Films
The Collected Shorts of Jan Svankmajer
Watership Down
Wizards
Yellow Submarine

Anime
Akira
Appleseed
Astro Boy
Castle in the Sky
Castle of Cagliostro, The
Cowboy Bebop: The Movie
Escaflowne
Escaflowne: The Movie
Full Metal Panic (series)
Ghost in the Shell
Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence
Grave of the Fireflies
Iria: Zeiram

Lain, Parts 1-4
Metropolis
Millennium Actress
My Neighbor Totoro
Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind
Neon Genesis Evangelion (series)
Ninja Scroll
Paranoia Agent, Vols 1-4
Perfect Blue
Porco Rosso
Princess Mononoke
Revolutionary Girl Uetna
Spirited Away
Steamboy
Tokyo Godfathers
Wicked City

<u>FX, CG, & Contemporary Animation</u>
The Animatrix
A Scanner Darkly
Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within
Finding Nemo
Happy Feet
The Incredibles
The Iron Giant
James and the Giant Peach
King Kong (1933)
King Kong (2005)
Monster House
Negadon: The Monster from Mars
The Polar Express
Ray Harryhausen Signature Collection
Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow
South Park: Bigger, Longer, and Uncut
The SpongeBob Squarepants Movie
The Triplets of Belleville
Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas
Toy Story
Toy Story 2
TRON
Who Framed Roger Rabbit