HUMA 3201: Animation: A Global Perspective

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Time & Classroom:  
Time: 12:00-2:50pm, Friday  
Room: LTH

Required Textbooks:  
• All available online at “Modules,” Canvas

Course Description:  
This course examines the history and development of animation as an industry, an art form, and a technology around the world. It begins with early experiments with animation, the transition to sound and feature film, and the rise of the classical Hollywood studios such as Disney and UPA. It then moves to the representative artistic styles in other countries or regions, including the experimental animation of NFB in Canada, socialist realism under Stalin, puppet animation in the Czech Republic, anime in Japan, the National Style in China, and the McDull series in Hong Kong. This course explores a variety of animation forms, with a focus on cel animation, stop-motion animation, silhouette animation, direct animation, abstract animation, limited animation, TV animation, computer animation, and VR animation. It will also track the development of technologies and techniques in animated filmmaking, such as sound and color technologies, rotoscoping, pixilation, digital technology and motion capture. Related animation theories will be introduced throughout the course. The aim of this course is to build a foundation for undergraduate students and beginning graduate students who are interested in animation studies. All reading materials, lectures, classroom discussions, writing assignments, and exams are in English.

Course Objectives:  
By the end of the semester students should be able to:  
• track the development of animation as an art form, a technology, and an industry around the world
• be familiar with major animators, their representative work, and the socio-historical context in which they emerged
• analyze particular animated films, identify their directors, animation technology/techniques, audio-visual styles, themes, and socio-historical condition
• understand important animation theories
• use a professional film vocabulary to discuss animation
• sharpen critical thinking and enhance academic writing skills in animation studies

Assignments:
• Watch all required films and read all required articles/book chapters every week
• Write film reviews (around 250 words) as scheduled in the syllabus
  (Due in class on Fridays, no late submission will be accepted)

Grading Criteria:
• Attendance: 10%
• Participation: 10%
• Quiz: 5%
• Film Reviews: 10%
• Mid-term Exam (closed book): 25%
• Final Exam (closed book): 40%

Technical Issues:
• Reading Materials: All available at “Modules,” Canvas. Also available at “Course Reserve,” HKUST Library
• Audiovisual Materials: Films for this course are available at the Media Reserve counter in the Library (ground floor). You can also find some films online through youtube and youku.
• Discussions Forum: Students can post questions and comments about this course for open discussion at “Discussions,” Canvas. The instructor will check the forum on a regular basis to address your postings. Your postings will be counted as classroom participation.
• E-mail: E-mail will be used frequently in this course. The instructor will use it to make announcements relevant to the course. You can also use it to ask questions or express your concerns to the instructor. The instructor will reply your emails within 48 hours. Please check your campus email account on a daily basis.
• Contact:
  Canvas: cei@ust.hk Hotline: 2358-6318
  Library Reserve: lbreserv@ust.hk Hotline: 2358-6776

Classroom Etiquette
• Attendance is mandatory. It is your responsibility to sign up and track your attendance. If you forget to sign up an attendance, the instructor will not make up for it. If you have to miss a class for a legitimate reason, please inform your instructor at least three days in advance and present relevant documents to the instructor within
one week after the absence. Being 5 minutes late for class three times will be counted as one unexcused absence. One unexcused absence means 3 points off your final score.

- **No Make-up Exams** are allowed. The instructor will grant a make-up exam only for absolute necessities (e.g., medical reason, family crisis) and not because you have too much work and have run out of time. Please inform the instructor in advance if you believe you have a legitimate reason for a make-up exam. You are expected to present convincing documents to the instructor. The make-up exam will be completely different from the regular one and will be more difficult.

- **No Late Submission** will be accepted. Please be on time.

- **Preparation**: You are expected to be well prepared before each class begins. Please read related course materials and watch the films of the week before you come to class. In this way, you can better make the most of classroom discussions.

- **Electronic Devices**: Please turn off your cell phones in class. Laptops, iPad, and other electronic devices are allowed only for learning purposes in class.

- **Notification in Advance**: Always inform the instructor at least three days in advance for absence and other issues that need special attention and accommodation.

- **Religious Holiday Accommodation**: If you wish to claim accommodation for a religious holiday, you should talk to your instructor within the first two weeks of the semester. You need to provide supporting documents.

- **Learning Disability Accommodation**: If you wish to claim accommodation for any kind of learning disability, you should talk to your instructor within the first two weeks of the semester. Please provide supporting documents.

- **Academic Integrity**: Any academic dishonesty of any kind will be officially processed in accordance with the policies of the university.
Week 1 (Feb 7): Early Experiments with Animation and Stop-Motion

Film Screening in Class:
- *Pauvre Pierrot* (aka *Poor Pete*) (Charles-Émile Reynaud, 1892)
- *The Enchanted Drawing* (James Stuart Blackton, 1900)
- *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces* (James Stuart Blackton, 1906)
- *Fantasmagorie* (Émile Cohl, 1908)
- *Little Nemo* (Winsor McCay, 1911)
- *Gertie the Dinosaur* (Winsor McCay, 1914)
- *The Sinking of the Lusitania* (Winsor McCay, 1918)
- *Koko the Clown* (Max Fleischer, 1918-1929)
- *Felix the Cat* (Pat Sullivan and Otto Messmer, 1919-1928)

Required Readings:

Week 2 (Feb 14): Disney, Sound, and Animated Feature Film

Film Screening in Class:
- *Plane Crazy* (1927)
- *Steamboat Willie* (1928)
- *The Karnival Kid* (1929)
- *The Skeleton Dance* (1929)
- *Flowers and Trees* (1932)
- *Three Little Pigs* (1933)
- *The Old Mill* (1937)
- *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937)

Required Readings:
- Sergei Eisenstein, *Eisenstein on Disney*, 7-35

Write a Film Review:
- *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* (Lotte Reiniger and Carl Koch, Germany, 1926)

Week 3 (Feb 21): Limited Animation on TV: UPA in the 1950s

Film Screening in Class:
- *Gerald McBoing Boing* (1951)
- *Rooty Toot Toot* (1951)
- *The Unicorn in the Garden* (1953)
- *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1953)
- *Gay Purr-Ee* (1962)

Required Readings:

**Week 4 (Feb 28): Norman McLaren: Direct Animation, Pixilation, and Visual Music**

Film Screening in Class:
- *Boogie-Doodle* (1941)
- *Hen Hop* (1942)
- *Begone Dull Care* (1949)
- *Blinkity Blank* (1955)
- *Neighbors* (1952)
- *Pas de deux* (1968)

Required Readings:
- Terence Dobson, Chapter 5 and 6, *The Film Work of Norman McLaren*

Write a Film Review on Oskar Fischinger
- *Fantasia* (Disney, 1940)
- *An Optical Poem* (Oskar Fischinger, 1938)
- *Early Abstractions* (Oskar Fischinger, 1946-57)

**Week 5 (March 6): CGI & VR Animations**

Film Screening in Class:
- *WALL-E* (Andrew Stanton, 2008)

Required Readings:

Write a Film Review:
- *Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1995)
**Week 6 (March 13): Jiří Trnka and Czech Puppet Animation**

Film Screening in Class:
- *Story of a Bass* (1949)
- *The Emperor's Nightingale* (1949)
- *The Gay Circus* (1951)
- *The Good Soldier Schweiß* (1955)
- *The Hand* (1965)

Required Readings:

Write a Film Review on Russian Puppet Animation
- *The Ant and the Grasshopper* (Ladislas Starevich, Russia, 1911)
- *The Cameraman's Revenge* (Ladislas Starevich, Russia, 1912)

**Week 7 (March 20): Socialist Realism under Stalin**

Film Screening in Class:
- *The Little Humpbacked Horse* (1947)
- *The Flower with Seven Colors* (1948)
- *The Fisherman and the Goldfish* (1950)
- *The Dead Princess and Seven Warriors* (1951)
- *The Scarlet Flower* (1952)
- *Princess Frog* (1954)
- *Little Gray Neck* (1956)
- *The Snow Queen* (1957)

Required Readings:
- David MacFadyen, “Several Paradoxes of Soviet Realism and Disney’s Unexpected Alternative,” *Yellow Crocodiles and Blue Oranges*, 31-61.
Week 8 (March 27): Mid-Term Exam in Class

Week 9 (April 3): Animation in Wartime China

Film Screening in Class:
- *Princess Iron Fan* (Wan Brothers, 1941)

Required Readings:

Week 10 (April 17): Chinese National Style in the Late 1950s and Early 1960s

Film Screening in Class:
- *The Conceited General* (1956)
- *Uproar in Heaven* (1960-1964)
- *Pigsy Eats Watermelon* (1958)
- *The Fishing Boy* (1959)
- *Little Tadpoles Look for Mamma* (1960)
- *The Herd Boy’s Flute* (1964)

Required Readings:

Write a Film Review:
- *Feelings of Mountains and Rivers* (1988)

Week 11 (May 1): The Rise of Animated Feature Film and TV Animation in Japan

Film Screening in Class:
- *Momotarō’s Sea Eagles* (1943)
- *Momotarō’s Divine Sea Warriors* (1945)
- *Mighty Atom* (aka Astro Boy, 1963)
Required Readings:

Write a Film Review:
- The Tale of the White Serpent (Toei Animation, 1958)

**Week 12 (May 8): Hong Kong Animation**

Film Screening in Class:
- Color Old Master Q (1981)
- A Chinese Ghost Story (1997)
- My Life as McDull (2001)

Required Readings:
- Keeto Lam, “A Brief Sketch of the Development of Hong Kong Animation;” Andy Liu, “Master Q Films;” Toe Yuen, “The Motley Crew of McDull Animation Team;” William Cheung, “My Life as McDull: Typical Hong Kong Animation and Character Design;” in Frame after Frame: A Retrospective on Hong Kong Animation

Studio Work:
- Creating your own CGI portrait
- Blender: basic stick figure movement

**Week 13 (May 11-14): The Inaugural Conference of the Association for Chinese Animation Studies**

- 9:00-10:50am, May 11: Keynote Speeches (compulsory attendance)
- Students need to attend two other panels of their choice (compulsory attendance)
- Attending extra panels to earn extra credits (one extra panel, one extra credit)

Conference Program: