

DD301-04 Acting Fundamentals for Animators
T/Th 10:00a-11:20a
Weston Hall, MoCap Room (Room 250)

Prof. Emily Edwards
Email: emily.edwards@njit.edu
Phone: 973-596-3612
Office Hours: Mon/Thurs 11:30a-1:00pm or by appt.
Office: Kupfrian Hall, Rm. 113

Course Description

Introduction to the historical contexts of acting. Survey of acting techniques and principles and their relationship to successful visual storytelling. Topics covered include movement, empathy and dialogue. Application of acting to two-and three-dimensional animation. Students will study examples from animation as well as theater. Required projects include both in-class acting exercises as well as directed computer graphics character animation.

Course Objective

Students will learn how to create more advanced animations by increasing their knowledge about acting and storytelling as a means of reference tools.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify the attributes of an honest acting performance, such as a clear character objective and obstacle and believable behavior within imaginary circumstances.
- Identify and perform traditional acting and animation conventions and techniques.
- Identify and implement storytelling techniques and manipulate them to create a coherent narrative event.
- Analyze fictional character development.
- Assess strengths and weaknesses in peer, self, and professional work.
- Animate digital characters to express a wide range of emotions.
- Perform scenes to gain experience and insight to draw on while animating

Prerequisites

Basic background in the use and application of digital media in design.

Class Policies

Attendance: Attendance is important for this course as most of the coursework will be exercises happening in class. Lateness and unexcused absences will be reflected in your grade. To get absences excused, a note is needed from the Dean of Students. If there are mitigating circumstances, contact me before the class you will miss. If you are running late, please text me to let me know. If you are feeling sick, please do not attend class in-person. Email me 2 hours before class for a zoom link, and you can attend remotely. You cannot attend remotely for any reason other than being sick.

Participation: For this class you will be asked to do acting and participate in acting exercises. While I do not expect it to be award-winning caliber, I do expect you to make an effort. If there is an exercise you feel uncomfortable doing, please let me know and you can observe.

Attire: As we will be doing acting exercises in many classes, please come dressed in clothing that allows you to move freely. This includes moving quickly and getting down to and up from the floor. Layers are recommended for days of extended physicality. Also feel free to bring water.

Consent and Respect: I actively cultivate a room that is welcome for everyone and is grounded in consent. Consent may be given and revoked at any time. Disrespect towards your peers will not be tolerated. If a misstep or action has occurred that makes you feel unsafe or disrespected, please let me know and I will address it. I acknowledge that racism is systemically a part of our culture and am doing my best to dismantle these practices where I find them. I welcome any and all feedback about ways I can be more effective in this process.

Questions/Concerns: If you have a question or concern you are not comfortable communicating to me directly, please use the “Anonymous Question Form” in Canvas and I will respond to question or concern at the next class for everyone.

Late Assignments: Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty. If you have mitigating circumstances that prevented you from completing an assignment, please reach out to me so we can discuss options. Letters from the Dean of Students may negate any penalties.

Honor Code: “Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>. Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu” **Using AI or ChatGPT on assignments can and will be considered plagiarism.**

Materials

Acting for Animation (4th Ed.) by Ed Hooks

“The 12 Principles of Animation” by Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas (on Canvas)

Mauritius by Theresa Rebeck (on Canvas)

Software

Adobe Suite

Any 3D modeling software such as Maya and Cinema4D

Any 2D painting software such as Photoshop, Corel Paint, Procreate, Clip Studio

Any Audio/Visual editing software such as Premiere Pro or DaVinci Resolve

Assignments

Acting Assignments: There will be in-class acting assignments, as well as 2 major acting assignments that will need to be rehearsed outside of class. One will be a solo scene. The final assignment will be a 2-3 minute acting scene from a play with a partner.

Animation Assignments: There will be 3 major animation assignments that will be completed throughout the semester that increase in complexity. The first animated scene will include incorporating the 12 Principles of Animation. The next scene is an exploration of facial emotions. The final scene should be a short, silent scene with two characters who interact with each other.

Analysis Assignments: You will watch 2 animated shorts or features throughout the semester and write a 2-3 page analysis of them focusing on the styles of aspects of animation used. You will also evaluate what traits are used to develop their characters and tell the story and evaluate whether or not this is effective.

Extra Credit (Up to 2% of final grade): Attend a live performance and write a 2-3 page reflection paper. This paper should not be a summary of the show, but rather a critical analysis about the show from an acting standpoint. What did you notice about the acting in the show? Was there a specific moment or character that stood out to you? Why? Was there something you think that was not performed well? What could that actor have done to make it better? This opportunity is for 1 performance only.

Course Breakdown

Attendance/Participation - 25%

Animation Assignments - 15%

Slice of Life Assignment - 10%

Analysis Assignments - 10%

Final Animation Project - 20%

Final Acting Project - 20%

Letter Grade Breakdown

A : 90%<

B+ : 88% - 89%

B: 80% - 87%

C+: 78% - 79%

C: 70% - 77%

D: 60% - 69%

F: > 60%

Course Schedule

(subject to change)

1/21 - Intro and Welcome

1/23 - Story/Script Analysis

1/28 - Story/Script Analysis

1/30 - How to Walk, **Read Hooks pg 1-31**

2/4 - The 12 Principles of Animation, **Read 12 Principles of Animation** (Canvas)

2/6 - **Slice of Life Presentations**

2/11 - Slice of Life Presentations, cont. Acting Principles

Newark Playwrights Festival, Jim Wise Theatre, 7:30pm, Free

2/13 - Active Listening, **Ball Animation Assignment Due**

2/18 - Building a Character - Status, **Read Hooks pg. 31-51**

2/20 - In-Class Critique of Animation Assignment #1

2/25 - Building a Character - Status, **Read Hooks pg. 51-70**

2/27 - Building a Character - Objectives and Obstacles

3/4 - Physicality - Viewpoints, **Read Hooks pg 71-86**

3/6 - Physicality - Viewpoints and Alexander Technique

3/11 - Facial Expressions - **Read Hooks pg. 87-97**

3/13 - Facial Expressions

Spring Break 3/17-3/21

3/25 - Open Performance Scene - **Animation Analysis #1 Due**

3/27 - Reading *Mauritius* in class

4/1 - Finish *Mauritius* in class, **Face Animation Assignment Due**

4/3 - NO CLASS

4/8 - In-Class Critique of Face Animation, Final Acting Scene Choice Due

4/10 - Story-telling with the Camera, In-Class critique of Assignment #2

Amelie, Jim Wise Theatre, \$15 4/10-4/12

4/15 - Script analysis/Tablework Rough Draft Final Animation Project Due

4/17 - Staging A Scene, Peer Review of Final Animations Due

4/22 - In-Class Rehearsal - *Final Scene should be mostly memorized*

4/24 - In-Class Rehearsal, Final Animation Project Due

4/29 - In-Class Critique of Final Animation Project, Voicework, Character Analysis Due

5/1 - In-Class Rehearsal

5/6 - Final Acting Scene Presentation, Class Wrap-Up

5/8 - Animation Analysis #2 Due (NO CLASS)

5/14 - LAST DAY FOR LATE WORK SUBMISSIONS (NO CLASS)