

**DePaul
SCA**

ANI 455

Stop Motion Animation

Fall 2021-22 | M/W 1:30pm-3:00pm | In Person class; CDM 803

shooting spaces: CDM 818 & The IRL (14 E. Jackson room 310)

Instructor: Devin Bell (he/him/his)

Office: 512 (or ZOOM appointments)

Email: dbell@cdm.depaul.edu

Office hours: M/W 11:40am-12:40pm, and 3:00-3:30pm

Advising hours by appointment only via email or Bluestar

<https://campusconnect.depaul.edu/>: Tues 9:00-10:00am, and 11:00am-1:00pm

Course Description:

The principles of stop motion character animation in real space are the emphasis of this intermediate level course. Students are introduced to basic armature building, lighting and scene composition, and the designing and fabrication of characters with a variety of materials. Contemporary uses of digital technology to enhance stop motion production will be explored.

This course is repeatable.

Learning Outcomes

- 1) Students will be able to implement basic principles of stop-motion animation
- 2) Students will be able to utilize a range of physical tools and materials to explore puppet-making, props and miniature sets
- 3) Students will be able to use lighting and shooting techniques to explore cinematography applied to animation
- 4) Students will be able to analyze historical and contemporary examples of stop-motion filmmaking
- 5) Students will be able to shoot a series of stop-motion animations with an emphasis on developing personal style and creating character performances

Texts and Materials

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

“Cracking Animation: The Aardman Book of 3-D Animation”
Lord, Peter and Sibley, Brian.

Attendance Policy:

After two absences, your final grade for the course will automatically be lowered by one-letter grade per absence. Any student missing five or more classes will receive the grade of "F" for the quarter. Contact me before class if you are unable to attend. Being late to class two times counts as one absence.

You are responsible for any missed lectures and assignments. If you miss a class, it is still your responsibility to turn in the assignment on time. We have very tight deadlines that are in place to benefit you and your projects. Lecture notes alone will not make up for missed work.

This course is designed as all “in-person” meetings. If circumstances change, we may meet remotely via synchronous Zoom meetings or recorded lectures, but I will notify you in advance under Announcements in D2L and/or sent via email.

You may not miss the midterm or final class date. Doing so will equal an automatic two letter grade reduction of your final grade. If for any reason you cannot make one of these dates you must contact me BEFORE the class meets. Excuses given after the fact will not be accepted regarding late assignments or absences.

No incompletes will be given without documented proof of circumstances beyond your control.

Important dates:

<https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx>

- **September 14- Last day to add (or swap) classes**
- **September 21- last day to drop with no tuition penalty**
- **October 26- last day to withdraw**

Participation

One of the best ways to learn in a classroom environment is through *active* participation in discussions, activities and critiques. In general, we will be following a pattern of creating sculptures or animations and then discussing them in a critique in the following week. When I open up the floor for you to speak, please make the effort to voice your honest and constructive opinion. This will help you learn from your mistakes and progress in your filmmaking.

There may be certain circumstances when we do not have enough time to critique each student's work in the class. I encourage students to volunteer their assignment early when a critique begins, or if time does not allow, make an appointment with me during my office hours for a thorough discussion of the work. Late submissions miss the benefit of the in-class critique, so it is always better to turn in a work in progress than nothing at all.

Class Work

Assignments

- Must be completed and fully uploaded through D2L one hour BEFORE class starts. To receive any credit for a late assignment, it must be submitted within 24 hours of the deadline. Late assignments will be accepted with teacher discretion only. For most of the projects, you will submit digital files such as multi-page Word docs, pdfs or jpegs. For all time-based projects, ensure rendered movie files play properly. Class time is for working with the material at hand, not finishing late assignments.
- Late work will not be accepted unless approved of PRIOR to the class in which it is due or accompanied by a valid medical excuse.
- Written Assignments: Must be typed.
- Digital Assignments: All assignments handed in digitally must be in the following format (please note upper and lower case usage)
 - lastnameFirstname_projectname.extension
 - example: bellDevin_projectOne.mov

* BACK UP YOUR WORK: Failure of computer software and/or hardware will not be accepted as an extenuating circumstance for late projects or incomplete

grades so back up your work daily.

Grading	<u>Assignments</u>	60% of grade		
	<u>Final Project</u>	40% of grade		
	Total	100%		
	A = 100-93	A- = 92-90		
	B+ = 89-88	B = 87-83	B- = 82-80	
	C+ = 79-78	C = 77-73	C- = 72-70	
	D+ = 69-68	D = 67-63	D- = 62-60	F = 59-0

Standards for Achievement:

Grade A:

Student performs in an outstanding way. Student exhibits achievement and craftsmanship in all work. Design criteria is exceeded and student challenges him/herself in project design. Student exhibits commitment to expanding ideas, vocabulary and performance.

Grade B:

Student performs beyond the requirement of the project. Student exhibits above average progress and craftsmanship. A design criterion is exceeded. Student exhibits above average interest in expanding idea, vocabulary, and performance.

Grade C:

Criteria of assignment is met, and all requirements are fulfilled. Student shows average quality work and minimum time and effort on projects. Student shows moderate interest.

Grade D:

Student performance is uneven and below average. Requirements for projects are only partially fulfilled. Minimal interest is shown and attendance, participation and involvement are inadequate.

Grade F

Student fails to meet minimum course requirements and shows no interest. Levels of participation and craftsmanship are extremely poor. Student's attendance is inadequate.

Requesting an incomplete grade:

An incomplete grade may only be assigned to a student if the student has experienced an extenuating circumstance near the end of the term, the student is in good standing in the class, and the request is made in a timely manner.

Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at

<http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>

Cell Phones

Use of cell phones in the class and the lab is prohibited. Please turn your phone off before entering class. Mistakes will happen, but repeated failure to turn your phone off will result in a lowered grade for the class. All phone conversations should be conducted outside the class – don't disturb those working in the lab and put others in an uncomfortable situation.

Computer Use

It is unacceptable to check e-mail, browse or social network while class is in

session; it is rude and distracting. Repeated misuse of time will result in a lowered grade.

Materials, Supplies & shooting

You will need some basic sculpting supplies including 11-12 gauge aluminum wire, pliers, and ½ lb. of plastacine modeling clay. You will be notified about other required materials as projects call for them. There will be some communal materials available while supplies last. It is recommended you bring your own preferred sculpting tools, xacto blades, safety glasses etc. See the attached supply list for requirements and recommendations.

Be prepared with materials, and be ready to draw and sculpt every time our class meets.

Camera and lighting- All photographic work must be shot using a DSLR camera and strong attention to lighting. Low quality images with poor lighting will be marked down, therefore it is strongly recommended to shoot every assignment using our school's facilities (CDM 818 and the IRL Animation Stages at 14 E. Jackson, room 310.) Additional gear, including stop-motion camera/computer kits and lighting kits may be checked out from CDM's "cage" at 14 E. Jackson, Suite LL106. Be aware that check out policies are strictly enforced, find details here (click "Equipment" tab):

<https://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Production-Resources.aspx>

Work space- We have different areas for fabrication and shooting animation: CDM 803 is for building puppets and sets, CDM 818 and the IRL animation stages (located at 14 E. Jackson, room 310) are exclusively for shooting. The IRL does have community space for building puppets and sets as well, but storage is limited. Do not use the shooting spaces for messy construction of any kind; be ready to set up your finished puppets and sets quickly when you have time reserved (3 hours max/week.) It is common courtesy to stay on schedule for this shared precious commodity, and contact your classmates politely if a delay is impacting you or someone else. If someone ahead of you is running overtime, talk to each other and work something out within reason, i.e. an extra ½ hour-1 hour. It is not alright to ask for more than that unless there is absolutely no demand for the space. It is your responsibility to make the time to shoot; scheduling conflicts will not be accepted as an extenuating circumstance for late projects or incomplete grades.

Regarding both the shooting and the building spaces- clean up and store your work every day, lock up your tools and supplies and label everything with your name, date and contact information. Students responsible for repeatedly leaving a mess in either space face a two letter grade reduction.

Signing up for Stage Time- You may sign up for shooting time in 818 or the IRL (3 hours max/week) via signup sheets provided each quarter. When a class is not using the IRL, you may request more time for bigger projects by contacting the stage coordinator (currently me) with details about the project and shooting schedule. Be aware that these stages require you to sign and adhere to a safety and equipment policy contract for each and every shoot.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course requires original content authorship for all visual and written material; plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism can occur when referencing source material too closely when creating your own work, copying an image with only slight modification (to color, line, pose, etc.), tracing an image or parts of an image, or submitting work that you did not create. We all reference other artwork, but you must understand how to use this reference only as a springboard and generate your own take on the subject. If you have a question about using

reference material, ask me before turning in your projects, not after. Any exception will be expressly stated. Plagiarized work will result in an academic integrity violation and may result in an "F" for the quarter.

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

Academic Policies

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the [University Academic Calendar](#). Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment.

* Special Accommodations/Disabilities: Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: csd@depaul.edu.

Evaluations from students are a required part of the course and help the instructor recognize areas for improvement. Evaluations are anonymous. Students are sent periodic reminders automatically over three weeks, or until the evaluation is complete. Students complete the evaluation online in [CampusConnect](#).

COVID-19 Health and Safety Precautions

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic. Students, faculty and staff are expected to (1) wear a mask as required at all times while indoors on campus; (2) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms; (3) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions; (4) stay home if sick; (5) participate in any required COVID-19 testing; (6) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training; and (7) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Advisory. By doing these things, we are taking care of DePaul together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who do not abide by the mask requirement may be subject to the student conduct process and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with any requirements should register with DePaul's Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).

Respect for Diversity and Inclusion at DePaul University as aligned with our Vincentian Values

At DePaul, our mission calls us to explore "what must be done" in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. We value diversity because it is part of our history, our traditions and our future. We see diversity as an asset and a strength that adds to the richness of classroom learning. In my course, I strive to include diverse authors, perspectives and teaching pedagogies. I also encourage open dialogue and spaces for students to express their unique identities and perspectives. I am open to having difficult conversations and I will strive to create an inclusive classroom that values all perspectives. If at any time, the classroom experience does not live up to this expectation, please feel free to contact me via email or during office hours.

Emergency Plan. An emergency can occur at any time, suddenly and without warning. The following link provides detailed information on Emergency Evacuation and Fire Alarm safety: <https://resources.depaul.edu/emergency-plan/emergency-evacuation/Pages/Evacuation.aspx>. The University will use the DPU Alert to announce school closing or other emergencies. In the event of an

emergency evacuation, the primary outdoor assembly area for CDM will be Grant Park (Southeast corner of Jackson and Michigan Ave).

Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Please let me know your preferred name and pronoun, and be respectful of the preferences and identities of your peers. For more information, see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at <http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>

Schedule

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and/or sent via email. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments will be submitted online at least 1 hour prior to class.

Lecture

Assignment given

Week 1 Sep 8	Introduction	Select Found Objects
Week 2 Sep 13	Stop-motion, basic tools	Begin Found objects animations
Sep 15	Styles of lighting and basic movement Lighting Workshop	Found objects animations
Week 3 Sep 20	Critique found objects animations Fun with clay- replacements and straight-ahead animation	Begin Clay Animation
Sep 22	Morphs, 3D cycles, 3D zoetropes	Final Clay Animation
Week 4 Sep 27	Critique Clay Animation Animation basics	Begin Armatures
Sep 29	Armature workshop and troubleshooting	Final Armatures
Week 5 Oct 4	Critique Armatures Basic physics and performance in stop motion	Begin "Walks"

Oct 6	Mid-shooting repair guide, Adding character to get more complex walk	Final "Walks"
Week 6 Oct 11	Critique "Walks" Character design for sculpture	Begin character sculpt
Oct 13	Replacement mouth shapes and amazing eyeballs!	Final character sculpt
Week 7 Oct 18	Critique character sculpt Acting, improv, reference and lip sync	Begin expression/lip sync
Oct 20	More on character performance; exaggeration	Final expression/lip sync
Week 8 Oct 25	Critique expression/lip sync Introduce Final Project	Begin Final (checkpoint 1)
Oct 27	Maquettes- characters and locations	Complete Final (checkpoint 1)
Week 9 Nov 1	Complex character/puppet design Schematic drawings, rigging	Begin Final (checkpoint 2)
Nov 3	Detailing characters, establishing art direction and designing coherent worlds	Complete Final (checkpoint 2)
Week 10 Nov 8	Critique Checkpoint 2 Special effects, compositing	Begin Final (checkpoint 3)
Nov 10	Troubleshooting and puppet repair mid-shot	Complete Final (checkpoint 3)
Week 11 Nov 15	Individual progress critiques	Complete Final (checkpoint 4)
Nov 17	Final ATTENDANCE MANDATORY NOTE: CLASS WILL BE HELD IN SAME ROOM Wednesday, Nov 17, 11:30am-1:45pm	Final Projects NOTE: Submission is due the night before

Stop-motion tools and materials (* items you will need to purchase- all other items are optional, so feel free to wait until we learn about them!)

*Aluminum wire (11.5-12 gauge)
*steel wire or "floral wire" (20-26 gauge)
*needle nose pliers
*modeling clay (oil-based plasticine)
*xacto blade
*Small glue gun
*glue sticks
wing nuts
machine screw nuts
machine screws
Aluminum foil
super-sculpey
clay (water based)
plaster
silicone
foam
Vinyl or nitrile gloves
cups (plastic and paper)
liquid epoxy
Square tubing
mixing sticks
liquid latex
Polyurethane foam
Industrial glue gun
epoxy putty
dental/sculpture tools
Toaster oven
scissors
Drill
safety glasses
chicken wire
burlap
plastic mixing containers
foam core
wood (various)
Heat Gun
Jig saw
Dremmel tool