

# SM2228: UNDERSTANDING ANIMATION

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## Effective Term

Semester B 2025/26

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

Understanding Animation

### Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

### Course Number

2228

### Academic Unit

School of Creative Media (SM)

### College/School

School of Creative Media (SM)

### Course Duration

One Semester

### Credit Units

3

### Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

### Medium of Instruction

English

### Medium of Assessment

English

### Prerequisites

Nil

### Precursors

Nil

### Equivalent Courses

Nil

### Exclusive Courses

Nil

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

This course provides an introduction to the history of animation, and to the different forms and styles of animation that have emerged since the introduction of cinema. The “pre-history” of moving image animation is also discussed. Examples

are drawn from animations created in many different parts of the world including North America, Asia, and Europe, with special emphasis on independent and auteur modes of animation production. Through this course, students will gain a holistic understanding of global animation beyond the dominating styles of Disney, Pixar, and anime.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Gain an understanding of global animation history and practices	x	x	
2	Identify and describe the most significant animation styles and techniques	x	x	
3	Analyse specific animated works in relation to relevant theoretical, critical, and historical criteria		x	x
4	Synthesize and apply ideas and concepts to a research project		x	x
5	Conduct extra research on the subject in relation to one's own experience as a self-reflective process	x	x	

#### A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

#### A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

#### A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Introduction of key concepts, themes, techniques and styles of animation from around the world, with screenings of film examples and discussion	1, 2, 3
2	Presentation	Student presentation about an animation-related topic	3, 4, 5
3	Essay	Video essay group project or individual written essay	3, 4, 5
4	Quiz	Quiz on understanding of course contents	1, 2, 3

**Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)**

	<b>ATs</b>	<b>CILO No.</b>	<b>Weighting (%)</b>	<b>Remarks ("- " for nil entry)</b>	<b>Allow Use of GenAI?</b>
1	Participation & discussion	1, 2, 3, 4	25	-	No
2	Presentation	3, 4, 5	25	-	Yes
3	Essay	3, 4, 5	25	-	Yes
4	Quiz	1, 2, 3	25	-	No

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Examination (%)**

0

**Additional Information for ATs**

The weightings is subject to change. The latest course information will be announced during the lesson.

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)****Assessment Task**

Participation &amp; discussion

**Criterion**

This assessment task reviews students' participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique. The evidence of 'negotiation', the sign of discovery, lies in students' pre-class preparation and interpersonal sensitivity to his/her peer members.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

- Active in-class participation, positive listening, strong ability to stimulate class discussion and comment on other points
- In-depth pre-class preparation and familiarity with materials
- Interpret others' views with an open mind and ready to negotiate
- Readiness to share personal insight via analysis and synthesis with informed views
- Constructively critical, thus facilitating the discovery of new issues

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

- Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to initiate class discussion and comment on other points
- Adequate pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Interpret opinions effectively

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

- Attentive in in-class participation, listening with comprehension, but only infrequently contributing
- Adequate pre-class preparation but little familiarity with peer reports and other materials - Fair ability in interpreting opinions

**Marginal (D)**

- Unmotivated to participate in class discussion or comment on other people's views
- Little pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Poor ability in interpreting opinions

**Failure (F)**

- Unwilling to participate in class discussion and comment on other points, even when requested by the teacher
- No pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- Minimal ability in interpreting opinions

### Assessment Task

Essay

#### Criterion

This assessment will be graded according to the clarity and fluency of the argument presented. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's ability to negotiate a position that is informed, defensible, and standing on personal insight.

#### Excellent (A+, A, A-)

- Rich content, excellent ability to interpret and integrate various resources
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition
- Precision in argument, well defined and reasoned points of view grounded in insightful interpretation of existing literature
- Readiness to respond to peer opinion and other views initiated in class discussion
- Discussion shed light on new dimensions of the issue

#### Good (B+, B, B-)

- Adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Reasonable organization with balanced structure and composition
- Clear elaboration of ideas that sticks to the point, with clearly differentiated issues, ability to interpret opinions independently
- Sufficient responses to peer comments to sustain a discussion

#### Fair (C+, C, C-)

- Adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Fair organization with adequate structure and composition
- Relevant points made to the subject matter in question
- Ability to respond to other statements and engage in class discussion

#### Marginal (D)

- Weak content, limited use of resources
- Poor organization, structure and composition
- Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions
- Ability to respond to other comments in simple terms

#### Failure (F)

- Inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources
  - No organization, structure or/and composition
  - Irrelevant points to the subject matter, no ability to interpret opinions
  - Fail to respond to other comments
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### Assessment Task

Oral Presentation

#### Criterion

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well-organized presentation with their own argument and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's self-initiative to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

#### Excellent (A+, A, A-)

- Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative

- Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

- Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter
- Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition
- Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

- Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter
- Fair organization, weak structure and composition
- Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management

**Marginal (D)**

- Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter
- Poor organization, structure and composition
- Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, poor time-management

**Failure (F)**

- Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter
- No organization, structure or/and composition
- Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management

**Additional Information for AR**

All A+/A/A- grade assignment should comply with the highest performance of Discovery-oriented learning.

**Part III Other Information****Keyword Syllabus**

Defining animation. The animation continuum: from mimesis to abstraction. Commercial and independent animation. The animation process. Styles and techniques of 2D and 3D animation. Computer animation and the history of computer graphics. The pre-history of animation. European animation. Soviet-era animation. Disney animation and the Walt Disney Co. Japanese animation: styles, genres, themes. Animation in Hong Kong and China.

**Reading List****Compulsory Readings**

	Title
1	Bendazzi, Giannalberto. <i>Cartoons: One Hundred Years of Cinema Animation</i> . Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994.
2	Budd, Mike and Max. H. Kirsch (eds.). <i>Rethinking Disney</i> . Middletown CT: Wesleyan UP, 2005.
3	Crafton, Donald. <i>Before Mickey: The Animated Film 1898-1928</i> . Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993.
4	Furniss, Maureen. <i>Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics</i> . Sydney: John Libbey, 1998.
5	Lent, John A. (ed.). <i>Animation in Asia and the Pacific</i> . Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2001
6	McCarthy, Helen. <i>Hayao Miyazaki: Master of Japanese Animation</i> . Berkeley: Stone Bridge P, 1999
7	Napier, Susan. <i>Anime: From Akira to Howl's Moving Castle</i> . Updated ed. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005.
8	Pilling, Jayne (ed.). <i>A Reader in Animation Studies</i> . Sydney: John Libbey, 1997.
9	Russett, Robert and Cecile Starr. <i>Experimental Animation</i> . New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1988.
10	Wasko, Janet. <i>Understanding Disney</i> . Cambridge: Polity, 2001.
11	Wells, Paul. <i>Animation: Genre and Authorship</i> . London: Wallflower, 2002.
12	Wells, Paul. <i>Understanding Animation</i> . New York: Routledge, 1998.

13	Stephen Cavalier. The world history of animation. Berkeley : University of California Press, c2011.
14	John Grant. Masters of animation. New York, NY : Watson-Guption Publications, 2001.
15	ed., Julius Wiedemann. Animation now! : Anima Mundi / [Ada Queiroz ... et al.] Köln ; London : Taschen, c2004.

**Additional Readings**

Title	
1	Nil