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Arts264: Experimental Film and Video: Stop Motion Animation

Professor Claudia Esslinger

Office Hours MWF 11-12 and by appointment

Course Description:

Developing moving sequences from still images is both historical and contemporary. Experimental artist/filmmakers use the process to create actions that could not be presented through real-time film and video. This class will emphasize manipulating materials from charcoal to found objects, creating innovative content for movement, integrating live video/sound recording and experimenting with the structure of time. The course will include both two and three-dimensional approaches to stop-motion, with an emphasis on innovation and cultural explorations. It will not explore strictly drawn cell animation, except as an evolution of a drawing-in-process. Class structure will include presentations of historical and contemporary work, demonstrations, readings and critiques.

Departmental Learning Goals:

The Development of the ability to make visual art works of high quality. Success will be characterized by demonstrating creativity, gaining new art making skills, working through conceptual problems, and making formal decisions relevant to each media. Student creative development takes into consideration two different categories: (1) the progress of each student during an individual course, and (2) the progress over four years of the studio art majors.

Development of the ability to evaluate one's own artwork and the artwork of others within the context of an inclusive learning environment. Success will be characterized by gaining an understanding of the vocabulary of art appreciation, using vocabulary to speak and write about art, and demonstrating a heightened sense of individual, social, and cultural awareness while participating in artistic evaluations.

Evaluation Criteria and Class Goals:

Aesthetic Merit:

Show an approach that is visually (formally), intellectually (conceptually) and emotionally **compelling**. Is there something that initially draws the viewer in to want to see more?

Originality/ creativity/ innovation/ surprise/ cleverness. Does the work **avoid clichés** and pat expectations? Did you take a risk ...step away from your comfort zone?

Conceptual depth, sophistication or complexity that allows a **sustaining** interest by the viewer. Did you develop metaphors, irony or mystery in your work? Does the form of the piece support the content? Is the work resolved, finished?

Artistic Integrity: An awareness of the appropriate audience/ assignment/ social context of your work as relating to other artists and non-artists, those of your generation and beyond, what era you are working within, what cultural knowledge you can refer to and what will be lost on the viewer. The piece should be appropriate for experimental galleries and/or video festivals. It should show a creative response to the guidelines of the assignment.

Personal Commitment:

Initiative and effort in learning technical and conceptual skills through careful listening in class, showing attention to detail, using class resources such as TA hours, the website, office hours and personal problem solving. You should show the appropriate amount of ambition for the project.

Responsibility shown in meeting deadlines, having consistent attendance, caring for equipment.

Communal attitude shown by helping others, contributing to critiques, discussions and presentations, showing a willingness to learn from the professor and other students and respect for others.

Collaboration: You all have different aptitudes and experiences. Working together will improve all of your pieces. You are expected to help each other out and to pull your part of the load. Groups will also be important at idea sessions and critiques. It is here that feedback from your peers becomes collaborative. Your participation at critiques and discussions will influence your grade on each project.

Class Etiquette:

Critiques: You don't need to raise your hand to comment, and participation is part of your critique grade. Make sure to speak loudly enough for everyone to hear and give everyone a turn.

Bodily care: because our class starts at 12, you may bring lunch with you but you still have to arrive ON TIME: 12:10! If we are in the digital lab, you will have to eat at the front of the room. If you are in your animation space, don't eat over the computer!

Internet/phone/ Computer work: Do not use your phone for communications during class unless needed FOR class.

Place it behind your computer where you are not tempted! Put your computer to sleep for critiques, demos, discussions. Take notes in your journal.

Tuck your backpack fully under your desk so I can get around easily please.

Instructional Aides:

You will be processing a lot of information technically and developing conceptually. To aide this process, I have many alternatives that I expect you to take advantage of. You will not be graded individually on them, but your effort in attending and viewing/reading will affect your performance and therefore affect your work.

-**TA's are available** three nights a week in 206 (at least TBD) from 7:30-10pm.

-Online videos and handouts are available at www.esslingersclasses.com password: bexleyhall. **You are expected to view these videos** while we are working on that particular topic and be ready for a pop quiz any time! If you are absent, watching these will help but will not replace the class demonstration where more information and ideas are given.

-**Office Hours** with the professor as needed. You may text/call for help with problems outside of office hours from 9am-9 pm. Please text first, making sure I know who it is. I will respond to the text if I am available. Please work with TA's also as much as possible.

Equipment policy:

You are expected to care for all equipment both on the premises and off. If something breaks or is lost while in your care, you are responsible for it financially and you must tell me immediately. You may sign out equipment through Mo Hesler (dept office) between the hours of 8:30 and 4 (except the lunch hour, 12-1pm) **Return time is determined by the assignment in agreement with me (sometimes you may keep it for the semester, but return the last week of classes or as soon as you are sure you have ALL footage.** We provide camera equipment, including an SD card so please make sure you don't leave the card out of the camera.

Sharing computers: You are the sole user of your computer in 101, but you are sharing your computer in 206 with at least one other student (from the digital imaging class and advanced art students). Get to know them and arrange times to work. You should only book 3 hours at a stretch in order to be fair to each other. Only students enrolled in Installation art, Digital Imaging, Digital Photo, Stop-Motion Animation, Experimental Video and Film, Acting and Directing for the Camera and Photography and Advanced Studio may use Horvitz Digital Studios. Anyone else, for any other project is not allowed (even with you helping them! You cannot have friends working on papers in our lab...sorry).

You may leave the equipment in your studio in 101, but you are still responsible for their safety.

Communication and grading:

You are responsible to read your email, communicate with me in person and by email and text and phone and be familiar with the class website. Grading comes in the form of email comments and number grades. I really value talking to you in person, writing emails in response to your work and I only give grades as a supplement to these more important tasks. Nevertheless, these can tell you how I think you are doing in relationship to my overall expectations which are based on a history of knowing what students can do, what the rest of the class might be able to do in the allotted time, and what I think you personally are capable of all in relationship to the goals mentioned above. Please do not compare your grades with others! There are many reasons for variations in grades. What is taking a risk for one person might be comfortable and predictable for someone else. Good work comes in many forms!

Please take initiative in scheduling conversations with me if you don't understand something. It is your responsibility to catch up on work you have missed. Communication is key to understanding! **To do the best in this class you should practice after each demo and start work right after the assignment is given so that you can revise as needed.** If you miss a presentation, demonstration or lecture, you will have to work with a TA and will not be able to visit the material as thoroughly.

Grades will use the 100% scale, but will be weighted by percentage of final grade, depending on the intensity of the project. For instance: a shorter project may be worth 5% of the final grade where as a longer project could be 30%.

90-100 (A range) The high end of this indicates exceptional work to which nothing can be added, on time, following the assignment and with special insight, effort, risk-taking and creativity. All of the evaluation criteria are met. Excellent participation in critique and discussions.

80-89.9 (B range) This indicates above average work, competent, safe and interesting but still lacking something or it could be innovative work without a high enough skill level. Good comments during critique and discussions.

70-79.9 (C range) This indicates average work, average effort, basic amount of skill and creative ideas. Low participation in critique and discussions. Questionable preparation.

60-69.9 (D range) The work is handed in but shows less than acceptable effort creativity and skill. Little to no participation in critique and discussions. Not prepared for class.

Up to 59 (F range) Little effort, skill, imagination, not prepared, etc.

Due Dates: Projects are due at the beginning of the class period on the date of the progress or final critique. A project is considered late if it is not ready at that time and will receive a 0 until submitted. If you are not finished, you should still show your work, receiving a tentative grade (better than 0!) which will be replaced with a new grade minus 5 points if you re-submit within a week. If the project continues to be late, I will deduct 5 points per week. Your participation in the critique is part of your grade, so you must be present at critiques. ***You are responsible to make sure I see your resubmission in a timely way.***

Re-submission: Even if your work is on time, you may always improve and resubmit work and the new grade will be averaged with your initial grade if it is submitted before the next critique. This doesn't apply to the final project which is due the last day of class. ***The final portfolio for the semester is due on what would have been the next class day after the final critique. The final portfolio is a current version of all of your projects for the semester.***

We will use **Petra** the Kenyon Server to upload our projects for critiques. If you have an excused absence coming up on a critique day, the work is due before you leave. Most projects will have one or more progress critiques for which you will receive credit toward the final score.

Attendance Policy: Attendance in this class is mandatory because you cannot make up lost days by just reading or any other independent work. The class time is full of demonstrations, presentations, critiques and workshop time. If you miss a demonstration you may never catch up and not know how to use the software or equipment. **Workdays in class allow personal assistance from the professor on assignments and should be prepared for (you should work outside of class to be at the next stage of work, ready for assistance. Expect to spend at least 6-10 hours per week outside of class.** You will always do better on an assignment if you have completed more work on your project and are ready for the workdays in class. Video screenings are wonderful opportunities to inspire your work and describe the nature of the assignment. Students who miss these invariably don't do as well on the associated project. You are responsible for finding out what was covered and learning from others as much as possible. For all of the above reasons, I am strict about attendance and accountability.

After three (3) unexcused class absences I will begin to lower your final grade for the course by two points (out of 100) for each additional absence. Unexcused absences should be saved for occasional minor illnesses and you should still notify me through a call or email before class. **Two times late will count as one absence.** Excused absences are only given for illnesses that require a doctor, Kenyon sanctioned activities such as athletic events, etc., and **must be okayed before the missed class** whenever possible. Do not leave for these events early. If you have more than three excused events that pull you away from class, you will have to start using your three allowed unexcused absences (for instance, if you have 5 scheduled events, two of them will use up some of your allowed unexcused absences.) **Excused absences do not include taking a friend to the airport, leaving early for break or the common cold.**

***Excused Absences:** College sanctioned events, religious observance, Doctor level illness, Pre-notification required, Pre-submission of work.*

***Unexcused Absences:** More minor illnesses, emergencies. Notification required.*

Copies: All documentation of your work will be handed in as an electronic file for inclusion in the Kenyon Art Department Archives. They may be exhibited on our website or for promotional reasons within the college.

Academic Honesty: Being honest academically in an art class is more difficult to define than in other classes. Sometimes using another image is intended as a cultural reference. It even has a name: "appropriation." Whenever this is intended, the image is well known enough in the culture for most people to know where it came from, and therefore it evokes some ideas or feelings tied to the original. (this is also why memes work) This is fine for an artist to do. Taking another artist's image, composition or idea directly and passing it off as your own is a case for dishonesty however. I suggest that if you have a question, come talk to me first.

Accessibilities Accommodations: A student with a disability who thinks he or she may need an accommodation to access a campus program, activity, or service should contact Student Accessibility and Support Services (SASS) to discuss specific needs. Advance notice is required to review documentation, evaluate accommodation requests and provide notice or arrangements for any accommodation. Please notify me about these accommodations as well.

Privacy vs Confidentiality: *If you are having a particularly hard time for any reason, please let me know early and keep me in the loop...*this need not be specific, but some general communication. As a faculty member, I am deeply invested in the well-being of each student I teach. I am here to assist you with your work in this course. If you come to me with non-course-related concerns, I will do my best to help. It is important for you to know that all faculty members are mandated reporters of any incidents of harassment, discrimination, and intimate partner violence and stalking. Meaning, I must report any such discussion to the Civil Rights/Title IX coordinator. I cannot keep information involving sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, interpersonal violence, or any other form of harassment or

discrimination based on a protected characteristic, confidential. The Health and Counseling Center, the College chaplains, and the staff at New Directions Domestic Abuse Shelter & Rape Crisis Center are confidential resources.

<https://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/ocr/title-ix-vawa/kenyon-policies/title-ix-policy/>

Civil Rights: Kenyon College does not discriminate in its educational programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, medical condition, veteran status, marital status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by institutional policy or state, local, or federal law. The requirement of non-discrimination in educational programs and activities extends to employment and admission.

<https://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/ocr/discrimination/>

Statement on Names and Pronouns: As noted by the Office for Civil Rights, Kenyon College is committed to diversity, inclusion, equity and non-discrimination. Many people might use a name that is different from their current legal name. In all areas of campus, we refer to people by the names, in addition to the pronouns, that they use for themselves. Students are invited to share their names and the pronouns that they use. Students are also encouraged to use gender-neutral language, if they aren't sure of someone's pronouns. For more information on Kenyon's commitment to diversity and non-discrimination, please refer to the Office for Civil Rights and/or the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.