

1107GFS

Animation Timing and Character

Semester 2 - 2006

Academic Organisation:	Griffith Film School
Faculty:	Queensland College of Art
Credit point value:	10
Student Contribution Band:	Band 1
Course level:	Undergraduate
Campus/Location/Learning Mode:	South Bank / On Campus / In Person
Convenor/s:	Mr John Eyley (South Bank)
Enrolment Restrictions:	Restricted: Approval from Head of School
This document was last updated:	19 June 2006

BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on developing skills in timing for animation specifically examining the technical and aesthetic processes involved in creating character actions and emotion. Students explore the application of these principles in 'pencil-form' animation.

Restriction: Student must be enrolled in a QCA or GFS Program

SECTION A – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

COURSE AIMS

In keeping with the philosophy of the Bachelor of Animation programme and in order to further the student's understanding of traditional character animation it is essential to examine closely the dynamics of movement and gesture of the human form. Understanding these dynamics is essential in being able to build on a foundation of knowledge that the animator can draw on in the application of any future animation technique. The exacting nature of analysing a range of actions of the figure through practical studio animation assignments will give the student confidence in their animation abilities in preparation for more subtle and overt acting techniques later in the programme.

Performance animation, especially the form needed for animated storytelling, requires a complex set of skills that combines in the technical control of intricate movements of complex forms in space as well as a feeling for timing and acting.

The chosen method for doing this in this course is through pencil animation at the lightbox. In this way the student experiences intimately the sometimes complex judgements that are needed to bring animated characters to life. Pencil animation technique is a strong cognitive process that requires the animator to visualise clearly the form and movement of a character before committing to paper and the screen. Through the physical nature of drawing lines on paper that follow the animator's perceptual processes the learning is deeper and exercises the visual and spatial reasoning of the brain that is necessary in creating animated performances. Coupled with this is the need for the animator to understand that characters think and act and how this translates to illustrating actions and emotions in animation form. Also to further develop the student's drawing skills, life drawing classes will be undertaken.

Complementing this process will be observational studies of historical and contemporary animated works to examine further animation principles and techniques. Focus will be on action analysis of specific animated films and how animators bring their own specific styles to the art; and a brief overview of animation histories and technique that will inform the student on the range of techniques possible.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the completion of this course the student will have achieved the following outcomes -

1. have developed sound drawing skills that prepare the student for the rigours of character animation
2. have applied appropriate timing and animation principles for convincing character animation.
3. be able to demonstrate a sound understanding of the pencil animation studio process.
4. have developed an understanding of gesture and expression in character animation.
5. an ability to apply the basic processes of visual problem solving for animation.
6. be able to demonstrate knowledge of significant animated films and their particular contribution to the art form.

CONTENT, ORGANISATION AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Organisation of this course centres on the weekly lecture / tutorial structure. Students are expected to attend all lectures, one tutorial per week, and at least six life drawing classes for this course. Lectures will present formal course content, film screenings, assignment briefings and critiques, technique demonstrations, and class discussion. Students will be expected to attend 5 hours of contact time per week for this subject in lectures and studio work and the balance of time (around 5 hours) in studio access. All practical exercises and problems are compulsory and are sequentially presented for progressive learning.

Studio work requires the student to work in the animation studios in and out of class times. Studio teaching provides access for the student to teaching staff for one-on-one instruction and feedback on assignments. Development of skills in this way is the most effective method of understanding the intricacies of timing and animation principles. This can not be emphasised enough – it is most important for the student and tutor to have a sound and consistent dialogue in the studio on a weekly basis. It is also expected that the student will work outside class times in the studio or in their own equipment at home as much of the work will need to be advanced before the next class.

Learning@Griffith:

At the beginning of each studio project printed information is provided that outlines the details for the assignment. The GU web site Learning@Griffith (Blackboard) will also provide all details for the progress of the course. Students will find the Course Outline, assignment outlines, and deadline information, as well as additional information that will assist the student in their learning in this course. Students are encouraged to use the communication section of L@GU for forums and email to increase effective learning.

Students are required to supply their own art materials (pencils, paper, paints, crayons, inks, CD-RWs, , etc.) although some specialist materials may be supplied for specific classes. A materials list will be available to students at the beginning of the year. This method of providing a complementary relationship between studio theory, studio practice, and individual instruction will be the most effective use of the teaching and learning environment.

Attendance and class participation:

For the most effective learning and performance in this course attendance is required at all lectures and studio tutorials where updating of topics and comment on current work frequently occurs. . A class role is kept and at least 80% attendance in all contact sessions is required. Class participation recognises that valuable learning also occurs during class discussion when working in the studio and is a valued part of this course.

CONTENT SUMMARY

Content

In order to fulfil the aims of this course the content has been organised into three areas of study: Human-based Character form and Gesture animation; Life Drawing; and Film analysis.

Human-Based Character Form (The articulated figure):

Here studies in the lightbox studio will focus on broad animated movements of a bipedal animated character. The walk cycle and jump action represent everyday actions that together neatly embody a comprehensive range of animation problems that appear in almost all other animated actions. In animating a convincing walk cycle the animator expresses personality, weight, complex movements of articulated limbs, and cyclic action that must refer to a background. The jump combines explosive and subtle timing of movement in a dynamic sequence of drawings while at the same time endeavouring to capture character. In both these exercises the aim is to convincingly illustrate through animated drawings that the characters live in a world of gravity and Newtonian laws of physics which must be communicated to the audience. The audience must be able to empathise with these characters and respond to their actions in a believable manner. This can be achieved through well conceived and choreographed animation.

Gesture Animation:

This aspect of studio work introduces the student to the basics of acting in animation and pencil drawing method. Narrative storytelling in animation demands that animated characters be convincing in their actions which means that gesture and expression are necessary areas of study. A broad understanding of physical gesture gives character animation more meaning and audience appeal when delivering acting performance, especially when dialogue is used. This area of study provides a sound basis for a deeper understanding of character and personality in acting in second year coursework. Each student experiences studio animation method through creating key drawings, working with X-sheets, and completing in-betweens for another student, before completing the filming of the drawings.

Film and form study:

Throughout the semester a broad range of animated films will be presented in the lectures for analysis that illustrates the scope of animation technique, form and topics of interest. The films will also back up specific studio assignments being covered at the time in the studio assignments. The intention here is also to inform the animation student of the varieties of animation techniques, significant films and animators that have made an impact on the art of animation. Students are encouraged to record and file lecture notes and read as widely as possible on the content topics throughout the semester. This content will be the focus of the examination component of assessment.

Life Drawing:

Life drawing is a drawing discipline that works on a couple of levels. It increases drawing and visualising skills with hand created images and develops knowledge of the structure of the human form. Drawing skills are implanted all through the animation curriculum regardless of the technique chosen - from conceptual sketches and storyboards to presentation designs and finished animation linework. Knowledge of the structure of the human body is essential in being able to construct animation characters with an understanding of how the figure moves.

Topic	Lecture Content	Tutorial/Laboratory Content	Assessment	Film analysis
1.	What is 'character animation'? Character Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'Balloon' ▪ Weight; path of action; Newton's Laws of Physics. ▪ Life Drawing Group A 		<i>Tex Avery</i> <i>Shrek</i> <i>Bugs Bunny</i> <i>Ice Age</i>
2.	Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Walk cycle ▪ Key frames ▪ Life Drawing Group B 		<i>Robin Hood</i> <i>Ice Age</i> <i>Thief and the Cobbler</i>
3.	Walk continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reference: <i>Eadweard Muybridge</i> ▪ Life Drawing Group A 		<i>Walking</i>
4.	Walk Cont'd/ Jump	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Varieties of walks ▪ Other cycles ▪ Life Drawing Group B 	Due: Walk 4:00pm Friday	<i>TBA</i> <i>France</i>
5.	Jump	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A question of Fast action ▪ Life Drawing Group A 		<i>The Hulk</i> <i>Jumping</i>
6.	Jump	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ And to subtle action ▪ Life Drawing Group B 		<i>The Iron Giant</i>
7.	Gesture & Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thumbnails ▪ X-sheet Life Drawing Group A 	Due: Jump 4:00pm Friday	<i>Who Framed Roger Rabbit</i>
8.	Gesture & Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key animation Student presentations ▪ Life Drawing Group B 		<i>TBA</i>
9.	Stop-motion Animation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key animation Student presentations ▪ Life Drawing Group A 		<i>Wallace & Grommit</i> <i>Harvey Krumpet</i> <i>Augusta Feeds Her Child</i> <i>Street of Crocodiles</i>

Topic	Lecture Content	Tutorial/Laboratory Content	Assessment	Film analysis
<i>VACATION</i>				
10.	Computer Animation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key animation ▪ Student presentations ▪ Life Drawing Group B 		<i>Luxo Jnr Toy Story Ice Age Madagascar</i>
11.	Cut Out animation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inbetweening ▪ Student presentations ▪ Life Drawing Group A 		<i>Jan Lenica South Park Tale of Tales</i>
12	Cel Animation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inbetweening ▪ Student presentations ▪ Life Drawing Group B 		<i>Lil Elvis Jones Grendl Grendl Grendl</i>
13	Where to from Here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inbetweening ▪ Student presentations 		<i>Grave of the Fireflies</i>
14.	Studio Access (no lecture / tutorial)		Due: Gesture Animation 4:00pm	
15.			On-Line Exam Wednesday	

ASSESSMENT

Summary of Assessment

Item	Assessment Task	Length	Weighting	Total Marks	Relevant Learning Outcomes	Due Day and Time
1.	Physical Animation	Parts A & B	30%	100	1, 2, 5	Part A, Friday, week 4, 4:00pm Part B, Friday, week 7, 4:00pm
2.	Gesture Animation	tba	40%	100	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Week 15, Friday 4:00pm.
3	Life Drawing Folio	Folio	15	100	1	Week 13 Friday 4:00pm
4.	Examination	1 hour	15%	40	3, 6	Venue: TBA

Assessment Details

Note:

1. ALL assignments are to be submitted to the GFS School secretary with cover sheet by the due date where it will be date-stamped before collection by the lecturer.
2. All assessment items are to be attempted and submitted to achieve a passing grade.

Assessment is progressive and according to criteria specific to each item. All student work is to be submitted for assessment on or before the due date. Group critiques will review the body of student work. Extensions will be granted only on the provision of a medical certificate (or in exceptional circumstances with a letter from the student counsellor).

The assessment criteria take into account the student's quality and extent of inquiry into the set problems as evidenced by both the process (development in the studio) and the product (the finished assessment item).

1. Physical Animation: 30%

Assessment of this item includes two parts, A and B, which are two separate animation exercises. The two parts are aggregated because together they achieve the sum of the aims of broad physical animation component of the course. The class is given instructions for each task which will be resolved into short animated sequences created in the studio and saved (burned) to a CD for submission.

(A more detailed description of the assignment and assessment criteria will appear on Learning@Griffith at the beginning of week 2.)

Individual assessment here will provide feedback to the student on their demonstrated skill level and understanding of the criteria.

Criteria:	1. Drawing / Structure consistency	3
	2. Character expression	2
	3. Timing and application of principles	4
	4. Development and participation	1

2. Gesture Animation: 40%

Assessment for this item involves the review of an animation sequence produced as an assignment. Assessment will take into account the student's application of pencil animation process, application of animation timing for gesture, character, and weight.

Students are required to make a short individual presentation to their respective tutorial class during the semester on an aspect of this topic.

A more detailed description of the assignment and assessment criteria will appear on Learning@Griffith at the beginning of week 7.)

Criteria:	1. Development	1
	2. Participation	1
	3. Drawing / Structure consistency	2
	4. Timing and application of principles	3
	5. Character gesture	3

3. Life Drawing: 15%

Students will receive feedback provided on their studio progress throughout the semester. Final folio of drawings will be assessed in week 13 in a one on one studio presentation. A presentation schedule will be posted in week 12 on Learning@griffith. The final folio is to consist of a selection of drawings in consultation with the lecturer. Work will be assessed according to the following criteria:

1. Structure	30%
2. Expression	30%
3. Presentation	20%
4. Attendance	20%

4. Exam (On line): 15%

This examination will determine the depth of the student's knowledge and understanding of animation form and techniques, terminology and conventions of production practice that has been in the lectures and tutorials.

Return of Assessment Items

All assessment items and feedback sheets will be returned to students during class time and available for pick-up within two weeks from the submission deadline. This includes the final assignment which if not available in the studio should be available from the school secretary

Notification of Availability of Feedback on Assessment

Announcements on the availability of feedback sheets will be made in the class lecture and announced on Learning@griffith.

GRADUATE SKILLS

Graduate Skills	Taught	Practised	Assessed
Effective communication (written)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective communication (oral)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective communication (interpersonal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problem solving	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Critical evaluation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Work autonomously	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Work in teams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity and innovation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ethical behaviour in social / professional / work environments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Responsible, effective citizenship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

TEACHING TEAM

Course Convenor

Convenor Details	South Bank QCA
Campus Convenor	John Eyley
Email	J.Eyley@griffith.edu.au
Office Location	Level 5, Webb Centre, QCA, South Bank Campus
Phone	3735 3174
Fax	
Consultation times	

Additional teaching team members

In the event that teaching staff may be on leave, sessional staff from industry will be enlisted to deliver the content for this course.

COURSE COMMUNICATIONS

Even though consultation times are available students should make use of the face-to-face tutorial sessions as effectively as possible since staff are not always readily available at other times.

At the beginning of each studio project printed information is provided that outlines the details for the assignment. The GU web site Learning@griffith (Blackboard) will also provide all details for the progress of the course. Students will find the course outline; all assignment outlines, and deadline information, as well as additional information that will assist the student in their learning in this course. Students are also encouraged to use the communication section of L@GU to increase effective learning and should check Learning@Griffith at least once in each week.

Students may use e-mail to communicate with teaching staff outside face-to-face class time.

TEXTS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

All content and assessment items in this course can be produced in the QCA studios and with the equipment provided. However students will find it an advantage to purchase a removable hard drive for the storage of project data. As most of the data created in this course is digital imagery and video sequences, larger storage devices are required. This necessity will increase as the animation programme progresses. For more information on digital storage devices contact the course convenor or one of the Office of Technical Services (OTS) staff.

It is an advantage for the student to own a functional animation light-box for home use. Experience has shown that students progress more rapidly with access to a lightbox other than the college's. Information on where these can be purchased and the costs will be posted on Learning@Griffith.

Set Text:

WILLIAMS,R. (2001) **The Animator's Survival Kit**, Faber and Faber, London,
BLAIR,P. **Animation**. Walter T. Foster series: Tustin.

Other References:

LAYBOURNE,K. (1979) **The Animation Book**, New York, Crown,
HALAS, J. & WHITAKER, H. (1981) **Timing for Animation**, London, Focal Press
THOMAS, F. & JOHNSON, O. (1984) **Disney Animation: The Illusion of Life**, New York, Abbeville Press.
NOAKE,R. (1988) **Animation: A Guide to Animated Film Techniques**, London, Macdonald.
CULHANE, S. (1988) **From Script to Screen**. New York, St Martin's Press.
WHITE, T. (1986) **The Animator's Workbook**, New York, Watson-Guptill.
WEBSTER,C. (2005) **Animation: The Mechanics of Motion**. Oxford, Elsevier – Focal Press
HOOKS, E. (2000) **Acting For Animators**. Portsmouth. Heinemann

SECTION B – ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

Assignment Extensions and Penalties	Extensions will be granted only on the provision of a medical certificate (or in exceptional circumstances with a letter from the student counsellor). For studio assignments a penalty of 2% per day will need to be applied to late submissions.
Copyright	All student work is copyright owned by the student. From time to time some student work may be requested for university use such as promotion. In this case there is a university form to be signed by the student should they agree.
Course Evaluation	This course will be evaluated at the end of the semester and students will be informed of the process in due course.
Examinations	The examination will be conducted under controlled conditions in a computer laboratory (to be advised).
Risk and Health & Safety	It is important for all students to be aware of Health & Safety in the study environment. Staff are constantly monitoring the animation rooms for this but should the student at any time be aware of unsafe practices or conditions in the area please report them promptly to the immediate staff available.

SECTION C – KEY UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Students must conduct their studies at the University honestly, ethically and in accordance with accepted standards of academic conduct. Any form of academic conduct that is contrary to these standards is academic misconduct, for which the University may penalise a student. Specifically it is academic misconduct for a student to:

present copied, falsified or improperly obtained data as if it were the result of laboratory work, field trips or other investigatory work;

include in the student's individual work material that is the result of significant assistance from another person if that assistance was unacceptable according to the instructions or guidelines for that work;

assist another student in the presentation of that student's individual work in a way that is unacceptable according to the instructions or guidelines for that work;

cheat; (Cheating is dishonest conduct in assessment);

plagiarise (Plagiarism is knowingly presenting the work or property of another person as if it were one's own.)

Visit the University's [Policy on Academic Misconduct](#) for further details.

KEY STUDENT-RELATED POLICIES

All University policy documents are accessible to students via the University's Policy Library website at: www.griffith.edu.au/policylibrary. Links to key policy documents are included below for easy reference:

[Student Charter](#)

[Academic Standing, Progression and Exclusion Policy](#)

[Student Administration Policy](#)

[Policy on Student Grievances and Appeals](#)

[Assessment Policy](#)

[Examinations Timetabling Policy and Procedures](#)

[Academic Calendar](#)

[Guideline on Student E-Mail](#)

[Health and Safety Policy](#)

UNIVERSITY SUPPORT RESOURCES

The University provides many facilities and support services to assist students in their studies. Links to information about University support resources available to students are included below for easy reference:

[Learning Centres](#) - the University provides access to common use computing facilities for educational purposes. For details visit www.griffith.edu.au/cuse

[Learning@Griffith](#) - there is a dedicated website for this course via the Learning@Griffith student portal.

[Student Services](#) facilitate student access to and success at their academic studies. Student Services includes: Careers and Employment Service; Chaplaincy; Counselling Service; Health Service; Student Equity Services (incorporating the Disabilities Service); and the Welfare Office.

[Learning Services](#) within the Division of Information Services provides learning support in three skill areas: computing skills; library skills; and academic skills. The study skills resources on the website include self-help tasks focusing on critical thinking, exam skills, note taking, preparing presentations, referencing, writing, proof reading, and time management.