

Tentative Course Syllabus

Course Code: HUMA 5370
Course Title: Animation Theories
Course Offered in: Fall 2026
Course Instructor: Professor Daisy Du

Course Description: Animation existed as optical toys long before the birth of cinema, but it was not until the digital age that animation experienced its explosive boom. Recently animation theories began to emerge as a new field of research, offering critical interventions in film studies and even challenging our conventional views of the world. This course explores various theoretical issues in animation studies, such as movement, stasis, affect, automation and agency, TV serialization, digitality, media mix, sound, authorship and spectatorship, animals, race, gender, cuteness, animism and environment. Animated films made in China, Japan, and other parts of the world will be analyzed as case studies.

On successful completion of the proposed course, students will be able to:	
1.	analyze particular animated films, identify their directors, technology/techniques, audio-visual styles, and socio-historical condition
2.	use a theoretical film vocabulary to discuss animated films
3.	sharpen critical thinking and develop perceptive insights of our society through critical analyses of animated films
4.	develop a strong sense of teamwork and social responsibility
5.	Conduct independent research and write a research paper

Weekly Topics:

1. Art of Movement
2. Moving Art
3. Automation and Agency
4. Suspended Animation
5. TV Animation
6. Digitality
7. Media Mix
8. Sound
9. Authorship and Spectatorship
10. Animals and Race
11. Gender
12. Cuteness
13. Animism and Environment

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Planned Assessment Tasks:

1. Attendance 10%
2. Reading and weekly presentation 15%
3. Classroom participation and discussion 15%
4. Final term paper 60%

Three samples of readings:

Alberti, John, editor. *Leaving Springfield: The Simpsons and the Possibility of Oppositional Culture*. Wayne State University Press, 2004.

Bouldin, Joanna. "The Body, Animation and the Real: Race, Reality and the Rotoscope in Betty Boop". In A. Koivunen and S. Paasonen, editors, *Conference Proceedings for Affective Encounters: Rethinking Embodiment in Feminist Media Studies*, Turku, 2001.

Buchan, Suzanne, editor. *Animated 'Worlds'*. John Libbey, 2006.