

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

FILM 591 L01/B01
SENIOR SEMINAR IN FILM STUDIES:
ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY
WINTER 2021

Tues., Jan. 12 – Thurs., Apr. 15 (excluding Feb. 16th and 18th)
Lecture, Thurs. 12:30 – 2:20 (synchronous)
Lab (film screening), Tues. 12:30 – 3:15 (synchronous)

IMPORTANT NOTE ON COURSE DELIVERY FOR WINTER 2021:

This Winter 2021 course will be offered entirely online as part of the University's plan to ensure everyone's safety during the Covid-19 pandemic. Please read the outline carefully to see which course components will be offered synchronously (where you are expected to participate at the usual scheduled course time) and which components will be offered asynchronously (to be completed on your own time). Synchronous course sessions will normally be hosted on Zoom, a video-conferencing program. To access scheduled Zoom course sessions, go to D2L, click on the COMMUNICATION tab, and select Zoom 5 or 10 minutes before class is scheduled to begin.

If you will not be able to participate in scheduled synchronous class sessions owing to time differences, then you should arrange to take this course when it is offered in person in the future.

Note that the time indicated on course outlines for all timed quizzes and exams in CMCL, COMS, and FILM courses includes 50% extra time to allow for technical difficulties.

Instructor: Ryan Pierson
Office: SS 214
Office Phone: 220-6720
E-Mail: ryan.pierson@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L
Office Hours: 11:00 – 12:00 T + Th and by appointment, on Zoom

Course Description

This course will examine the phenomenon of the “animated documentary,” an apparent contradiction-in-terms that has emerged as a major filmmaking practice in the past twenty years. In addition to the history and practices around animated documentary, we will examine the broader theoretical problems that emerge from the combination of “animation” and “documentary” more generally

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students should have a firm grasp of the history and literature of animated documentary, as well as a grasp of the major issues of film theory that questions of animated documentary touch upon (e.g., indexicality, the relation of image to sound, documentary ethics and epistemology)

Textbooks and Readings

The following books are required for the course and are available through the university bookstore:

Annabelle Honess Roe, *Animated Documentary*

Karen Beckman, *Animating Film Theory*

Hannah Frank, *Frame by Frame*

The rest of the course readings will be available on D2L.

*Note: readings that appear in [[double brackets]] are assigned to graduate students only.

Learning Technologies and Requirements & Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

This is an online course. In order to complete online (or blended) courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates, with current antivirus software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection, and a current and updated web browser;
- A webcam (built-in or external);
- A microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone. If you need access to other software programs to complete assignments, your instructor will provide relevant information and links.

If you have technical difficulties, contact the university's IT department. For more information, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-informationtechnologies-it.html>

Instructors may arrange to record synchronous zoom class sessions for lesson capture; however, students are not to share recordings with others. Please carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Synchronous Meetings

Screenings and discussions will be synchronous. We will meet via Zoom. If you miss a screening, it is up to you to view the films. If you miss a discussion, it is up to you to get notes from a classmate.

Note: some films will be screened asynchronously. These are noted in the course outline, with a link to the film.

Assignments and Evaluation

Participation, 20%

Student participation is central to a seminar. You will be expected to take active part in each week's discussion, ready to discuss the week's reading in detail. Come to class with at least one comment or question on the week's material.

Discussion boards, 20%

Starting in week 2, you will be asked to write a response to the week's readings and post it to D2L. These responses must be posted by 8 a.m. Thursday. There is no minimum or maximum length; the only requirement is that you engage with at least one of the readings assigned that week. These responses will help inform our discussion, and you are free to use your response as the basis for your participation.

Presentation, 15%

Each student will sign up for a week in which they will present on and lead discussion through the week's assigned readings. The presentation should contain a summary and commentary on the readings in question; placement of the reading within the larger context of the course; and a few questions or provocations for further discussion. Students will present in pairs.

Mini-conference presentation (Apr. 6-15): 15%

During the last two weeks of class, each student will make a short presentation (10-15 minutes) on their final project, with space for Q&A, roughly in the manner of a conference presentation.

Final essay (due Apr. 22), 30%

Your major assignment for the course will be an essay that further explores the topic of animation and documentary in some way. Please consult with me on your topic well in advance.

Undergraduate essays should be 8-12 pages in length; graduate essays should be 15-20 pages.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO

Submission of Assignments: Please submit all assignments electronically.

Please include your name and ID number on your take-home final.

It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recorded for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

For late assignments, one-third of a letter grade will be subtracted from the assignment for each 24-hour period.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Final grades are reported as letter grades. Quizzes will be graded numerically, while discussion board posts and the take-home final will be graded by letter.

The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department. If letter grades are used for an assignment or other course component, the percentage equivalent in the final column will be used for calculating the final grade:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with

only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as notesharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-materialprotected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://lawslois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please visit <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Jan. 12 + 14): Introductions

Read: *Animated Documentary*, introduction and chapter 1 (to p. 26)

Karen Beckman, "Animation on Trial"

Watch: *Chicago 10* (Brett Morgen, 2007)

The Simpson Verdict (Kota Ezawa, 2002)

Week 2 (Jan 19 + 21): Definitions and Origins—Animation

Read: Donald Crafton, "The Veiled Genealogies of Animation and Cinema"

Ryan Pierson, "On Styles of Theorizing Animation Styles: Stanley Cavell at the Cartoon's Demise"

[[Herve Joubert-Laurencin, "Andre Martin, Inventor of Animation Cinema: Prolegomena for a History of Terms]]

Watch: *Fantasmagorie* (Emile Cohl, 1908)

Neighbours (Norman McLaren, 1952)

A Symposium on Popular Songs (Bill Justice, 1962)

Week 3 (Jan. 26 + 28): Definitions and Origins—Documentary

Read: John Grierson, "First Principles of Documentary"

Michael Renov, "Toward a Poetics of Documentary"

[[Trinh T. Minh-ha, "Documentary Is/Not a Name"]]

Watch: *Housing Problems* (John Grierson, 1935)

Reassemblage (Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1982)

Week 4 (Feb. 2 + 4): Digital Representation

Read: *Animated Documentary*, chapter 1 (pp. 27-40) and chapter 2

Tom Gunning, "Faking Photographs, or, What's the Point of an Index?"
[[Andre Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image"]]

Watch: *Walking with Dinosaurs* (BBC, 1999), episode one
Planet Dinosaur (BBC, 2002), episode one
Grasshopper (Bob Sabiston, 2004)

Week 5 (Feb. 9 + 11): Sound

Read: *Animated Documentary*, chapter 3
Jeffrey Ruoff, "Conventions of Sound in Documentary"
[[Holly Rogers, "Sonic Elongation: Creative Audition in Documentary Film"]]

Watch: *Roadhead* (Bob Sabiston, 1998)
Stranger Comes to Town (Jacqueline Goss, 2007)
It's Like That (Southern Ladies Animation Group, 2003)

Feb. 16 + 18: TERM BREAK, NO CLASSES

Week 6 (Feb. 23 + 25): Subjectivity

Read: *Animated Documentary*, chapter 4
Jennifer Blair, "Animation to Spare in Chris Landreth's and Ryan Larkin's Short Films"
[[Tess Takahashi, "Framing the Postmodern: The Rhetoric of Animated Form in Experimental Identity-Politics Documentary Video in the 1980s and 1990s"]]

Watch: *Ryan* (Chris Landreth, 2004)
Spare Change (Ryan Larkin & Laurie Gordon, 2008)
How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File (Hito Steyerl, 2013)

Week 7 (Mar. 2 + 4): History

Read: *Animated Documentary*, chapter 5
Ohad Landesman & Roy Bendor, "Animated Recollection and Spectatorial Experience in *Waltz with Bashir*"
[[Philip Rosen, "Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical Concepts"]]

Watch: *Waltz with Bashir* (Ari Folman, 2008)

Week 8 (Mar. 9 + 11): Animation as Document (and Montage)

Read: *Frame by Frame*, introduction and chapter 1
Bill Nichols, "Documentary Film and the Modernist Avant-Garde"
[[John MacKay and Mihaela Mihailova, "Frame Shot: Vertov's Ideologies of Animation"]]

Watch: *Blazes* (Robert Breer, 1961)
The Man with the Movie Camera (Dziga Vertov, 1929)

Mar. 16 + 18: SCMS, NO CLASS

Week 9 (Mar. 23 + 25): Animation as Photography

Read: *Frame by Frame*, chapter 2

Thomas Lamarre, "Cartoon Film Theory: Imamura Taihei on Animation, Documentary, and Photography"

[[Tom Gunning, "Animating the Instant: The Secret Symmetry between Animation and Photography"]]

**Watch: TBD

Week 10 (Mar. 30 + Apr. 1): Animation as Copy

Read: *Frame by Frame*, chapter 4

Lisa Gitelman and Meredith L. McGill, "Xerographers of the Mind"

[[Yuriko Furuhashi, "Animating Copies: Japanese Graphic Design, the Xerox Machine, and Walter Benjamin"]]

Watch: *101 Dalmations* (Wolfgang Reitherman, 1961)
Anthology No. 1 (Yokoo Tadanori, 1964)

Weeks 11-12 (Apr. 6, 8, 13, 15): presentations