

COURSE CONTENT

Course Code	DT3008
Course Title	Research and Visual Development
Pre-requisites	DT2000 Basic Principles of Motion or DT2001 3D Production or DT2009 Storyboarding and Production Design or DT3017 Game Seminar
No of AUs	3
Contact Hours	39 hours studio contact

Course Aims

In this advanced level course, you will apply visual research methodologies to create and develop original stories, characters and scenarios that are progressed through an animation pre-production process, culminating in a set of visual assets prepared for final production. You may work in any animation medium, including 2-D, 3-D, stop motion, puppet, game environment, abstract and experimental. You will employ a range of creative processes and problem-solving strategies as you explore and refine your concepts. This course builds upon the learning of previous animation courses, and prepares the way for a substantial animation production in following studies.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Describe research methods and principles of visual development suitable for developing animation concepts.
2. Develop advanced proficiency in all aspects of animation pre-production including character, environment, colour and sequential story-telling.
3. Apply selected design strategies to render narrative concepts.
4. Visually communicate with high proficiency an animated narrative and story world.
5. Contribute with value to discussions on animated story, character and world development.

Course Content

In this course you will focus in depth on the creation and development of an original animated narrative concept. The course builds on the learning from DT2009 Storyboarding and Production Design, and will address more complex and challenging aspects of animation pre-production and visual development. You will be guided towards the adoption of a selection of research methods to support your design process that includes traditional approaches as well as contemporary and experimental approaches. Emphasis will be placed on originality for story, character and animated world. You will be encouraged to be creative beyond known tropes, or, to work within known tropes using such methods as parody, irony, black humour, abstraction, experimentation, or any appropriate investigation that expresses original artistic enquiry.

Processes

You may work experimentally, or with known processes, that includes mood boarding, storyboarding, colour scripting, artistic rendering and concept art. Although you will meet specific

class deadlines, the creative approach you take will be specify to you. You are encouraged to explore and experiment both in narrative and in rendering. This is also the time you may need to explore new tools, particularly software, that you will select to best suit your needs. Whatever your approach, you will bring your own unique point of view by way of original story, characters and world.

Create and contribute

This course allocates substantial time to create, develop, discuss, critique, iterate, and refine. This course is intended to nurture the creative process, and provide sufficient time to enhance your creativity to the highest level possible. You will be expected to actively participate, both in informal class activity, and in formal presentations. Discussion and critique are essential components in the creative processes, and a willingness to give and receive constructive critique is essential in mature creative development.

By the time this course is completed, you will have raised your creative work to a higher level, and be proficient with the pre-production phase of animation development and production.

Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)

Component	ILO Tested	Programme LO	Weighting	Team/ Individual
Continuous Assessment 1: Studio-based exercises and projects 20%	1,2,3, 4	N.A.	20	Individual
Continuous Assessment 2: Mid semester portfolio review 20%	1,2,3, 4	N.A.	20	Individual
Continuous Assessment 3: Participation	5	N.A.	20	Individual
Final Project: Pitch bible 20% Animatic. 20%	1,2,3,4	N.A.	40	Individual
Total			100%	

Reading and References

1. Bacher, Hans. *Vision: Colour and Composition for Film*. Laurence King Publishing 2018.
2. Bacher, Hans. *Dreamworlds: Production Design for Animation*. Focal Press 2007.
3. Beiman, Nancy. *Prepare to Board! Creating Story and Characters for Animated Features and Shorts. Third edition*. CRC Press 2017.
4. Glebas, Francis. *Directing the Story: Professional Storytelling and Storyboarding Techniques for Live Action and Animation*. Focal Press 2008.
5. Madden, Matt. *99 Ways to Tell a Story: Exercises in Style*. Chamberlain Bros. 2005.
6. MacLean, Fraser. *Setting the Scene: The Art & Evolution of Animation Layout*. Chronicle Books 2011.

7. Mateu-Mestre, Marcos. *Framed Ink: Drawing and Composition for Visual Storytellers*. Design Studio Press 2010.
8. Mateu-Mestre, Marcos. *Framed Perspective Vol. 1: Technical Perspective and Visual Storytelling*. Design Studio Press 2016.
9. Mateu-Mestre, Marcos. *Framed Perspective Vol. 2: Technical Drawing for Shadows, Volume, and Characters*. Design Studio Press 2016.
10. Rall, Hannes. *Animation: From Concept to Production*. CRC Press 2017.
11. Rall, Hannes. *Adaptation for Animation: Transforming Literature Frame by Frame*. CRC Press 2019.

Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

(1) General

You are expected to complete all assigned readings, activities, assignments, attend all classes punctually and complete all scheduled assignments by due dates. You are expected to take responsibility to follow up with assignments and course related announcements. You are expected to participate in all project critiques, class discussions and activities.

(2) Punctuality

You are expected to be punctual for all classes. If you are more than 30 minutes late, you will be deemed as absent and will not be able to sign on the attendance register.

(3) Absenteeism

In-class activities make up a significant portion of your course grade. Absence from class without a valid reason will affect your participation grade. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by a medical certificate and participation in NTU's approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies. There will be no make-up opportunities for in-class activities.

Academic Integrity

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the [academic integrity website](#) for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

Planned Weekly Schedule*

*Subjected to adjustment by instructor according to students' progress, public holidays and unforeseeable circumstances.

Week	Topic	Course LO	Readings/ Activities
1-2	Introduction to story and concept for animated short films	1	<p>Introductory Lecture Introduction to story development: Introduction to the class. Schedules, deadlines and expectations: An open discussion. Presentation of examples of successfully created animated shorts. Discussion on what makes their story concepts work. Presentation of successful ADM-FYPs and discussing a strategy for successful outcomes in FYP.</p> <p>Introduction to story structure and construction for animated short-films Research for visual development: Artistic reference and mood boards</p> <p>Assignment 1: Create 3 rough story ideas for animated short films as demonstrated through five drawings for story set-up crisis and pay off. (5 story-beats).</p>
3-4	Introduction to character design	1,2,3	<p>Character Design and Story The significant characteristics of good character design in a character cast will be looked at through examples and demonstrations. Particularly emphasis will be put on the connection between story and character design. The role of the cast: Diversity and contrast in design.</p> <p>Continued critique of the storyboards and the refined treatment/script first draft.</p> <p>Assignment 2: On the basis of class review, develop 2 stories further through storyboards and rough character sketches.</p>
5-6	Explore your universe: Creating the environment for your characters:	1,2,3,4	<p>The tools and techniques of concept art and visual development Lecture on examples of outstanding animation production design. Analysis of connection of visuals to story. Various design techniques and methods. From sketch to</p>

			<p>finalized design. Defining a cohesive design style. Elements of a comprehensive design bible.</p> <p>Assignment 3: Develop your story further through refined character designs, background and prop design.</p> <p>Ongoing review and critique.</p>
7-8	Advanced editing techniques	1,2,3	<p>Sophisticated editing concepts and animated transitions Crossing the line re-addressed, cross-cutting, match cuts and continuity editing, camera movements and montage sequences. Metamorphosis and other animation-specific scene transitions. The role of the animatic in preproduction: The story or Leica reel.</p> <p>Ongoing review and critique of assignments.</p>
9-10	Story and colour	1,2,3,4	<p>Colour design and colour script The interdependent relationship of colour design and story will be explained Thoroughly and illustrated with prime examples Enhancing the dramatic effect of scenes through appropriate use of colour will be analysed and taught. Colour script: The “colour map” of a film Colour design concepts: Light contrasts, warm and cold etc. Values and lighting as the basis for colour design.</p> <p>Assignment 3: Develop a colour script for your story.</p> <p>Ongoing review and critique of assignments.</p>
11	Story and sound	1,2,3	<p>The role of sound for animation Sound as a tool to support the visual narrative Layout sound and temp tracks Sound breakdown and syncing Sound libraries and foley.</p> <p>Ongoing review and critique of assignments.</p> <p>Assignment 4: Create an animatic with sound from your storyboards. Finalize your development art.</p>

12	Creating a production pipeline	1,2,3,4	<p>Animation production techniques Students will be introduced to planning a production pipeline and schedule based on the final choice of animation technique (e.g. traditional 2D, stop motion or CG) for their project in development.</p> <p>Review of animatic assignment work in progress</p>
13	Final Presentation	1,2,3,4,5	<p>In-class presentation of final project (assignments 1-4 combined, pre-production bible and animatic)</p>