

**City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus**

**offered by School of Creative Media
with effect from Semester A 2024/25**

Part I Course Overview

Course Title:	Abstract and Experimental Animation
Course Code:	SM5344
Course Duration:	One semester
Credit Units:	3
Level:	P5
Medium of Instruction:	English
Medium of Assessment:	English
Prerequisites: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	Nil
Precursors: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	Nil
Equivalent Courses: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	Nil
Exclusive Courses: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	Nil

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

Through a series of screenings, workshops and lectures, this course introduces students to historical and contemporary approaches in abstract and experimental animation. A central premise of the course is that sound and music are key components of the moving image. Students will explore the concept of visual music, how rhythm, timing and counterpoint can structure or disrupt our reading of abstract motion. Another focal point is on the nexus between narrative and non-narrative modes of experimental animation, and how meanings can be negotiated through abstraction. In-class exercises and assigned projects will expose students to a range of tools and techniques which will enable them to design and produce abstract and experimental moving image works, as a form of artistic expression and as a conceptual tool for time-based media and beyond.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Gain an understanding of abstract and experimental moving image history and practices.		✓	✓	
2.	Acquire animation skills and techniques through group work and creative exercises			✓	
3.	Interpret/express sound and music and/or meanings and concepts through abstract moving image		✓	✓	✓
4.	Experiment and take risks with digital and/or analog animation		✓	✓	✓
5.	Transform basic technical competence into a unique style or personal signature.			✓	✓
		100%			

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

(LTAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

LTA	Brief Description	CILO No.					Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	5	
Lectures and screenings	Explain key concepts and themes of abstract and experimental animation, screening of films examples with discussion	✓					
Workshops	Introduce skills and techniques specific to abstract and experimental animation		✓	✓			
Assignments and Exercises	Group projects to practice and creatively apply skills and techniques		✓	✓			
Experimental Animation Projects	Short projects to refine skills and develop original personal expression		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Readings		✓					

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.					Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5		
Continuous Assessment: 100%							
Participation and performance	✓	✓		✓		20%	
Experimental animation projects		✓	✓	✓	✓	60%	
Presentation		✓	✓	✓	✓	20%	
Examination: 0% (duration: , if applicable)						100%	

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Participation and performance	This assessment task reviews students' participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique during the tutorial sessions. The evidence of 'negotiation', the sign of discovery, lies in students' pre-class preparation and interpersonal sensitivity to his/her peer members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active in-class participation, positive listening, strong ability to stimulate class discussion and comment on other points - In-depth pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials - Interpret others' views with an open mind and ready to negotiate - Readiness to share personal insight via analysis and synthesis with informed views - Constructively critical, thus facilitating the discovery of new issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to initiate class discussion and comment on other points - Adequate pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials - Interpret opinions effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attentive in in-class participation, listening with comprehension, but only infrequently contributing - Adequate pre-class preparation but little familiarity with peer reports and other materials - Fair ability in interpreting opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unmotivated to participate in class discussion or comment on other people's views - Little pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials - Poor ability in interpreting opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unwilling to participate in class discussion and comment on other points, even when requested by the teacher - No pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials - Minimal ability in interpreting opinions
2. Experimental animation projects	Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, execute creative ideas and projects. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's proactively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of personal styles and signature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic appreciation and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marginal appreciation of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium

	turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excellent appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium - Work raises questions and instils insights about the process of conception, creative strategisation and production - Innovative exploration by combining knowledge from different disciplines (e.g. mathematics, psychology, physics, anthropology, etc.) to create an inter-disciplinary project - Efficient adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available with constructive adjustment 	<p>qualities of the medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to create project / work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration - Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available and constructive feedback/ suggestions 	<p>medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited ability to create project / work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration - Adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marginal ability to create project / work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration - Limited adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fail to create project / work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration - Minimal adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available
3. Presentation	This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well- organized presentation with their own argument and evidence from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter - No

	readings and notes. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in the student's initiative to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.	<p>subject matter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative - Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management - Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition - Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management 	<p>of the subject matter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fair organization, weak structure and composition - Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor organization, structure and composition - Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, poor time-management 	<p>organization, structure or/and composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management
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Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B)	Marginal (B-, C+, C)	Failure (F)
1. Participation and performance	This assessment task reviews students' participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique during the tutorial sessions. The evidence of 'negotiation', the sign of discovery, lies in students' pre-class preparation and interpersonal sensitivity to his/her peer members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active in-class participation, positive listening, strong ability to stimulate class discussion and comment on other points - In-depth pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to initiate class discussion and comment on other points - Adequate pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unmotivated to participate in class discussion or comment on other people's views - Little pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials - Poor ability in interpreting opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unwilling to participate in class discussion and comment on other points, even when requested by the teacher - No pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials

		<p>materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpret others' views with an open mind and ready to negotiate - Readiness to share personal insight via analysis and synthesis with informed views <p>Constructively critical, thus facilitating the discovery of new issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpret opinions effectively 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimal ability in interpreting opinions
2. Experimental animation projects	<p>Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, execute creative ideas and projects. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of personal styles and signature - Excellent appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium - Work raises questions and instils insights about the process of conception, creative strategisation and production - Innovative exploration by combining knowledge from different disciplines (e.g. mathematics, psychology, physics, anthropology, etc.) to create an inter-disciplinary project <p>Efficient adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium - Ability to create project / work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration - Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available and constructive feedback/ suggestions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marginal appreciation of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium - Marginal ability to create project / work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration <p>Limited adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium - Fail to create project / work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration - Minimal adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

		(time, space, equipment, etc) available with constructive adjustment			
3. Presentation	This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well- organized presentation with their own argument and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of ‘discovery’ lies in the student’s initiative to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter - Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative - Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management <p>Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter - Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition - Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter - Poor organization, structure and composition <p>Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, poor time- management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter - No organization, structure or/and composition - Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

Abstract animation, experimental animation, visual music, moving image art

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1.	Russett, Robert & Starr, Cecile. <i>Experimental Animation: An Illustrated Anthology</i> . New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1976.
2.	Sitney, P. Adams. <i>Visionary Film, The American Avant-Garde, 1943–2000, Third Edition</i> , Oxford University Press, 2002. Chapter on Absolute Animation, pp. 231–267.
3.	Mollaghan, Aimee. <i>The Visual Music Film</i> . Palgrave Macmillan UK. 2015.

2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

1.	Rees, A. L. <i>A History of Experimental Film and Video</i> , London: British Film Institute, 2011.
2.	Youngblood, G. <i>Expanded Cinema</i> , New York: E.P. Dutton & Co, 1970.
3.	O’Pray, Michael. <i>Avant-Garde Film: Forms, Themes and Passions</i> , London: Wallflower Press, 2003.
4.	Williams, Richard. <i>The Animator's Survival Kit</i> , Faber and Faber, 2004.
5.	Jennings, Gabrielle & Mondloch, Kate. <i>Abstract Video: The Moving Image in Contemporary Art</i> . University of California Press. 2015.