City University of Hong Kong Course Syllabus

offered by School of Creative Media with effect from Semester A 2022/23

Part I Course Overv	view
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: (Course Code and Title)	Nil
Precursors: (Course Code and Title)	Nil
Equivalent Courses: (Course Code and Title)	Nil
Exclusive Courses: (Course Code and Title)	Nil

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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	Discov	very-en	riched
		(if	curricu	ılum re	lated
		applicable)	learnir	ng outco	omes
			(please	e tick	where
			approp	oriate)	
			A1	A2	<i>A3</i>
1.	Gain an understanding of abstract and experimental moving image history and practices.		1	✓	
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		1	1	1
4.	Experiment and take risks with digital and/or analog animation		1	1	1
5.	Transform basic technical competence into a unique style or personal signature.			1	1
		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 self-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.

Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs) (TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILC	O No.			Hours/week	(if	
		1	2	3	4	5	applicable)	
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		1	1				
Assignments and Exercises	Group projects to practice and creatively apply skills and techniques		1	1				
Experimental Animation Projects	Short projects to refine skills and develop original personal expression		1	1	1	1		
Readings		1						

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	1	1		1		20%	
Experimental		1	1	1	1	60%	
animation projects							
Presentation		1	1	1	1	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 in Semester A 2022/23 and thereafter

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent	Good	Marginal	Failure
		(A+, A, A-)	(B+, B)	(B-, C+, C)	(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.	- 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	- 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	- 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	- 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 turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.	- 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	- 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	- 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 Limited adjustment of	 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

		- Work raises	and creative exploration	plans and strategies in	adjustment of plans and
		questions and instils	- Proper adjustment	response to resources	strategies in response to
		insights about the	of plans and strategies	(time, space, equipment,	resources (time, space,
		process of conception,	in response to resources	etc) available	equipment, etc)
		creative strategisation	(time, space, equipment,	,	available
		and production	etc) available and		
		- Innovative	constructive feedback/		
		exploration by	suggestions		
		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			
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3. Presentation	This assessment will grade on	- Rich, informative	- Adequate content	- Weak content,	- Inadequate
	content and fluency of	content, excellent grasp of the material with in-	with firm grasp of the material that informs	loose grasp of the general ideas with some	content, fail to identify the general ideas with
	presentation. Students should show their co-operation to	depth and extensive	the audience on a	knowledge of the	knowledge of the
	conduct a well- organized	knowledge of the	subject matter	subject matter	subject matter
	presentation with their own	subject matter	- Reasonable	- Poor organization,	- No organization,
	argument and evidence from	- Rigorous	organization, balanced	structure and	structure or/and
	readings and notes. The	organization, coherent	structure and	composition	composition
	threshold of 'discovery' lies in	structure, and	composition	Poor presentation skills:	- Poor presentation
	the student's initiative to	systematic exposition	- Good verbal	marginal pronunciation,	skills: marginal
	conduct additional research	with a strong sense of	communication:	expression and diction,	pronunciation,
	and to personalize theories for	narrative	comprehensible	poor time- management	expression and diction,
	her/his personal daily	- Superior	pronunciation, fluent	Post time management	minimal time-
	experience.	presentation skills:	expression and diction,		management
		distinct pronunciation,	fair time-management		
		fluent expression and			
		appropriate diction,			
		exact time-management			
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Critical analysis with insightful comments	
opening up new issues,	
or suggesting the ability	
to theorize	

Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent	Good	Fair	Marginal	Failure
		(A+, A, A-)	(B+, B, B-)	(C+, C, C-)	(D)	(F)
1. Participation	This assessment task reviews	- Active in-	- Active in-	- Attentive in	- Unmotivated	- Unwilling to
and performance	students' participation and	class participation,	class participation,	in- class	to participate in	participate in class
	performance in discussions,	positive listening,	positive listening,	participation,	class discussion or	discussion and
	debates and peer critique	strong ability to	ability to initiate	listening with	comment on	comment on other
	during the tutorial sessions.	stimulate class	class discussion	comprehension,	other people's	points, even when
	The evidence of 'negotiation',	discussion and	and comment on	but only	views	requested by the
	the sign of discovery, lies in	comment on other	other points	infrequently	- Little pre-	teacher
	students' pre-class preparation	points	 Adequate 	contributing	class preparation	- No pre-class
	and interpersonal sensitivity	 In-depth pre- 	pre-class	- Adequate	and familiarity	preparation and
	to his/her peer members.	class preparation	preparation and	pre- class	with peer reports	familiarity with
		and familiarity with	familiarity with	preparation but	and other	peer reports and
		peer reports and	peer reports and	little familiarity	materials	other materials
		other materials	other materials	with peer reports	 Poor ability 	- Minimal
		- Interpret	 Interpret 	and other	in interpreting	ability in
		others' views with	opinions	materials	opinions	interpreting
		an open mind and	effectively	- Fair ability in		opinions
		ready to negotiate		interpreting		
		 Readiness to 		opinions		
		share personal				
		insight via analysis				
		and synthesis with				
		informed views				
		- Constructively				
		critical, thus				
		facilitating the				
		discovery of new				
		issues				
2. Experimental	Students should demonstrate	- Work has	- Strong	- Basic	- Marginal	- No
animation projects	ability to utilize primary and	strong affective	appreciation,	appreciation	appreciation of the	appreciation of the
	secondary sources, execute	quality and the	exploration and/or	and/or application	aesthetic and	aesthetics and

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	creative ideas and projects.	articulation of	application of the	of the aesthetic	expressive	expressive
	The threshold of 'discovery'	personal styles and	aesthetic and	and expressive	qualities of the	qualities of the
	lies in a student's proactively	signature	expressive	qualities of the	medium	medium
	turning theory into praxis, to	- Excellent	qualities of the	medium	- Marginal	- Fail to create
	transform course material into	appreciation,	medium	- Limited	ability to create	project / work that
	self-owned authorship.	exploration and/or	- Ability to	ability to create	project / work that	demonstrate the
		application of the	create project /	project / work that	demonstrate the	processes of
		aesthetic and	work that	demonstrate the	processes of	thinking and
		expressive qualities	demonstrate the	processes of	thinking and	creative
		of the medium	processes of	thinking and	creative	exploration
		 Work raises 	thinking and	creative	exploration	- Minimal
		questions and	creative	exploration	- Limited	adjustment of
		instils insights	exploration	- Adjustment	adjustment of	plans and
		about the process of	- Proper	of plans and	plans and	strategies in
		conception, creative	adjustment of	strategies in	strategies in	response to
		strategisation and	plans and	response to	response to	resources (time,
		production	strategies in	resources (time,	resources (time,	space, equipment,
		- Innovative	response to	space, equipment,	space, equipment,	etc) available
		exploration by	resources (time,	etc) available	etc) available	,
		combining	space, equipment,	,	,	
		knowledge from	etc) available and			
		different disciplines	constructive			
		(e.g. mathematics,	feedback/			
		psychology,	suggestions			
		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				
3. Presentation	This assessment will grade on	- Rich,	- Adequate	- Adequate	- Weak	- Inadequate
	content and fluency of	informative	content with firm	content with	content, loose	content, fail to
	presentation. Students should	content, excellent	grasp of the	comprehensive	grasp of the	identify the
	show their co-operation to	grasp of the	material that	grasp of the	general ideas with	general ideas with
	show their co-operation to	grasp or the	materiai mat	grasp of the	general ideas with	general lueas with

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conduct a well- organized	material with in-	informs the	material	some knowledge	knowledge of the
presentation with their own	depth and extensive	audience on a	demonstrating	of the subject	subject matter
argument and evidence from	knowledge of the	subject matter	basic knowledge	matter	- No
readings and notes. The	subject matter	 Reasonable 	of the subject	- Poor	organization,
threshold of 'discovery' lies	- Rigorous	organization,	matter	organization,	structure or/and
in the student's initiative to	organization,	balanced structure	- Fair	structure and	composition
conduct additional research	coherent structure,	and composition	organization, weak	composition	- Poor
and to personalize theories for	and systematic	 Good verbal 	structure and	- Poor	presentation skills:
her/his personal daily	exposition with a	communication:	composition	presentation skills:	marginal
experience.	strong sense of	comprehensible	- Fair	marginal	pronunciation,
	narrative	pronunciation,	presentation skills:	pronunciation,	expression and
	- Superior	fluent expression	acceptable	expression and	diction, minimal
	presentation skills:	and diction, fair	pronunciation,	diction, poor time-	time-management
	distinct	time-management	expression and	management	
	pronunciation,	8	diction, fair time-	U	
	fluent expression		management		
	and appropriate				
	diction, exact time-				
	management				
	- Critical				
	analysis with				
	insightful				
	comments opening				
	up new issues, or				
	suggesting the				
	ability to theorize				

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. Experimental Animation: An Illustrated Anthology. New York:
	Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1976.
2.	Sitney, P. Adams. Visionary Film, The American Avant-Garde, 1943–2000, Third Edition,
	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. A History of Experimental Film and Video, London: British Film Institute, 2011.
2.	Youngblood, G. Expanded Cinema, 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.