GAM 141

Digital Animation Practice 1

20 CREDITS

COMPULSORY FOR ALL BA(HONS) DIGITAL GAMES ANIMATION ROUTE STUDENTS

**Module Leader: Richard Milligan**



**What the module is about**

This module is aimed at providing you with the basic principles and skills required for 3D Animation.

You will learn the tools and techniques that you will then develop and practice in future modules. This module gives you the underpinning craft skills that you will need to develop as an animation artist.

Additionally, you will keep a development blog where you will reflect on the work you are creating and begin to build your digital presence.

More information on this module can be found in the module Information form, or MIF, on the learning space. The MIF is the official document that outlines the basics of the module. This module guide gives further information and guidance – please do read this guide at the start of the module – it’s important.

**Teaching Programme Session Breakdown**

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| **Session**  **1** | **Getting to know Maya**  **[RM]** |
| In this session, we will explore the assessment expectations for this module and discuss the creation of your blog. Once the formalities have been tended to, we will get to grips with the basics of Maya - learning how to navigate the scene, set up projects, create basic meshes and use some of the fundamental tools for 3D. | |
| **Essential Reading** | * <http://www.digitaltutors.com/tutorial/2054-Introduction-to-Maya-2016> * <http://simplymaya.com/autodesk-maya-training/free-tutorials/?cat_id=23> |
| **Secondary Reading** | * Palamar, T (2015) Mastering Autodesk Maya 2016. Sybex * Murdock, K (2015) Autodesk Maya 2016 Basics guide. SDC Publications |
| **Your notes for further follow-up reading** |  |

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| **Session**  **2** | **Getting to know Maya pt2**  **[RM]** |
| Following on from last session, we will explore deeper into the fundamental processes and menus of Maya. Any issues you have encountered so far can be brought up and addressed here before we get stuck into learning how to animate in Maya. | |
| **Essential Reading** | * <http://forums.cgsociety.org/showthread.php?f=7&t=6360>   A great supply of tutorials, some old, some new – user lead. |
| **Secondary Reading** |  |
| **Your notes for further follow-up reading** | At this point, getting comfortable with Maya is your prime concern so any tutorial you can find and complete will help you immensely at this point. Next week, we get Animation specific so make sure you have addressed any Maya issues you have with me (in class or through email, but preferably in class). |

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| **Session**  **3** | **The Basics Of Animation**  **[RM]** |
| In this session we will familiarise ourselves with Maya’s interface and study some animation principles to get you started. We will focus on setting key frames & adjusting timing by creating a set of bouncing balls (a fundamental exercise in squash & stretch). | |
| **Essential Reading** | * Thomas, F. (1997) The illusion of life: Disney Animation. Hyperion |
| **Secondary Reading** |  |
| **Your notes for further follow-up reading** | Conducting own research into 12 principles of animation will help develop an ‘eye for motion’. |

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| **Session**  **4** | **Overlap & Follow Through**  **[RM]** |
| In this session we will have a look at some basic rigging techniques (parenting, constraints, joints, IK chains) and use this knowledge to create ‘overlapping’ & ‘follow through’ Animation. | |
| **Essential Reading** | * Williams, R E (2002) The Animator's Survival Kit. Faber & Faber. |
| **Secondary Reading** |  |
| **Your notes for further follow-up reading** |  |

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| **Session**  **5** | **The flour Sack**  **[RM]** |
| Often used as a test before employment, the flour sack is an excellent tool for developing your animation skill and demonstrating your understanding of animation principles. Getting a believable performance out of a flour sack, with no facial elements, is a great test of your understanding of personality and character.  Using the supplied rig, we will explore anticipation, exaggeration, weight and other important elements relating to defining character and adding personality to animation. | |
| **Essential Reading** | * Whitaker, H (2002) Timing for Animation. Focal Press |
| **Secondary Reading** |  |
| **Your notes for further follow-up reading** |  |

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| **Session**  **6** | **The flour Sack**  **[RM]** |
| Often used as a test before employment, the flour sack is an excellent tool for developing your animation skill and demonstrating your understanding of animation principles. Getting a believable performance out of a flour sack, with no facial elements, is a great test of your understanding of personality and character.  Using the supplied rig, we will explore anticipation, exaggeration, weight and other important elements relating to defining character and adding personality to animation. | |
| **Essential Reading** | * Hooks, E. (2003) Acting for Animators: A Complete Guide to Performance. Greenwood press. |
| **Secondary Reading** |  |
| **Your notes for further follow-up reading** |  |

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| **Session**  **7** | **The pick-up**  **[RM]** |
| In this session we will look at how we can attach and detach constraints to control the interaction between multiple objects using constraints and ‘blend parent’. | |
| **Essential Reading** | * <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRETjE5smyo> |
| **Secondary Reading** |  |
| **Your notes for further follow-up reading** |  |

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| **Session**  **8** | **Return of the Flour Sack**  **[RM]** |
| Combining the elements of previous lectures, we will first set up our flour sack so that it can pick up and throw a ball, then we will animate it. This is a test before creating your main animation that combines as many principles as you can muster | |
| **Essential Reading** | * Hooks, E. (2005) Acting in Animation: A Look at 12 Films. Heinemann Drama |
| **Secondary Reading** |  |
| **Your notes for further follow-up reading** |  |

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| **Session**  **9** | **Walking with the Flour Sack**  **[RM]** |
| Using our trusty friend, we will explore the complexities of the walk cycle. This session will introduce concepts more suited to games production such as looping and on-the-spot animation. | |
| **Essential Reading** | * <http://www.11secondclub.com/> - Monthly competition entered by amateurs and pros alike. Great reference for good and bad animation, active community, great resources (Including rigs). |
| **Secondary Reading** |  |
| **Your notes for further follow-up reading** |  |

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| **Session**  **10** | **Ideas for your show reel**  **[RM]** |
| Discussion and workshop centred on your own animation show reel. Be prepared to show and tell. Animation is a brutal career if you cannot separate critique from personal criticism, this session is aimed at developing your animation ideas as much as it is the art of non-attachment. | |
| **Essential Reading** | * http://www.creativebloq.com/audiovisual/perfect-showreel-top-tips-9134570 |
| **Secondary Reading** |  |
| **Your notes for further follow-up reading** |  |

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| **Session**  **11** | **Tutorials**  **[RM]** |
| Tutorials: one 2 one with your lecturer.  Each student will have dedicated time to discuss ideas, progress and concerns relating to Animation project.  Guidance regarding compressing your videos so that they do not exceed the 300 mb cap | |
| **Essential Reading** | * https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8WKCBCblqw |
| **Secondary Reading** | * https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lI1EPnxJI2I |
| **Your notes for further follow-up reading** |  |

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| **Session**  **12** | **Tutorials**  **[RM]** |
| Tutorials: one 2 one with your lecturer.  Each student will have dedicated time to discuss ideas, progress and concerns relating to Animation project.  Guidance regarding compressing your videos so that they do not exceed the 300 mb cap | |
| **Essential Reading** |  |
| **Secondary Reading** |  |
| **Your notes for further follow-up reading** |  |

**Reading**

Read the essential reading before the class to help with the discussion in seminars. Follow-up reading is given to help you to go deeper into a subject and to provide leads (look in the bibliographies of the reading set) for doing more independent research required for the assessment.

**Tutorials**

You will be assigned a tutorial which will take place in Sessions 11 and 12. This tutorial allows you to talk with a tutor about your research and work-in-progress for your Animations. Bring all current work with you to get the most out of the session and prepare questions for the tutorial beforehand. This is an opportunity for you to get guidance on the development of your Animation and a chance to discuss how the body types and personality are communicated in your development.

**Assessment**

**Assessment 1: Animation principles 80%**

You will receive summative feedback on weekly animation principles exercises.

Formative assessment will be given upon submission of your final show reel, which will contain but is not limited to, your weekly exercises.

You will be creating ‘play blasts’ in Maya and editing the clips together in whichever video editing software you choose – basic training will be given in your final three weeks of this unit (using adobe premiere).

**Assessment 2: Blog 20%**

As soon as you begin this module, you will create a blog using *Blogger*, this will be updated weekly. The content should evaluate your own work and provide an up to date account of the theory and skills you learn.

**Formats & Presentation**

Please supply all animation videos in a conventional format (AVI, MOV, MP4) and upload to the learning space. Combine the various animations into one single video prior to upload.

Blog: Create blog using blogger and submit link in the learning space.

**Marking Criteria**

We will use the following criteria as guidance when we grade your Work. We’ve broken this down to help you understand how your grade was arrived at in the marking process.

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| *Animation* |
| Animation: Technical - Do your cycles clearly communicate their intention? |
| Animation: Character – Does your animation express unique Physiology & Personality? |
| *Blog* |
| Does your Blog describe and evaluate the principles of Animation and the techniques used in its creation? |

**Feedback**

You will receive formative feedback throughout your Animation sessions and also in your tutorial. Summative written feedback is given on your Animations and Blog once they are submitted for assessment.

If you have any questions about the module or assessment, please contact the module leader [Richard](mailto:tanya.krzywinska@falmouth.ac.uk) Milligan

We hope you enjoy this module. You can feedback your views of it through your student representative or through the module review form filled in at the end of the module.