Course Description
The heterogeneous set of practices and complex blend of visual art and (post)cinema that has informed the work of experimental animation since the early 20th century continues to open ever-expanding possibilities for understanding and making media. The animated image offers the potential to subvert, disrupt, distort, destabilize and critique formulations of human and non-human; defying and expanding limits of perception and material existence; challenging categories of gender, sex, race, nature, nation, labor, and self; and breaching boundaries of movement in time, and space. Throughout this hybrid seminar/studio class, we study experimental animation as an historically and culturally situated varied form, tendency, and social practice while working through creative prompts that combine materials, processes, and approaches, exploring both digital and analog techniques.

Learning Outcomes
By the successful completion of this course, students will have learned:

1. To recognize and describe the history of experimental animation and the literature and creative practices that both examine and inform it.
2. To bring concepts and questions addressed in feminist, queer, decolonial, Black, critical race, and disability studies to bear on creative animation practices.
3. To identify examples of artists and works that use experimental animation to address categories of gender, race, nature, nation, labor, self, other, time, and space.
4. To engage creatively with the techniques of animated image-making including collage, rotoscope, direct animation, pixilation, and motion graphics tools.
5. To individually and collaboratively create research-driven animated films and videos that engage audiences.
6. To experiment and take risks with digital and/or analog media that investigates the relationship between maker and media culture.
7. To research and design projects that respond creatively to critical prompts around analog and digital media forms.

Course Requirements

Required Texts
All required and recommended reading will be made available through Canvas.

Equipment/Materials Requirements
Hardware
- A digital camera (DSLR or mirrorless) or smart phone (android or iPhone) with camera and Stop Motion Studio Pro installed ($4.99)
- A computer that can run Adobe After Effects, Media Encoder, Photoshop, and After Effects (software available from University)
Some kind of tripod/stabilization device to keep your camera or phone from shaking. A remote Bluetooth shutter control is recommended but not required.

Software
We will use Adobe Photoshop, Premiere, and After Effects, all part of Adobe Creative Cloud. I will give brief demonstrations of these programs, for more detailed help you should watch the videos on Adobe’s site and use Lynda.com. I will post links to tutorials. As noted above, you may wish to purchase the Stop motion Studio Pro App and install it on your smart phone. You’ll be animating “things” and possibly drawing, painting, mark-making. You are only expected to use what you have on hand.

Mail supplied materials
I will be mailing all registered students the materials needed to complete the direct animation prompts (prompt #4 and prompt #5). You will need to mail completed work back to me to be digitized and shared in class by deadline specified in assignment description. Postage will be included.

Minimum Technology Requirements for Zoom
- Computer with current operating system
- Internet access sufficient for instructional tools like Canvas and Zoom (minimal internet access speeds of 800kbps upload and 1.0Mbps download are required).
- Headset (recommended)
- Webcam
- Microphone (computer or external)

Reference Resources
- The New School Libraries and Archives has made Lynda.com (now also through linkedin learning https://www.linkedin.com/learning) available to you for free. Lynda.com offers online software instruction and professional development tutorials, including video tutorials for Adobe Premiere.
- Lynda.com can be accessed through the "databases" tab on the library website (search for it by title under “L”). Once a user profile is created on the site, Lynda.com can also be accessed on mobile and tablet apps through linkedin learning.

Assessable Tasks
Expectation and criteria for each assignment will be distributed and discussed as assigned, but here are the basics:

Participation
- This includes being prepared to contribute to every class by organizing some of your thoughts and questions about the assigned reading in a shared mural board that we will discuss in class. Additional expectations for participation are specified below under “Attendance and Participation.”

Prompt #1: Collage exquisite corpse DUE 2.3.21 @4pm EST
- For this small group exercise, students collaborate as they explore image capture and experimentation with collage, motion, and sequencing while considering found objects, archives, self-reflexivity, and identity.

Prompt #2: Mutable morph (soft medium) DUE 2.17.21 @4pm EST
- Using mixed media charcoal, paint, chalk, rice (or digital tracing – rotoscope) or other soft medium, create an animated sequence that responds broadly to discussions of the haptic, the “poor” image, or experiential ways of knowing.

Prompt #3: One thing to another thing (multi-layer w/ rigid medium) DUE 3.3.21 @4pm EST
- Using mixed media paper collage or torn paper silhouette or another layered rigid medium, or digital composition, create an animated sequence that addresses notions of plasticity, fluidity, transformation, and expanded possibilities for expression.

Prompt #4: Phytogram philm (mail project) DUE (in mail) 3.10.21 @4pm EST
- Working in class 3.24.21
- Using materials you received in mail, create a phytogram out of plant materials directly on film emulsion.

Prompt #5: Direct documentation (mail project) DUE (in mail) 3.10.21 @4pm EST
- Workshop (in class) 3.24.21
Using materials you received in mail, create a direct film treatment using mixed media including marker, tape, printed images, etc. Consider discussions of border cinema and the documentary impulse.

**Project proposal + presentation**  
DUE 3.31.21 @4pm EST

You will choose a topic that you’d like to explore through your final project and present the proposal in class. Your final project may be a research-driven animated work or a written paper that addresses themes pertinent to the course (we can discuss expectations and scope in 1-on-1). The project should take the form that best suits your skills and interests. Ideally you will find a way to undertake a project that both engages with our course material and develops some aspect of your current creative or critical practice. Your 700- to 1000-word proposal should include the following: 1) A description of your proposed research topic and the critical issues or larger debates that are at stake; 2) A brief discussion of your topic’s significance, timeliness, relevance, etc.; 3) A description of your desired mode of presentation: do you plan to write a research paper or create an animation?; 4) A tentative bibliography of at least 8 sources, including at least four scholarly publications. In class you’ll each take no more than three minutes to (informally) share your plans (you are not required to use visuals, but you are welcome to include).

**Final project + share out**  
DUE 5.5.21 @4pm EST

Any research-based animation project should be accompanied by a 600- to 900-word support paper in which you address the critical, methodological, and design/aesthetic issues you aimed to explore through your work, explain how your approach aided in that exploration, and provide a bibliography listing the critical resources that informed the project. If submitting a research paper, it should be 4000- to 6000-words. You will prepare to present and share your projects during our final class meeting.

**Final Grade Calculation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prompt #1: Collage exquisite corpse</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prompt #2: Mutable morph (soft medium)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prompt #3: One thing to another thing (multi-layer with rigid medium)</td>
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<td>Prompt #4: Phytogram philm (mail project)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prompt #5: Direct documentation (mail project)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project proposal + presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final project + share out</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Course Design**

We will have a weekly Zoom meeting on Wednesdays, 4pm-6:40pm EST. The weekly Zoom meeting will be largely dedicated to discussion, screening, and workshopping. You will be invited to participate via chat, audio, or video. We will be using Canvas for accessing class materials and course modules.

**Attendance and Participation**

Our class is a mix of seminar, studio, and workshop, and its success depends on your regular attendance and reliable participation. We need each other to show up on time, having completed the readings, and prepared to engage constructively and respectfully with one another. Every week, you will respond to the assigned readings on a **mural** board. Responses may be graphic or notes, they may be questions or ideas. We will discuss how to engage with mural more during the first introductory class. See below, under “Course Policies and Procedures,” for more on our commitment to inclusion and respect.

The New School requires all credit students to attend every class and I am required to note attendance at the start of class. If you must be absent, please do your best to notify me in advance. One absence will not affect your grade (please, again, try to notify me at least 24 hours in advance). Two absences will result in a half letter grade reduction. Three absences will result in a full drop in a letter grade. Four absences and you will fail the class. Students who arrive more than 15 minutes late will be marked absent.
I recognize that we are living in precarious times and that the synchronous online format may be challenging. I promise, it can also be extremely generative, engaging, and fulfilling. In all cases, I am happy to work with you to develop strategies for project planning and time management as well as participation. My aim is to be sympathetic to the challenges students face both inside and outside the classroom and, likewise, I expect that you also respect my time and the collective agreements and trajectory for the class.

Attendance and participation are worth 25% of your final grade.

A note about the workload and “extra” readings on syllabus:
This is a hybrid studio/seminar where we will balance the study of experimental animation as a historically situated form, tendency, and social practice with skill-building and experimentation using a variety of tools. You will be reading, writing, looking, listening, discussing, practicing, making work, and workshopping throughout this class. I have made every effort to balance these modalities in order to enrich the learning experience and support critical thought and creativity. I am sensitive to the time it takes to complete a reading and to the time-consuming labor involved in completing an animation. I organized the syllabus with all that in mind. You will notice that the syllabus lists out “supplemental read” selections most weeks. Don’t be overwhelmed by this. I have included readings as “supplemental” if they engage or supplement the topics and activities planned for the week but may alternately be referenced by, replicate, repudiate, or build upon the week’s required readings and activities. I may at times summarize or refer to some of the concepts from the supplemental readings in class discussion. They are always worth a skim and will be helpful to you in preparing final research work or returning to at some point in your studies. My aim in including them on the syllabus is offer you further depth and breadth on a topic.

Course Outline (subject to change)

| PART 1: MECHANICS, MATERIALS, MUTABILITY AND MAGIC – PLACING ANIMATION EXPERIMENTS |
|---|---|---|
| WEEK | Date | Topics/Activities | Assignments |
| 1 | 1.20 | This first week is an introduction - to the course and to one another. | **supplemental read:** No reading is required for this week, but sharing several references that will, in part, inform my introduction and may be touchstones throughout the class and referenced by other authors we read in coming weeks:  
- Steve Reinke, “The World Is a Cartoon: Stray Notes on Animation,” *The Sharpest Point: Animation at the End of*
| 2 | 1.27 | This week’s topics include collage, found objects, worldmaking, and archives of identity and self-reflexivity and transformations.  
**exemplars:**  
Wangechi Mutu, Edward Owens, Carlos Santa, Akosua Adoma Owusu, Martha Colburn, Janie Geiser, Lewis Klahr, Stan VanderBeek, Wrik Mead, Peggy Ahwesh, Cauleen Smith, Julie Murray, Kelly Sears etc.  
**assign:**  
prompt #1: Collage exquisite corpse | **read:**  
**supplemental read:**  
| 3 | 2.3 | This week’s topics explore anxious borders: Tracing the “poor” lines of movement, the “haptic” and feeling the film.  
**exemplars:**  
William Kentridge, Rox Lee, Robert Breer, Mary Beams, Nathalie Djurberg, Karen Yasinsky, Ladislas Starevich, Caroline Leaf, Susan Pitt, Zoe Beloff, etc.  
**workshop:**  
prompt #1  
**assign:**  
prompt #2: Mutable morph (soft medium) | **read:**  
**supplemental read:**  
- Ryan Pierson, “Rotoscoping: Sentimental Relations,” *Figure and Force in Animation Aesthetics* (Oxford UP, 2020) 115 – 143.  
**due:**  
- prompt #1 |
| 4 | 2.10 | In this class, we’ll consider stopping and starting, flickers of time, trance and transformations.  
**exemplars:**  
Tabita Rezaire, Jodie Mack, Ojoboca, Lily Sue Sheng, Zeinabu irene Davis, Paul Clipson, Jordan Belson, etc.  
**workshop:**  
Audio inductions | **read:**  
**supplemental read:**  
This week’s topics include labor, automation, transformation, plasticity, metamorphosis and metaphors of animating trans-forms and insurgent aesthetics.

**exemplars:**
Harun Farocki, Heidi Kumao, Annapurna Kumar, Rox Lee, Trevor Panglen, The Brothers Quay, Jan Švenkmajer, Terence Nance, John Akomfrah, etc.

**workshop:**
prompt #2

**assign:**
prompt #3: One thing to another thing (multi-layer with rigid medium)

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This week we will be considering materiality, organic matter, mattering, scratch and direct animation.

**exemplars:**

**assign:**
prompt #4: Phytogram philm (due in mail before 3.1.21 @4pm EST)

**watch (in class):**

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**read:**

**supplemental read:**

**due:**
- prompt #2

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In this class we discuss unsettled borders and wild tongues.

**exemplars:**
Lin + Lam, Jackie Goss, Brenda López Zepeda, Amit Dutta, Suneil Sanzgiri, etc.

**workshop:**
prompt #3

**assign:**

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**read:**
- Helen Hill, Recipes for Disaster: A Handcrafted Film Cookbook (Helen Hill, 2005).

**supplemental read:**
- Helen Hill, Recipes for Disaster: A Handcrafted Film Cookbook (Helen Hill, 2005).

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**PART 2: DOCUMATIONS: ANIMACIES, ACTIONS, AND ANIMATED AGENCIES**

In this class we discuss unsettled borders and wild tongues.

**exemplars:**
Lin + Lam, Jackie Goss, Brenda López Zepeda, Amit Dutta, Suneil Sanzgiri, etc.

**workshop:**
prompt #3

**assign:**

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**read:**

**supplemental read:**
| **PART 3: ANIMATED SPACES AND INTERVALS OF RESISTANCE** |
|---|---|---|
| **11 4.7** | This week we will be meeting individually to discuss final project work. | Sign up for individual meeting |

### Prompt #5: Direct documentation (due in mail before 3.10.21 @ 4pm EST)


**Due:**
- Prompt #3

### Prompt #4

**Read:**

**Supplemental Read:**

### 8 3.10

In this class, we’ll consider animacies and the continuum of human/non-human agencies.

**Exemplars:**
Hsu Che-Yu, Larry Achiampong and David Blandy, Sondra Perry, Sandra Lahire, Sabrina Ratté, Ben Rivers, etc.

**Workshop (possible):**
Designing creative action

**Read:**

### NO CLASSES MARCH 15 – 21 – SPRING BREAK

### 9 3.24

In this class, we will discuss Hosea’s concept of “post-animation” in relation to ideas we’ve been working on throughout the semester.

**Exemplars:**
Lillian Schwartz, Sabine Gruffat, Hito Styerl, Jakolby Satterwhite, Sondra Perry, LaJuné McMillian, Jennifer Steinkamp, LuYang, Kristin Lucas, etc.

**Workshop:**
Prompt #4 Prompt #5

**Assign:**
Final project proposal

**Read:**

**Supplemental Read:**

**Due:**
- Project proposals

### 10 3.31

In this class, we consider fluidity, fluid dynamics, indigenous knowledge, futures, and wake work.

**Workshop:**
Project proposals

**Read:**

**Due:**
- Project proposals

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### 11 4.7

This week we will be meeting individually to discuss final project work.

Sign up for individual meeting
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Exemplars/Workshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 12   | 4.14 | This week’s topics include utopias and virtual utopias.  
**exemplars:** Claudia Hart, etc.  
https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/05/opinion/tech-nature-freedom.html |  
| 13   | 4.21 | This week we will be considering places, the displaced, and the outer space.  
**exemplars:** Simon Liu & Jennie MaryTai Liu, Semiconductor, etc. | - Joel McKim, “Speculative Animation: Digital Projections of Urban Past and Future,” First Published November 29, 2017.  
| 14   | 4.28 | This week’s topics include laughter, trauma, healing and the abject.  
| 15   | 5.5  | Final presentations | - Final projects |  
|      |      |                      | - Course evaluations |  

**University, College/School, and Program Policies**

**Academic Integrity**

Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, academic warning, disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, or dismissal from the university.

Students are responsible for understanding the University’s policy on academic honesty and integrity and must make use of proper citations of sources for writing papers, creating, presenting, and performing their work, taking examinations, and doing research. It is the responsibility of students to learn the procedures specific to their discipline for correctly and appropriately differentiating their own work from that of others. The full text of the policy, including adjudication procedures, is found at [http://www.newschool.edu/policies/](http://www.newschool.edu/policies/).

Resources regarding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it can be found on the Learning Center’s website: [http://www.newschool.edu/university-learning-center/student-resources/](http://www.newschool.edu/university-learning-center/student-resources/)


Grading Policies: [http://www.newschool.edu/registrar/academic-policies/](http://www.newschool.edu/registrar/academic-policies/)
Course Policies and Procedures

Inclusion and Respect
Modified from The New School’s Safe Zone declaration (thank you, Shannon Mattern): We in this classroom are dedicated to creating a welcoming environment for all members of the university community inclusive of race, ethnicity, national origin, culture, language, gender and gender expression, sexuality, religious and political beliefs, age, and ability. We’ll aim to celebrate our diversity and to respectfully negotiate differences in experience, understanding, and expression. We will stand against all forms of discrimination and oppression, whether directed against individuals or groups. We will also make an effort to respect one another’s individuality in our forms of address, which includes learning one another’s preferred names and pronouns.

If you experience anything in the classroom that undermines these values – or if there is anything I can do to better cultivate inclusivity and respect – please feel free to let me know. Likewise, if you are facing personal challenges inside or outside the classroom that are impacting your class performance, I’m happy to speak with you about strategies of accommodation, and to help you find the appropriate support resources at the university.

Changes to Syllabus
The above schedule is the most accurate version of my plans for the way things will unfold. However, even the best laid plans may need to be altered slighting and it is possible that I will find it necessary to make a few small changes to our schedule: we might host a guest who’s become available, I might decide to cut a couple of our readings or substitute a film over the course of the semester, etc. Any changes will be noted, with advance notice on our class Canvas page which will always be the most accurate and up-to-date “control center” for our class. Any revisions will only maintain or decrease, never increase, your workload.

Remote Learning Environment Expectations
Synchronous Learning Environment
- Download the Zoom application to your system prior to our first class for best performance (as opposed to using the Zoom website).
- Ensure your technology is ready ahead of time so as not to distract yourself or others as you login or troubleshoot. I recommend giving yourself a few extra minutes to login and “arrive” for class the first time you use Zoom.
- Do your very best to you have a reliable internet connection.
- Use headphones/earbuds to hear and be heard most clearly.
- Additional protocols and etiquette will be shared, but class agreements include:
  - All students indicate their name and preferred pronoun in Zoom video panel. You can change name by clicking on the dots in upper right of your video.
  - Using video is preferred when possible and, when used, care is taken with screen backgrounds to ensure they do not include flashing lights or other visuals that can make it hard for some people to participate. Participants are mindful as well of the background that appears behind them, keeping privacy considerations in mind.
  - Mute microphones during video sessions, unmuting when it’s your time to speak.
  - While in class, all participants concentrate exclusively on class conversation and activities.
  - Students use the raised hand feature in Zoom to indicate they wish to speak.
  - All participants are responsible for creating a safe, healthy, inclusive and belonging space.

Recording Synchronous Sessions
I will be recording our weekly Zoom meetings only if a student lets me know in advance that they will not be able to attend. I will make those recordings available to our class for the benefit of a student who was unable to attend. The recordings will be shared only with this class and deleted after the semester ends. If any students has concerns about participating in recorded meetings, they are encouraged to reach out to me directly.
Responsibility
Students are responsible for all assignments, even if they are absent. Late assignments, failure to complete the readings assigned for class discussion, and lack of preparedness for in-class discussions and presentations will jeopardize your successful completion of this course.

Delays
In rare instances (I don’t expect ever), if the instructor is delayed for synchronous sessions, students are expected to wait a minimum of thirty minutes for their arrival. In the event that instructor will miss a session entirely, an announcement will be made on Canvas indicating any work that should be completed before the next synchronous session.

Student Course Ratings (Course Evaluations)
During the last two weeks of the semester, students are asked to provide feedback for each of their courses through an online survey. They cannot view grades until providing feedback or officially declining to do so. Course evaluations are a vital space where students can speak about the learning experience. It is an important process which provides valuable data about the successful delivery and support of a course or topic to both the faculty and administrators. Instructors rely on course rating surveys for feedback on the course and teaching methods, so they can understand what aspects of the class are most successful in teaching students, and what aspects might be improved or changed in future. Without this information, it can be difficult for an instructor to reflect upon and improve teaching methods and course design. In addition, program/department chairs and other administrators review course surveys. Instructions are available online at http://www.newschool.edu/provost/course-evaluations-student-instructions.pdf.

Resources
The university provides many resources to help students achieve academic and artistic excellence. These resources include:

- University Libraries and Archives: http://library.newschool.edu (See also Reserves)
- University Learning Center: http://www.newschool.edu/learning-center
- Student Disability Services: www.newschool.edu/student-disability-services/
  If you are a student with a disability/disabled student, or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact the Student Disability Services (SDS) at studentdisability@newschool.edu, or 212-229-5626, to coordinate all reasonable accommodation requests.
- The New School Food Assistance: For more information on food assistance and additional resources, please click on the link below: https://www.newschool.edu/student-support-crisis-management/student-food-pantry-faq/
- Health and Wellness: For information about services and support available to New School students please click on the link below: https://www.newschool.edu/campus-community/health-wellness-support/