

3D Character Animation 2019

18th February to 7th June 2019 - The Animation Workshop, VIA UC

Course contents

Week 1	18 th to 22 nd February	Introduction to Maya
Week 2	25 th Feb. to 1 st March	Introduction to Maya
Week 3	4 th to 8 th March	Rigging
Week 4	11 th to 15 th March	3D Animation Basic
Week 5	18 th to 22 nd March	3D Animation Basics
Week 6	25 th to 29 th March	3D Animation Basics
Week 7	1 st to 5 th April	3D Animation Basics
Weekend	6 th to 7 th April	Acting workshop 1
Week 8	8 th to 12 th April	3D Animation Advanced – Acting
Week 9	15 th to 19 th April	3D Animation Advanced – Acting
Week 10	22 nd to 26 th April	3D Animation Advanced – Dialogue
Week 11	29 th to 3 rd May	3D Animation Advanced – Dialogue
Week 12	7 th to 8 th May	Acting workshop 2
Week 12	6 th , 9 th , 10 th May	Final project preparation
Week 13	13 th to 17 th May	Final Project: a 20-30 second animation short film
Week 14	20 th to 24 th May	Final Project
Week 15	27 th to 31 st May	Final Project
Week 16	3 rd to 7 th June	Final Project

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The Animation Workshop
VIA University College

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Format of teaching

We do not have any teachers on staff at The Animation Workshop, VIA UC. Instead, we bring in professional artists from studios to teach for a limited number of weeks. In general, the teacher will do lectures/demos in the mornings followed by exercises and project work in the afternoons. Hands-on sessions are accompanied by 1-on-1 feedback or dailies and weeklies with the whole group. The classroom is set up with a computer for each of the (up to) 16 participants, and a teacher computer hooked up to a projector, making it easy to switch between demos/lectures and hands-on work.

Course instructional method:

- Lectures, demonstrations, walk-throughs, hands-on work, workflow talks, exercises, with critique and advice.
- Dailies, weeklies and assignment presentations.
- All modules will include lectures and extensive hands-on experience. The specific exercises listed below are examples and are subject to change. All rigs are provided for the exercises.

Class hours

Normal class hours are 9:00 to 16:30, but evening/weekend homework must be expected.

3DCA 2019 detailed program

Introduction to Maya – 2 weeks

Teacher: Henrik Malmgren, SE. AV Generalist, CEO and founder of Good Job Studios.

The goal for the module is for the course participants to understand the Maya user interface, basic settings, functions and tools, and go through the elements of the Maya pipeline. Participants will create simple models using reference images, and texture, light and shade it. Exercise example: Participants will model an exterior and an interior set. Being an animation course, the modelling and texturing exercises are meant to give the participants an understanding of the software and the possibilities. The goal is NOT to have the participants model a character for animation, since you will be working with already modelled and rigged characters in the following weeks.

Rigging – 1 week

Teacher: Frederik Valentin Bjerre-Hyldgaard, DK. Technical animator at IO Interactive

The one week of rigging is designed to be an intro to rigging, so participants learn the terminology, know how to afterwards communicate with a rigger, and know how a rig is constructed. Participants are not trained to be riggers specifically. Exercise example: Rig a ball character with legs and feet. The exercise is scalable to include arms and hands.

3D Animation Basics – 4 weeks

Teacher: Christoffer Andersen, DK. Senior animator at TeamTO, France. *Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation* (2018), *Skylanders Academy*, season 1 & 2, *Barbar & The Adventures of Badou – Season 3*.

Participants will study the traditional animation principles and learn how to apply them in CG animation in Maya. The teacher will take the participants through a long range of basic exercises during the 4 weeks, from bouncing balls, music exercises, to walk cycles and weight shift exercises. At the



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end of the module, participants will be more at ease with the technical side of animation and Maya.

Acting Workshop I – 2 days

Teacher: Robert Bennett, USA. Acting teacher, director for animated films (Les Gobelins, The Animation Workshop, VIA UC, EMCA etc.)

This weekend workshop is closely linked to the following Acting module. Before this workshop, participants are presented with an assignment to be completed during the 2-week Acting module. This assignment will be the starting point for the weekend workshop. The content of the workshop will be warm up exercises, how to act for animation, getting comfortable acting for animation reference, getting (more) comfortable recording yourself, exploring the movements and acting of your characters, and developing your characters. The goal is for participants to create a unique character with a solid background story and characteristics. What will motivate the character to do what she does and how the character will react to what happens. A strong character will make it easier to come up with cool ideas for the scenes. Finally, participants shoot reference of themselves to use for the following module.

3D Animation Advanced – Acting – 2 weeks

Teacher: Mette Tange, DK. 3D character animator and Partner at Tumblehead Animation Studio. *Age of Sail* (2018), *Captain Underpants* (2017), *Sing* (2016), *Minions* (2015), *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 2* (2013).

The goal with the 2-week Acting module is for the participants to apply what they have learned during the basic weeks in a short shot. The module is structured as a mini production, where the participants choose from 5 different scenarios without dialogue to solve a given assignment, and then shoot reference, block, animate and polish their animations under the guidance of the teacher. The scenarios, props and character to be used will be provided, so the participants can focus on the animation. At the end of the module, participants will have finished a short (5-12 seconds) physical acting shot.

3D Animation Advanced – Dialogue – 2 weeks

Teacher: Fredrick Fassé, CAN. Lead Animation Supervisor at Atomic Cartoons. *LEGO Jurassic World: The Secret Exhibit* (2018) *Beat Bugs* (TV Series, 2016), *Ratchet & Clank* (2016), *Escape from Planet Earth* (2013), *Dead Rising 2* (video game, 2010).

The 2-week Dialogue module is also a mini production, and similar to the preceding Acting module. The goal for the participants is to learn and get hands-on experience doing facial animation, lip-sync, eyes, eye-darts, blinks etc. The steps are: Choose a short piece of dialogue (5 seconds), shoot reference, block, animate and polish the animation under the guidance of the teacher. Focus is on lip-sync and facial animation, through a medium shot from the waist up. The teacher will bring a choice of 5 short pieces of dialogue for the participants to choose from. Alternatively participants find 2-3 audio clips and the teacher helps select the most suited audio. The goal at the end of the module is for each participant to have a finished, short dialogue shot, with one character speaking. If there are two, one should be off-screen.

Acting Workshop II – 2 days

Teacher: Robert Bennett, USA. Acting teacher, director for animated films (Les Gobelins, The Animation Workshop, VIA UC, EMCA etc.)



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Participants are expected to have some ideas for their final projects, short clips, between 15-20 seconds, with some gag or action going on. For this second acting workshop, participants will develop and hone the acting for their final projects, and shoot reference clips of themselves. We will try to push the development of the participants' characters. The better you know your character, the easier it is for you to animate her. If participants have a sound clip already, they are asked to bring it for the workshop. The workshop will take place on Tuesday and Wednesday on the 12th week of the course.

Final Project Preparation – 3 days

Teacher: No teacher

The remaining 3 days of this week are dedicated for the preparation of the final projects. Participants will polish their idea, plan their shots, shoot reference if they did not already, do a quick thumbnail storyboard, sketch some “golden poses”, and in general recharge their batteries for the final stretch of the course.

Final Project – 4 weeks

Teacher: Nils Lundmark-Searing, CAN. Character animator at Next Level Games, Vancouver. Credits include *Game of Thrones* (E04S07), *The Angry Birds Movie* (2016), *The Smurfs 2* (2013), and *Hotel Transylvania* (2012).

CG assistance during the final week: Henrik Malmgren, SE. AV Generalist, CEO and founder of Good Job Studios.

The 4 final project weeks are another mini-production during which participants produce a 20 second shot. No scenarios to choose from, the participants will have to come up with an idea themselves. The module is a continuation of the previous modules, so participants can choose to focus on a dialogue piece again or concentrate on more physical, pantomime acting.

The goal is for the participants to get the story out of the way as quickly as possible, and then plan and begin blocking the animation. Participants are encouraged to limit the story and keep it very, very simple, so they can spend as much time animating and polishing as possible. The clips need to be super short without a grand story. A short visual gag works much better. Keep it simple, keep it short!

The course ends with a presentation for the school, where each participant presents her final project, and a nice dinner at a restaurant in Viborg.

OPTIONAL: Trip to The Annecy International Animation Film Festival

Festival dates: 10th to 15th June 2019.

The 3DCA course includes a bus trip (Viborg - Annecy - Viborg) and student accreditation to The Annecy International Animation Film Festival. More info is available from the course organizer.

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