

Digital Media Studies
The University of Trinidad and Tobago

Curricula Proposal Diploma in Animation

Submitted to the Academic Council of the
University of Trinidad and Tobago
July 31st, 2008



Character Design Workshop, May 2008

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and Vice President of Digital Media Studies at the University of Trinidad and Tobago.

1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Animation Diploma is designed to improve and develop the skills of potential animators in the Caribbean. The courses focus on core skills and techniques necessary for successful character animation, story development, animation principles and digital techniques. Participants will work intensively in either 2D (drawn) or 3D (model) using two main software programs, Toon Boom Digital Pro for 2D and Alias Wavefront Maya for 3D.

Participants will be exposed to the principles of acting, timing, staging, character development, life drawing and motion. This is integral in perfecting their skills as animators. This course will run for two years and is intensively taught. As part of the programme, participants will be exposed to a series of workshops, and professional master classes. This will also include script development and storyboarding.

The Program Administrator, Camille Selvon Abrahams, has worked in animation on short films and productions since 2001 and is able to provide participants with a capable and professional level of support. The other facilitators are specialists in their fields and will provide support training and materials to make this program a rounded and holistic experience.

AIMS:

- To provide an intensive training programme in the principles of animation using either 2D (drawn), 3D (model) techniques
- Encourage and promote critical approaches to design through the delivery of a programme created to introduce students from the Caribbean to expert animation techniques
- Provide hands on training, master classes and professional experience through the delivery of expert training from internationally recognised animators.

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the programme participants will have:

- Attained an appreciation of the techniques of animation principles
- Improved their knowledge and understanding of the skills associated with animation both in 2D and 3D.
- Improved their proficiency in character design and character animation
- Understood the importance of critically examining the implication of applying cultural and social thought to the development of ideas for the world stage
- Gained professional knowledge and understanding of the overall animation industry
- Improved their drawing, and kinetic skills and understanding in relation to animation
- Understood the techniques involved in successful stop-motion animation
- Produced a show reel demonstrating the techniques learnt.

2. CURRICULUM

The curriculum includes shared courses with the Caribbean Institute of Fashion and Design (CIFD) during the first year of the program.

YEAR ONE

Trimester 1: 13 credit hrs 15 contact hrs	Course Code	Credit Hours	Lecture Hours	Tutor Hours	Contact Hours
Shared CIFD – Drawing From Observation		3	3		3
Shared CIFD: CULTURAL CONCEPTUALISATION (Critical Thinking I)		3	3		3
Principles of Animation		3	3		3
Digital Media Concepts Software Tools I – 2D Animation Software and Photoshop		3		3	3
Scripting and Story Development		1	3		3
Trimester 2: 12 credit hrs 12 contact hrs	Course Code	Credit Hours	Lecture Hours	Tutor Hours	Contact Hours
History of Animation		3	3		3
Shared CIFD: Figure Drawing Movement and Motion		3	3		3
Shared CIFD: Software Tools II Analog and Digital Technologies		3	3		3
Communication Design II - Editing Software		3		3	3
Trimester 3: 12 credit hrs 12 contact hrs	Course Code	Credit Hours	Lecture Hours	Tutor Hours	Contact Hours
Story board development		3	3		3
Animatic Development		3		3	3
Software Tools III and Design Project		3		3	3
Communication II (Oral)		3	3		3

YEAR TWO

Trimester 4: 15 credit hrs 15 contact hrs	Course Code	Credit Hours	Lecture Hours	Tutor Hours	Contact Hours
Stop-Motion Animation		3		3	3
Acting For Animation		3	3		3
Character Design and Development		3	3		3
Cultural Conceptualisation (Critical Thinking II and Ethics)		3		3	3
Animation Entrepreneurship and Marketing (Incubation Program)		3	2		3
Trimester 5: 11 credit hrs 12 contact hrs	Course Code	Credit Hours	Lecture Hours	Tutor Hours	Contact Hours
2D Animation using Toon Boom Technology		3		3	3
3D Animation Using Maya Software		3		3	3
Final Animatic Production		3		3	3
Final Script Production		2	2		3
Trimester 6: 12 credit hrs 12 contact hrs	Course Code	Credit Hours	Lecture Hours	Tutor Hours	Contact Hours
Software Tools III and Design Project		3	3		3
Design Project Analysis		3		3	3
Final Animation Short production		3		3	3
Student Screening		3	3		3

Total Credit Hours: 75

Total Contact Hours: 78

3. COURSE CONTENT

All participants are required to study the following core modules listed below then go on to specialise in either 2D(drawn) using Toon Boom or 3D(model) using Alias Maya.

YEAR ONE CORE MODULES:

- 1) **LIFE DRAWING WITH MOVEMENT** – A series of intensive sessions where participants consolidate their knowledge and understanding of movement through drawing, design and movement of the human body.
Facilitator Erica Russell
- 2) **CULTURAL CONCEPTUALISATION** – Popular Culture and Mythology: The Development of a Character through experimental research. Participants will explore cognitive approaches specific to understanding and critiquing on the relevance of popular contemporary animation characters to a modern Trinidad & Tobago society. This workshop is intended to encourage participants to engage in discussions on the analysis of design for animation.
Facilitator Mario Lewis.
- 3) **SCRIPT, CHARACTER AND STORYBOARD ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT**–Students will be exposed to traditional techniques of character design and story development. They would be shown the process involved in the development of the Character Model Sheet. They would explore techniques used for the creation of a brainstorming chart and the Three Act Structure for script development.
Facilitator, Camille Selvon Abrahams, Animation Program Administrator
- 4) **DIGITAL MEDIA STUDIES**– A study of Digital Media and its relevance for creative ideas. The study of Synthetics Actors, Immersive Environments and User Generated Content. Concepts in Analog to Digital media analysis and theory of Analog and Digital color imagery, display and representation.
Facilitator, Professor Michael Smith.

OPTION MODULES:

- 5) **PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE** – visits will be organised to the University of Trinidad and Tobago from representatives of international Animation studios example Passion Pictures UK and independent professional animators from professional studios worldwide. Students will also be required to attend and participate in the Annual Anima Caribbean Animation Festival. Students will be able to speak with participants and have their work critiqued by industry professionals.

YEAR TWO CORE MODULES:

- 1) **STOP-MOTION ANIMATION** – A short course in stop-motion animation using latex puppets. All essential consumable materials for the course are supplied. Model animators use a StopMotionPro workstation with a professional 3-chip video camera, lighting rig and video editing software. Students do the bulk of their work using an armature puppet with latex structure and clothing.
- 2) **ACTING FOR ANIMATION** – This is a series of workshops that focuses on the importance of acting in animation. Performance is considered paramount to the development of successful character animation. This is studied as a way of understanding the kinetic subtleties of character development for animation. Introductory exercises include lessons in techniques used to convey thoughts and emotions such as fear and excitement.
- 3) **2D ANIMATION** - Through a series of studies and exercises using Toon Boom Digital Pro Software, drawing and design skills are developed, which aims to improve the application of drawing skills to the design, movement and articulation of 2D characters. The experience of life drawing and performance is assimilated into the 2D animation module. At the end of the module participants produce a short show reel of work.
- 4) **3D ANIMATION** – through a series of studies and experiments using Maya 3D software, kinetic skills and techniques are developed, which aim to improve kinetic skills and understanding of 3D character animation with models and puppets. The experience of life drawing and performance is assimilated into the 3D animation module. At the end of the module participants produce a short show reel of work.
- 5) **FINAL ANIMATIC AND SCRIPT** – For their final production students will be required to complete a full length, timed animatic supported by the final script for production.
- 6) **FINAL ANIMATION SHORT** – Students will be required to apply all their training to complete a short production. At the end of the course, a screening of their work will take place, at which point representatives from leading studios will be present. This is an opportunity for participants to be 'talent-spotted' and to gain work experience or employment.

OPTION MODULES:

- 7) **PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE** – visits will be organised to the University of Trinidad and Tobago from representatives of international Animation studios example Passion Pictures UK and independent professional animators from professional studios worldwide. Students will also be

required to attend and participate in the Annual Animae Caribe Animation Festival. Students will be able to speak with participants and have their work critiqued by industry professionals.

4. RECOMMENDED READING

1. TRADITIONAL ANIMATION

The Animator's Survival Kit: by Richard Williams

Cartoon Animation - by Preston Blair

The Illusion of Life - by Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston

2. WRITING AND DIRECTING FOR ANIMATION

Animation from Script to Screen - by Shamus Culhane

The Human Figure in Motion - Eadweard Muybridge

Film Directing Shot by Shot Visualizing from Concept to Screen - Steven D. Katz

3. COMICS

How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way - by Stan Lee, John Buscema

Comics & Sequential Art - by Will Eisner

4. DRAWING

Perspective Made Easy - Ernest Norling

Perspective Drawing (How to Draw and Paint series #29) by Ernest Norling

Figure Drawing For All It's Worth - Andrew Loomis

Drawing the Head and Figure - Jack Hamm

The Human Machine - George Bridgman

The Art of Animal Drawing: Construction, Action Analysis, Caricature - Ken Hultgren

5. FACULTY

Camille S Abrahams - CAMILLE SELVON ABRAHAMS is an award winning multi-media producer & animator who returned to Trinidad & Tobago after spending five years honing her animation and multi-media production skills in the United Kingdom. Her Final Year animation 'The MasterPEACE', won the Royal Television Society Award in London. She is the Founder and Festival Director of Animae Caribe Animation and New Media Festival, the Caribbean's first animation and new media festival. She is currently at the University of Trinidad and Tobago in the Digital Media department and is the coordinator for the animation program at the University. She recently completed her second animated short film 'The Vegetarian Super Machine' which was

funded by the Trinidad and Tobago Film Company. Camille Recently launched Full Circle Studio, a state of the art design studio that focuses on animation, new-media production and training.

Prof Michael Smith - Dr. Michael Smith is the Chairman of the Information Communications Technology Program and Vice President of Digital Media Studies at the University of Trinidad and Tobago. He has developed seminal audio and image processing systems to analyze video content and improve video search, recommendation and visualization. Dr. Smith holds a PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering from Carnegie Mellon University, a Master's in Electrical Engineering from Stanford University, and a Bachelor's degree from Tuskegee University and North Carolina A&T State University.

Erica Russell - Erica Russell is an Oscar Nominated Animator U.K. and consultant to the Animation Program. She is the founder of Eyeworks, an animation studio that specializes in commercials and music videos, including an award winning one-minute spot for London's Virgin Megastore. She also made her first film, *Feet of Song*, for Channel 4 TV. This was awarded the British Film Institute's award for "Best British Animated film of 1989", selected as outstanding film of the year at the London Film Festival, and in 1991 was awarded a personal prize at the Odense Film Festival.

Mario Lewis - Mario Lewis has an Ma in Fine Arts and serves as a research fellow with The Academy at UTT for Arts, Letters, Culture and Public Affairs. School for Studies in Learning, Cognition and Education. Mario is one of Trinidad's most established young artists. His art has been exhibited at Museums and Galleries around the world including Cuba, France, London and Germany.

Professor Joan Ashworth, Consultant - Professor Ashworth is the head of the Animation department at the Royal College of Art and Design, London. She is an artist working in Moving Image with a background in stop-frame animation. Ashworth trained at the National Film and Television School graduating in 1987 with her short film *The Web* based on Mervyn Peake's *Titus Groan*. *The Web* was shown at film festivals worldwide winning the Mari Kuttna Prize for Best British Animation 1987 and was broadcast on Channel 4. Ashworth co-founded 3 Peach Animation through which she directed many commercials, title sequences and stings for TV and cinema, including the opening titles for Tim Burton's *Batman*. Ashworth joined the RCA in 1994 becoming Professor of Animation in 1998. Since joining the RCA Ashworth has made stings for BBC1's Christmas campaign and contributed to *Ceremony of Innocence* CD-ROM based on Nick Bantock's books, *Griffen and Sabine*. Recently, Ashworth completed a 10 minute film *How Mermaids Breed* inspired by Bronze Age Cycladic fertility figures, the drawings of Henry Moore, and Birling Gap Beach, Sussex.

Pollywood Studios Dotti Colvin and Allan Lewis Consultants - Dotti Colvin and Alan Lewis have between them over 25 years training and production experience in traditional animation, illustration and Maya 3D technology. They are Certified Autodesk Instructors and members of the Autodesk Development Network. They are specialist in the area of 3D Computer Generated Imagery and are trainers at the Reputed Escape Studios in London one of Europe's most reputable Animation instruction school.

The program will hire three additional full-time faculty members for the start of the September, 2009 semester.

6. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The following globally renowned organizations have been in discussion with the Digital Media Studies unit and have expressed a strong interest in playing key roles in the development and execution of the DMS

Ms Joan Ashworth – *Head of Animation Department- Royal College of Art, U.K.*

The Royal College of Art is the world's only wholly postgraduate university of art and design, specialising in teaching and research. "We are enthusiastic about all of the initiatives that you have described, It is exciting to see the emerging animation talent being showcased in the festival and we want to support the development of good design, great animation skills and socially relevant and imaginative content in the film-makers work. I hope that animation education will blossom in Trinidad enabling individual voices to champion the unique and particular thoughts and concerns of Trinidadians to enrich the study and industry of animation and inform the wider world."

Hugo Sands – *Managing Director-Passions Pictures U.K.*

"If I can be useful to further the development of the DMS I would be very willing to do so. Animation and media education is a complicated subject as I have discovered from my participation in the Animation Forum of Skillset, a UK Government initiative to improve animation education in the UK. It is complicated because it encompasses art and technology and many different skills, but it is rewarding and, with the growth of digital media, is an expanding field.

Joan Vogelesang – *CEO-Toon Boom, Canada*

"As mentioned, we would be very honored to help you foster and develop an animation industry in the Caribbean region and make it a similar, if not greater, success to what Toon Boom experienced in India." (Karina Bessoudo- Director of Marketing- Toon Boom). Toon Boom Animation Inc. is the worldwide leader in animation software solutions. In 2005, Toon Boom was granted the Primetime Emmy® Engineering Award by the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences for its significant

contribution made to the animation industry targeted for television, in North America and throughout Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Samuel Quatery - Senior Partner, Animation Africa, Ghana /Uk

“Your festival and program may be young but it looks like it’s made quite an impact judging from the impressions I get and I pray it continues to grow. We are eager to move this industry so we will support efforts that are made in that direction I am excited to know that there are serious efforts to push animation. We need platforms like this where we can meet and share our stories with the world. Keep it up and keep me updated”.

7. OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATES OF THIS PROGRAM

Currently there are many opportunities existing for graduates from this program. Animation and new media is an exciting emerging industry and as such, possibilities are available on many levels and in many areas.

- **INTERNATIONAL** – The Toon Boom Training will allow students to be eligible for work in any International production company using TB Technology. At the moment there is actually a shortage of animators in countries like India and Singapore.
- **OUTSOURCED CONTRACTS WITH EXISTING STUDIOS** – Currently there is a drive by Toon Boom to develop studios for outsourcing in the Caribbean. There are two existing possibilities that will be needing animators to fill positions. Full Circle Studio in North Trinidad and Collier Morrison and Belgrove in Port of Spain. UTT is also considering the creation of outsourcing studios in Trinidad and Tobago
- **EXISTING STUDIOS FOR LOCAL CONTENT** – Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean is seen as a hot spot for Creative content. There is a constant need for local and regional creations. A 2008 report by UNESCO states, in the contemporary world, a new development paradigm is emerging that links the economy and culture, embracing economic, cultural, technological and social aspects of development at both the macro and micro levels. Central to the new paradigm is the fact that creativity, knowledge and access to information are increasingly recognized as powerful engines driving economic growth and promoting development in a globalizing world. This program is certain to impact on the creative economy of the region.

8. CONNECTIONS TO OTHER PROGRAMS

The animation program will develop connections to other departments throughout the University of Trinidad and Tobago. The partnerships will provide interdisciplinary collaborations for curriculum enhancement, research, and industrial and community outreach. The animation program faculty have established initial academic and research partnerships with the following programs:

- Information Communications Technology (ICT)
- Centre for Innovation, Design, Entrepreneurship and Strategy (C-IDEAS)
- Biomedical Engineering Program
- The Academy at UTT for Arts, Letters, Culture and Public Affairs

9. APPLICATIONS

Entry requirements for this program will be in accordance with general UTT admission policy. Passes in a minimum of 5 CXC, CSEC General Proficiency Level (Grades I, II III) or equivalent GCE O-Levels including Maths and English Language. The person who does not have such qualifications but who demonstrates original creative output with a focus on computer animation and graphics will also be considered for entry. In addition a portfolio should include evidence of competence in a range of art and design disciplines. A sound knowledge of computer programs like Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and After Effects and any other design software will be an asset.

Due to a previous successful short course conducted at UTT JSDTI Campus in May 2008 there is currently a group of 10 – 15 participants already available for this program. The first year will be used as a form of evaluation and feedback. We can use these students with expertise in animation so as to receive feedback on how to improve and enhance the curriculum for the next year. Future applicants may come from a variety of backgrounds ranging from film, media, illustration, computer graphics, sculpture, fine art and design. Overall, we will be looking for commitment to the development of personal animation skills, and evidence of creative and technical ability to undertake the course modules.

What makes this program unique from any other animation skills based training program in the Caribbean, is that we have the support of a wide range of top animation studios including Passion Pictures UK, Ginko Animation UK, Toon Boom Animation in Canada and independent professional animators from around the world. Professional animators, model makers, producers and sound specialists from the industry are all willing to contribute seminar sessions to the course programme, making for a rich and unique learning experience.

10. COURSE DATES

Start date September 2008

Deadline for applications 31th July 2008

Fees: GATE ASSISTED

For details application forms, please check www.u.tt/media/animation

Provisional Calendar Year 1 (2008-2009)

TRIMESTER 1	September 2008 – December 2008
Sept 1	Classes Begin
Dec 12	Classes end - Exams & evaluations
TRIMESTER 2	January 2009 – April 2009
Jan 5	Classes Begin
April 14-18	Classes end - Exams & evaluations
TRIMESTER 3	April 2009 – August 2009
April 27	Classes Begin
July 31	Classes end - Exams & evaluations