

storytelling through computer animation

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Hours: T,W,R 2-3:30 or appt.

Meeting Times: Tuesday, Thursday 11:00am - 12:20pm
Room 118 or csLab, Science Center

What is *your* story?

Summary

Today's technologically-rich world of cell phones, Facebook, and YouTube keeps us connected like never before. Yet, our "sharing" comes in bite-size exchanges – rarely is there time to tell *your* story. Telling stories can communicate, recreate and preserve our cultures, memories, and traditions. This course is a combination of seminar and hands-on computing to expose you to new modes of and practice with telling your own stories. In the seminar

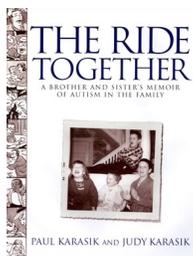
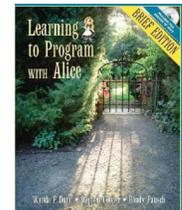


portion, the readings, your writing, and discussions will focus on good stories, in particular on graphic novels as a successful storytelling genre. In the lab, you will use a gallery of computer-animated 3D characters and virtual worlds to spark story ideas. You will learn to program social interactions between characters as a means to the end of storytelling using the programming language Alice. The software Comic Life in conjunction with other web tools will facilitate the construction of your tales.



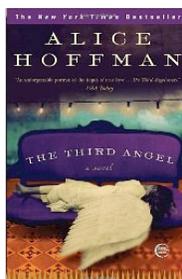
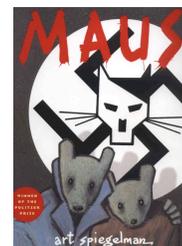
Books

Dann, W., Cooper, S., Pausch, R. (2008). Learning to Program with Alice (2nd Ed). Prentice Hall.



Karasik, Paul and Karasik, Judy (2004). The Ride Together: A Brother and Sister's Memoir of Autism in the Family. Washington Square Press.

Spiegelman, Art (1986). Maus I and II. Pantheon Books.



Hoffman, Alice (2009). The Third Angel: A Novel. Three Rivers Press.

I recommend that you also buy a 3-ring binder.

Goals of this First Year Seminar:

This seminar is an opportunity for you to foster a new identity, that is, the identity of you as a scholar. The semester of work associated with this course includes reading, study, writing, discussion, oral presentations, and computing.

Our goals include:

- (0) sharpening your skills in **evaluating** the graphic novel genre as a medium for storytelling
- (1) **increasing your confidence** in asking and responding to difficult questions
- (2) achieving new successes when **expressing yourself** in a group and or larger audience
- (3) raising your confidence in **writing** and **creating** your own stories
- (4) heightening your skills in **marshalling evidence**, including full and complete referencing
- (5) reaching a new level of **computing competency** and applying computing to new areas

Working on these goals is to practice the stuff of scholarship: confident presentations, digging for information, creative and professional writing, an ability to solve hard problems with computing, including writing software when what you want is not out there. Learn to do these well, practice, start over, study again, take them with you. In sports, in art, or drama, it takes patience and hard work to make a powerful move. Likewise in scholarship, it will take patience and hard work for you to “make a powerful move.”

Your Grade:

Things to do	Grading Percents	Frequency/Due
Participate in class discussions	10%	<i>always ...</i>
Attend three (3) campus talks/performances/exhibits	5%	1) Alice Hoffman talk Thur, Sept 23 rd , 5pm 2) <i>you pick and tell me</i> 3) <i>you pick and tell me</i>
Labs	5%	in lab as needed
4 Writing Assignments	25% overall	
w0: Graphic novel summary	3%	Tue, Sept 07
w1: Book Review	7%	Tue, Sept 21
w2: Your comics topic	7%	Thur, Oct 07
w3: Historical analysis of the early fears of comics	8%	Thur, Dec 02
Alice Programming Assignments	25% overall	
a1: Intro to Alice	5%	Tue, Sept 28
a2: Interacting Characters	5%	Tue, Oct 19
a3: Conditionals and loops	5%	Tue, Nov 02
a4: Events	10%	Tue, Nov 09
<i>Your story</i> (final project)	30% overall	
v1 Design	5%	Thur, Nov 11
v2 Demo/Presentation	5%	Thur, Nov 18
Final In-class Presentation	5%	Dec 07 or 09
Final Story Submission	15%	Thur, Dec 09

Late Submissions:

Due is due. Always turn in whatever you have on time. Something turned in on time is much better than not having it accepted because it is late. Late is not an option. (Good, glad we can all agree with this.) Note: **Alice Programs** are due on various dates (see detailed syllabus); however, since I know from experience that many students like to use the last night for testing, I will allow you to submit your programs until 5am the following day. For example, **Program a1 is due TUE, Sept 28th, but you can submit it electronically until 5am WED, Sept 29th -- Careful! The course website (onCourse) makes it appear as if the program is due on WED, but remember, that means WED at 5am!**

Honor Code Revisited:

It goes without saying that all submitted work will be the student's own, in keeping with the Wheaton Honor Code, unless the assignment has assigned groups. For labs, you may get "help" from fellow classmates, but remember that all completed work must be your own. Use discretion; don't ask your colleague for "the" answer. However, I do encourage you to discuss the problem in general, such as the type of statements or functions one might use. For programming assignments, your answers and software must be your own from beginning to end. Here is an analogy. Almost no one would ever "use/steal" a line or two from another person's poem. Consider it the same with your programs. Don't "borrow/use" lines or sections of code from another classmate. Your program is (like) your poem; everyone's program should be unique. Be wise. If a colleague is asking you for too much help, be honest and remind them your program is just that, *your* program.

Tips for working on your own

- (0) It is expected that you spend at least **2-3 hours** on reading, study, and preparation for every 90 minutes of lecture and discussion.
- (1) It is expected that you spend at least 4-8 hours per week on your current programming assignment. WARNING: Programmers typically underestimate the time it takes to complete a software project; 4-8 hours per week on your programming assignment may be one of those "underestimations."

In classroom "LABS"

- (0) The computer work in class (labs) are a critical part of the course. In a way, it is your time to "hack", solve unique problems, and show that you can work hard on the problem at hand. Your labs will prepare you to work on your next programming project. You must be in lab to get credit for the session. If you happen to miss a lab, you are strongly encouraged to do it on your own time, but please do not ask for credit.
- (1) In order to best grasp the material presented in the lab, I strongly suggest that you completely redo any labs that you find difficult. (Read that last sentence again, unless of course you've already reread it once.)

HELP

*Please don't wait too long before you see me;
a quick chat in my office can often clear things up.
I'm here often ...*

Accommodations for Disabilities

In compliance with the Wheaton College policy and equal access laws, Dean Wilhelm is available to discuss appropriate accommodations that may be recommended for students with disabilities. Requests for accommodations are to be made during the first two weeks of the semester so that timely and appropriate arrangements can be made.

Students are required to register with Denyse Wilhelm, Assistant Dean of Academic Resources and Disability Services, ADA/504 Coordinator, whose office is located in Kollett Hall, first floor at the Filene Center for Academic Advising and Career Services. Contact ext. 8215 to schedule an appointment, or email Dean Wilhelm at wilhelm_denyse@wheatoncollege.edu.

Day Timah (I'm from Maine so I can make fun of Northeastern USA accents ☺)

Thur Sept 02

"hello FYS"

review of syllabus and onCourse ("moodle") site

Part I: A historical timeline of "comics" -- Hieroglyphics to ...

Class trip: "Library Stacks" to find a graphic novel ...

2do: Read (two items):

- (i) Begin reading master storyteller Alice Hoffman's The Third Angel (see (a) below)
- (ii) Find a comic or graphic novel in the library stacks (see (b) below).

Due next class (Tue, Sept 07):

- (a) a schedule that shows how you will finish The Third Angel by Tue, Sept 14.
 - your schedule *must* explicitly indicate how you will read this book **twice**; the first time just to enjoy; the second time to take detailed notes
- (b) a one page summary (single space, 12 point font, Times) of your graphic novel/comic

Tue Sept 07

Due today: (a) **detailed reading schedule** for finishing The Third Angel by next Tue 14th
(b) w0: a one-page, typed (professional!) summary of a graphic novel/comic

Part II: A historical timeline of "comics"

csLab: "20+ things you need to know how to do in MS Word"
(bring your laptop if you want to practice on your own box)



Thur Sept 09

Part III: A historical timeline of "comics"

2do:

- be prepared next Tuesday for a detailed discussion of The Third Angel
 - * in your notes, create a (set of) **family tree diagrams** to indicate the relationships between characters that appear in each Parts I, II, and III
 - * in your notes, keep careful track of **physical details of each character**
- read some online book reviews (e.g., @amazon.com, NYTimes, etc)
- w1: written Book Review of The Third Angel will be due Tue, Sept 21

Tue Sept 14

Discussion of Hoffman's The Third Angel

2do:

w1 The Third Angel Book Review will be due on Tue, Sept 21

w2 – Pick/research an item, author, or historical event on the timeline of comics; Your topic for your Comic character (w2) is due: Thur Sept 16



Thur Sept 16



csLab: continued discussion of Hoffman's The Third Angel

Use of Alice v3.0beta to create avatars for the characters in The Third Angel

Your topic (typed on a single sheet with your name) from the timeline of Comics is **due today**

2do:

w1 The Third Angel Book Review is due in class next meeting

Tue Sept 21

w1 The Third Angel Book Review is due today

Reference Librarian (and graphic novel guru) Mason Brown discusses and demos online library tools for finding resources for literary criticism of comics and graphic novels

2do:

An **outline** and (a start to a typed) **list of references** is due: Thur, Sept 23

Thur Sept 23

Alice Hoffman visits today: Talk at 5pm (location TBD).

w2: Outline and references due today

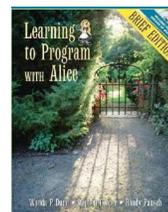
Lab: Introduction to “Alice”

2do: Install Alice **v2.2** on your own computer.

2do: Read Alice text: Foreward, Preface, and Ch1 p1-16.

2do: Complete **a1: #4 or #5 p17 – Due Tue Sept 28.**

2do: Begin Paul and Judy Karasik's The Ride Together.



Mon Sept 27

Dinner at President's House tonight! 6-7pm (Don't be late! ☺)

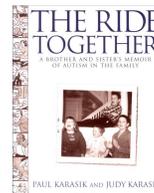
Tue Sept 28

a1 due: Be ready to demo #4 or #5 p17 in lab.
csLab: More Alice today.

2do: Continue w2-research for your timeline paper using new literary criticism resources Mason showed us -- w2 due on Thur, Oct 07.

2do: Read Alice p16-25 -- Storyboarding

2do: Finish Paul and Judy Karasik's The Ride Together



Thur Sept 30

Discussion: Paul and Judy Karasik's The Ride Together

Tue Oct 05

w2 due on Thur, Oct 07

Lab: Alice – Section 2.2 – Working with the “Chap02-03-04FirstEncounter.a2w” world

2do: Read Alice p26-38, Repeat the lab at home
Read Alice p40-42 (The *vehicle* property): Can your chicken ride a horse?

Thur Oct 07

w2 due today

csLab: more Alice

Mon-Tue Oct 11-12

Fall BREAK

Thur Oct 14

csLab: Alice – Exercises 2.2 -- #3 then #4



2do: Read Maus: A Survivor's Tale (Book 1) by Art Spiegelman for Tue, Oct 19

2do: Check out Spiegelman's bio online [see onCourse]



2do: a2 Alice – Modify today's lab. Create a world with interacting characters.

Try to use as many of the features of Alice that you have learned so far.

a2 Due: Tue, Oct 19 – submit via onCourse

Tue Oct 19

a2 due today

Discussion: Maus (Book 1)



2do: Read Spiegelman's Maus: And Here My Troubles Began (Book 2)

Thur Oct 21

Discuss Maus (Book 2)

Tue Oct 26

Lab: Alice – Programming for real ...

- built-in functions for objects
- simple control structures



2do: Read Alice p49 – 59, bottom of 62-65

2do: Complete Exercise #1 in 3-1 on p66 for class on Thur, Oct 28

Thur Oct 28

Exercise #1 in 3-1 on p66 **due today in lab**

Lab: Alice – Repetition with a loop

2do: Read Alice p61-62, 68

2do: **a3 due Tue Nov 02**

Tue Nov 02

Advising Week

Due today: a3

Creating Comics: Genres, themes, characters ...
Lab: Introduction to Comic Life



Lab: Alice – Interaction: Events and Event Handling

2do: Read Alice p91 – 97

2do: **a4 due Tue Nov 09** – Choose between Exercise #5 (Ninja Motion), #6 (Cheshire Cat), #7 (Turtle Motion Control), or create your own exercise that uses Alice events and user-defined methods for your objects

2do: Brainstorm on *your* story ...

Thur Nov 04

Planning the panels, time frames, gutters ...

Lab: Working on *your* story ...

2do: **v1 of your design**, including outline of your *story*, characters, beginning of panel layout
Due on Thur Nov 11

Due: a4 due on Tue Nov 09

Tue Nov 09

Due today: a4 -- Event-driven world

Due this Thur: v1 of your outline of your *story*, characters, the beginning of panel layout

Sharing *your* (work in progress) story ideas to others in the class

Thur Nov 11

Due today: v1 of your outline of your *story*, characters, the beginning of panel layout

2do: Begin v2 of *your* story ... (v2 due Thur Nov 18)

Tue Nov 16

Lab: work on *your* story ...

2do: w3 -- Write a 3-page historiographic essay that explores several contradictory sources on the impact of comics on young readers during the 1930s, 40s, and 50s in the United States.
(due Thur Dec 02)

See the onCourse link for definitions, examples, and other helps when writing a historiographic essay:

<http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/writing/history/assignments/historiographic.html>

A set of readings to evaluate are held on reserve in the Library. You will have to spend considerable time reading, re-reading, taking notes, and consolidating arguments on this material.

Thur Nov 18

Demo/presentation of *your* story to the rest of the class
Due: v2 of your story – take turns presenting

Tue Nov 23

Lab: work on *your* story ...

2do: w3 due Thur Dec. 02

Wed-Fri Nov 24-26



Thanksgiving Break

Tue Nov 30

Lab: work on *your* story ...

Thur Dec 02

w3 Due today: Your historiographic essay on the impact of comics on young readers.

Final presentation of *your* story

Tue Dec 07

Final presentation of *your* story

Thur Dec 09

Final presentation of *your* story

Due: Final copy of *your* story

Evaluations