

storytelling through computer animation

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SC-103 508.286.3970
Hours: MW 9-10:20 or appt
F 11:30-12

<http://cs.wheatoncollege.edu/mleblanc>

Meeting Times: Mon and Wed, 12:30 - 1:50pm
Room 325 csLab, (old) Science Center

What is *your* story?

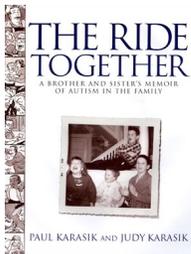
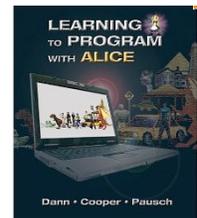
Summary

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. (2012). Learning to Program w/Alice: Full Version (3rd Edition w/CD), Pearson Education.

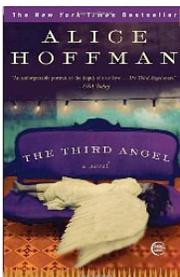


Karasik, Paul and Karasik, Judy (2004). The Ride Together: A Brother and Sister's Memoir of Autism in the Family. Washington Square Press.

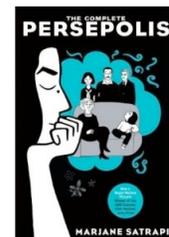
Spiegelman, Art (1986). Maus I and II. Pantheon Books.



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



Satrapi, Marjane (2005). Persepolis (v1 and v2). Pantheon Books.



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) <i>Karasik lecture</i> 2) <i>you pick and tell me</i> 3) <i>you pick and tell me</i>
Labs	5%	in lab as needed
3 Writing Assignments	25% overall	
w0: Graphic novel review	5%	Wed, Sept 07
w1: Your comics paper	10%	Wed, Oct 05
w2: Book Review	10%	Mon, Oct 31
Alice Programming Assignments	25% overall	
a1: Intro to Alice	5%	Mon, Oct 03
a2: Interacting Characters	5%	Wed, Oct 19
a3: Conditionals and loops	5%	Fri, Nov 11
a4: Events	10%	Mon, Nov 21
Your story (final project)	30% overall	
v1 Design	5%	Mon, Nov 14
Final In-class Presentation	10%	TBD
Final Story Submission	15%	Wed, Dec 07

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 Mon, Oct 3rd, but you can submit it electronically until 5am Tue, Oct. 4th -- Careful! The course website (onCourse) makes it appear as if the program is due on Tue, but remember, that means Tue 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 Timer

Wed Aug 31

"hello FYS"

review of syllabus and onCourse ("moodle") site

Class trip (*find a "buddy"*): "Library Stacks" to find a graphic novel ...

2do: Read (two items):

- (1) Read Stephen Weiner's "The Graphic Novel: Comics Take Themselves Seriously" (see onCourse)
- (2) Find a graphic novel (or comic) in the library stacks

Due (at the beginning of) next class (Wed, Sept 07):

- a typed one page (at minimum) review of your graphic novel/comic
- single space, 12 point font, Times New Roman
- include a bibliographic reference of your book *and* any other review that you use
- use Grovel (see link on onCourse) to read sample reviews
- format bibliographic references like this:

(sample reference for a graphic novel book)

LeBlanc, Mark (2006). *Title Goes Here*. Feebar Publishing House, New York, NY.

(sample reference for a review)

Grovel (2006). A review of *Watchmen* by Andy. Watchmen was written by Alan Moore; Art by: Dave Gibbons. Publisher: DC Comics (US), Titan Books (UK). First published: 1987. Review obtained at: <http://www.grovel.org.uk/watchmen/> on August 17, 2011.

Wed Sept 07

Due today [w0]: a one-page, typed (professional!) review of a graphic novel/comic

Reading: Persepolis (Part I) by Monday, Sept 12

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



Mon Sept 12

Reading: Persepolis 2 by Wednesday, Sept 14

Part II: A historical timeline of "comics"

Lab: "20+ things you need to know how to do in MS Word"

(bring your laptop if you want to practice on your own box)



Wed Sept 14

Discussion of Persepolis with Dr. Touba Ghadessi, Assistant Professor of Art History

2do:

- Pick a comic character for your paper – Character selection due: Mon, Sept 19
- Start reading Paul and Judy Karasik's The Ride Together

Mon Sept 19

So what is your paper topic? Your comic character?

Part III: A historical timeline of “comics”

Practice with library tools for finding resources for literary criticism for comic paper

2do:

An **outline** and (a start to a typed) **list of references** of your paper (w1) on your comic is due: Wed, Sept 21

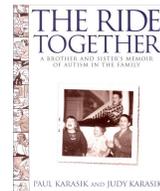
- Continue reading Paul and Judy Karasik's The Ride Together (finish by Wed)

Wed Sept 21

Outline and list of references due today for w1. Draft due next Wed.

Discussion: Paul and Judy Karasik's The Ride Together

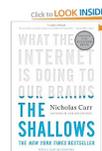
We arrive at some questions we'd like to ask Paul.



Mon Sept 26

Paul Karasik visits class

Paul Karasik lecture: Hindle Auditorium, 5-6pm



Wed Sept 28

Opening page (1) *and* bibliographic references (draft) of your comics paper **due today**. Full paper due next Wed Oct 05.

Lab: Introduction to “Alice”

- 2do: Install Alice **v2.2** on your own computer.
- 2do: Read Alice text: Foreward, Preface, and Ch1 p3-18.



2do: Complete **a1: #4 or #5 p20-21 – Due (bring to class) Mon Oct 03.**

Mon Oct 03

a1 due: Be ready to demo #4 or #5 in lab.

More Alice today.

2do: Read Alice p22-28 – Storyboarding.
Comics paper (w1, final version) due on Wed.

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

Wed Oct 05

Comics paper (w1) **due today.**

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

2do: Read Alice p29-43, Repeat the lab at home
Read Alice p51-52 (The *vehicle* property): Can your chicken ride a horse?

Mon-Tue Oct 10-11

Fall BREAK

Wed Oct 12

2do: Prepare a **detailed** reading **schedule** for finishing The Third Angel by Monday, Oct 24
Submit your schedule in class on Mon, Oct 17

csLab: More Alice

2do: a2 Alice – Modify today's lab. Create a world with interacting characters.
Use as many of the features of Alice that you have learned so far.
Read Alice Ch. 3, p62-73 – if/else
a2 Due: Wed, Oct 19 – submit via onCourse



Mon Oct 17

Due today: Reading schedule for finishing The Third Angel by Mon, Oct 24
2do:

- be prepared next Monday 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**

Due: a2 due Wed, Oct 19

Read Alice Ch. 3, p73-82 - Loops

Wed Oct 19

Due today: Alice a2 (via onCourse)

2do:

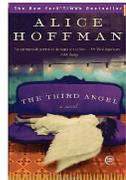
- read some online book reviews (e.g., @amazon.com, NYTimes, etc)
- w2: written Book Review of The Third Angel will be due Mon, Oct 31

Mon Oct 24



Discussion of Hoffman's The Third Angel

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



Wed Oct 26

Programming in detail: variables, handtracing (we do it together :)
sums and counters
finding averages



Mon Oct 31

Advising Week

The Third Angel Book Review (w2) due today

Alice: Introduction to **Parameters** and **Events**

2do: Read Ch. 4 p89-104

Wed Nov 02

More Alice ... making a "clever" skater

2do: Read Maus: A Survivor's Tale (Book 1) by Art Spiegelman for Mon, Nov 7

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



Mon Nov 07

Discussion: Maus (Book 1)

Intro to Story Design

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



Wed Nov 09

Discuss Maus (Book 2)

Your story: planning panels, time frames, gutters

a3 due Fri, Nov 11

Lab: Alice – Interaction: Events and Event Handling

2do: Read Alice p140-146

Mon Nov 14

Creating Comics: Genres, themes, characters ...

Lab: Introduction to Comic Life

v1: Version 1 of your story is due in class today



Wed Nov 16

Planning the panels, time frames, gutters ...

Lab: Working on *your* story ... or a4 game ...

Due: a4 due on Mon Nov 21

Mon Nov 21

Due today: a4 – Demo your event-driven world

Wed-Fri Nov 23-25



Thanksgiving Break

Mon Nov 28

Lab: work on *your* story ...

Wed Nov 30

Final presentation of *your* story

Mon Dec 05

Final presentation of *your* story

Wed Dec 07

Final presentation of *your* story

Due: Final copy of *your* story

Evaluations