# Writing and producing for animation (with module Literature, cinema and Tv series for kids and young audiences)

## Prof. Armando Fumagalli; Prof. Eleonora Fornasari

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The aim of this course is to begin to understand the rich history of animation and the complex skills that are necessary to write, develop and produce an animated feature film or a Tv series. Particular emphasis will be dedicated to the flourishing of International extremely successful feature films, like those of Pixar and Dreamworks.

Some special classes will be dedicated to Japanese animation, especially to those Tv series that are known as “World Masterpiece Theater” and to the films of Hayao Miyazaki.

In the course some writers and producers for animation will be invited to speak about practical aspects of their work. One of the topics that will be covered is the management of creative groups and how to collaborate in developing stories and creative projects.

At the end of the course, students will be able to understand the creative path that leads to the creation of a film or a Tv series and some basic concepts about production and market of this area of the audiovisual industry.

***COURSE CONTENT***

*A summary of the history of animation and its industry.*

– The birth of animation

– The big success of Walt Disney, from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) onward.

– The new golden age of animation in the ‘90s. *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)*, The Lion King* (1994), etc.

– *Toy Story* (1995) and the birth of Pixar.

– The worldwide success of animation: Pixar, Dreamworks, Blue Sky, Illumination: from *Shrek* to *Ice Age* to *Despicable Me* and more.

– Some European productions for the International markets.

*The market and production for animation*

– Feature films and Tv series.

– The market in Italy and Europe: the importance of co-production.

– Animation in Japan: the *World Masterpiece Theater*

– An artist in animation: the unique approach of Hayao Miyazaki.

*Principles of Writing for Animation*

– How to write a Premise

– How to write an Outline

– How to write a Script

***READING LIST[[1]](#footnote-1)***

Stephen Cavalier, *The World History of Animation*, University of California Press, Oakland 2011 (only some parts: there will be indications on line on the lecturer’s page).

Ed Catmull (with Amy Wallace), *Creativity, Inc.,* Random House, New York 2014 (italian trnaslation: *Verso la creatività e oltre*. Sperling e Kupfer, Milano 2014).

Jeffrey Scott, *How to Write for Animation*, The Overlook Press, New York 2002.

Students are recommended to check on lecturer’s webpage further details or changes in the program.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures and discussion in class about the different topics that will be illustrated.

At least two or three professionals of animation will be invited to class to speak about their job.

In odd years (2025, 2027, etc…) a summer three weeks optional course of Film making at the School of Visual Arts in New York will be organised for students who freely want to participate. The course program and the time period will be available on the International Relations and Almed websites starting from the beginning of 2025.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Oral assessment (duration: about 20 minutes) divided into three questions (one for each textbook) After the first question, that is more general, students may be asked to answer more specific questions on the topics emerged during the discussion. The final mark will result from the sum of the points obtained in the three answers.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attending the course.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage.

*In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.*

Module: *Literature, cinema and Tv series for kids and young audiences* (Prof. Eleonora Fornasari)

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The aim of this course is to introduce the students to literature, cinema and Tv series aimed at kids and young audiences; to develop a critical awareness of the construction of representations of childhood; to explore and critically assess the cultural and social contexts of children literature, cinema and television; to explore critically a range of key issues in cultural production for kids and young audiences; to explore the contexts and new directions of children’s film and television. The course will also provide the students with a knowledge of the basic principles of how to create and write stories for children and young audiences in different contexts and formats.

By the end of the course, students should be able to: explore and assess a range of children’s literature, cinema and television; understand the different formats in the writing and production for children and kids; evaluate the appropriateness/inappropriateness of certain kind of storylines, characters and themes, in different contexts and in relation to specific age groups; critically assess the representation of childhood in stories written for literature or different screens; analyse children’s literature and its audiovisual adaptations in relation to social and cultural contexts; understand a range of issues in cultural production for kids and young audiences; identify the kind of writing/content that is best suited for particular platforms in terms of reaching children and young audiences.

***COURSE CONTENTS***

*A summary of the history of children’s literature*

– Introduction to children’s literature and its terminology

– A brief history of international children’s literature and its main writers.

– Defining the field of study, the target and the theoretical framework (literary and aesthetic)

– Focus on the coming-of-age novel: structure, themes, point of views and characters

*Female character driven stories.*

– The female character in children’s novels, from classics to modern times

– Female literary archetypes: main features and examples

*Audiovisual contents for kids and young audiences*

– Introduction to cinema and television for kids and young audiences

– Children’s representation on the screen

– Gender gap in audiovisual representation

– How to create quality content for children in film and television

– The bond between literature and its audiovisual adaptations: differences between cinema and television

*Analysis of archetypes across literature, cinema and television*

– Analysis of the *free spirit* archetype: *Pippi Longstocking* (novel by A. Lindgren + 1969 Tv series) + Jo March/*Little Women* (from the novel by L. May Alcott to the television and cinema adaptations along time).

- Analysis of the *female warrior* archetype: from Merida (*Brave*, Pixar 2012) to Katniss Everdeen (from the novel by Suzanne Collins, 2008-2010 to the filmic adaptations).

Children’s literature as a bond between different generations: when the adaptations aim at an adult target.

***READING LIST[[2]](#footnote-2)***

For All:

A. Fumagalli, *Young Women Who Write: Little Women (2019) by Greta Gerwig*, in R. Welch and R. Ferrell (eds.), *Women Who Write Our Worlds*, Intellect, London 2023.

L. May Alcott, *Little Women,* any unabridged edition, 1868

A. Lindgren, *Pippi Longstocking*, any unabridged edition, 1945

A female character-based novel of their choice for the final analysis (see “Assessment method and criteria)

Students will be also asked to watch the movies *Brave* (Pixar, 2012) *Hunger Games* (Ross, 2012), *Catching Fire* (Lawrence, 2013), *Mockingjay Part 1* (Lawrence, 2014), *Mockingjay Part 2* (Lawrence, 2015), *Little Women* (Armstrong, 1994) and *Little Women* (Gerwig, 2019) before discussion in class.

For International students only:

E. Fornasari, *Adapting children’s literature for animated Tv series. The case of Heidi,* «Journal of Screenwriting», 9:3, 365–78, 2018.

K. Rundell, *Why you should read children’s books, even though you are so old and wise,* Bloomsbury, London, 2019

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 **One** of the following novels of their choice:

J. Wilson, *The Story of Tracy Beaker,* any edition*, 1991*

B. Pitzorno, *Lavinia and the magic ring*, any edition, 1985

J. Kelly, *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate*, any edition, 2011

For Italian students (or students who can read Italian) only:

E. Fornasari, *20 eroine per una storia della letteratura per l'infanzia al femminile*, Dino Audino, Roma 2023.

E. Fornasari, *La ricetta della felicità,* Il Castoro, Milano 2020.

M.C. Oltolini, *Scrivere bambini, scrivere per bambini*, in Armando Fumagalli, C. Albani, P. Braga (eds.), *Storia delle serie Tv*, Vol.1, Audino, Roma 2021

***TEACHING METHOD***

– Lectures.

– Active, “learn by doing” approach

– Class discussion and group sessions.

– Class readings and screenings of clips from movies and Tv series

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

In order to get their credits, students are asked to:

– Attend class regularly

– Participate actively to class activities

– Keep up with the assigned readings and materials

– Pass the exam

The exam is comprised of an oral assessment (duration: about 20 minutes, three questions) and written analysis of ***one*** the suggested novels, along with its audiovisual adaptations (movie and/or Tv series):

* L. Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, any unabridged edition, 1865
* L. M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables,* any unabridged edition, 1908
* F. H. Burnett, *The Secret Garden,* any unabridged edition, 1911
* R. Dahl, *Matilda,* 1988
* N. Gaiman, *Coraline,* 2002
* S. Mayer, *Twilight,* 2005.

The examination aims to assess both the student’s theoretical knowledge of children’s literature and media (oral exam, 60% of the grade) and their capacity to employ what they have learnt to critically analyse a children’s novel along with its adaptations (written analysis, 40% of the grade).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attending the course.

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*Office hour*

With prior email appointment: eleonoraclaudia.fornasari@unicatt.it

1. I testi indicati nella bibliografia sono acquistabili presso le librerie di Ateneo; è possibile acquistarli anche presso altri rivenditori. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. I testi indicati nella bibliografia sono acquistabili presso le librerie di Ateneo; è possibile acquistarli anche presso altri rivenditori. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)