

2015 - 2016

**Thesis Student
Guidelines
Animation**

Department of Film, Video &
Animation
Room 500
209 East 23 Street

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Letter from the Chairman

Dear Thesis Students:

In my opinion, you all have the potential to become significant artists. From the beginning of your experience at SVA you have each shown talent and originality. Your thesis year should be the culmination of all your hard work. As fourth year students, you have already completed the most sophisticated program available to undergraduates on the East Coast. I am confident that each of you is now ready to produce work of professional quality and substance, which will become your voice and vision — your entrée into the profession.

The SVA Film, Video and Animation School Thesis Program is a unique experience, which can become the foundation of a very successful career. It represents your chance to complete one or more projects over the course of a year with all the support, guidance and resources that SVA can provide. The members of the Thesis Committee and the Thesis Advisors have spent literally hundreds of hours preparing a program that combines the best of their experience in all areas of film, video and animation. The Committee and the faculty serving as advisors are ready to back it up with our personal commitment and devotion to you during this crucial year of your education.

Remember, you will be dedicating a full year to your project. A large amount of your time, effort and financial resources will be put into this endeavor. We urge you to choose a subject that you are passionate about, that no one can do exactly as you would.

The School of Visual Arts will encourage and support any type of project you choose to undertake; narrative, non-narrative, experimental, etc. — as long as the work demonstrates commitment, an advanced level of content, craft, technique, and quality.

All of us have the highest expectations for you as individuals, and as a class. We look forward to working closely with you, and hoping to help you realize the success you have already worked so hard to achieve.

Sincerely,

Reeves Lehmann
Chair
Department of Film Video Animation

The Thesis Year

Your thesis year offers many opportunities. You'll develop a relationship with your chosen Advisor. You'll gain experience from the complexities and challenges of undertaking a major project. You'll solidify working relationships and personal friendships. You'll complete a major project that you will be proud of.

More importantly, you'll have the opportunity to express and develop your vision and dedication through your thesis project. This is a rare privilege; one that you've earned during your years of undergraduate work.

Take full advantage of this opportunity. Your thesis project will require a tremendous amount of work. It will take courage and drudgery when you don't know how, or even if, things will work out. It will take a stubborn and constant focus. It will require commitment, passion and discipline.

All that effort is worthwhile, only if it's used to express your own ideas and perceptions and vision. As a storyteller you can entertain, educate, shed new light, energize your audience, give a new perspective, or redefine a genre. Excellent work can only come from what you know, feel and imagine as an individual.

This is a chance to express something in a way that no one else could. It's not time to imitate; it's time to create.

The School of Visual Arts will encourage and support any type of project you choose to undertake; narrative, non-narrative, experimental, etc. – as long as the work demonstrates commitment, an advanced level of craft, technique, and quality.

Mission Statement

Animation is the most exciting, vital, and progressive art form in the world today. As such, SVA has a vested interest in graduating alumni who will advance the form forward with a wide variety of content and style. To this end, we train students to understand and utilize the principles of story, design, animation, and editing in conjunction with the disciplines of production and economy. The Animation Senior Thesis Short Film, coupled with a professional portfolio, is where the students' mastery of these skills is put to the ultimate test.

Animation Thesis Advisors & Advisor Selection

Thesis advisors are charged with guiding their students in the making of their thesis film.
Their responsibilities include:

1. Consulting with advisees every week with a minimum of two meetings a month in person.
2. Submitting monthly Thesis Reports to the Thesis Committee.
3. Grading their advisees in the 1st and 2nd semesters (subject to approval by the Thesis Committee).

Under no circumstance circumstances is a Thesis Advisor allowed to perform any creative work on a Thesis Project

Thesis Advisors are normally limited to six (6) Thesis students. If, however, a student wishes to retain services of an Advisor who has exceeded this limit, in addition to submitting the Student/Advisor Agreement, the student **must petition** the Film Chairman for an exception in the form of a letter, explaining why that Advisor is the one best suited to advise on the student's Thesis. The final determination will be the sole discretion of the Film/Animation Chairman.

Even though advisors are typically chosen from SVA faculty, an advisor may be selected from outside SVA with approval of Thesis Committee. Any Non-SVA advisor must provide the following information before approval is granted:

Name, phone, mailing address, email, Social Security Number, resume and/or CV

You are not considered a thesis student until all paperwork is approved.

**Completed Thesis Student / Advisor Agreements are due in the
Film Chairman's Office (209 East 23rd St., Room 500)
no later than 4:00 pm Friday, April 24, 2015**

The Animation Thesis Film

Films can be made in any animation technique available to students. Every project must have a clear, concise one-sentence summary description of its content. **No thesis film is to exceed four minutes and 30 seconds (excluding end credits). Collaborative projects will be limited to two students, each with a different advisor. With collaborations, projects are graded, not individuals.**

Before embarking on any project that includes elements other than your own, you **MUST OBTAIN** all rights and privileges for use in writing. This includes published material, music, photographs, etc.

With proper planning and execution, it is possible for the students to exceed the expectations of themselves and their advisors. Mandatory deadlines have been established to help facilitate a smooth production schedule. Students alone are responsible for adhering to these deadlines. Each student should tailor a schedule to accommodate their particular production method.

Mandatory Animation Thesis Deadline Protocol

The Animation Thesis Coordinator, will invite each of you to join Dropbox. Follow the directions and get an account to have access to SVA Animation Thesis Dropbox. Each student will have their own folder where they will place all the thesis material required for each deadline. Each student folder will have monthly folders within.

Only members of the Animation Thesis Committee and Thesis Coordinator will access your folder. As each deadline approaches the coordinator will empty each folder. You cannot make up missed deadlines. Submit deadline material as follows:

All documents such as story outlines or production schedules as pdfs.

All images such as model sheets, background designs and storyboards as jpgs.

Even though your project is in a 1920 x 1080 format, for Mandatory Deadline deliveries, all animatics should be resized to **1280 x 720** in an **H264 video codec**. Make sure your animatic opens in Quicktime before submitting.

DO NOT submit anything where software (After Effects, Photoshop) needs to be opened.

Once you have submitted the proper material to the appropriate folder, leave it alone. The Thesis Coordinator will be archiving once deadline has passed.

This procedure will hold for the entire academic year **EXCEPT** for delivery of your **FINAL PROJECT** that has its own requirements with a delivery date in April 2016.

The Animation Thesis Deadline dates for Dropbox are as follows:

Friday, August 14, 2015 by 4:00 pm

Friday, September 18, 2015 by 4:00 pm

Friday, October 16, 2015 by 4:00 pm

Friday, November 13, 2015 by 4:00 pm

Friday, December 11, 2015 by 4:00pm

Friday, January 22, 2016 by 4:00 pm

Friday, February 19, 2016 by 4:00 pm

Refer to the appropriate Animation Thesis Mandatory Deadline page for details of what is due by these dates. Missed deadlines will affect grading.

2-D Animation Mandatory Deadlines

Deadline deliveries are made via Dropbox. Documents such as story outlines, production schedules and transcripts should be submitted as pdfs. Images such as model sheets, background designs and storyboards as jpgs. Animatics should be resized to **1280 x 720** in an **H264 video**. Make sure your animatic opens in Quicktime before submitting to Dropbox.

Friday, August 14, 2015 by 4:00 pm

- One sentence story or concept description
- First draft of storyboard with dialogue, scene description and action notes
- First draft of character design lineup with preliminary color treatment
- Preliminary background designs with color treatment
- Written description of production method and sound treatment (statement of copyright and clearances, if appropriate) with proposed work schedule

Friday, September 18, 2015 by 4:00 pm

- Revised character designs with color treatment
- Revised rough background designs with color treatments
- Rough animatic (with rough sound)

Friday, October 16, 2015 by 4:00 pm

- Final character and background designs
- Final animatic (with rough sound and vocal track)

Friday, November 13, 2015 by 4:00 pm

- Rough cut of film (with 50% of rough layouts and 15% of rough animation completed)

Friday, December 11, 2015 by 4:00pm

- Rough cut of film (with all rough layouts and 40% of rough animation completed)
- Final vocal track

Friday, January 22, 2016 by 4:00 pm

- Rough cut of film with 80% of rough animation completed

Friday, February 19, 2016 by 4:00 pm

- Rough cut of film with all rough animation and 20% of animation cleanup completed

Friday, April ?, 2016 by 4:00 pm

- Delivery of the completed film. Specifications will be detailed later.

Stop Motion Mandatory Deadlines

Deadline deliveries are made via Dropbox. Documents such as story outlines, production schedules and transcripts should be submitted as pdfs. Images such as model sheets, background designs and storyboards as jpgs. Animatics should be resized to **1280 x 720** in an **H264 video codec**. Make sure your animatic opens in Quicktime before submitting to Dropbox.

Friday, August 14, 2015 by 4:00 pm

- One sentence story or concept
- First draft of character designs, backgrounds and begin storyboards
- Statement of copyright & clearances if appropriate

Friday, September 18, 2015 by 4:00 pm

- Revised storyboard & completed character / set designs

Friday, October 16, 2015 by 4:00 pm

- Approval of sculptures and mold making begun
- Sound recordings of vocal tracks (if applies)
- First draft of animatic with vocal tracks (if any)

Friday, November 13, 2015 by 4:00 pm

- Exposure sheets if your film contains any dialogue
- Stop motion sculptures & molds complete, animation armatures begun

Friday, December 11, 2015 by 4:00pm

- All stop motion characters completed
- 75% of sets completed

Friday, January 22, 2016 by 4:00 pm

- All stop motion sets completed
- 10% of all animation completed

Friday, February 19, 2016 by 4:00 pm

- Remaining animation completed

Friday April ?, 2016 by 4:00 pm

- Delivery of the completed film. Specifications will be detailed later.

Animation Grants

Pre-Production Grants - DUE Friday, October 10, 2014:

These grants are awarded in the fall semester. All US Citizens must provide proof of voter registration. The Animation Thesis Committee will choose the recipients of Pre-Production Grants based on the quality of the work submitted via the Dropbox. The following material is to be submitted:

- Most current animatic (with rough sound)
- Most current character designs (color treatments)
- Most current background designs (color treatments)
- pdf of your transcript showing a minimum 3.5 GPA
- proof of voter registration (US citizens only)
- any material requested by the Dusty Awards Office
- statement of intent as to what the Pre-Production Grant money will be used for

In addition, you are to send an email to Melissa Brown at mbrown17@sva.edu and the Thesis Coordinator at svaanimationthesis@gmail.com stating that you are a Grant Applicant

Post Production Grants – DUE Friday, February 19, 2016:

These grants are awarded in the spring semester. US Citizens must provide proof of voter registration. The Animation Thesis Committee will choose the recipients of Post-Production Grants based on the quality of their work s submitted via the Dropbox.. The following material is to be submitted:

- rough cut of film with all rough animation completed
- production schedule (showing what's been accomplished to date)
- copy of your transcript showing a minimum 3.5 GPA
- proof of voter registration (US citizens only)
- any material requested by the Dusty Awards Office
- statement of intent as to what the Post-Production Grant money will be used for

In addition, you are to send an email to Melissa Brown at mbrown17@sva.edu and the Thesis Coordinator at svaanimationthesis@gmail.com stating that you are a Grant Applicant

Alumni Scholarship Awards

Theses awards are given to students to help with the completion of their thesis/portfolio projects; all recipients are required to have a minimum GPA of 3.0 and submit a detailed thesis project proposal.

The proposals are then reviewed by panels comprised of notable SVA alumni, which makes recommendations to the Alumni Society Board for final approval. The awards come from generous donations from alumni, parents and friends of SVA.

Grades

Grading is determined by quality of work presented at prescribed monthly deadlines. The following instructions apply to 2D and Stop-Motion students. Grades are given at the end of each semester in the Thesis year; the fall grade is either Unsatisfactory (U) or Satisfactory (S), the spring grade is a letter grade. If you receive a (U) in the fall you cannot receive an A for your thesis.

Grades are given primarily on the recommendation of the advisor, although the Thesis Committee is empowered to raise or lower a grade this grade. No incompletes are given in the thesis year. Any extensions must be approved by the Film Chairman and are subject to additional fees.

Grades reflect the quality of your work, your adherence to the requirements listed in the requirement section, with particular emphasis placed upon communicating effectively with your advisor. It cannot be emphasized enough that your advisor is your ally.

Student Grievance Procedures

The School of Visual Arts does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, handicap, age or national origin. Any member of the Thesis student body who feels he/she has been subject to discrimination should talk with the Title IX Coordinator or make a written complaint to the Thesis Committee.

The Thesis Committee will review the complaint, talk with the individuals involved, and hold a hearing if necessary; in short, take all necessary action to correct the situation. If the student lodging the complaint requests no hearing, the Committee will forward its decision to the faculty member in writing. The decision of the Thesis Committee is final and is subject to further review only by the President of the college.

The Dusty Animation & Film Festival

The Dusty Film Festival is one of the only Film/Animation School events of its kind in New York. It is as much for Industry as it is for students and their families. Since its inception in 1990 the festival has grown to be the largest and most attended event, co-sponsored by the School Visual Arts and numerous Film, Video and Animation companies.

It is an important venue through which the film & animation industry discovers new talent. This is your chance to demonstrate your abilities to people who are committed to developing newcomers; it is your opportunity to make contact with people who may choose to hire you in the future.

Therefore it is crucial that you maximize your participation in this event, taking advantage of every facet of the show from the Festival to the Gala Reception. Over the course of the spring semester, students will be invited to attend preparatory seminars for the Dusty Film Festival.

The Dusty Film Festival also raises money for each Thesis Class; to date over \$600,000 has been raised and distributed as grants, or in-kind services to Thesis students.

A detailed information booklet available from the Animation Chairman's Office will help you prepare for this event. In order to participate, all policies and procedures must be adhered to. SVA has the right to exclude a student from participating if it feels that any of the policies or procedures has been violated.

Everyone is required to submit a copy of his or her completed project by the end of the semester to the Film Chairman's office. The FORMAT will be announced beforehand. This copy will become the property of the School of Visual Arts. Make sure it is of professional quality, as it will be shown at the Dusty Film Festival.

Only COMPLETED films will be judged and screened!

DUSTY Film Festival Office
209 East 23rd St. Room 317 / 318
212 - 592 - 2129
dusty.sva.edu

ANIMATION
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Reeves Lehmann
Chair
Department of Film, Video & Animation

Celia Bullwinkel
cb@celiabullwinkel.com

Richard Gorey
richgorey@hotmail.com

Carl Paolino
cpseffects@aol.com

Donald Poynter
donaldpoynter@hotmail.com

Animation Post-Production Grant Application

Name: _____

Project Title: _____

Specialization: _____

Local Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Thesis Advisor (print): _____

Thesis Advisor (signature): _____

Required with application:

- rough cut of film with all rough animation completed
- production schedule (showing what's been accomplished to date)
- copy of your transcript showing a minimum 3.5 GPA
- pdf of proof of voter registration (US citizens only)
- statement of intent as to what the Post-Production Grant money will be used for

Email Melissa Brown at mbrown17@sva.edu and the Thesis Coordinator at svaanimationthesis@gmail.com stating that you are a Grant Applicant.

Due Friday, February 19, 2016 by 4:00 pm

Animation Pre-Production Grant Application

Name: _____

Project Title: _____

Specialization: _____

Local Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Thesis Advisor (print): _____

Thesis Advisor (signature): _____

Required with application (via Dropbox):

- Most current animatic (with rough sound)
- Most current character designs (color treatments)
- Most current background designs (color treatments)
- pdf of your transcript showing a minimum 3.5 GPA
- proof of voter registration (US citizens only)
- statement of intent as to what the Pre-Production Grant money will be used for

Email Melissa Brown at mbrown17@sva.edu and the Thesis Coordinator at svaanimationthesis@gmail.com stating that you are a Grant Applicant.

Due Friday, October 16, 2015 by 4:00 pm

Animation Thesis Student / Advisor Agreement

Specialization (Select One):

Student: _____ STOP MOTION - 2-D - 3-D (circle one)

Advisor: _____

I have selected the above named individual as my Thesis Advisor for the 2015-2016 academic year. Obligations to my thesis advisor and the thesis committee are as follows: (initial next to each):

STUDENT Initials:

_____ Communicate with my Advisor on a weekly basis

_____ Attend meetings scheduled with my Advisor

_____ Submit all required materials to the Dusty Film Festival Office

_____ Submit copies of ALL materials pertaining to my project to The Animation Thesis Committee and The Office of the Chairman

_____ Failure to comply with these responsibilities will jeopardize my thesis status, affect my final grade and/or make me ineligible for any grants.

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Local Address: _____

X _____ Date _____
(Student Signature)

X _____ Date _____
(Advisor Signature)

Due: Friday, April 24, 2015 @ 4:00 pm

COPIES FOR: Student & Thesis Advisor

ORIGINAL: Office of the Chairman

Animation Thesis Advisor Requirements

Thesis advisors are responsible for guiding their students in the making of their thesis film. Advisors' minimum responsibilities include:

1. Consulting with their advisees every week with a minimum of two meetings a month in person.
2. Writing monthly Thesis Reports by the mandatory deadlines. Reports to be submitted, by email, to svaanimationthesis@gmail.com
3. Grading their advisees in the 1st and 2nd semesters (subject to approval by the Thesis Committee)

Any additional time spent with the student is up to the discretion and availability of the advisor.

Any Non-SVA advisor will be subject to approval by the Thesis Committee and must provide the following information before approval is granted: Name, phone, mailing address, email, Social Security Number, resume and/or CV

Thesis Reports

The monthly Thesis Reports are a record of your work with your advisee. As such, each report should include an objective assessment of the student's progress in applying the storytelling, technical and managerial skills necessary to complete their thesis film. These reports are used to help the advisor and the Thesis Committee evaluate and substantiate grading decisions. Thesis Reports are due the same dates required by Animation Mandatory Deadlines.

Even though the advisor's contract as Thesis Advisor officially starts in September, one consultation (whether by email or in person) with each advisee in August is required to help guide advisees in meeting their first deadline. (**see Animation Mandatory Deadlines**) The mandatory deadlines have been established to help facilitate a smooth production schedule. Students alone are responsible for adhering to these deadlines.

The Completion Folder

Each student is required to deliver thesis material via Dropbox, as outlined in the Animation Mandatory Deadlines (**see Animation Mandatory Deadlines**).

Advisor Signature _____

Date _____