Over the past twenty years, Pixar Animation Studios has released more than a dozen feature films that both rank among the most popular in the history of the New Hollywood and stand as some of the most critically acclaimed animated films ever made. Beginning with Toy Story (1995), directed by John Lasseter, the studio has worked through a handful of original ideas, returning full circle with Toy Story 3, a film whose opening day domestic box office topped $41 million, the second-highest release ever for an animated film. Along the way, Pixar films have revolutionized computer-assisted filmmaking, threatening the viability of traditionally hand-drawn feature animation at the Disney Corporation, Pixar's sometimes parent company.

Founded in 1979 as the computer division of Lucasfilm (George Lucas' film production empire in Northern California), Pixar was then bought by Apple co-founder Steve Jobs in 1986. Primarily a computer company, Pixar developed RenderMan software, what would become the industry-standard computer-generated imaging tool, as well as hardware systems for the Walt Disney Corporation meant to reduce the expense of traditional paint and ink departments for hand-drawn animation. As demonstration content, and some television advertising, proved of greater financial interest than the software and hardware products themselves, Pixar gravitated toward the film production end of the business.

Applications of Computer Generated Imaging (CGI) techniques to narrative film resulted in a series of ground breaking shorts, starting with The Adventures of Andre and Wally B (1984), and continuing with Luxo, Jr. (1986), Red's Dream (1987), Tin Toy (1988), and Knick Knack (1989). As a result of these films' quality (and high public visibility, via the winning of numerous Oscars for best short-format animation, for example), Pixar entered into a three-feature deal with Disney, resulting in the spectacular success of Toy Story, a film that grossed $350 million dollars globally. After considerable bickering between Pixar's Jobs and Disney's CEO, Michael Eisner, Disney bought Pixar in 2006 for $7.4 billion in stock. The art colony
at Pixar and the corporate nature of Disney demonstrate a classic case of business culture clash, but despite the artistic tensions, the symbiosis worked well to generate films that year after year rank among the most interesting produced in Hollywood.

Given this track record, it is time to turn academic methods toward understanding Pixar films in a systematic way. The intellectual quality of Pixar films (as opposed to the studio's imitators, such as Dreamworks Animation [2001’s Shrek] and Twentieth Century Fox Animation [2002’s Ice Age]) encourages serious analysis of the importance these films have for understanding millennial American culture. It is my assertion that Pixar films, both intellectually stimulating and popular, represent an apotheosis of American cinema, a middle ground in the culture wars between effete art cinema and un-engaging action cinema. In this course, we will discuss some of the pressing theoretical questions of contemporary academic cultural studies as they pertain to an understanding of Pixar’s products, read via the framework of the children’s books of Dr. Seuss and the underground comic turned financial juggernaut, The Simpsons. The course methods will be wide-ranging and truly interdisciplinary, ranging from film, literary, and television studies to American and global studies, from children’s literature to experimental animation.

**Student Learning Objectives**

1. Students who successfully complete the course will be able to use critical theory to read literary and visual textual material (such as films, children's books, and/or television sitcoms).
2. Students who successfully complete the course will be able to speak and write critically about the importance of mass media for understanding American civilization in the 20th and 21st centuries.
3. Students who successfully complete the course will be able to read academic work in the humanities with understanding and long-term retention.
4. Students who successfully complete the course will be able to apply academic work to an original project of their choosing. This course will demonstrate to students that the theories and methods they learn about in school are directly applicable to the kind of creative or intellectual work they intend to do in their careers.

**Graded Course Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Presentations on Readings</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Blue Book Writing and Final Writing Portfolio</td>
<td>60%</td>
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**Description of Assignments**

Students will learn to apply the methods of the course being modeled by the instructor (literary analysis, applied critical theory, historical criticism, visual media analysis, intertextual criticism, etc.) to their own work. Students will write and give presentations about the following topics:

1. Compare and contrast a Pixar film with a Disney film.
2. Use a piece of critical theory to read an episode of The Simpsons.
3. Discuss the significance of history to a Pixar film, a Disney film, a Dr. Seuss book, and/or an episode of The Simpsons.

4. Use a Pixar film as a critical reading frame for a Dr. Seuss book (or, use a Dr. Seuss book as a critical reading frame for a Pixar film).

5. Compare and contrast a Pixar film with another animated feature (U.S. or otherwise) made outside of the Disney orbit.

6. Use the course’s framework of the trickster to analyze a Pixar film, a Dr. Seuss book, and/or an episode of The Simpsons.

7. Analyze as a text one season of The Simpsons.

8. Use a canonical piece of literature as a reading frame for a Pixar film, a Dr. Seuss book, and/or an episode of The Simpsons.

9. Research, analyze, and account for the global popularity (or lack thereof) of a Pixar film, a Dr. Seuss book, and/or The Simpsons.

Required Book List
Marx, Leo. The Machine in the Garden (1964)

Weekly Syllabus

Section One: Introduction to the Course
Tuesday, January 19
Topic #1: The Blue Umbrella and Critical Theory
Reading #1: Walter Metz, “From Van Gogh's Shoes to Pixar’s Umbrellas” {handout}

Thursday, January 21
Topic #2: Wall-e and American Studies
Reading #2: Walter Metz, “A Womb with a Phew!” {D2L}

Tuesday, January 26
Topic #3: The History of Animation (1895 - 1945)
No Reading

Thursday, January 28
Topic #4: The History of Animation (1945 – present)
No Reading

Tuesday, February 2
Student Presentations on Leo Marx's The Machine in the Garden
Reading: Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden (1st third)

Thursday, February 4
Student Presentations on Leo Marx's The Machine in the Garden
Reading: Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden (2nd third)
Tuesday, February 9
Topic #5: Leo Marx, the American Complex Pastoral, and The Tempest
Reading: Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden (3rd third)

Section Two: Commercial Art, Countercultural Commerce
Thursday, February 11
Topic #6: Walt Disney and Classical Hollywood Cinema
Reading: Richard Schickel, The Disney Version {Introduction, Foreword, Chs. 1 & 2}

Tuesday, February 16
Student Presentations on Richard Schickel's The Disney Version
Reading: Richard Schickel, The Disney Version {Chapters 3-6}

Thursday, February 18
Student Presentations on Richard Schickel's The Disney Version
Reading: Richard Schickel, The Disney Version {Chapters 7-9}

Tuesday, February 23
Reading #3: Dana Polan: "A Brechtian Cinema?" {D2L}

Thursday, February 25
Topic #8: The Walt Disney Corporation and New Hollywood Cinema
Reading: Richard Schickel, The Disney Version {Chapters 10 & 11}

Tuesday, March 1
Topic #9: Dr. Seuss: The Art of Illustration in a Time of Persecution
Reading #4: Richard Minear, Dr. Seuss Goes to War (1999) [selections] {D2L}

Thursday, March 3
Topic #10: Dr. Seuss and the Holocaust
Reading #5: Walter Metz, “Show Me the Shoah!” {D2L}

Tuesday, March 8
Topic #11: The Simpsons and Cultural History
Reading: John Alberti, Leaving Springfield {Alberti, Arnold, Koenigsberger, Mullen}

Thursday, March 10
Topic #12: Intertextual Approaches to The Simpsons
Reading: John Alberti, Leaving Springfield {Dettmar, Chow, Sloane}

Week of March 14-18
No Class: Spring Break
Tuesday, March 22
Student Presentations on John Alberti’s *Leaving Springfield*
Reading: John Alberti, *Leaving Springfield* {Brook, Savage, Henry}

Thursday, March 24
Student Presentations on John Alberti’s *Leaving Springfield*
Reading: John Alberti, *Leaving Springfield* {Broderick, Beard, Rushkoff}
**Note:** BERT will run a fire drill at 10:20am

**Section III: Pixar, Transformed**

Tuesday, March 29
Topic #13: The Revolution in Computer Generated Imaging
No Reading
*The Adventures of Andre and Wally B* (John Lasseter, 1984)
*Luxo, Jr.* (John Lasseter, 1986)
*Red’s Dream* (John Lasseter, 1987)
*Knick Knack* (John Lasseter, 1989)
*Monsters, Inc.* (Pete Docter, Lee Unkrich, and David Silverman, 2001)

Thursday, March 31
Topic #14: Toys
Reading #6: Charles Baudelaire, “A Philosophy of Toys” {D2L}
Reading #7: Walter Metz, “Pixar’s Philosophy of Toys” {D2L}
*Tin Toy* (John Lasseter, 1988)
*Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1995)
*Toy Story 2* (John Lasseter, Lee Unkrich, and Ash Brannon, 1999)
*Toy Story 3* (Lee Unkrich, 2010)

Tuesday, April 5
Topic #15: Masculinity
Reading #8: Walter Metz, “Down Kerouac’s Road to Pixar’s *Up*” {D2L}
*The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939)
*The Crowd* (King Vidor, 1928)
*Up* (Pete Docter and Bob Peterson, 2009)

Thursday, April 7
Topic #16: Gender and Feminism
Reading #9: Walter Metz, “Was Sarah Jane Brave?” {D2L}
*Imitation of Life* (Douglas Sirk, 1959)
*Brave* (Mark Andrews, 2012)

Tuesday, April 12
Topic #17: Post-Humanism
Reading #10: Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto” (1991) {D2L}
*2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick, 1968) and *Wall-e* (Andrew Stanton, 2008)
Thursday, April 14
Topic #18: Individuality
No Reading
*For the Birds* (Ralph Eggleston, 2000)
*Boundin’* (Bud Luckey, 2003)
*Partly Cloudy* (Peter Sohn, 2009)

Tuesday, April 19
Topic #19: Criticism, Imagination, and Creativity
No Reading
*Ratatouille* (Brad Bird and Jan Pinkava, 2007)
*La Luna* (Enrico Casarosa, 2011)

Thursday, April 21
Topic #20: Artists
No Reading
*One Man Band* (Andrew Jimenez and Mark Andrews, 2005)
*Ratatouille* (Brad Bird and Jan Pinkava, 2007)
*Presto* (Doug Sweetland, 2008)

Tuesday, April 26
Topic #21: Landscape
No Reading
*A Bug’s Life* (John Lasseter and Andrew Stanton, 1998)
*Cars* (John Lasseter and Joe Ranft, 2006)

Thursday, April 28
Topic #22: Education
No Reading
*Lifted* (Gary Rydstrom, 2006)
*Monsters University* (Dan Scanlon, 2013)

Tuesday, May 3
Topic #23: Globalization
Reading #11: Walter Metz, “A Great Artist Can Come From Anywhere” {D2L}
*Finding Nemo* (Andrew Stanton and Lee Unkrich, 2003)
*Ratatouille* (Brad Bird and Jan Pinkava, 2007)

Thursday, May 5
Topic #24: Superheroes and Conflict
No Reading
*The Incredibles* (Brad Bird, 2004)
*Day and Night* (Teddy Newton, 2010)

Final Exam Week (Monday, May 9 – Friday, May 13)
Concluding Discussions and **Course Evaluations**
SIU’S Emergency Procedures (BERT: Building Emergency Response Team): This course takes place in the Communications Building. These are our procedures.

University’s Emergency Procedure Clause: Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on BERT’s website at www.bert.siu.edu, Department of Public Safety’s website www.dps.siu.edu (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guideline pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

Students With a Disability: Instructors and students in the class will work together as a team to assist students with a disability safely out of the building. Students with a disability will stay with the instructor and communicate with the instructor what is the safest way to assist them.

Tornado: During the spring semester we have a Storm Drill. Pick up your belongings and your instructor will lead you to a safe area of the basement. No one will be allowed to stay upstairs. Stay away from windows. The drill should not last more than 10 minutes. You must stay with your instructor so he/she can take roll. Students need to be quiet in the basement as the BERT members are listening to emergency instructions on handheld radios and cannot hear well in the basement.

Fire: During the fall semester we have a Fire Drill. Pick up your belongings and your instructor will lead you to either the North or South parking lot depending on what part of the building your class is in. You must stay with your instructor so he/she can take roll. As soon as the building is all clear, you will be allowed to return to class. These drills are to train instructors and the Building Emergency Response Team to get everyone to a safe place during an emergency.

Bomb Threat: If someone calls in a bomb threat, class will be suspended and students will be asked to pick up their belongings, evacuate the building and leave the premises. Do not leave anything that is yours behind. We will not allow anyone back into the building until the police and bomb squad give us an all clear. DO NOT USE YOUR CELL PHONES. Some bombs are triggered by a cell phone signal.

Shooter in the Building: If it is safe to leave, move to a safe area far from the building away from where the shooter is located. If anyone has any information about the shooter, please contact the police after they have gone someplace safe. Put in your cell phone the SIU Dept. of Public Safety 618-453-3771. If there is a shooter on campus you can call this number to report it. There will be a lot of calls going to 911 and the SIU Police will get your call using 618-453-3771. It is good to have this number listed in
your cell phone for all emergencies here on campus. If it is not safe to leave, go into a room, lock the door and turn out the lights. Everyone should spread out and not huddle together as a group. Don't stand in front of the door or in line of fire with the door. Students' chair and desks should be piled in front of the glass and door as a barricade and the teacher's desk, podium and anything movable can be pushed against the door. This is intended to slow down any attempts to enter the classroom. If it looks like the shooter is persistent and able to enter, make a lot of noise and have the students use everything in their backpacks to throw at the shooter to distract him. Silence all cell phones after one person in the room calls the police and informs them of their location and how many people are in the room. **Be quiet and wait for the police to arrive.** The police are looking for one or more shooters, and they have no way of knowing if the shooter is in the room people are hiding in. For this reason, when the police enter the room, no one should have anything in his/her hands and each person **MUST** raise his/her hands above his/her head.

**Earthquake:** In the event of an earthquake, you are advised to take cover quickly under heavy furniture or crouch near an interior wall or corner and cover your head to avoid falling debris. Outside the building are trees and power lines and debris from the building itself that you will need to stay away from. In the building, large open areas like auditoriums are the most dangerous. Do not try to escape on a stairway or elevator. Do not hide under a stairway. We do not recommend that you stand in a doorway because the door could shut from the vibrations and crush your fingers trapping you there.

**Rave Mobile Safety Alert System:** We recommend that you sign up for the Rave Mobile Safety Alert System. It is a new system that replaces the WENS system to alert you through emergency text messages on your cell phone and emails for emergencies on campus, weather reports and emergency school closures. You have to sign up. If you were signed up for WENS it does not roll over. You have to sign up for Rave Mobile Safety Alert System. Go to Saluki Net, go to my records tab, under SIUC Personal Records, click on View My SIUC Student Records, Under Main Menu click on Personal Information, click on View and Update Addresses and Phones, in the middle of the page click [Update Addresses and Phones], under phones click Primary: This will take you to Update Addresses and Phones – Update/Insert, under primary phone number for this address put in your cell phone and submit. For more information, visit dps.siu.edu, contact SalukiTech at 453-5155 or salukitech@siu.edu.

**CPR/Defibrillator and First Aid Class:** If you would like to take a CPR/Defibrillator and/or First Aid class, contact LaVon Donley-Cornett, lavong@siu.edu or call 453-7473.

**Women's Self Defense Classes** are offered to female students faculty and staff by the Department of SIU Public Safety. For more information call the Department of SIU Public Safety 453-3771.