**Mones CSE456 Summer 2019**

**Assignment #3:**

**Creating, Writing, Constructing and Pitching your Group Animated Story**

***DUE:* Tuesday July 9, 2019 at 1 pm.**

**Books and Resources for cse456 for story construction.**

<https://courses.cs.washington.edu/courses/cse456/18su/administrative/recommended_books.html>

* David Mamet “On Directing Film”
* Brian McDonald – “Invisible Ink”, “The Golden Theme”, and “ Ink Spots”
* Bruce Block “The Visual Story”

This week your group will be creating, constructing and preparing a group story pitch for class on July 9th. Your story will include a **title**, **armature, seven steps** and **beat sheet**. You will select two characters and a set from the options provided to you. The entire group will be required to prepare and work to improve the story and the pitch.

You will select an armature from those listed below and you are expected to start to sketch out some ideas for your characters.

You are also required to turn in **acting reference (links and photos) for the character(s) in your story and audio that best supports your story.**

*This is a lot to take on.*

Remember: In production, you are expected to follow the **Golden Rules**. The most important one is to “do something.” It does not need to be perfect, but it does need to be the best work you can do with the time limit you have. Everything needs to be turned in and on time.

**For review, here are your seven steps:**

ONCE UPON A TIME ..

AND EVERY DAY...

UNTIL ONE DAY...

AND BECAUSE OF THAT...

AND BECAUSE OF THAT...

UNTIL FINALLY...

AND EVER SINCE THAT DAY...

1. **Here are your story armatures to select from:**

Select one of the following armatures and stick to it.

1. *What is most truly valuable is often underrated.*
2. *Acquaintance softens prejudices.*
3. *There is always someone worse off than you*
4. **Your Story Rules**

* No more than two characters. You must have at least one character and that character must be human.
* They will be selected from the ones you will be provided.
* The story must take place in one of the three sets you will be provided
* Select one armature from above and **stick with it**.
* Please consider that you are designing for an animated short and therefore you can exaggerate (reality). How is animation the best medium to tell this story and not live action?
* Let your imagination run away with you and enjoy the assignment. Try to design a story with heart. Consider that you want to move your audience on an emotional level and teach them or remind them of something important within the story rules.

***Note:*** While writing your stories, include a character who has a goal (who wants something) and an obstacle that is keeping him/her from that goal. Try your best to have the seven steps flow logically to the next. Try designing from step 1-7 and from 7-1 to see what might be logically out of order. Revise your story based on what you discover could improve it. Also, be careful to include all seven steps. Try telling your stories to friends and family and ask them for feedback. If they get lost, ask them to identify which part of the story left them confused and try to improve your seven steps. Adjust your story until you feel comfortable that it is as clear and simple as you can make it while also keeping your audience engaged and intrigued.

Beware of stories that are too long and hard to tell: convoluted stories with characters and sets that are on an epic scale will just make your goal harder to accomplish.

1. **STORY PITCHES**

Each group will present a story pitch and will pitch their story in class on July 9th. For this assignment, your group will work together to create a story that will be animated and will have seven steps, you will start a beat sheet, you will have a title, and you will have an armature.

Make sure that your story text is as consistent as you can make it with the visualization of your story. That will be the goal of your group so work with your teaching assistants until class on July 9th so they can help you prepare. You will need to PRACTICE your pitch so put the time aside to do so. Your story must be original.

Limit the story pitch to one and a half minutes and time yourself. Use the following checklist to help your group prepare for your pitch. Your group will need to work together to evaluate and improve your story.

Try not to read your story when you pitch but to instead act it out and engage with your audience. We would rather that you feel your characters set and story than to rely on your text. There will be no dialog.

**Checklist for your story pitch:** Use the exercises that you experienced with Matt Smith to help you develop your story!

● Prepare an outline. Remember that you won’t use dialog – convey your ideas with acting.

● Relax.

● Practice your pitch ahead of time. Find people to listen and provide feedback who haven't heard your story pitch. Ask them what your story is about and pay attention to what they say.

● Practice more than you need to. You will improve dramatically. Work with the colleagues in your class to help improve your story.

● Get as much feedback as you can from as many people as you can and address their feedback appropriately

When your group is ready - INTRODUCE YOUR GROUP AND THEIR ROLE IN THE PITCH RIGHT IN THE BEGINNING OF THE PITCH. Tell the group the story title.

● Use props where needed and remember to involve your entire group in your pitch.

● Act out your story when appropriate. Be the characters. It will help you develop them and understand them.

● Use active language and avoid "internal" descriptions. (Don't say the Character "realizes" because we can’t see “realize”)

● Address your pacing. Edit out unnecessary description or add in steps to help clarify beats so as not to confuse or lose your audience.

● Do whatever you need to in order to bring the audience into the story experience. Make it fun and be creative

● Present a story best told using 3D animation and use the strengths of animation as part of your pitch.

● Look at your audience and make every effort to engage them during your pitch.

● Be creative and try to have fun! The more fun/the more engaged you are - the more fun and engaged your audience will be. After your pitch, be sure to **WRITE DOWN YOUR FEEDBACK FROM THE CONSULTANTS AND STAFF ASAP AND THEN MEET TO ADDRESS IT**. You’ll be pitching again in class and you’ll be asked what your feedback was and how you addressed it.

PREPARE YOUR WRITTEN MATERIALS AND BRING “story packets” TO CLASS WITH YOU on **JULY 9th**

1. **Adjectives for your characters**

In your group sessions work with the TA’s to agree on 3 adjectives that describe the personality of each of your characters. This will help you better understand the character's motivation and personality.

1. **Acting and audio**

In addition, you will also be providing us with **acting reference** (images found online, photographs, scans, etc.) and come up with your **audio preferences**. Use your adjectives to help you find three examples of acting reference for each of your characters.

For audio choices, you will submit ideas for music and sound efx by including links online and text descriptions to justify your choices.

For your final project, each group will need to incorporate sound (foley/sound EFX and music) and a voiceover into your completed visual, so start to think about and plan the audio choices **now**. You will be practicing your voiceovers as you present your story pitches so you may want to ask students or staff to videotape your pitches so that you can collect reference. This will help you know what to say when you record your final voiceover.

1. **Beat sheet**

You will be creating a **beat sheet**. A Beat sheet describes the specific actions for your story in chronological order. This will help you with your story development.

Once the seven steps, title and armature is selected and you have practiced your pitch, you will create a Beat Sheet. Your Beat sheet will follow your seven steps and 3-act structure! Your Beat Sheet must also prove and support your armature.

You will work to improve your Beat sheets so you will iterate the Beat sheet. Start with the example provided and try to copy the basic format. You will also use your Beat Sheet as support for the visualization of your story. The Beat Sheet should help you organize and select the best camera, poses and props (etc.) that will support your story as it unfolds. A good Beat Sheet should help you stay on track. You might find that as you visualize your Beat Sheet that you need to go back and revise your seven steps. Feel free to do so, as the process is not always linear.

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1. **Turn** in One Group and One individual Critique for each assignment from now on.
2. **Keep things simple and clear!** Only include elements important to telling your story. You will know how to do this by practicing your pitching skills.

**Checklist of what is due:**

● Story Title

● Armature

● 7 Steps and Armature

● Beat sheet

● 3 examples of acting reference for each character

● Audio preferences to support your story. Include at least 2 links and descriptions

● 3 adjectives to describe each of your characters

● One Group and One Individual Critique provided by each student in the class.

* Individual critiques cover your feelings about your individual contribution
* Group critiques cover your feelings about your group’s contributions.

1. **Due Date: All work for this project should be submitted to Canvas by 1pm Tuesday July 9th**
2. **Paperwork.** Additionally, please print out and staple together **eight** packets of your story materials to being to class and share with the class when we review in class on Tuesday July 9, 2019.  Be sure to include all of the items listed above in each packet and have them when you arrive to class on time by 1 pm.

**Note**: There is a printer in the animation lab that you may use for this, called pgcANIM. Access it here: [\\ips.cs.washington.edu](file:///\\ips.cs.washington.edu)

D*o not* wait until the last minute as you will hold up the class, which will mean we run the risk of our class time running over our allotted time.

You will continue develop the same story for the rest of the quarter with your group members. Try to find something (or everything!) about your story that you can get excited about. You will be working long hours on this particular story so find a way to love it. This part should be easy.

Starting next week, you will pitch your story in class (and outside of class) to staff and others. Please be sure to set aside time to practice the skills of story pitching with your group and come to class prepared.

It is recommended that you follow several steps in order to prepare to present your pre-production in class. Please work within your group to modify and improve upon your seven steps and be sure that your steps prove your armature. You will list a title, an armature and then the revised seven steps.

**Questions for your group to discuss include:**

Is your armature clear and have you proven it?

Are any of the 7 steps missing or out of place?

Is there a lack of clarity?

Are you specifying too much in parts of the story to the detriment of the other story beats? Is the pacing/timing off?

Starting next week we will focus on pacing concerns, acting and action, and ways to convey your story visually in a way that will be clearest for your audience.

**Questions to consider for final script and beat sheet:**  
1. Whose story is it? From whose perspective is the story being told?  
2. Who wants what?  
3. Who is stopping them from getting it ( could be the same person)?  
4. What does the character learn ?  
5. Have you made the simplest and clearest story possible?  
6. Have you created a story that can be three minutes when completed/produced?

**Questions to consider when analyzing any short animated film:**  
  
1. Can you find three acts?  
2. Are the seven steps present?  
3. Is there an emotional component to the story?  
4. Is the story easily understood?  
5. Is there an armature (sometimes there isn't. The story is sometimes just a series of gags.)  
6. What is the armature?  
7. Where do each of the three acts start and end?  
8. What are the seven steps?  
9. What is the quality/effectiveness of the character motion?  
10. What is the quality of the character design?  
11. What is the quality of the overall timing/pacing of the short?  
12. How effective are the set/props/environment in enhancing your enjoyment and understanding of the story?  
13. How do the sequence changes and camera shifts/angles enhance or detract from the storytelling experience?