

We will be screening an animated short film roughly every week and you will be expected to keep a “response journal” throughout the term. I plan to have you hand in this journal both at the mid-term break and at the end of the term.

I have many goals in having you keep these journals. First, I want to expose you to short computer-animated films that you may not have seen. Second, I want to encourage you to begin observing animation more closely. Note that this includes you as an audience member engaged in a (hopefully) compelling film, but also you as a developing digital artist who can learn from techniques being employed by the filmmakers. And finally, I want you all to grow more comfortable articulating your thoughts in writing.

To these ends, I encourage you to quickly jot down your reactions after you watch a film the first time. What stands out in your mind? Story? Design? Animation? Models? Music? Concept? Don’t worry about WHY something stands out to you yet. Save that for now. If nothing stands out, then take some time to ask yourself, “What was this about?” and see if you can write down some answers.

Then, watch the film again. Try to identify the reasons you were drawn to something. See if you can understand how the filmmaker’s decisions impacted your eventual viewing experience. Try reverse-engineering the creative process.

Write whatever you come up with in your journal. The language need not be formal, though clarity is obviously valued. Feel free to write in the first person, and be honest. If you really liked the film then say so and try to examine why. Same if you didn’t like it.

Largely, the journal is a space where you are free to discover your own interests within the films. It would be smart to begin with the name of the film and filmmaker, and identify specifics from the film as they relate to your observations. Refer to shots, characters, and moments as necessary to clarify your responses.

If you want to actually hand-write in a journal, that’s great. Typing is fine as well. You may want to create a google doc or use a blog for these responses – as long as they are collected in a single space when needed that’s fine with me.

Although I will read them, check them for completeness, and use them as a window to peer into your individual relationship with the material screened, I do not plan to give you detailed feedback on the journals.