Course Syllabus - AVT 377: Cyberpunk | Course Outline | Course Supplement

PLEASE NOTE: Course content may be revised during the semester. Any changes will be announced during class and edits will be made to this document. Please refer back to this document on a weekly basis.

Professor: Mark Cooley
Spring 2016
Office hours: by appointment TR 12:00 - 1:30 room 2030
Contact: mcooley(at)gmu.edu

Note: The professor would like to express his gratitude to Professor Kirby Malone, who developed and taught this course for ten years in Mason's School of Art. Professor Malone generously contributed his time, ideas, conversation and course materials for SoA's 2013 reanimation of Cyberpunk.

Prologue

This course offers an opportunity for an examination of (cyber)culture and the implications of new technologies (and the systems which produce them) through an analysis and critique of cyberpunk and post-cyberpunk science fiction. Students conduct inquiries into the dominant
themes and representations pursued in cyberpunk culture through a variety of lenses including philosophy, theory and criticism, scientific inquiry and the creative process. Students are asked to participate in a trans-disciplinary discourse, which attempts, like the best science fiction, to offer insights into where we are, where we've been and where we're going.

The Set Up

Cyberpunk is dead, or so the pseudonymous Vincent Omniaveritas took it upon himself to proclaim in the pages of cyberpunk's critical fanzine Cheap Truth in 1986. Just two years after Gibson's breakthrough Neuromancer the "revolution" had flat-lined, or so it was said. Perhaps, seeing the inevitable doom of this revolution ending (as revolutions so often do) in the hands and service of those least invested in revolutionary values, Bruce Sterling writing as Omniaveritas, decided it prudent to abandon the farm and set the horses out on the open range before the big shopping mall moved in.

We are now living in The Future, in the epicenter of the east coast sprawl no less. The malls moved in and out, but we get all our day-to-day post-apocalyptic supplies from Wal Mart. Some say that soon after making it big in the states cyberpunk moved to Japan, leaving most of the writers here to continue with their experiments and the U.S. entertainment industry to routinely reanimate Cyberpunk™ - a lifeless body of media tropes tuned to the key of dark, disturbed, dystopic, and techno-fetishistic. Reanimations often suffered the fate of poor Frankenstein's 1931 monster, having had the original literary brain traded out for the Hollywood one. For some, cyberpunk is a cliché, a hollowed out style, a techno-sublime backdrop or edgy sci-fi vehicle for an exceedingly small collection of regurgitated narratives done up in black leather, mirrorshades and enough CGI ass kicking to make your head spin. And that's exactly how they say the masses like it, an inch deep and a million miles wide. But that's not the whole story, as we'll see.

Out here in the sprawl the tchotchke-tech invasion runs at full-tilt. We do our entertainment/infotainment on the go now. It's mostly about us. What we ate for dinner, what we "like". God gave us opposable thumbs and we're finally beginning to discover their full potential. Tapping on screens we (re)construct ourselves in a parallel world where everything exists in quotes, where friends become "friends" and so on. And though our virtual worlds seem infinite, even transcendent, the "infinite" is always inextricably tied to the finite. The ipad battery dies and the world is flat, a thin piece of glass reflecting us as we are. The movie ends, the lights come up and we shield our eyes from the sun as we leave the theater. But the dream lingers on. We check our messages, maybe check-in on fb® on the way to the car, "like" the movie, and so on.

And meanwhile offworld, the cyborgs making the gadgets through which our dreams are made jump from factory rooftops in an effort to test the limits of their programming and kill themselves in the process (recently, factory owners have attempted to retain the loss of valuable wetware by installing nets around the perimeter of the factories). In short, the spectacle abides (at least on this end of the rainbow) and converting the (digital) natives has never been so much fun, or
profitable. The desire for an unconscious consciousness is stronger than ever it seems, as flesh-eating zombie hordes scuff big box store tile for the latest release of franchised dreams.

...And, all this built on the ground where revolutionary battles were once fought.

But maybe, just maybe, right now, somewhere in the sprawl or out beyond the wall, a group of shadowy figures raise their fists to a sky the color of television, tuned to a dead channel (which now days would be bright blue) and yell, "Cyberpunk is Dead, Long Live Cyberpunk!"

Abandoning Definitions in Favor of Tendencies.

Definitions are always the subject of great debate (or at least they should be). I will refrain from using definitions for the time being. The following outline touches on some of the dominant tendencies (as I like to call them) of cyberpunk.

> **Envisioning a globalized future** characterized by multiculturalism, combined with extreme class division and the hegemony of a corporate state. Stories often focus on street-level disenfranchised or disaffected characters who are often compelled to engage in dangerous border crossings of one type or another. Whether their travels be in geographic space, cyberspace, or psychological space, crossing over into forbidden zones is always met with intense danger and hostility.

> **Engaging with info-tech, biotech, and nanotech** by suggesting how the human body, the psyche, and society will transform with the development and use of invasive technologies, while insisting that these changes won’t likely be dropped from the sky for the “benefit of all mankind,” but rather, engineered and disseminated inside systems of tight economic, political and social controls.

> **Using the human-technology interface** as a way to explore how the conditions of post-modernity challenge deeply embedded paradigms of western thought; in particular, binary oppositions such as reality/illusion, originality/duplication, life/death, human/inhuman, male/female, organic/inorganic, artifice/nature.

> **Critiquing Corpo Statism** by depicting bleak and ecocidal post-industrial quasi-fascist states where tyrannical corporations wage war on public and individual interests for the benefit of powerful private parties. Particularly of interest is the way in which the rational society uses invasive technologies and city and social planning as apparatuses of control through surveillance, propaganda and overtly hostile acts.

> **Pushing DIY & DIWOism** in the punk and hacker traditions with an ambivalent stance toward technology as both a tool of dominance and liberation,
ecstatic pleasure and unrivaled pain. Characters often work toward changing the beneficiary of technology by turning oppressive technologies against the interests that they were designed to serve.

**Goals**

To provide a supportive group context for investigating the issues, ideas, aesthetics, theory and criticism, in and around cyberpunk and postmodern science fiction.

To engage with the fictions of nonfiction and the nonfictions of fiction. That is to say, inspect the reciprocity of art and life.

To communicate, through text and dialog, careful, deep and rhizomatic readings and viewings of the course materials.

To practice critical thinking and an openness to the world of ideas, actions and potentialities.

**Texts / Media**

This course uses a variety of media and texts ranging from fiction, critical theory and documentary / journalism. Texts will be provided in the course outline except for the following novels:

Student must select one of the following books and read it.

*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* by Philip K. Dick
*Neuromancer* by William Gibson
*Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson

**Course Requirements**

Student Blogs: Each student is required to start and keep a dedicated website (on a blogging platform of choice) to which all coursework will be posted. It is preferable that the blog be private and password protected with an invitation going to the professor. All coursework is to be documented on the blog and posted on the due dates provided in the syllabus. Work will not be considered complete until it is posted to your website.

Assignments: Unless otherwise instructed, students are expected to produce text responses to the assignments presented in the course outline. Student texts should be completed with the intent of defining and applying key concepts delineated in the assignments and are evaluated on the degree to which they are successful in this regard. Texts should also serve as preparation for an informed and expanded classroom dialog. Successful writing for this course
is characterized by clear and functional copy edited language that expresses a thorough reading and understanding of the course materials. A note on would-be trollish writers: We're not here to write dismissive mini-manifestos (as witty as they may sometimes be) meant to slice, dice and roast our intellectual enemies. We're looking for ideas and opening our brains long enough to absorb them. And as we know, any agreement or disagreement should at least start with a thorough understanding of the ideas at play. Remember, assignments must be submitted to course blogs before being considered complete.

Final Paper: Students are responsible of writing a final paper with a thesis of the student's choice and which must include a critical analysis of one of the following novels:

**Paper outline due 3/15**

**Final Paper due 4/28**

*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* by Philip K. Dick

*Neuromancer* by William Gibson

*Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson

If you've read these, you can either reread one of them or, I have others to choose from.

Participation: Discussions offer an important time for exploration, analysis and critique of course materials as well as a time for connecting course content to personal experience and current worldly events. As we all probably know, class discussions can be difficult to initiate and sustain, but when successful, they add immeasurably to the classroom experience. Attending class both prepared and engaged will help make this course a success. And please remember this is a flesh congregation. Students telepresently or virtually engaged during class meetings are counted absent or asked to leave if they wish to continue their remote engagements. Phones should be shut off during class. Laptops should only be used to take or retrieve notes. No, you don't need to check that email. Remember, you should control your technology; your technology (or the people on the other end of it) should not control you. This is a basic tenant of cyberpunk and also of this class. Your phone is calling you even as you read this... refuse, resist... Your friend, your boss, the NSA can all wait! Let them feel the power of your will reject complete allegiance to the network.

Attendance: Only extraordinary circumstances should prevent students from attending class. Two absences are allowed. A letter grade reduction is made to final grades for each additional absence. Arriving late or leaving early more than twice results in an absence. Students spending class time on social media, video games and other distractions are counted absent. In the event of an absence, students are responsible for getting all missed information from their classmates unless extraordinary circumstances require a meeting with the professor during office hours. Class time is not used to review previously covered material in order to compensate for student absence or inattentiveness. In addition, email concerning information missed or misunderstood because of absence or inattentiveness will likely go unanswered. In short, instruction is not conducted by email. Students who make a habit of being unprepared, inattentive, or absent do not pass this course. Students may schedule an appointment during
the professor's office hours if additional instruction is needed outside of studio hours.

Deadlines: Unless extraordinary circumstances occur, tardy work will be dropped a letter grade for each class day that it is late. All work, submitted to the professor on-time, may be reworked and resubmitted as many times as necessary until a satisfactory evaluation is received.

Evaluation

A | Work that demonstrates excellent understanding of ideas presented through the course materials.

B | Work that demonstrates commitment to expanding one's vocabulary and a good understanding of the ideas presented through the course materials.

C | Work that demonstrates a fair understanding of ideas presented through the course materials.

D | Work of below average quality that suffers from a poor reading and/or expression of ideas presented in the course materials.

F | Work that demonstrates neglect of course materials and requirements, nonexistent work, late work, or very poor application.

Biweekly Papers 80%
Participation 10%
Final Paper 10%

Course Outline, Resources & Assignments | top of syllabus

NOTICE: Additions, subtractions and reorganization of course content are likely to be made in response to particular class needs. Changes will be announced during class meetings or sent to student GMU email. This webpage will be updated as changes are announced.


Welcome to the Machine
| T 1/19 | R 1/21 | T 1/26 | R 1/28 |

Keywords
The Corpo State, (Post)Industrialization, Neoliberalism, Globalization, Commodification and Commodity Fetishism, Alienation, Reification, Machines vs. Tools, Living Labor vs. Objectified or Dead Labor, Automatons, Robots, Androids

Films

*The Matrix* dir. The Wachowskis
*Sleep Dealer* dir. Alex Rivera (2008).
*Black Mirror: Fifteen Million Merits* (S1, Ep 2) (2012).

Theory / Criticism

*The Labour Process and Alienation in Machinery and Science*. Karl Marx
*Causes of Alienation* From *The Marxist Theory of Alienation*. Ernest Mandel and George Novak
*Disposable Life* - Slavoj Zizek

Documentary / Journalism

*The Corporation* dir. Jennifer Abbott, Mark Achbar

Fiction

*R. U. R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)*, Karel Capek
*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, Philip K. Dick

Assignment

Read/View Course Resources (these will become the references used in your writing):

See at least two of the films listed and/or read a selection of the fiction listed.
Read at least one of the theory / criticism pieces listed.
See at least one documentary / journalism pieces listed.

Write a text applying key concepts derived from the reading(s) to the films you've seen and/or fiction you've read. 1000 word minimum.

**Paper Due R 1/28**
Homeland Security Ltd.
| T 2/2 | R 2/4 | T 2/9 | R 2/11 |

Keywords

Militarized Police, Intelligent War Machines, Pre-Crime, Profiling, Remote Warfare, Military & Prison Industrial Complexes, The (in)Justice System

Films

*Alphaville* dir. Jean-Luc Godard (1965).
*The Handmaid’s Tale* dir. Volker Schlöndorff (1990), from the Margaret Atwood 1985 novel.
*Sleep Dealer* dir. Alex Rivera (2008).

Theory / Criticism

*Introduction to War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* by Manuel De Landa

Documentary / Journalism / info

The Business of Security
IKE’S WARNING OF MILITARY EXPANSION, 50 YEARS LATER, NPR

THE PRISON-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, The Atlantic, Eric Schlosser

Remote Warfare

Dirty Wars dir. Richard Rowley

Unmanned: America’s Drone Wars. Brave New Films


Domestic Police Issues

Democracy Now: Police Coverage

Fox News: Police Coverage

Interview with Michael Wood

Fiction

Minority Report, Philip K. Dick.

Altered Carbon, Richard K. Morgan

Assignment

Read/View Course Resources (these will become the references used in your writing):

See at least two of the films listed and/or read a selection of the fiction listed.

Read at least one of the theory / criticism pieces listed.

See/read at least one documentary / journalism pieces listed.

Write a text applying key concepts derived from the reading(s) to the films you’ve seen and/or fiction you’ve read. 1000 word minimum.

Paper due 2/11

BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU (WATCH YOURSELF)

| T 2/16 | R 2/18 | T 2/23 | R 2/25 |

Keywords


Films
Selected Films

Alphaville dir. Jean-Luc Godard (1965).
Black Mirror: Fifteen Million Merits (S1, Ep 2) (2012).

Related Films

The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum dirs. Volker Schlöndorff and Margarethe von Trotta (1975).

Theory / Criticism

Discipline and Punish, III Discipline, Chap. 3, Panopticism, Michel Foucault

Documentary / Journalism

Citizenfour dir. Laura Poitras (2014).
Death By Metadata Jeremy Scahill & Glenn Greenwald Reveal NSA Role in Assassinations Overseas.
We Live in Public dir. Ondi Timoner (2009).
Steve Mann: AR eyeglass and wearable computing ... Veillance (Surveillance versus Sousveillance)
MVeillance: How McDonaldized surveillance creates a monopoly on sight that chills AR and smartphone development, Steve Mann
Interview with Ramsey Orta
Interview with Michael Wood
we cop watch | 5 Rules for Recording Police

Assignment

Read/View Course Resources (these will become the references used in your writing):
See at least two of the films listed and/or read a selection of the fiction listed. Read at least one of the theory/criticism pieces listed. See/read at least one documentary/journalism pieces listed.

Write a text applying key concepts derived from the reading(s) to the films you've seen and/or fiction you've read. 1000 word minimum.

**Paper Due 2/25**

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**The Flesh Machine**

| T 3/1 | R 3/3 | Spring Break Mar 7 – Mar 13 | T 3/15 |

Keywords

Eugenics, Biotechnology, Implants, Body Mods, Cyborgs, Replicants, Artificial Intelligence, Dolls, Surrogates, Avatars, Other bodies & selves

Films

*Frankenstein* dir. James Whale. Adapted by John L. Balderston from a play by Peggy Webling, which in turn is drawn from the novel by Mary W. Shelley (1931).
*Alphaville* dir. Jean-Luc Godard (1965).
*Ghost in the Shell* dir. Mamoru Oshii.
Theory / Criticism


Documentary / Journalism

Literature

*The Girl Who Was Plugged In*, James Tiptree Jr.

Assignment

Read/View Course Resources (these will become the references used in your writing):

See at least two of the films listed and/or read a selection of the fiction listed.
Read at least one of the theory / criticism pieces listed.
See/read at least one documentary / journalism piece listed.

Write a text applying key concepts derived from the reading(s) to the films you've seen and/or fiction you've read. 1000 word minimum.

**Paper Due 3/15**

**You Are Not Yourself**


Keywords

Subjectivity, Identity (re)Formation, Memory/Memory Implants, Media as Message, Psychological Experimentation, Social Programing, Anti-Social Media

Films

Dark City dir. Alex Proyas (1998).
The Island Michael Bay (2005).
Inception dir. Christopher Nolan (2010).
Shutter Island dir. Martin Scorsese. From the Dennis Lehane novel (2010).
Beyond the Black Rainbow dir. Panos Cosmatos (2010).

Literature

We Can Remember it for you Wholesale, Philip K. Dick
Johnny Mnemonic, William Gibson
The Final Remake of The Return of Little Latin Larry With a Completely Remastered Soundtrack and the Original Audience, Pat Cadigan

Theory / Criticism
New Media and Technocultures Reader: Chapter 8 Marshall McLuhan, Selected Material from Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. ed. Martin Lister, Seth Giddings

RadioLab: No Special Now, (audio)
The Interpassive Subject, Slavoj Žižek
Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture, Stuart Ewen.
Interpassivity revisited: a critical and historical reappraisal of interpassive phenomena, Gijs van Oenen
Personality, Slavoj Žižek
Excerpts from The Cyborg Manifesto, Donna Haraway
Prosthetic Memory: Total Recall and Blade Runner by Alison Landsberg, (pgs. 175-189). Cyberspace, Cyberbodies, Cyberpunk: Cultures of Technological Embodiment. ed. Mike Featherstone and Roger Burrows
Epilogue: Cyberpunk and Memory (pgs. 204-214) Cyberpunk and Cyberculture: Science Fiction and the Work of William Gibson. Dani Cavallaro

Documentary / Journalism

Meet the Two Scientists Who Implanted a False Memory Into a Mouse, by David Noonan, Smithsonian Magazine, Nov. 2014
False memories of sexual abuse lead to terrible miscarriages of justice, the guardian, Chris French, 2010. How to install false memories, Scientific American

Assignment

Read/View Course Resources (these will become the references used in your writing):

See at least two of the films listed and/or read a selection of the literature listed.
Read at least one of the theory / criticism pieces listed.
See/read at least one documentary / journalism pieces listed.

Write a text applying key concepts derived from the reading(s) to the films you've seen and/or fiction you've read. 1000 word minimum.

Final Paper outline due 3/15

Section Paper Due 3/31
Reality Inc.

Keywords

Ideology, Interpellation, (De)coding, Spectacle, Simulacra, Simulation, Hyperreality

Films

Dark City dir. Alex Proyas (1998).
The Island dir. Michael Bay (2005).
Inception dir. Christopher Nolan (2010).

Theory / Criticism

The Society of the Spectacle, (text) Guy Debord
The Society of the Spectacle (film w/ updated images)
Simulacra and Simulations, Jean Baudrillard
The Gulf War did not take place, Jean Baudrillard
Jean Baudrillard - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
RadioLab: The Real Don Quixote (audio)
Assignment

Read/View Course Resources (these will become the references used in your writing):

See at least two of the films listed and/or read a selection of the literature listed. Read at least one of the theory / criticism pieces listed. See/read at least one documentary / journalism pieces listed.

Write a text applying key concepts derived from the reading(s) to the films you've seen and/or fiction you've read. 1000 word minimum.

**Paper Due 4/14**

(My Only Friend) The End
| T 4/19 | R 4/21 | T 4/26 | R 4/28 |

Keywords:

Dystopia, The Integral Accident, Ecocide, (Post)Apocalypse

Films

*Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* dir. Stanley Kubrick. Script by Terry Southern (1964).
*A Boy and His Dog* dir. L.Q. Jones. Based on a novella by Harlan Ellison (1975).
I am Legend dir. Francis Lawrence (2007).
The Book of Eli dir. The Hughes Brothers (2010).
Mad Max: Fury Road dir. George Miller

Theory and Criticism

Invention of Accidents, Paul Virilio
Accident Thesis, Paul Virilio

Assignment

Read/View Course Resources (these will become the references used in your writing):

See at least two of the films listed and/or read a selection of the fiction listed. Read at least one of the theory / criticism pieces listed. See at least one documentary / journalism pieces listed.

Write a text applying key concepts derived from the reading(s) to the films you've seen and/or fiction you've read. 1000 word minimum.

Paper Due 4/28

Final Paper/Project due 4/28
In accordance with George Mason University policy, turn off all beepers, cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class. The instructor of the class will keep his/her cell phone active to assure receipt of any Mason Alerts in a timely fashion; or in the event that the instructor does not have a cell phone, he/she will designate one student to keep a cell phone active to receive such alerts.

Commitment to Diversity
This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran’s status, or physical ability.

Statement on Ethics in Teaching and Practicing Art and Design
As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the School of Art adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

Open Studio Hours
SOA teaching studios are open to students for extended periods of time mornings, evenings and weekends whenever classes are not in progress. Policies, procedures and schedules for studio use are established by the SOA studio faculty and are posted in the studios.

ArtsBus - Dates for Spring 2016
February 20
March 19
April 9

ArtsBus Credit
* Each student must have up to 5 AVT 300/Artsbus credits before graduation. For credit to appear on your transcript you must enroll in AVT 300. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment.
* If you plan/need to go on multiple ArtsBus trips during a semester and need them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300. Please go to the ArtsBus website: http://artsbus.gmu.edu "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy.
* Non-AVT majors taking art classes do not need Artsbus credit BUT may need to go on the Artsbus for a class assignment. You can either sign up for AVT 300 or buy a ticket for the bus trip at the Center of the Arts. Alternate trips must be approved by the instructor of the course that is requiring an ArtsBus trip.
Visual Voices Lecture Series Spring 2016

Visual Voices is a year-long series of lectures by artists, art historians and others about contemporary art and art practice. Visual Voices lectures are held on Thursday evenings from 7:20-9:00 p.m. in Harris Theater: http://soa.gmu.edu/visualvoices/

Important Deadlines:

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<tr>
<th>January 1 Day of Week</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King Day (no classes)</td>
<td>Mon Jan 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>First day of classes; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date; full semester withdrawals removed</td>
<td>Tue Jan 19</td>
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<td>Summer 2016 Graduation Intent Available via Patriot Web</td>
<td>Mon Jan 25</td>
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<td>Last day to add classes—individualized section forms due</td>
<td>Tues Jan 26</td>
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<td>Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty</td>
<td>Tues Feb 2</td>
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<td>Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)</td>
<td>Fri Feb 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last day to file your Spring 2016 Graduation Intent</td>
<td>Fri Feb 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immunization Record Deadline</td>
<td>Tue Mar 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via Patriot Web</td>
<td>Mon Feb 15 – Fri Mar 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)</td>
<td>Mon Feb 22 – Fri Mar 25</td>
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<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>Mon Mar 7 – Sun Mar 13</td>
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<td>Incomplete work from Fall 2015 due to Instructor</td>
<td>Fri Mar 25</td>
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<td>Incomplete grade changes from Fall 2015 due to Registrar</td>
<td>Fri Apr 1</td>
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<td>Dissertation/Thesis Deadline</td>
<td>Fri Apr 1</td>
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<td>Last day of classes</td>
<td>Mon May 1</td>
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<td>Reading Days</td>
<td>Tue May 3</td>
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<td>Reading days provide students with additional study time for final examinations. Faculty may schedule optional study sessions, but regular classes or exams may not be held.</td>
<td>Wed May 4 – Wed May 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam Period (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)</td>
<td>May 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commencement and Degree Conferral Date</td>
<td>May 14</td>
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Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for late adds (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the SOA office (or the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid being processed), LATE ADD fee will apply. Requests for non-selective withdrawals and retroactive adds (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student’s major is located. For AVT majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, Performing Arts Building A407.

Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences

If you have a diagnosed disability or learning difference and you need academic
accommodations, please inform me at the beginning of the semester and contact the Disabilities Resource Center (SUB I room 234, 703-993-2474). You must provide me with a faculty contact sheet from that office outlining the accommodations needed for your disability or learning difference. All academic accommodations must be arranged in advance through the DRC.

Official Communications via GMU E-Mail
Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

Attendance Policies
Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

Honor Code
Students in this class are bound by the Honor Code, as stated in the George Mason University Catalog. The honor code requires that the work you do as an individual be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas. (This does not prohibit collaborative work when it is approved by your instructor.) As a faculty member, I have an obligation to refer the names of students who may have violated the Honor Code to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously. No grade is important enough to justify cheating, for which there are serious consequences that will follow you for the rest of your life. If you feel unusual pressure about your grade in this or any other course, please talk to me or to a member of the GMU Counseling Center staff.

Using someone else’s words or ideas without giving them credit is plagiarism, a very serious Honor Code offense. It is very important to understand how to prevent committing plagiarism when using material from a source. If you wish to quote verbatim, you must use the exact words and punctuation just as the passage appears in the original and must use quotation marks and page numbers in your citation. If you want to paraphrase or summarize ideas from a source, you must put the ideas into your own words, and you must cite the source, using the APA or MLA format. (For assistance with documentation, I recommend Diana Hacker, A Writer's Reference.) The exception to this rule is information termed general knowledge—information that is widely known and stated in a number of sources. Determining what is general knowledge can be complicated, so the wise course is, “When in doubt, cite.”

Be especially careful when using the Internet for research. Not all Internet sources are equally
reliable; some are just plain wrong. Also, since you can download text, it becomes very easy to inadvertently plagiarize. If you use an Internet source, you must cite the exact URL in your paper and include with it the last date that you successfully accessed the site.

Writing Center
Students who are in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). The services of the Writing Center are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis.

The Collaborative Learning Hub Located in Johnson Center 311 (703-993-3141), the lab offers in-person one-on-one support for the Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, Blackboard, and a variety of other software. Dual monitor PCs make the lab ideal for collaborating on group projects, Macs are also available; as well as a digital recording space, collaborative tables, and a SMART Board. Free workshops are also available (Adobe and Microsoft) through Training and Certification; visit ittraining.gmu.edu to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.