

## Course Syllabus - AVT 280: Introduction to New Media Art: 1:30-4:10.

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: Paul Shortt**

**Spring 2017**

**Art and Design Building 1023**

Office hours: Office hours: by appointment MW

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### Strategies and Goals

This course investigates a variety of tools, tactics and concerns of artists working with new media and forms of art. The course explores, through research and practice, the cultural significance and impacts of technoculture and new media technologies with a focus on the context of modern and contemporary art.

Students are expected to:

**Research:** Develop a familiarity with a variety of artworks and key concepts that have contributed to art and cultural inquiry in the context of media and technocultures;

**Practice:** Demonstrate a thoughtful and creative understanding of various concepts, issues and tools in the process of making meaningful artworks;

**Critique:** Demonstrate a functional vocabulary for critically evaluating contemporary artworks.

## Course Requirements

### Projects

Students are required to complete a series of projects forming a constellation of concepts, approaches, concerns, technologies, and genre of importance to media artists. Each project requires students to complete assigned research, think and practice critically and creatively, show responsibility for the content of their work, provide meaningful justifications for aesthetic decisions and display a convincing and proficient use of appropriate tools. Each project must be posted (in accordance with the syllabus requirements and due dates on the course outline) to a dedicated page on a website using the blogging service of the student's choice. Each project page should include the following:

#### A. Research - Artworks & Assigned Reading and Media

The function of research in this course is to create an understanding of the issues, concepts and technologies employed in each project.

##### Look

A discussion of at least 3 Artworks from the artists referenced in the course outline (100 words minimum for each artwork).

Artworks should be taken seriously, and an effort should be made to understand the cultural significance of the works. Additional research beyond the links provided will be necessary.

##### Read, Watch or Listen

A discussion of one of the listed readings or media in the project references located in the course outline. Blog entries concerning assigned readings or media should summarize the main points of the text/media and be a minimum of 200 words. Additional research beyond the links provided will may be necessary.

#### B. Artwork: Make

Completed artwork in the required format and posted to the blog, and if relevant, including documentation of the making of the project.

## C. Project Summary

Including a minimum of 200 words explaining the meaning of your work, including the main concepts explored and how your aesthetic choices and technical execution contribute to the work with respect to its intended impact on an audience.

### Discussion & Critique

All students are expected to participate in class discussions. Thoughtful, creative, critical and sincere attitudes are encouraged. In the context of group critique, it is important that the class openly, honestly and respectfully discuss the work presented. Remember that the goal of critique is to examine and make meaning from what we see. Critique also functions to question the motives, creative decisions, and the conceptual and technical proficiency of the artist. Students are expected to give and take criticism seriously but not personally, and where appropriate, incorporate responses to criticism into future work. The overall goal of critique is to uncover meaning and aid the artist in improving their work. Various methods of critique will be introduced by the professor and practiced by the class during critique sessions. All class members will participate in critical discussion of the works produced in this course in an attempt to:

Identify, practice, and question various approaches to theory and criticism in the arts; Identify meaning and discuss how meaning is reproduced through artworks; Explore the development of technology, media and aesthetics as socially, politically, and economically charged activities rather than as neutral entertainment; Encourage and empower people to create and to help make their creative works better, and... Discuss what "better" might mean.

### Blog

Students are required to start a course blog to which ALL assignments, in the appropriate formats (audio,video,image,text), are to be posted (depending on the blogging platform, additional online services may be needed to post audio & video works). The blog should be private with the professor and course members given viewing access. Blogs should contain a separate page and corresponding menu item dedicated to each course project. Blog entries should be edited for content, spelling and grammar prior to posting. Work will NOT be considered complete until it is posted to the course blog as well as displayed in any additionally assigned formats.

### 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

Late work will not be accepted except under extraordinary circumstances (see the professor for permission). In the event that late work is accepted, grades will be reduced one letter grade for each class day they are late.

Students may rework projects to be considered for a reevaluation during the semester. However, projects are reevaluated only if the project was originally completed on time.

### Evaluation

Each project requires students to complete assigned research, think and practice critically and creatively, show responsibility for the content of their work, provide meaningful justifications for aesthetic decisions and display a convincing and proficient use of appropriate tools. Each project must be posted (in accordance with the syllabus requirements and due dates on the course outline) to a dedicated page on a website using the blogging service of the student's choice. All grades will be given equal value and averaged

together at the end of the semester to obtain a final grade. Grades are distributed through email with little or no comment. Comments concerning grades are given during critique and individually in class.

**A** | Work that is highly creative, well informed, researched, and applied with a high degree of skill.

**B** | Work that is creative, informed, researched, and demonstrates commitment to craft, ideas, and expanding one's vocabulary.

**C** | Work that is complete, though perhaps derivative, and/or could benefit from further research, a more creative direction and/or skillful application.

**D** | Work of below average quality that suffers from unskilled, uninformed, and/or derivative work.

**F** | Work that demonstrates consistent neglect of course requirements, nonexistent work, excessively late work, or poor application of processes, thought, creativity and/or skill.

#### **TOPIC AREAS:**

Students will be given detailed project descriptions when projects are introduced.

IDENTITY

VISUAL INTERVENTION

ANIMATED GIF ANIMATION

REMIX

VISUAL INTERVENTION

#### **TEXTBOOKS (Required)**

You will use tutorials and texts from Digital Foundations: Intro To Media Design available for free online at:

<http://wiki.digital-foundations.net> (for Adobe programs)

OR <http://en.flossmanuals.net/digital-foundations/> (for open source programs)

Readings that pertain to each project in class will be posted to the class blog or blackboard.

#### **Software**

Students will be introduced to working with Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Premiere and other programs to create projects that use computers as a tool in a variety of ways. Additionally, students may use open source and/or additional commercial software programs in creating their projects.

#### **Supplies**

An appropriate personal data storage device (min. 32 Gb)

Output Materials (and costs) as needed

Digital Camera and tripod

Digital Video Camera- you may check cameras out from the STAR Lab in the Johnson Center.

#### **General Resources**

[ARTStor](#) - as a Mason student, you have access to the ARTStor art image database. Please use this database when researching artworks. The images are larger with quality far superior to most versions you'll find online. [Lynda.com](#) - as a Mason student, you have access to Lynda.com, which provides excellent software instruction. Take advantage of this newly available university resource.

#### University and School of Art Policies

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 2017: February 18, March 25, April 18

#### 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

Dates for Spring 2017: January 26, February 9, March 9, March 23, March 30

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

<i>January 1 Day of Week</i>	<i>Sunday</i>
Martin Luther King Day (no classes)	Mon Jan 16
<b>First day of classes</b> ; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date; full semester waitlists removed	Mon Jan 23
<b>Last day to add classes</b> —all individualized section forms due Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	Mon Jan 30
<b>Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty</b>	Mon Feb 13
<b>Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)</b>	Fri Feb 24
Immunization Record Deadline	Wed Mar 1
Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via <a href="#">Patriot Web</a>	Mon Feb 20 – Fri Mar 24
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	Mon Feb 27 – Fri Mar 31
Spring Break	Mon Mar 13 – Sun Mar 19
<b>Incomplete work from Fall 2016 due to Instructor</b>	<b>Fri March 31</b>
<b>Incomplete grade changes from Fall 2016 due to Registrar</b>	<b>Fri April 7</b>
Dissertation/Thesis Deadline	Fri May 5
<b>Last day of classes</b>	Sat May 6
<b>Reading Days</b> 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.	Mon May 8 – Tue May 9
<b>Exam Period</b> (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)	Wed May 10 – Wed May

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<b>Commencement and Degree Conferral Date</b>	May 20

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](http://ittraining.gmu.edu) to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.