Penn State University – School of Visual Arts
Spring 2015
ART 476 History of Digital Art
Professor: Eduardo Navas (ean13@psu.edu)
Thursdays 11:15 AM – 2:15 PM
Office hours: Mondays and Thursdays 9 to 11 AM, 209 Art Cottage

Course Description

History of Digital Art is a survey class that offers participants an opportunity to examine the humanistic aspects of contemporary digital art. Through readings and direct interaction with digital media and digital artists, the class will develop an appreciation of the ways in which the interface between human beings and technology has been historically constructed and is subject to critical investigation. The goal of the class is to prepare each student so that she or he may engage with digital media in a way that is ever more historically and socially relevant.

Students will address the ways in which digital technologies transform artistic practices such as museum display, the writing of art criticism, the definition of works of art, changing role of the artist and the changing space of the art studio. More important, however, by engaging with digital works of art students will learn to think critically about technology and its engagement with culture at large. They will be encouraged to think about the political, economic and social impact of digital technologies. This humanistic approach to technology makes this course particularly useful to students of art history, philosophy, comparative literature, art education, and the visual/plastic arts. A significant portion of the course will be devoted to the ways in which art on the Internet and digital art in general challenge the integrity of categories such as race and national identity.

Class Structure
Class will consist of lectures and discussions of works that are important in the history of digital art. Students will be assigned readings that will complement in-class lectures. There will be two major papers, the first around the middle of the term, and the second at the end. For each paper students will need to write concisely about works of art and topics and themes discussed in class throughout the term. Students will be expected to post reactions to in-class discussions on Angel forums. Forum postings will be considered part of your class participation.

Learning Outcomes:
1. To understand how form and content are combined to communicate a message.
2. To understand the history and theory that is relevant to the history of digital art.
3. To acquire a basic understanding of conceptual models important in visual culture and especially digital art.
4. To gain knowledge of the diverse production in digital art and their relation to art history.
5. To produce effective critical analysis.

A Note on Plagiarism
Plagiarism will not be tolerated. A student who commits plagiarism will be reported to the office of the visual arts. The student's behavior will be taken very seriously and dealt with according to the guidelines provided by Penn State University – School of Visual Arts. To avoid plagiarism, please cite your sources when appropriate.

Academic Integrity Statement
University Policies and Rules Guidelines states that academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts. Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to acts such as cheating on exams or assignments; plagiarizing the words or ideas of another; fabricating information or citations; facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others; claiming authorship of work done by another person; submitting work completed in previous classes; and/or submitting the same work to multiple classes in which a student is enrolled simultaneously.

Accessibility Statement
Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. The Office for Disability Services (ODS) Web site provides contact information for every Penn State campus: http://equity.psu.edu/ods/dcl. For further information, please visit the Office for Disability Services Web site: http://equity.psu.edu/ods.

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: http://equity.psu.edu/ods/guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Safety Information
Students in the School of Visual Arts may find themselves working in the shop or in their studios or classrooms using a variety of power and hand held equipment, which may cause injury. Students should use the shop only after having received an orientation in the

use of such equipment and when supervised by faculty or shop personnel. Should any injuries occur, in the shop, studios, or classrooms in the School of Visual Arts please report them to Matt Olson, Shop Supervisor, Room 108-A Visual Arts Building, Phone: 814-865-3962, email: mjo5165@psu.edu.

Required Readings
Digital Culture by Charlies Gere
Digital Art by Christiane Paul
A Thousand Years of Non-linear History by Manuel De Landa

Available at the bookstore.

Recommended:
New Media Art by Mark Tribe & Reena Jana
Available online at
https://wiki.brown.edu/confluence/display/MarkTribe/New+Media+Art

Course Requirements
Please note that final grades are dependent upon consistent performance in all course requirements.
- **Attend every class session.** (See attendance below for more details.)
- **Participate in class and online discussions**.
- **There are a total of 2 major written assignments.** The point breakdown is below.
- **There are no make-ups.** Please check with me for possible exceptions. Not consulting with me prior to the dates when assignments are due will lead to an automatic F for the respective assignment.

Grading
- Attendance 10%
- Class Participation (affected by attendance) 10%
- Online Forum Participation 10%
- First Major Essay 35%
- Second Major Essay 35%

Total 100%

Grade Scale
Letter grade assignments are as follows:
- 94-100 = A
- 90-93 = A-
- 87-89 = B+
- 84-86 = B
- 80-83= B-
- 77-79 = C+
- 74-76 = C

- 70-73 = C-
- 60-69 = D
- 0-59 = F

Attendance
- Three Absences = F, Three tardies (15 minutes late or early departure) = one absence.
- One Absence will take away 1.5% from attendance grade and 1.5% from class participation.
- There are no excused absences unless it is an extreme case. Please check with me for exceptions.

Semester Schedule
Check Angel for readings aside from the assigned books as noted in the schedule below. Also make sure to purchase the required books when they become available at the university bookstore. There may be more readings in additions to the basic ones below. **Check Syllabus link on Angel for updated reading materials.**

Week 1:
Thursday, January 15, 2015
Introduction | Brief overview of the History of Digital Art
Lecture on Modernism, Postmodernism and New Media

Week 2:
Thursday, January 22, 2015

Lesson online
Complete assigned reading plus online material available on Angel and answer and discuss questions available on Angel Forum for the readings below

Read and be ready to discuss:
David Hopkins, "The Politics of Modernism: Abstract Expressionism and the European Informel," After Modern Art: 1945 – 2000, pp. 5 – 34 (PDF)
David Hopkins, "Postmodernism: Theory and Practice in the 1980s," After Modern Art: 1945 – 2000, pp. 197 – 231 (PDF)
Giorgio Agamben "What is an Apparatus?" (PDF)

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, January 23, to Wednesday, January 28, 2015.

Week 3:
Thursday, January 29, 2015

Read and be ready to discuss:
Digital Culture, pp. 1—16
Digital Art, pp. 7 – 46
Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, January 30, to Wednesday, February 4, 2015.

Week 4:
Thursday, February 5, 2015
Read and be ready to discuss:
Manuel De Landa, *A Thousand Years of Non-linear History*, pp. 11-56
Christiane Paul, "The Myth of Immateriality," pp. 251-272 (PDF)

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, February 6, to Wednesday, February 11, 2015.

Week 5:
Thursday, February 12, 2015
Finish discussing Giorgio Agamben and Manuel De Landa
Begin reading: Fredric Jameson "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (PDF)

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, February 13, to Wednesday, February 18, 2015.

Week 6:
Thursday, February 19, 2015
Read and be ready to discuss:
Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (PDF)
Digital Culture, Chapter 2: 47 – 74

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, February 20, to Wednesday, February 25, 2015.

Week 7:
Thursday, February 26, 2015
Midterm Essay Released
Read and be ready to discuss:
Digital Art: Chapter 1: 27 – 65
Vannevar Bush, "As we May Think" in the *New Media Reader*, pp. 35 – 48 (PDF)
by Dieter Daniels, "Duchamp: Interface: Turing…", pp. 103-127 (PDF)

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, February 27 to Friday, March 4, 2015.

Week 8:
Thursday, March 5, 2015
Midterm Essay Due
Lecture on Media Art: Postmodernism and Posthumanism

Week 9:
Thursday, March 12, 2015
Spring Break

Week 10:
Thursday, March 19, 2015
Read and be ready to discuss:
Digital Art, Chapter 2: 67 – 138
Deleuze and Guatarri, "Of the Refrain," PDF

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, March 20 to Wednesday, March 25, 2015.

Week 11:
Thursday, March 26, 2015
Read and be ready to discuss:
Manuel De Landa, *A Thousand Years* […] pp. 71 - 99

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, March 27 to Wednesday, April 1, 2014.

Week 12:
Thursday, April 2, 2015
Read and be ready to discuss:
Digital Culture, Chapter 4, 112 – 149
Manuel De Landa, *A Thousand Years* […] pp. 103 – 147

Week 13:
Thursday, April 9, 2015
Final Essay Guidelines Released
Read and be ready to discuss:
Digital Culture, Chapter 5 and Conclusion, 150 - 202

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, April 10 to Wednesday, April 15, 2014.

Week 14:
Thursday, April 16, 2015
Read and be ready to discuss:
Manuel De Landa, *A Thousand Years* […] pp. 183 - 226

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, April 17 to Wednesday, April 22, 2015.

Week 15:
Thursday, April 23, 2015
Read and be ready to discuss:
Digital Art, Chapter 3, "Themes in Digital Art," 139 – 246
Manuel De Landa, *A Thousand Years* […] pp. 227 - 274

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, April 24 to Wednesday, April 29, 2015.

Week 16
Thursday, April 30, 2015
Final Lecture

Week 17:
Thursday, May 7, 2015
Final Essay due