

Penn State University – School of Visual Arts

Spring 2016

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, 206 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

Available at the bookstore:

Digital Culture by Charles Gere

Digital Art by Christiane Paul

Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste by Pierre Bourdieu.

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/Online Forums 30%
- First Major Essay 25%
- Second Major Essay + Questions (two parts) 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 14, 2016

Introduction | Brief overview of the History of Digital Art
Lecture on Modernism, Postmodernism and New Media

Week 2:

Thursday, January 21, 2016

Read and be ready to discuss:

David Hopkins, "Postmodernism: Theory and Practice in the 1980s," *After Modern Art: 1945 – 2000*, pp. 197 – 231 (PDF).

Charlie Gere, *Digital Culture*, pp. 11 – 50.

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, January 22, to Wednesday, January 27, 2016.

Week 3:

Thursday, January 28, 2016

Read and be ready to discuss:

Pierre Bourdieu, "Introduction," 1 – 9, "The Title of Cultural Nobility," 18 – 50,

Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste.

Christiane Paul, "The Myth of Immateriality," pp. 251-272 (PDF).

Christiane Paul, *Digital Art*, pp. 7 – 46.

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, January 29, to Wednesday, February 3, 2016.

Week 4:

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Read and be ready to discuss:

Bourdieu, "Cultural Pedigree," 63 – 85.

Gere, *Digital Culture*, Chapter 2: 51 – 78.

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, February 5, to Wednesday, February 10, 2016.

Week 5:

Thursday, February 11, 2016

Gere, *Digital Culture*, Chapter 3: 79 – 115.

Paul, *Digital Art*, Chapter 1: 27 – 65

Bourdieu, “Class Condition and Social Conditioning,” 101 – 112, “The Cheating of a Generation,” 143 – 147, “The Struggle To Keep Up,” 147 – 154.

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, February 12, to Wednesday, February 17, 2016.

Week 6:

Thursday, February 18, 2016

Read and be ready to discuss:

Jonathan Crary, “Chapter 2,” 29 – 60, 2/7/7, (PDF)

Simone de Beauvoir, “The Aesthetic Attitude” and “Freedom and Liberation,” 74 – 96

Digital Art, Chapter 2: 67 – 138

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, February 19, to Wednesday, February 24, 2016.

Week 7:

Thursday, February 25, 2016

Midterm Essay Released

Read and be ready to discuss:

Bourdieu, “The Correspondence between Goods Production and Taste Production,” 230 – 256.

Gere, *Digital Culture*, Chapter 4, 116 – 153.

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, February 26 to Friday, March 2, 2016.

Week 8:

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Midterm Essay Due

Lecture on Media Art: Postmodernism and Posthumanism

Week 9:

Thursday, March 10, 2016

Spring Break

Week 10:

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Read and be ready to discuss:

Deleuze and Guatarri, “Of the Refrain,” *A Thousand Plateaus*, (PDF).

Manuel de Landa, “Assemblage Theory and Human History,” *Deleuze: History and Science*, 3 – 28 (PDF).

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, March 18 to Wednesday, March 23, 2016.

Week 11:

Thursday, March 24, 2016

Read and be ready to discuss:

Bourdieu, "The Sense of Distinction," 261 – 295.

Digital Art, Chapter 3, "Themes in Digital Art," 139 – 246.

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, March 25 to Wednesday, March 30, 2016.

Week 12:

Thursday, March 31, 2016

Read and be ready to discuss:

Bourdieu, "Cultural Goodwill," 319 – 346.

Gere, Chapter 5: "Digital Resistances," 154 – 200.

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, April 1 to Wednesday, April 6, 2016.

Week 13:

Thursday, April 7, 2016

Final Essay Guidelines Released (two parts)

Read and be ready to discuss:

Eduardo Navas, "Culture and Remix: A Theory on Cultural Sublation," (PDF).

Eduardo Navas, "Regenerative Knowledge & Culture," (PDF).

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, April 8 to Wednesday, April 13, 2016.

Week 14:

Thursday, April 14, 2016

Read and be ready to discuss:

Bourdieu, "The Choice of the Necessary," 372 – 396.

De Landa, "Materialism and Politics," 29 – 49 (PDF).

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, April 15 to Wednesday, April 20, 2016.

Week 15:

Thursday, April 21, 2016

Read and be ready to discuss:

Bourdieu, "The Right to Speak," 411 – 414, "Personal Opinion," 414 – 417, "The Modes of Production of Opinion," 417 – 426, "Conclusion: Classes and Classifications," 466 – 484.

Answer questions available on Angel. Discussion takes place from Friday, April 22 to Wednesday, April 27, 2015.

Week 16

Thursday, April 28, 2016

Final Lecture

Week 17:

Thursday, May 5, 2016

Final Essay due