

Penn State University – School of Visual Arts
Spring 2018
ART 476 History of Digital Art
Professor: Eduardo Navas (ean13@psu.edu)
Mon, Wed, Fri 12:20 – 1:10 PM
Office hours: Mon and Wed 11 to 12 PM, 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 lead class discussions each week for 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

Art and Electronic Media, Edward A. Shanken

Recommended:

Digital Art by Christiane Paul

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.**
- **Lead 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 20%
- Class Participation/Online Forums 30%
- First Major Essay 20%
- Second Major Essay + Questions (two parts) 30%

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:

Monday , January 8, 2018

Introduction | Brief overview of the History of Digital Art

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

Lecture on Modernism, Postmodernism and New Media | Early discussion on Hopkins's "Postmodernism: Theory and Practice in the 1980s," *After Modern Art: 1945 – 2000*, pp. 197 – 231 (PDF).

Friday, January 12, 2018

Assignment of Readings to lead online discussions on Canvas

Week 2:

Monday, January 15, 2018

Martin Luther King Day, No Classes

Wednesday, January 17, 2018

Read and be ready to discuss:

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

Friday, January 19, 2018

Discussion takes place on Canvas from Friday, January 19 to Sunday, January 21, 2018.

Week 3:

Monday, January 22, 2018

Read and be ready to discuss:

Charlie Gere, *Digital Culture*, "Preface" and "Introduction," 7 – 20 + selected art projects.

Wednesday, January 24, 2018

Continue Lecture on Gere, "Preface" and "Introduction"

Friday, January 26, 2018

Discussion takes place from Friday, January 26 to Sunday, January 28, 2018

Week 4:

Monday, January 29, 2018

Read and be ready to discuss:

Charlie Gere, "Chapter 1: The Beginnings of Digital Culture," *Digital Culture*, 21 – 50 + selected art projects.

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

Continue Lecture on Gere, "The Beginnings of Digital Culture."

Friday, February 2, 2018

Discussion takes place from Friday, February 2 to Sunday, February 4, 2018

Week 5:

Monday, February 5, 2018

Read and be ready to discuss:

Gere, "Chapter 2: The Cybernetic Era" *Digital Culture*, 51 – 78 + selected art projects.

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Continue Lecture on Gere, "The Cybernetic Era."

Friday, February 9, 2018

Discussion takes place from Friday, February 9 to Sunday, February 11, 2018

Week 6:

Monday, February 12, 2018

Read and be ready to discuss:

Gere, "Chapter 3: The Digital Avant-Garde," *Digital Culture*, 79 - 115 + selected art projects.

Wednesday, February 14, 2018

Continue Lecture on Gere, "The Digital Avant-Garde."

Friday, February 16, 2018

Discussion takes place from Friday, February 16, to Sunday, February 18, 2018.

Week 7:

Monday, February 19, 2018

Midterm Essay Released

Read and be ready to discuss:

Gere, "Chapter 4: The Digital Counter Culture," *Digital Culture*, 116 – 153 + selected art projects.

Wednesday, February 21, 2018

Continue Lecture on Gere, "The Digital Counter Culture."

Friday, February 23, 2018

Discussion takes place from Friday, February 23, to Sunday, February 25, 2018.

Week 8:

Monday, February 26, 2018

Midterm Essay Due

Gere, "Chapter 5: Digital Resistances," *Digital Culture*, 154 – 200 + selected art projects.

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

Continue Lecture on Gere, "The Digital Resistances."

Friday, March 2, 2018

Discussion takes place from Friday, March 2, to Sunday, March 4, 2018.

Week 9:

March 5 - 9, 2018

Spring Break

Week 10:

Monday, March 12, 2018

Read and be ready to discuss:

Gere, "Chapter 6: Digital Nature" and "Chapter 7: Digital Culture in the Twenty-first Century," *Digital Culture*, 201 – 224 + selected art projects.

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

Continue Lecture on Gere, "Digital Nature" and "Digital Culture in the Twenty-first Century."

Friday, March 16, 2018

Discussion takes place from Friday, March 16, to Sunday, March 18, 2018.

Week 11:

Monday, March 19, 2016

Read and be ready to discuss:

Edward Shanken, "Survey: Introduction + Coded and Electronic Production," 12 – 27 + selected art projects from the section "Works," Art and Electronic Media.

Wednesday, March 21, 2018

Continue Lecture on Shanken, "Survey: Introduction + Coded and Electronic Production."

Friday, March 23, 2018

Discussion takes place from Friday, March 23, to Sunday, March 25, 2018.

Week 12:

Monday, March 26, 2018

Read and be ready to discuss:

Shanken, "Survey: Charged Environments," 27 – 32 + selected art projects from the section "Works," Art and Electronic Media.

Wednesday, March 28, 2018

Continue Lecture on Shanken, "Charged Environments."

Friday, March 30, 2018

Discussion takes place from Friday, March 30, to Sunday, April 1, 2018.

Week 13:

Monday, April 2, 2018

Final Essay Guidelines Released (two parts)

Read and be ready to discuss:

Shanken, "Survey: Networks, Surveillance, Culture Jamming," 32 – 38 + selected art projects from the section "Works," Art and Electronic Media.

Wednesday, April 4, 2018

Continue Lecture on Shanken, "Networks, Surveillance, Culture Jamming."

Friday, April 6, 2018

Discussion takes place from Friday, April 6, to Sunday, April 8, 2018.

Week 14:

Monday, April 9, 2018

Read and be ready to discuss:

Shanken, "Survey: Bodies, Surrogates and Emergent Systems," 38 – 42 + selected art projects from the section "Works," Art and Electronic Media.

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

Continue Lecture on Shanken, "Survey: Bodies, Surrogates and Emergent Systems."

Friday, April 13, 2018

Discussion takes place from Friday, April 13, to Sunday, April 15, 2018.

Week 15:

Monday, April 16, 2018

Read and be ready to discuss:

Shanken, "Simulations and Simulacra," 42 – 47 + selected art projects from the section "Works," Art and Electronic Media.

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

Continue Lecture on Shanken, "Simulations and Simulacra."

Friday, April 20, 2018

Discussion takes place from Friday, April 20, to Sunday, April 22, 2018.

Week 16

Monday, April 23, 2018

Review of Materials for Final Project

Wednesday, April 25, 2018

Writing time for final essay

Friday, April 27, 2018

Final Essay Due

Week 17:

Friday, May 4, 2018

Revision of Final essay