NΞW MΞÐIΛ : CRΛSH CØURSΞ

FVNM 2100-001 (467)

// Course Description

This introductory course focuses on screen-based new-media works, their historical contexts, their specific aesthetics and theoretical concerns. Students gain an understanding of the emerging culture and historical antecedents of new-media. Interactive, network and web-based technologies are introduced from the perspective of media art making.

// Schedule Outline

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2015-09-04 - new media
2015-09-11 - computers
2015-09-18 - code
2015-09-25 - algorithms
2015-10-02 - games
2015-10-09 - networks
2015-10-16 - hypermedia
2015-10-23 - copy
2015-10-30 - artware
2015-11-06 - realtime
2015-11-13 - glitch

2015-11-20 - presentations
2015-11-27 - thnx-giving
2015-12-04 - in progress critique
2015-12-11 - crit week
2015-12-18 - final critique
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// Prerequisite

Prerequisite courses: FVNMA 2000 or ARTTECH 2101; If students have not taken one of the prerequisite courses they must demonstrate a working knowledge of traditional media techniques (video editing, digital imaging) as well as a general background in film/video theory && historie[s]. Students should also have a comfortable consumer-level relationship w/ their computers (how to create/navigate files && folders; how to edit your system settings, use the finder, web browsers, etc)

// Learning Goals

the goal of this "crash course" is to establish a foundational digital literacy; to be able to 'read' + 'write' new media; to understand (very broadly) how computers && networks work (as tools + as environments); to form a foundation upon which a critical practice (informed by new media historie[s], theories && techniques) can be established in the subsequent classes of the new media path (w/in the FVNMA dept, ex: *Realtime, Glitch, Hypermedia, Artware, Art Games, Internet Art && Cultures, etc.*)

- basic understanding of how computers && networks work

- general background on key historical figures && motivations which have informed the development of new media (as a field) and its technologies/ tools/environments

- working knowledge of programming concepts && other key new media techniques/tools (you should leave this course with "beginner-intermediate" level skills in anticipation of the "intermediate-expert" level courses that follow) *because this is a "crash course" we will be introducing lots of new technologies but mastering none**

- general understanding of the political/social/aesthetic implications of living in a digital age (what copying/collaboration/authorship mean today; what algorithms are + how they affect us; how realtime/interactive/generative systems change the dynamix of older media)

credit will be determined according to the following breakdown:
- weekly assignments 40%
- project proposal 20%
- in progress critique 20%
- final project 20%

Courses for which a student registers are recorded on the student's permanent record. SAIC adheres to a credit/no credit grading system.

The adjacent grade symbols are used to denote credit status. Undergraduate and non-degree-seeking students **must achieve at least average performance in the course the traditional grade equivalent of a C or 80% in order to earn CR (credit)**. Graduate students must achieve the traditional grade equivalent of a B or 90% in order to earn CR (credit).

If a student would like a grade equivalent they should give you a Student Letter Grade Form, which they can request at the Registrar's Office.

CR	Credit
NCR	No Credit
W	Withdrawal
INC	Incomplete
IP	Thesis In Progress
NR	Grade Not Reported by Instructor

Grades of INC (Incomplete) will be granted by the instructor only upon request by the student and only if the instructor believes that the student's reason for the request is justified. Incompletes must be completed within the first two weeks of the next regular semester, or the grade will automatically be changed to NCR (no credit).

// Attendance

SAIC policy states that students are expected to attend all classes regularly and on time.

Students should miss class only with reasonable cause. If a student needs to miss class with reasonable cause, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor before the date of the class being missed to receive instruction for how to make up for the missed class. **If the student misses a class for other than a reasonable cause (communicated prior to the absence) the student will fail the class.**

If a student misses MORE than three classes, whether or not for a reasonable cause, the student will fail the class, if the student does not withdraw from the class prior to the

deadline for withdrawal with a grade of "W." Deadline for withdrawal: Tuesday November 3, 2015 (fall semester) and Wednesday, March 30, 2016 (spring semester). if a student has even a single

if a student arrives to class more than 10 minutes after 9am or leaves more than 10 minutes before 4pm it will be considered a half absence.

Reasonable cause to miss a class might include:
- Illness or hospitalization (the student should contact Health Services, who will relay information to the faculty in whose class the student is enrolled)
- Family illness or death
- professional opportunities (should be communicated to the professor && approved ahead of time)

// Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) to schedule an appointment. DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you with a letter outlining the approved accommodations for you to deliver to your instructors. This letter must be presented before any accommodations will be implemented. You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible.The DLRC is located within the Wellness Center on the 13th floor of 116 S Michigan Ave. and can be reached via phone at 312.499.4278 or email atdlrc@saic.edu.

// Materials and Supplies

students are expected to bring their laptops to class every week

students are expected to have downloaded and installed the following applications by the second week of class: Sublime Text, Firefox, Max/MSP/Jitter, Unity, Photoshop, Fetch, MAMP and node.js. links/instructions for downloading all these applications is detailed on the class website. all the applications are either free or available through self service.

students must register their own domain and sign up for web hosting by week 7. the cost of domain registration and a year of hosting can vary ($20 - $100 a year). we will discuss specifics/options in class prior to week 7.

all readings will be provided by the instructor

week1:2015-09-04 { new media }

the term "new media" means a few different things in a few overlapping contexts, we will be approaching this term from three perspectives; as a metamedium: a fusion of already-existing + not-yet-invented media; as a cultural movement: w/ parallel developments in modern art && in computing; as an ecology: the relationships + interactions between people && their digital environment

> HW: answer the homework question on the lecture notes page
> read: "The Persistence of the Word (There Is No Dictionary in the Mind)" by James Gleick

week2:2015-09-11 { computers }

computers are electricity routing machines (albeit incredibly fast && intricate) yet we anthropomorphize them in ways we don't to clocks or canals; we use terms like "memory", "thinking", "recognizing", "understanding", "sleeping", etc. why is this the case? how exactly do they do all that they do. we'll be answering these questions as well as looking at the historical figures && motivations that informed it's development.

> HW: answer the homework question on the lecture notes page
> complete the online "hello processing" tutorial

week3:2015-09-18 { code }

programming in a sense means instructing a computer to do what you want it to do. but how does it work? how did we go from flipping switches to writing JavaScript as a mode of interfacing w/ a computer. when and how did artists start incorporating programming concepts into their practice? we'll be answering all these questions as well as learning the fundamental concepts of modern programming (variables, functions, loops and conditional statements)

> HW: watch How Algorithms Shape our World by Kevin Slavin
> then watch Algorithms Are Taking Over The World, by Christopher Steiner
> then listen to the Radiolab Podcast on Facebook's "Trust Engineers"
> submit the screenshot of your static sketch on the class lecture notes page

week4:2015-09-25 { `algorithms` } *Virtual Visiting Artist: Lauren McCarthy*

"The importance of algorithms in our lives today cannot be overstated. They are used virtually everywhere, from financial institutions to dating sites. But some algorithms shape and control our world more than others", we'll be discussing the roles these algorithms play in our lives; we'll learn how to write our own by building on our programming lesson from last week; we'll look at how different new media artists engage with algorithms aesthetically, conceptually and politically.

      HW: submit your interactive/generative sketch

week5:2015-10-02 { `games` } *Substitute: Chris Collins*

I will be out of town this week, Chris Collins who teaches Art Games will be the substitute. Art Games considers computer based games as New Media artworks and art as a game-like system. Computer-based games constitute a significant form of new screen media and cultural activity. Chris will survey/demo/play works by artists working at the intersection of indie games and new media art as well as introduce the tools/resources (Unity, Google Warehouse, etc.) available for developing art games.

      HW: read "Web Work: A History of Internet Art" by Rachel Greene
          answer the homework question on the lecture notes page

week6:2015-10-09 { `networks` }

new media artists (and "Critical Engineers") Julian Oliver and Danja Vasiliev define the Internet as "A deeply misunderstood technology upon which we increasingly depend". we'll look at how/why the Internet was created; we'll learn how it works and what "control" means in a decentralized system. we'll survey canonical "net.art" and Web Art works as well as learn the basics behind its development and distribution (HTML, CSS, FTP)

      HW: register your domain and host, upload your homepage
          submit your URL on the lecture notes page

week7:2015-10-16 { `hypermedia` } *Visiting Writer/Curator: Ben Valentine*

from Vannevar Bush to Ted Nelson to Tim Berners-Lee to you. we'll discuss what the world wide web is (not to be confused w/ the Internet) and how it came to be as well as discuss the concepts of "hyper" media broadly. we'll learn how to apply our programming knowledge to the web to create experimental hypermedia narratives.

> HW: read "Copy" by Jussi Parikka
> read "the Ecstasy of Influence" by Jonathan Lethem

week8:2015-10-23 { `copy` }

Copying has always been (a) key to cultural production. Over the last couple of centuries, "the interdependence of our creativity has been obscured by powerful cultural ideas, but technology is now exposing this connectedness. [Today] we're struggling legally, ethically and artistically to deal with these implications." we'll discuss the politics of "open-source" culture as well as learn about its technical apparatus (cvs, git, etc.)

> HW: complete the online github tutorial

week9:2015-10-30 { `artware` }

"Software has become our interface to the world, to others, to our memory and our imagination—a universal language through which the world speaks, and a universal engine on which the world runs." we'll be looking at how artware (or software art) produced by artists goes beyond software's traditional utilitarian role, and into the realms of critical/social/speculative software, "software designed explicitly to pull the rug from underneath normalized understanding of software". we'll also be learning the basics of the flow-based programming (also known as visual programming; specifically Max/MSP)

> HW: complete the Max/MSP tutorials specified on the lecture notes page

week10:2015-11-06 { `realtime` }

the realtime nature of digital audio/visual systems allows for live/performative new media art. we'll discuss the "realtime" philosophies of early live experimental media artists and look at works by realtime artists using and misusing audio/visual systems towards performative ends. we'll continue to learn the fundamentals of flow-based programming, specifically realtime video manipulation (w/ Jitter)

HW: read "Glitch" Olga Goriunova and Alexei Shulgin
        read "Codecs" by Adrian Mackenzie

week11:2015-11-13 { `glitch` }   *Visiting Artist: jon.satrom*

a glitch is an unexpected moment in a system that calls attention to that system. glitch art is anytime an artist intentionally leverages that moment, by either recontextualizing or provoking glitches. glitch art isn't a medium so much as it is a way to approach media (an ethic). some glitch artists make videos, others make gifs, others do performance, others make prints or photos or textiles or sculptures, etc. the one thing all glitch artists agree on is the potential of that moment we call a gltich.

HW: prepare you final proposals/presentations, submit your proposal on the class site

week12:2015-11-20 { **presentations** }

class presentations of our final project proposals. your written proposal (**to be turned in on the class website before the start of class**) should be **1 page** in length. each student will have **20 minutes**, you should prepare a 10 minute presentation and use the remaining 10 minutes for feedback. your proposal (both the written proposal and the presentation) should address the following questions:
1.   what will your project look/sound/smell/feel like?
2.   what is the conceptual/personal/political motivation behind the project?
3.   what is the intended context? where/how does the audience experience it?
4.   what/who are your influences for this particular piece?

projects are encouraged to leverage the tools/techniques discussed in class but don't explicitly need to be "digital" (in terms of material/media/form), projects do, however, need to be thematically tied to the new media discourse covered in class. the motivations behind the project (be they conceptual, personal, political or otherwise) should directly relate to new media && the digital age in the same sense we've discussed these in class.

expectations
● if you do not submit your 1 page proposal to the class website before the start of class you will not receive credit for your proposal
● if any of these questions aren't clearly answered in both the paper and class presentation it will be considered incomplete and you will not receive credit for your proposal.
● if you are absent or otherwise don't present your concept you will not receive credit

for your proposal (accommodations/rescheduleing will be made for excused absences)
- ● otherwise you will receive full credit for the proposal.

week13:2015-11-27 { thnx-giving } NO CLASS

week14:2015-12-04 { in progress critique }

each student will have 20mins to present/critique their "in progress" finals. projects do not have to be complete/finished, they can be in a draft/preliminary/prototype form. however **you should be prepared to provide any necessary context required** to communicate a clear enough picture of your project to have a productive critique.

expectations
- ● if we have to spend more than half your allotted time (10mins) asking questions for clarification then you did not prepare enough supplementary material to provide the necessary context to engage in a productive discussion and you will not receive credit for your in progress critique
- ● if you do not present/critique on this day you will not receive credit for your in progress critique

week1:2015-12-11 { crit week } NO CLASS

week1:2015-12-18 { final critique }

class presentations of our final projects. your web based documentation page (to be turned in on the class website before the start of class) should include the following:
1. title of the work
2. attribution
3. description (which should make clear the piece's motivation, themes && context)
4. any combination of videos, images and gifs
5. contact && relevant social media info

each student will have **20 minutes**, you can introduce the piece but should allot the majority of your 20 minutes for critique.

expectations
- ● if you do not submit your documentation page to the class website before the start of class you will not receive credit for your final
- ● if you are absent or otherwise don't crit your work you will not receive credit for

your final
- otherwise you will be evaluated on the following criteria
    - does the project directly engage with the themes/concepts discussed in class
    - are the motivations/intentions clear in the experience of the work
    - did the student synthesize feedback from the in progress critique to improve the work