

Advanced Digital Seminar
ART 4095/5095/Fall 2008/3 credits
Lectures: Tuesdays 9:00-11:50
Brownson Wing 12 Mac Lab

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Office Hours: Wednesday 9:00 – 12:00
Office Location: Tenny Hall Room 4-5
Online Information: <http://blackboard.mville.edu/>

Course Description

Students in this seminar explore practical and theoretical issues that confront artists and graphic designers by creating hands-on designed responses to readings, discussions, lectures, and demonstrations. This class is a forum for students to discuss their design processes, develop new skills, reinforce existing skills, and discuss the contemporary context of their work. Each student must choose a digital design process to focus on for the semester: print, interactive, or time-based design. For advanced students.

Prerequisite: Computer Graphics I, and two other digital courses or their equivalent.

This is not a software course – it is an Art course. You will need to be creative and to devote time outside of class on your work and to actively participate in discussions and critique in order to excel in this class. This course will investigate the role of the computer in your studio practice and in contemporary culture – it is not a technical certification course.

Course/Learning Objectives

1. The student will use the formal language of art to explore and investigate the making of art.
2. The student will engage in problem-solving relating to 2-Dimensional, 3-Dimensional and time-based art.
3. The student will use museums and galleries as a resource for creating art by understanding where art has been in the past and where it is now.
4. The student will create art and achieve aesthetic judgment and technical competency in his/her area of concentration.
5. The student will apply organizational skills of proper file management
6. The student will use professional level software to create artwork that reflects an individual aesthetic
7. The student will understand the major legal, ethical, privacy and security issues in information technology

Required Text & Materials

- There is not a required text to purchase for the course, but there are several required readings that will be provided for you on the course Blackboard site.
- Sketchbook/notebook. This is yours to keep, but will be used as your place to think and process your work and will be looked at by the teacher.
- Some reliable method of backup: A USB jump/thumb drive and/or several CD-R/DVD-R discs

Attendance/Class Participation Grading

Attendance is mandatory. More than one absence (for any reason) will lower your grade.

Make sure to contact me if you are going to be absent. Absence is not an excuse for coming to the next class unprepared. You must contact a classmate or the Professor to find out what you missed. I don't repeat lectures. Lab days are not an exception. Come to class prepared to work. If you are working at home or in an off-campus studio, be prepared to show me the progress you are making. I will not permit you to leave on a lab day because you "need to shoot". The goal of a lab day is not only to get work done, but also to take advantage of the fact that I am available to help you. Habitual lateness will also reduce your grade.

This is a class where students are expected to show both complete and work in progress to the class. Thoughtful feedback is essential to improving your work and the work of your fellow classmates. I will be grading your participation based on how helpful I think your comments or questions are to addressing relevant concerns of the work at hand. I will be taking notes on this throughout the semester. Failure to participate in discussions and critiques will affect your semester grade. **Failure to attend and participate in any critique will result in an overall reduction of one letter grade for each critique missed. Failure to attend and participate in the final critique will result in an automatic "F" for the course**, regardless of one's grade going into the final project. This is not negotiable.

Equipment and Facilities

- Students have lab access to the lab during hours when there are not classes scheduled, as well as on the weekend. There is also a Mac lab in the Student Center for you to use.
- There are a few digital cameras and video cameras available at Media Services for you to check out. The check out period is 1 day.
- Students are responsible for backing up all of their work – no excuses for lost or damaged work.

Assignments

As this is an advanced class, you will be choosing a single self-directed project which will drive your work for the entire semester. There will be check-in points during the semester, where you will be required to produce specific support materials. You will be required to immediately start and keep a journal that should contain all sketches, notes, ideas, etc. for your project. You should plan at the very minimum to make weekly entries. You will turn in scanned copies or PDF versions of this journal throughout the semester. You will produce three versions of your Project Proposal that link theory and practice to prepare you for the Final Project. These exercises will be your chance to try out the strategies and skills you'll use to produce the larger work. We'll discuss your plans often throughout the semester, and it is never too early to speak with me about your ideas for it. Late projects will not be accepted.

The Project

The project you choose to create should reflect both a technical proficiency with the media you choose and a thoughtfully developed conceptual thread. I am completely open to whatever aesthetic, conceptual, personal, and political topics you choose, but you must be willing to talk and write about your project, and to be open to critique of the work as it progresses. I will help you to determine if your project ideas are feasible. Your project will logically evolve during the semester, so don't worry if your exploration leads you down a different path than you at first

imagined. This is natural, and the supporting documentation of your process will help us to follow the paths that you end up taking.

Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Students guilty of academic misconduct either directly or indirectly through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. In addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed through the regular instructional procedures as a result of academic misconduct, the instructor has the authority to assign an F or a zero in the course.

Course Grades

Course grades reflect your growth, assignment completion, contributions to class discussions and critiques, and attendance. A “C” is successful completion of the work – an average grade. **You will need to turn in above average/superior work in order to get an “A” or a “B”**

A = Outstanding; pushing the limits of both the student's creativity and the assignment.

B = Thorough, thoughtful, and creative approach to the assignment.

C = AVERAGE; minimum project requirements met.

D = Poor; does not meet minimum requirements.

F = Fail; failure to complete the assignment.

Grading Criteria

Project Iterations (3 @ 10% each)	30%
Attendance/Participation:	20%
Final Project (including written statement, support documentation on CD, etc)	40%
Journal	10%

Disability Statement

If you believe that you have a disability that may warrant accommodations in this class, I urge you to notify me immediately so that together we can work to develop methods of addressing needed accommodations in this class. You also must contact the Academic Dean’s office.

Class Rules

1. All cell phones, beepers, text messaging and the like must be turned **OFF**.
2. Students are required to complete readings to prepare for the next class.
3. No disrespect of any kind, toward any one will be tolerated.
4. Oral participation and hands-on project participation in class is mandatory and counts toward your attendance/participation grade and project grades.
5. No food, drinking, or smoking in the facilities.
6. All equipment must be returned to its proper place and computers shut down before you leave the facilities.

Critique Guidelines

Your critiques should address form and content and address the work of art in itself and in the context of the discussions and readings of the class.

Critical criticism involves more than the act of determining whether or not one likes a piece! Generally there are 3 main activities in critique:

1. Describing the work (what does it look like? what is it made of?): This is purely formal.
2. Interpreting the work (what does it mean?): Within itself? Within the context of our readings and discussions? Within the greater world?
3. Evaluating the work (is it art? is it interesting? does it "work"?): To thoughtfully evaluate a work of art, you must determine what your criteria are for judging its relative worth or effectiveness. Only you can provide this information. Do not assume anyone shares your point of view. Explain why you feel the way you do. "I like it" is meaningless.

In order to be productive in critique:

1. Listen! If you get defensive about your work during critique you will probably not hear the informative and helpful comments that your classmates and I are making.
2. Explain your comments. Is this a successful work of art? Why/why not? What criteria have you used to make your judgment? Be very specific.
3. Be respectful, and leave your ego at home. Be willing to say what you think, and be willing to hear potentially harsh criticism about your work. This is the only way a critique will be productive.

Course Schedule (may be revised, with warning, throughout semester)

August 26 – class 1

Introduction to class and to one another, objectives, materials, requirements
Syllabus review and course expectations

For next class:

Bring a digital file, print or negative from a previous course or body of work to the next class meeting

Read: “The ‘Being John Malkovich’ Effect” by Mark Dery (on Blackboard)

September 2 – class 2

Discussion: Your Digital Portfolio

Discussion: of reading

Lab: Image capture and archiving

For next class:

Begin developing a proposal for your Project/Begin sketching for your Project – you will present this iteration in 2 weeks.

- Begin by looking at the work of other artists (check links on Blackboard)
- Give yourself permission to play with several ideas at once-- brainstorm.
- Pretend you have all the technical and financial means possible. Describe or sketch the work in as much detail as you can without knowing how you might accomplish your goals.
- Be ambitious. & fantasize.
- Don't hesitate to talk to me about your ideas.
- You may include photographs, storyboards, crude drawings, etc.
- After two weeks of formulation, you will present this earliest stage of your project as a draft proposal.
- Try not to worry about "finishing" the work at this point.
- In fact, don't worry about any of the things you usually worry about with a creative project such as presentation, reception, etc.
- This is an exercise in trusting the process and seeing what develops.
- Sketch &/or write about your project on a blog &/or in your sketchbook (and scan this and post it)

Read:

“What is digital studies?” by Alex Galloway (Bb)

“Beyond Interface” by Steve Deitz (Bb)

rhizome.org (try a search under keywords that describe your project ideas)

September 9 – class 3

Discussion of readings

Time to work on project ideas

For next class:

Read: “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” by Walter Benjamin. (Bb)

September 16 – class 4

Critique: 1st iteration.

Discussion of contemporary artists with work relevant to your project idea

For next class:

Read: “Hacker Manifesto” by McKenzie Wark (Bb)

September 23 – class 5

Discussion of readings

Demo of techniques

For next class:

Begin visualizing your Project/Begin sketching for your Project – you will present this in 2 weeks.

You’ve now presented your initial idea and received feedback on its merit and feasibility. Now you must answer the following in a proposal that is at least 4 paragraphs. Include support materials as necessary on CD. Type the written visualization and submit it in class:

- What form will it take?
- What materials will you use?
- Who is your audience?
- How will the work be displayed?
- What artists influence your work on this project?
- How so?
- What are the steps you’ll need to take from now until project completion?
- What does this project look like?

Read:

“Database as Symbolic Form” by Lev Manovich (Bb)

“Own, Be Owned, or Remain Invisible” by Heath Bunting (Bb)

“What is netart ;-)?” by Joachim Blank (Bb)

Check out: Bureau of Inverse Technology (<http://www.bureauit.org/>)

September 30 – class 6

Demos

Discussion of readings

For next class:

Read: “Simulacra and Simulations” by Jean Baudrillard (Bb)

October 7 – class 7

Critique 2nd Iteration
Demos
Discussion of readings

For next class:

Read:

“Culture Jamming” by Mark Dery (Bb)

“Welcome to the Present” by Allucquere Rosanne Stone (Bb)

October 14 – no class, Mville Monday schedule**October 21 – class 8**

Discussion: Producing support documentation and writing an artist’s statement
Demos

For next class:

Read: “How Computers Change the Way We Think” by Sherry Turkle (Bb)

Begin working on your 3rd Iteration (due in 2 weeks):

- Your work in progress should be included
- Write a 1-page artist’s statement – think about establishing a context for your work
- Create an editioned print – 1 for each student in class + 2 extra
- Include any relevant materials from your first 2 iterations
- Consider problems that may arise as you complete your project, and plan “escape routes”
- What additional resources/materials/help do you need to complete your project?
- Don’t forget to include information about artists and their projects that have influenced your project

October 28 - class 9

Discussion of artists and work relevant to your project
Demos
Work on Projects in class

For next class:

Read: “The Mythology of Terrorism on the Net” by Critical Art Ensemble (Bb)

November 4 – class 10

Critique of 3rd Iteration
Demos
Discussion of Readings

For next class:

Read: “What’s So New About New Media Art” by Susan Ryan (Bb)

November 11 – class 11

Demos
Work on Projects in class

For next class:

Read: "The Paradoxes of Digital Photography" by Lev Manovich (Bb)

November 18 – class 12

Discussion of readings

Work on Projects in class

For next class:

Read: "The Spirit of Terrorism" by Jean Baudrillard (Bb)

November 25 – class 13

Individual conferences in preparation for final critique

Work on Projects in class

For next class:

Read: "Geeks Inadvertently Making Net Art" by Curt Cloninger (Bb)

December 2 – class 14

Final Project due - Critique

Edition prints due