Advanced Topics in Digital and Electronic Media Studies: Inventing the Future: Art and Electronic Media

Tu/Th 1:30pm-3:05pm
Communications 150 (Studio C)

Prof: Edward Shanken

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Office Hours: TBA

Throughout history, artists have envisioned alternative futures and constructed working models of them that offer us a glimpse into what is to come. *Inventing the Future* will consider the history, theory and practice of digital and electronic media art as a "psychic dress rehearsal for the future." By doing so, we may gain insight into possible trajectories of emerging technologies and cultural practices. We will examine various technologies, such as xerography, rapid prototyping, digital computing, telecommunications, the Web, biofeedback, GPS, virtual and augmented reality. We will equally consider how technologies cannot be separated from the way people use them, the human behaviors that co-emerge with them, and the dreams (and fears) embedded in them. Our exploration will focus on many amazing artworks as well as provocative writings by curators, theorists, artists and engineers. In order to foreground conceptual continuities across media, periods, genres and forms, we will take a thematic approach to various topical streams:

- Generative Art, Computer Graphics, and Animation
- Interactive Environments and Games
- Networks, Surveillance, Culture Jamming
- Bodies, Robots, Surrogates, Cyborgs
- Simulations and Simulacra: Virtual and Augmented Spaces
- Systems Aesthetics and Real Time Systems
- Social Media and Post-Internet

Individual examples of artworks and the streams they represent will be subjected to close analysis. Students will acquire fluency with methods from art history, media-theory, and media-archaeology, and learn how to apply these methods, traditions, and principles to understand visual culture.

Dr. Shanken's lectures will be complemented by guest speakers, who will provide insight into the actual practice of digital art and new media. Students will be expected to actively participate in course discussion and to undertake independent research. Coursework will include regular journal entries and responses to each other's writings using the Art and Electronic Media Online Companion (AEM-OC) <www.artelectronicmedia.com>.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To develop a shared understanding of historical and contemporary media art practices and where they fit in a larger aesthetic context of contemporary art and popular culture.
- To examine and critique the evolving relationships and key interactions between art, technology, and culture as a nexus for invention and innovation
- To explore theoretical issues that pertain not just to new media art but to emerging forms of digital culture, including issues of accessibility, intellectual property, networked society, participatory culture, and social media.
- To generate original scholarship about the field that will be published in the Art and Electronic Media Online Companion.

READINGS
In order to minimize cost and paper use, all required readings will be available on Canvas. Reading assignments should be completed before class meetings.

I encourage every student to seek out news items, academic papers, and social media publications relating to course related issues. A selection of recommended readings appears below.

ABSENCES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Absences and late submission of work excused only with a letter from your doctor or lawyer**.** More than three unexcused absences will result in failure of the course. Unexcused late arrival/departure counts as ½ absence.

EVALUATION:

Attendance and participation: 20%
Weekly journals and online participation: 30%
Midterm 20%
Final project: 30%

Discussion and Participation

Presence is vital! Class attendance is mandatory, unless you inform me of a good reason for your absence. There are many ways to participate in this class. Participation does not mean just speaking out. It could mean asking and answering questions in class, providing feedback on other students' work online, making additional contributions to the AEM-OC, sharing information about upcoming events related to the course theme via email. I will evaluate your commitment to the class in whatever ways you choose to participate.

Assignments

Regular journal entries and responses: During the term, you will create at least six (6) short multimedia articles, submit them to the [Art and Electronic Media Online Companion](#) (AEM-

OC). In addition, by the time of the next class meeting, you will comment on at least two other entries submitted by a classmate the prior week. The entry is graded and the responses are required. For more details consult the [Content Creation Guide](#) and the [Rubric for Evaluating AEM-OC Entries and Responses](#).

Extra Credit

The successful completion of an extra credit assignment offers students a possible addition of one extra point to their final grades. Partial credit may be awarded depending on the quality of the entry. TBA

Exams

Mid-term: The midterm will offer an opportunity to expand and improve your first four AEM-OC entries for publication on the website.

Final: The final project will be a written essay of 2500 words, plus citations or equivalent media work.