FA071 New Media: Digital Art

Date and Time: Mondays 12:45 – 5:10
Location: A2A03
Professor: James Mayhew
E-mail: jmayhew@gwu.edu
Office Hours:

Course blog: Accessible through Blackboard or at http://gwnewmedia.wordpress.com/
All modifications to the course syllabus will be posted there. The digital calendar takes precedence over this printed calendar. Additional links to projects, artists, ideas, and tutorials are linked to the syllabus posted on the blog.

Course description
This class will be structured around three components – studio work, the development of technical skills, and introduction to the broad field of new media / electronic and time-based arts.

There are many types of digital an electronic art practices – with many influences. The course will cover a series of topics that have motivated media artists over the last 30 years, as well as historical roots in other “new” medias, such as photo, film, and radio. Art and design practices (whether they are visual, sonic, conceptual, formal, political, commercial ...) are rooted in close observation of the world. Observing the visual qualities of objects, how people behave, what something sounds like, what something feels like, what a text says, how power is articulated – whatever the focus may be, detailed attention and observation are key starting points. We will follow those observations into the digital realm to see how digital representation and distribution affect the making and reception of art, ideas, and relationships. There are no prerequisites for this course.

Learning Outcomes
• To make observations about visual images and information and to articulate responses verbally and visually.
• To learn new technical skills and creatively expand upon your current abilities. Become adept at the use of several hardware devices (such as scanners, computers, printers, etc) and software applications (such as Photoshop, Illustrator and Dreamweaver).
• To produce digital projects for screen and print. To become confident in creating a clear, coherent and thoughtful body of work with the use of digital tool sets.
• To develop a knowledge of historical models and movements in the electronic arts. To develop a context for understanding some of the basic cultural and theoretical concerns surrounding the ever-accelerating growth of Electronic (or “New”) Media, while analyzing and assessing ways in which electronic media have helped to create and shape contemporary discourse.
• To develop conceptually rigorous and socially aware media art and design practices.
• To build generosity and collaboration among peers.
• To expand your perspective on the world around you. To become sensitive to historical as well as immediate concerns shaping our everyday relationship to electronic media and, consequently, the world-at-large.

Course Structure
Our time will be divided between studio projects, readings, discussions, and field trips. This course provides demonstrations and hands-on experience with digital multimedia software on the Macintosh platform, including digital imaging tools (digital photography, scanning, Photoshop, Illustrator), basic HTML and web design, and introduction to the sequential image work. You are be expected to dedicate as much time outside of class as needed to complete your projects, readings, and assignments. All your projects will be presented in class for discussion and critique.

Evaluation
The grade you earn this semester will be based both upon the quality of the work you make and the quality of your contribution to class discussions and critiques. The quality of the work you produce this semester will be evaluated based upon:
• The thoughtfulness of your approach (at both the research and process stage, as well as in the final piece)
• Your ability to utilize the relevant technology proficiently and present your work in finished form
• Your ability to fulfill the technical and conceptual specifications of each assignment
• Your willingness to take risks, challenge yourself, your peers (and your teacher)
• Your ability to begin to articulate relevant concepts regarding the structural and representational issues at stake

**Attendance**
Given that we only meet once a week, you are required to attend all classes in full. Two or more missed classes without a doctor’s note will adversely affect your grade by 10% per absence. More than three absences will result in a failing grade. If you will miss class to observe a religious holiday not observed by the University as a whole, please inform me at least one week in advance.

No chat / text messaging / emailing or other form of telepresence-based communication during presentation times of the class unless it is part of your project. During work times, your project work is primary. Need self control? Artist Steve Lambert’s software can help out - http://visitsteve.com/made/selfcontrol/

**Late Assignments**
Unless otherwise stated, projects are due at the beginning of class on critique days – attendance is mandatory even if your project is not complete. A letter grade will be deducted for work turned in past the scheduled deadline (unless you have a documented illness or have made an arrangement with me in advance). Leave yourself extra time for technical glitches – they will happen and are an integral part of working with technology. *And back up all of your work.*

Critiques are only valuable if we are all here to help each other understand what we have made. Your grade for the project will drop a letter should you miss critique day for reasons other than illness.

**Grades**
You are expected to participate in discussions and activities; complete all reading assignments; and devote enough time outside of class to complete all assigned projects before the due date.

• Your contributions to the collective experience of the class will be based upon your attendance, participation in class readings and discussions, and will include postings to the course blog. (15%)
• The work you produce will consist of a sequence of project assignments (60%), shorter assignments (25%).
• You will turn in a complete portfolio on CD at the end of the semester with documentation of all your projects. This will be due during final exam week at the same time as the final project.

Revision is an important aspect of art making. You are always welcomed and encouraged to revise and re-edit a project and to arrange for a mini-critique individually or during class if time permits. You may resubmit one of your projects for re-grading any time at or before the final class. If the re-edit receives a higher grade, it will replace the initial grade.

**Materials**
The course fee covers expenses for ink and contributes to the lab. In addition, you will need:

• CDs, DVD or a thumb drive to back up your work, depending on your usage
• A project notebook – you choose the style, but it should be something that allows for sketching, note-taking, and saving 2d papers/images etc. that you collect
• You will need high quality paper on which to print – we will discuss per project – you may purchase paper either by the box, or from the lab monitors on a per sheet basis.

There are several recommended texts in supplement to the reading handouts you will be receiving. Additional recommended texts are to be found on the resources section of the course blog:

• You may subscribe to Lynda.com for $25 a month for tutorials in the Adobe software that we will be using in
class. We will have plenty of tutorials in class and assigned as well, but if you need extra support, this website has great tutorials.

- Digital Foundations: Intro to Media Design with the Adobe Creative Suite; Xtine Burrough; Michael Mandiberg
- Illustrator CS5 for Windows and Macintosh: Visual QuickStart Guide; Elaine Weinmann and Peter Lourekas
- Photoshop CS5 for Windows and Macintosh: Visual QuickStart Guide; Elaine Weinmann and Peter Lourekas

Recommended:

- access to a still digital camera (point and shoot is fine).

Academic Integrity
I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states: “Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” For the remainder of the code, see: http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html

A note on plagiarism vs. appropriation...given the nature of the material in this course, we will be addressing art and scholarship that appropriates content from various sources. Issues of ownership, copyright, and fair use will be discussed, however, as a basic guideline, you should only appropriate material if the act of appropriation is conceptually relevant to your project. The meaning of any appropriated material should be significantly altered from its original intent. Boiled down, if you just want the image, and are not addressing where it came from it’s not okay. Find a way to make that image yourself.

Disability Support Services (DSS)
Students requiring special accommodations in this course should contact Disability Services and speak with the instructor. The information you share is confidential. Such arrangements will help the instructor facilitate, for the benefit of everyone, the full participation of every person in the course.

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

If you require accommodation to fully utilize the computers in the FAAH digital lab, please speak with me about tailoring your account settings.

University Counseling Center (UCC) 202-994-5300
The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals

http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices

Security
Please don’t leave your things unattended in the lab. Theft is not rampant, but it does happen. Be aware of your surroundings if you are working in the building late at night.

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.
Part 1: Body by Design

January 14  
Course Introduction  
Set up student blogs  
Begin Project 1

January 21  
Labor Day no class

January 28  
Due – respond (academically and substantively!) to the readings on your blog. Posts must be at least 500 words.  
Due – Body by Design Step 1 – Gather images  
Due- Students blogs must be designed and organized

- Reading Discussion:  
  How We Became Posthuman by N. Katherine Hayles, Chapter 1  
  Borg Like Me - Gareth Branwyn  
  Listen to the Radio Lab episode - Where Am I?

- Introduction to Photoshop and scanning  
- Review for today – Digital Foundations, Intro. To Media Design: Chapters 2, 7, 9

February 4

- Reading Discussion:  

- Introduction to Photoshop, continued  
- Review for today – Digital Foundations, Intro. To Media Design: Chapters 8, 10, 11

February 11  
Due – Completed file for Project 1

- Printing from Photoshop  
- Project 1 Critique  
- Introduce Project 2  
- Screening/slideshow: Collecting, Fair Use, Appropriation

Part 2: Close Looking

February 18  
No Class

February 25  
Due: Project 2 - 3 x 7 x 1 Collection (3 images per day for 7 days on 1 idea)  
Blog post on readings, 500 word minimum.

- Reading Discussion:  
  "Echoes at Ground Zero" by Lawrence Weschler  
  “Framing”, from Graphic Design The New Basics, Ellen Lupton & Jennifer Cole Phillips

- Screening/slideshow: Framing and cropping  
- In class assignment: Framing with margins and text  
- Intro to Project 3
Part 3: Advertising Intervention

February 25  **Due:** Blog post about readings (500 word minimum), 3 minute proposal presentation for Project 3

- Reading Discussion:
  - Anti-Advertising Reading Packet
  - Watch “Ways of Seeing: Episode 4”
  - “Gender Advertisements”, by Erving Goffman

- Screening/slideshow: Branding and Brandscapes
- Introduction to digital color models - in software, in export, and in printing.
- Introduction to Illustrator

March 4  **Due:** Blog posting

- Introduction to Illustrator, continued
- In class assignment: Vector points and lines
- In class work time

March 11  **No Class – Spring Break**

March 18  **Due:** Project 3 – Advertising Intervention, blog post about readings, 500 word minimum

- Reading Discussion:
  - *An Atlas of Radical Cartography*
  - *The Power of Maps*
- Introduce Project 4
- Screening/slideshow: Radical Mapping

Part 4: Mapping

March 25  **Due:** Blog posting, sketch/concept ideas for Project 4. Students will discuss in class.

- Reading Discussion:
  - Mapping Packet

- In class/studio work time

April 1  **Due:** Project materials, ready to work

- Illustrator, continued

Part 5: Going Flat

April 8  **Due:** Project 4

- Introduce Project 5
- Screening/slideshow: Sequential graphics
- In class assignment: Working with movement

April 15  **Due:** Blog posting about readings, 500 word minimum
• Reading Discussion:
  *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* by Scott McCloud
  Graphic novel/comic packet and on-line examples

• In class assignment: Stacking Narratives

April 22  
*In class work day*

April 29  
*Final day of class*

  *Due:* Sequential Project

December  
*Due:* Final Project

*Final Critique will be scheduled during our schedule final exam time.*

Dates are usually announced mid-semester. Attendance is required!