Expanded Course Description

This course invites the media artist to creatively experiment with and expand the aesthetic/conceptual vocabulary of a variety of interactive and emerging media formats, including 360-degree filmmaking, interactive film/documentary, world-building using the Unity game engine, and DIY robotics. The course objectives are to build on existing media skills in order to find novel and unorthodox ways for working with and across multiple media formats and tools, telling stories, and discovering new conceptual landscapes in media practice. To galvanize media practice, we examine five themes, structured as weekly topics: 360-degree filmmaking, interactive film/documentary, media art activism, world-building through the Unity game engine, and DIY robotics—i.e., Arduino single-board microcontrollers and camerabots/drawbots. Each class consists of a short lecture and discussion, media screenings/playings, and ample time for media practice, workshopping proposals, and critiquing works-in-progress and final projects.

COURSE TEXTS AND SOFTWARE TOOLS

Students are encouraged to borrow readings from the York University Library system that will be placed on course reserve. If some readings are not available through the library, they will be made available by the instructor. Some software tools are available on classroom computers. For other software/freeware, download links will be supplied by the instructor.
TOPICS AND CONCEPTS

Week 1 (Jan 7). INTRODUCTION: THE FUTURE OF MEDIA ART

Lecture: introduction of the main course objectives and its deliverables, including a detailed description of the proposal requirements. This week, students are also invited to introduce themselves and their media practice interests.


Suggested Readings:


Media practice: Students start working on their group media project proposals—by finding group members, and starting to conceptualize their scripts, storyboards, production plans, etc.

Week 2 (Jan 14). 360-DEGREE FILMMAKING

Lecture: we consider the possibilities and limits of 360-degree filmmaking for telling stories and depicting human/post-human experience. Students are invited to renew their practice from the previous year with the 360 camera.

Screenings: Clips from Hito Steyerl’s talk "Bubble Vision” (on 360 vision and VR technologies) https://dezignark.com/blog/hito-steyerl-bubble-vision/


Required Readings:

Media Practice: Students are invited to use their foundational skills in 360-camera work and deepen their practice building on their existing skills in order to make a 360 film and/or an interactive documentary.

Week 3 (Jan 21). INTERACTIVE FILM/DOCUMENTARY

Lecture: We consider the interactive film and documentary form, and how media artists can harness its possibilities for engendering co-creation with the user.

Screening: “What is an Interactive Documentary?” http://comeindoc.com/

“The Universe Within”, Katerina Cizek, National Film Board of Canada. http://universewithin.nfb.ca/desktop.html#index

“Possibilia” Directed by DANIELS, 6 min. https://www.shortoftheweek.com/2016/08/03/possibilia/

Required Readings:


Resources:
“An Interactive Documentary Definition – Part I.”

Media Workshop: Workshopping the 360 film footage into an interactive documentary/film.

Week 4 (Jan 28). PROPOSAL FOR GROUP MEDIA PROJECTS #1 AND 2: WORKSHOP AND CRITIQUE

Students present their proposals (scripts, storyboards, production plans, etc.) for group media projects # 1 and #2, which we workshop and critique in class.

Week 5 (Feb 4). MEDIA ACTIVISM: ANTI-SURVEILLANCE AND GLITCH FILMS

Lecture:
We consider digital technologies that monitor and record our activities, identities, and bodies—technologies of surveillance, sousveillance, and self-surveillance such as wearable devices, electronic textiles, and facial recognition systems. We also reflect on artistic and creative methods of resistance to the surveillance society through anti-surveillance and glitch film.


Required Readings:


Optional reading:

Media Workshop: Students are invited to harness glitching and other similar practices for creating anti-surveillance and glitch film.

Week 6 (Feb 11). PRESENTATIONS OF GROUP MEDIA PROJECT # 1

Deliverable: Students present their group media projects #1 for in-class critique and analysis -DUE TODAY.

(February 18-22): READING WEEK

Week 7 (Feb 25): ‘WORLD-BUILDING’ WORKSHOP: CREATING REAL-TIME SIMULATIONS THROUGH UNITY-PART I

Guest Speaker and Unity workshop guide: Game developer and designer, Fernando Restituto.

Lecture: we consider the making of videogames and virtual worlds as real-time, visual information systems and simulations whereby players/creators dynamically move in, materially engage with, and ‘build worlds’—construct virtual environments. We engage with the Unity game engine through a dedicated workshop.

**Required Readings:**


**Optional reading:**


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**Week 8 (March 4): ‘WORLD-BUILDING’ WORKSHOP: CREATING REAL-TIME SIMULATIONS THROUGH UNITY-PART II**

**Media practice:** Students continue with ‘world-building’ in Unity.

**Week 9 (March 11). DIY ROBOTICS AND MAKER PRACTICES-PART I**

**Lecture:** during weeks 9 to 11 we explore DIY robotics in terms of how they can galvanize media practice through building camera bots, drawbots, doodlebots, and other Arduino-controlled devices.

**Screening:** “How to Make a Scribbling Robot” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVrfcTPSzyo

**Required Readings:**


Arduino Sketchbook -TBA

**Media Workshop:** Arduino and DIY Robotics.

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**Week 10 (March 18). DIY ROBOTICS AND MAKER PRACTICES-PART II**

**Required Readings:**

**Media Workshop**: Arduino and DIY Robotics (camerabots, drawbots, doodlebots).

**Week 11 (March 25). DIY ROBOTICS AND MAKER PRACTICES-PART III**

**Required Readings:**
Arduino Sketchbook - TBA

**Media Workshop**: Arduino and DIY Robotics (camerabots, drawbots, doodlebots).

**Deliverable**: Media-Making Diary DUE.

**Week 12 (April 1). PRESENTATIONS OF GROUP MEDIA PROJECT #2**

**Deliverable**: Students present their group media projects #2 for in-class critique and analysis -DUE TODAY.

**LIST OF LEARNING OUTCOMES AND EXAMPLES OF**

The course is intended to deepen student media practice through an in-depth immersion in three conceptual/thematic areas. Through lectures, class discussions, and workshops, students explore key issues in contemporary media practice and the multiple modes in which artists, activists, and creative workers have engaged media. Working collaboratively in teams on and off campus, students are facilitated in developing skills in collective brainstorming, collaboration, and network thinking and sharing. Following each lecture and/or instruction, students will use class time to work on the design, planning, and execution of their creative project.

**GRADED ASSESSMENT**

**Class Attendance**: 10%

**Creative Group Project MEDIA/DESIGN PROPOSAL #1 and #2**: 15% x 2 = 30%
Students submit two different media/design proposals consisting of a synopsis, screenplay, storyboard, wireframe, flow chart, etc. that explains and describes the two group media projects.

**Group Media Project 1**: 25% Due Week 6
Group Media Media Project 2: 25% Due Week 12

**Digital Media-Making Diary**: 10% Due Week 11
Students document their media-making processes weekly—one digital media-making diary entry per week for a total of 10 weeks—, which may include writing, sketching, drawing, conceptualizing, doodling, etc. using a web-based, blogging, or social media service, such as Tumblr, Instagram, non-conventional formats such as Twine, and/or any combination of the above.
Media project suggestions:
360 film
Interactive film/documentary
Glitch/anti-surveillance film
3D virtual world
Media Project that integrates footage/drawings from a DIY camerabot or drawbot
Arduino project (see instructor for Arduino kit access)
Other (student’s choice)

Students can, as an option, ‘layer’ the above media formats—for example, take the 360 degree camera footage and edit it into an interactive documentary, add a glitch aesthetic, integrate footage from the DIY camerabot, etc. within some kind of unifying conceptual scheme or narrative.

Penalties for late submissions are 10% per day, unless student supplies relevant documentation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

TEXTS USED IN THIS COURSE:
Adler, Dan, Janine Marchessault, and Sanja Obradovic, eds. 3D Cinema and Beyond. Intellect, 2014.

MEDIA PRACTICE RESOURCES:
Interactive Documentary Tools:
http://i-docs.org/2014/07/15/interactive-documentary-tools/

Datamoshing:
http://datamoshing.com/

DIY Robotics:
https://www.instructables.com/id/DoodleBot360/
https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2018/05/ada-by-karina-smigla-bobinski/
“The Queen of Shitty Robots”, Simone Giertz:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=c0bsKc4tiuY
Borrow an Arduino kit from The Toronto Public Library (21 day loan):
https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/using-the-library/computer-services/innovation-spaces/arduino.jsp

Academic Policies /Information
The Senate Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy (ASCP) provides a Student Information Sheet that includes:

- York’s Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures / Academic Integrity Web site
- Access/Disability
- Ethics Review Process for Research Involving Human Participants
- Religious Observance Accommodation
- Student Code of Conduct

Additional information:

- Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities
- Alternate Exam and Test Scheduling
- Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy

The Senate Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy stipulates that (a) the grading scheme (i.e. kinds and weights of assignments, essays, exams, etc.) be announced, and be available in writing, within the first two weeks of class, and that, (b) under normal circumstances, graded feedback worth at least 15% of the final grade for Fall, Winter or Summer Term, and 30% for ‘full year’ courses offered in the Fall/Winter Term be received by students in all courses prior to the final withdrawal date from a course without receiving a grade.

- Important University Sessional Dates (you will find classes and exams start/end dates, reading/co-curricular week, add/drop deadlines, holidays, University closings and more.
  http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/index.htm

- "20% Rule"

No examinations or tests collectively worth more than 20% of the final grade in a course will be given during the final 14 calendar days of classes in a term. The exceptions to the rule are classes which regularly meet Friday evenings or on Saturday and/or Sunday at any time, and courses offered in the compressed summer terms.

Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles.

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Many courses utilize Moodle, York University's course website system. If your course is using Moodle, click here to access it.

Moodle @ York University