LCC 4730/6318
Experimental Media and Digital Art/Spring 2009
Georgia Institute of Technology/School of Literature, Communication & Culture
Syllabus: http://www.lcc.gatech.edu/~cpearce3/lcc4730s09/Index.htm

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Course Overview
Students examine the conceptual, formal, aesthetic and technical basics of creating and analyzing digital artistic artifacts in areas of: virtual, augmented and mixed reality; ubiquitous and distributed computing; networks; tangible objects; physical and physiological computing; social computing; information and scientific visualization; and artificial intelligence. The course includes analysis, experimentation, creation, and critique of artistic projects and short analytical papers. Numerous areas of converging and diverging issues among artistic and scientific knowledge bases will be explored, in order to understand how emerging technologies and critical practices may offer us ways to reshape and rethink the world.

This section will give a particular focus to the contributions of fine artists to cultural, aesthetic and technical innovation in interactive and electronic media. Since the early 20th Century, artists have been at the forefront of experimentation with new technologies and media, exploring and redefining public realms, and “culture jamming” popular forms and practices. Because these artists often navigate the borderlands between mainstream art, public art, industrial research, and entertainment, their work often falls through the cracks of history, in spite of the fact that work has had major impact on the trajectory of technological development. They frequently tackle problems that may not yet exist, anticipating future trends and putting technology into a profoundly human context. And they often work in public contexts, exploring the everyday relationships between humans and technology. In the past decade, practitioners who operate at the intersections of R&D, art and invention, increasingly being dubbed “arts researchers,” are finding roles in universities, academia and industry. This course will provide a comprehensive survey of experimental media and art from the early 20th Century to the present day. Students will be guided through a series of highly experimental problems designed to stretch their creativity and explore questions that fall outside the realm of traditional academic, scientific or industrial research.

Schedule/Location
The class typically meets on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1:05-1:55pm in Skiles Room 302, but may be moved for specific instances. Friday sessions will be devoted to optional tools/technical tutorials, to be lead by other students in the class, which may be held in other locations.

Requirements/Grading
Class assignments consist of readings for which there will be discussions and occasional pop-quizzes. Grading is based on the following:

Blogposts 40%
You will be required to write 5 blogposts, short essays, on class readings. These will be worth 8% each of your total grade.

Projects 60%
The first four projects will comprise 10% of the course grade; the final project comprises 20%.

Attendance
Attendance is mandatory; three unexcused absences will result in a half point reduction in overall grade. Excused absences are those for which the student requests permission in advance, and must have a legitimate reason: e.g., genuine illness, accident or other extenuating circumstance, including conferences. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE UP MISSED CLASSES. Please ask your classmates for notes and download lectures via links on the online syllabus. Please do not ask me what you missed. I only teach each class once.

Graduate Students
Grad students who are enrolled in LCC6318 will be asked to do additional readings, and to lead tools tutorials throughout the semester.
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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Fri (Lab/Tutorials)*</th>
<th>Readings/Due Mon</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>1/5-9</td>
<td>Introductions/Course Overview</td>
<td>Tutorial: Photoshop</td>
<td>BUY BOOKS!!! Don’t procrastinate!!</td>
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<td>Lecture: Machine Aesthetics</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>1/12-16</td>
<td>Art-as-Process Dada, Fluxus,</td>
<td>Tutorial: Dreamweaver</td>
<td>E.A.T.L.A. Survey 2/1970; New Media Reader, Ch 14; Multimedia: Ch 5 Overview of Fluxus</td>
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<td>New Games, Happenings</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>1/19-1/23</td>
<td>HOLIDAY: NO CLASS</td>
<td>Project 1: Appropriation</td>
<td>Participation: Intro, pp.18-31; Multimedia: Foreward, Coda and Overture</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>1/26-1/30</td>
<td>Lecture: Experimental Animation 1</td>
<td>Lecture: Experimental Animation 2</td>
<td>Tutorial: Video/Animation Tools TBD</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>2/2-2/6</td>
<td>Screening: Films of Charles &amp; Rae Eames</td>
<td>Screening: Video Art of Nam Jun Paik</td>
<td>Tutorial: Video Editing: Final Cut Pro</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>2/9-13</td>
<td>Video Art/Bill Viola and Others</td>
<td>Computer Animation &amp; Machinima</td>
<td>Tutorial: Video Editing: Final Cut Pro</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>2/16-2/20</td>
<td>President’s Day (extra time to work on projects!)</td>
<td>Project 2: Experimental Video</td>
<td>Participation: pp. 66-79 Multimedia: Ch 31</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>3/2-3/6</td>
<td>Network Art</td>
<td>User Created Content</td>
<td>Participation: 108-139 Multimedia: Chs 24,27,28</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>3/21-3/27</td>
<td>Guest Lecture: TBD</td>
<td>Tutorial: Flash</td>
<td>Paul: Chapter 1 Multimedia: Ch 37</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>3/30-4/3</td>
<td>Project 4: Gratuitous Interactivity</td>
<td>Procedural Art</td>
<td>Paul: Chapter 2 Multimedia: Chs 10, 30</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>4/6-4/10</td>
<td>Games as Art, Part 1</td>
<td>Tutorial: Processing</td>
<td>Paul, Chapter 3 Pearce: Games as Art Pearce, Sustainable Play, <a href="http://www.selectparks.net">http://www.selectparks.net</a></td>
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<td>Week 16</td>
<td>4/20-4/24</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Project 5: Procedural/Game</td>
<td>Garcia &amp; Lovink and Selected Web Sites</td>
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<td>Week 17</td>
<td>4/27-5/1</td>
<td>FINALS WEEK/NO CLASS</td>
<td>FINALS/NO CLASS DEMO DAY</td>
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*Note: Tutorial Topics Subject to Change*
Readings
The following readings are REQUIRED. Reading will be captured through blogpost assignments.

Books
**Please purchase all books as soon as possible after the start of the term.** These books can be purchased at the Engineers Bookstore on Marietta Street, Barnes & Noble, Amazon.com, or ALibris http://www.alibris.com


Selected Papers & Web Sites
Please go to the urls listed; other papers will be handed out in class.

E.A.T.L.A. Survey 2, February 1970


Select Parks [http://www.selectparks.net](http://www.selectparks.net)


Graduate Students/Additional Reading:

If you have not already done so in previous classes, you should read the following chapters in Multimedia: From Wagner to Virtual Reality: 8,9,13,15,17.

Suggested Tools/Software
Photoshop
Dreamweaver
Final Cut Pro
Flash
3D TBD
Java Processing

*Tutorials may vary and will be scheduled on request based on student demand.*
Assignments

Blogposts

The course blog is located here: http://flux.blogs.com/experimental_media_s09/
Entries can be made by creating an author account (you don't need to open your own blog account!) and logging in at: www.typepad.com

There will be five essays due during the course of the semester. Undergrads should write an essay 1-3 single-spaced typed pages in length; graduates should write an essay 3-5 pages in length. All blogposts should be posted on the class blog, which is located here. Blogposts may include illustrations (although these will not be considered part of the page count). The main purpose of these essays is demonstrate that you have completed and understood the course readings. Thus blogposts MUST integrate substantive material from the readings given during the preceding unit. A minimum of 1 point will be docked for each reading missed. Essays should follow a logical argument, and use formal referencing throughout. If desired, essays may also discuss how principles have been applied to class projects. Grammar and spelling with be taken into consideration in grading, so please be sure and proofread your essays for spelling and grammar errors, and do a spell/grammar check in Word before submitting. I will not remind you when blogposts are due. There will be no penalty for late submissions but PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR BLOGPOSTS ON TIME WITHOUT MY HASSLING YOU. It makes my job exponentially more difficult to have to track you down and also to have accumulated posts to grade.

Blogpost 1: ‘New’ Media’ (Due Monday of Week 4)
Using Examples from the Readings, discuss how early non-digital artists envisioned the use of technology as a means of artistic expression. What was the interrelationship between “content” and “medium” in these early movements?

Blogpost 2: Media Properties (Due Monday of Week 6)
Using examples from the readings, describe how different media provide specific affordances for expression and interactivity.

Blogpost 3: Immersion (Due Monday of Week 9)
Describe the concept of immersion, drawing from definitions given in the readings, and provide specific examples from the artworks cited of how they illustrate principles of immersion.

Blogpost 4: The Aesthetics of Interactivity (Due Monday of Week 12)
Drawing from the readings, describe how different artists have used interaction as a form of aesthetic expression.

Blogpost 5: Expressive Affordances of Digital Media (Due Monday of Week 15)
Drawing examples from the readings, describe affordances unique to digital media that illustrate its expressive capabilities. Can we see shades of these affordances in other pre-digital media covered in the class?
Projects
In this course you will be asked to create five artworks. The media and method you use for these artworks is completely up to you; some will specify a technology or simply that technology must be used. For each piece:

1. Create the artwork
2. While creating the work, document your process or method
3. Write a brief artists’ statement of 1-2 pages referencing artists from the readings whose work influenced or has bearing on the work
4. Place the artwork or documentation of the artwork plus documentation on the course blog w/ your artists’ statement and send to instructor by the date specified
5. Be prepared to give a brief formal presentation in class describing the intent, influences and technique of your work (since class sessions are only 50 minutes, this should be 1 to 1.5 minutes.

Project 1: Appropriation/Collage/Decollage
Create an artwork entirely using appropriated material drawn from other sources. This piece can be a static artwork, three-dimensional object, web site or dynamic code-based work. Collage is the technique of building up images, decollage entails removing elements to reveal or modify images. Either method is fine, or find or invent a new method. The goal is to use the found material to make a new statement, either by juxtaposition, recontextualization, aesthetic exploration or other means. Graduate students should apply principles of visual art and design learned in the previous semester, such as color theory, composition, etc. to project.

Project 2: Experimental Video
Make a one-minute video that explores or deconstructs some aspect of the conventions of the video medium. Project may be live-action or animation (including stop-motion animation or Machinima). Material may be created from scratch or appropriated from another source. The video should include an audio track, but it can also be silent if that is part of the concept. Conventions explored can include: visual representation, linear/nonlinear time, narrative, lighting, montage, color and composition etc.

Project 3: Machine Aesthetics
Create an artwork using a technology in which the content or execution of the piece reflects upon or calls attention to the technology being used. A variety of approaches can be taken, from using the technology in a way that highlights its unique properties, to using it in an ironic way that makes a statement about the technology, its function or its role in culture. Note that technology here is very loosely construed, and that the work may be made with or of the technology in question. The piece can be presented as an art object, a performance, or a conceptual art piece.

Project 4: Gratuitous Interactivity
Make an interactive artwork on the computer in which the interactivity is gratuitous in some way. The interactivity can be simply playful, it can be deliberately frustrating, or it can invert or satirize some familiar convention or process of interactive media. The goal is to create a work that explores the unique interactive properties of the computer in a way that calls attention to or questions our assumptions about them.

Project 5: Procedural/Game Art
The aim of this project is to create a rule-based piece of artwork that has dynamic interaction, either between the elements within the artwork, or between the audience and the art itself. This can be structured-packaged as a game, but it doesn’t have to be. If it is a game, break or bend some of the conventions typical of games. This piece can be implemented in Flash, Shockwave, Java, Java Processing, or the game engine of your choice. It can also be done using some of the techniques discussed in such movements as Dada, Flux, New Games or Tactical Media. The goal is to craft a work whose primary communication takes place through the dynamic enactment of a set of rules.