ART 407 - New Media (Fall 2011)
MWF 12:30-1:20 PM
TLC 222

Online supplement: http://art407.blogspot.com

Instructor
Greg Turner-Rahman
office: AAN 306
office hours: Monday/Wednesday 10:30-11:30 or by appointment
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WHAT YOU'LL NEED

The Language of New Media
Lev Manovich

A computer with relatively fast internet connection

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT
ART 407 (New Media) is a detailed examination of the computer as an expressive medium.

As a class we'll attempt to fix the new media artifact within historical, socio-political, cultural, and aesthetic contexts. Throughout the semester we will explore the various qualities of new media and, this term, touch upon the topics:

code, aesthetics, and data. In an effort to better understand the complexity of issues we will be reading ideas meant to provoke you into exploring the technology and perhaps challenge long standing means of making meaning of our lives.

Our readings and exploration should help you investigate several key questions:

• What are the underlying themes of recent digital works? Are they different from past works of art? If so, how?
• Do new media artworks help or hinder our understanding of what it means to be human and how we understand the world?
• Is there an aesthetics of the digital?
• Is new media art primarily about technological change and possibility? Can it truly be critical?

WHAT MAKES THIS CLASS WORK
Quite simply, *you*.

This is your class and it should be a time for you to openly share your ideas with your peers. Not only do we want to hear what you have to say but also your contributions - whether they are about the daily topic, the readings, currents events, or merely something interesting you've seen - are all legitimate and can take the discussion in an exciting new direction. Don't be afraid, then, to speak up and share your thoughts.

YOUR PARTICIPATION
There are a number of ways that you can participate:

Web Findings We have a class website that begs for your discoveries. If you find something relevant to the discussions, please send the link to me via email along with a brief description of how you think it pertains to the class and I will review and post it. You can garner an extra credit point for every submission that we publish on the website.

Readings ART 407 is a history/theory course that requires a healthy amount of reading. The readings I have chosen this year are intended to not only discuss concepts in written form but also do so visually. To facilitate your readings I will provide, when possible, online supplements.

Please come prepared to share your thoughts about the readings.
Suggestions for tackling the readings:

- Make an effort to understand the themes or arguments first. Look at introductory paragraphs and skim the text before reading more thoroughly. Work from the big ideas to the details.

- Some ideas are hard to understand. Don't sweat it. Read, ponder, do a web search, talk it out with classmates, then develop your own ideas. It is important to synthesize rather than merely regurgitate.

- Just do the reading. You have to make the effort. Reading the night before is alright. We all do it. But I'd strongly encourage you to spend time just mulling over the ideas. This means reading a little ahead of time.

- SUPER SECRET: Forget highlighting. Make notes instead. The act of translating what you read is surprisingly creative. A lot of synthesis and interpretation happens just in making notes. I find that even drawing little diagrams in attempt to capture essences of arguments helps me make sense.

     SEE SCHEDULE BELOW FOR A COMPLETE BREAKDOWN OF THE READINGS

Discussions My hope is that we can keep the discussion somewhat casual, not unlike a graduate seminar, and that we can create a safe environment in which we we can easily and happily share our ideas. Open discussions allow us to test ideas and, ultimately, come away with our own conclusions.

It is important that you come prepared and that you give others the opportunity to talk. Please listen and give your classmates the opportunity to share their thoughts.

If your reading group was assigned a week's reading you will be responsible for writing the questions that the class will asked to answer and you will also lead class discussion. **If you are absent or fail to turn in your question the day that your reading group is presenting then you will be lowered a grade.**

Projects We will be creating 2 projects throughout the semester, if all goes well, make explicit many of the concepts discussed during the term. These projects are designed to give you the opportunity to play with the ideas and, well, to make stuff.

Exams There will be one quiz and one final exam. The questions will be short answer and essays and will cover material from the lectures, readings, and multimedia (including games, films, and interactive projects).

EVALUATION

Your participation is a key to making the class lively and interesting. If you decide not to do the readings or to participate in class discussions then you won't have advanced the discussion and it will impact your grade.

The grade breakdown is as follows:

   Discussion Group: 10 points

   Projects: 30 points each/60 points total

   Exams: 40 points each/80 points total

READING AND PROJECT SCHEDULE

NOTE: This is a living document and may be subject to change.

Week 1 - August 22/24/26
Introduction
READ: Manovich, pp. 19 -61
As we may think: http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1969/12/as-we-may-think/3881/
Discussion: What is New Media?

Week 2 - August 29/31/September 2
Revolutions/Cultures
READ: http://www.plentymag.com/magazine/the_whole_earth_effect.php?page=1
Constituents of a Theory of the Media **(pages 46 - 62)**: Google Books

CHECK OUT: http://ei.cs.vt.edu/~history/TMTCTW.html
Discussion: Hackers, crackers, and tinkerers

Week 3 - September 5/7/9
September 5 is Labor Day - No Class

Image in the Electronic Realm
READ: Manovich, pp. 117 - 198;
Baker, "Photography's Expanded Field":
http://ida.lib.uidaho.edu:6138/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=19064211&site=ehost-live

Week 4 - September 12/14/16
Image/Interface
READ: Manovich, pp. 63 - 115

Week 5 - September 19/21/23
Image/Interface

QUIZ 1

Week 6 - September 26/28/30
Affect Discussion

Week 7 - October 3/5/7
REVIEW OF AFFECT VIDEOS

Affect and Body
READ: The Time of Affect: http://ida.lib.uidaho.edu:2515/doi/full/10.1086/421163
Affect and Subjectivity: A Case Study of Neopets.com:
http://www.politicsandculture.org/2009/10/02/jennifer-pybus-affect-and-subjectivity-a-case-study-of-neopets-com/

Week 8 - October 10/12/14
Space/Being-in-the-World
LISTEN: Heidegger Lectures Online (Being, Dasein, Being-in-the-World I - the first four mp3s):
http://www.archive.org/details/Philosophy_185_Fall_2007_UC_Berkeley

READ: The Aesthetics of the Ambient Video Experience:
http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue11/issue11_bizzocchi.html

Week 9 - October 17/19/21
Simulacra and Simulation
READ: Baudrillard, Excerpts Online: http://www.egs.edu/faculty/jean-baudrillard/articles/simulacra-and-simulations/
Did the Universe Just Happen?:http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/88apr/wright.htm

Week 10 - October 24/26/28
Visual Poetry and Moving Type as World making
READ: Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature: http://www.hf.uib.no/cybertext/Ergodic.html

CHECK OUT: Yae Chung Industries: http://www.yhchang.com/

Born Magazine: http://www.bornmagazine.com
Elit collection: http://collection.eliterature.org/1/

Week 11 - October 31/November 2/4
Gameplay, Narrative, and Participatory Cultures
READ: Frasca, "Ludology meets Narratology":http://www.ludology.org/articles/ludology.htm
http://web.mit.edu/cms/People/henry3/collective%20intelligence.html
http://web.mit.edu/cms/People/henry3/starwars.html

Facade: http://www.interactivestory.net/
The Graveyard: http://tale-of-tales.com/TheGraveyard

Week 12 - November 7/9/11
Post-humanity
READ: How We Became Posthuman: http://online.itp.ucsb.edu/online/collog/hayles1/
On humans and machines: http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/borghayl.html

Week 13 - November 14/16/18
Code

READ: Whitelaw, "Art against Information": http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue11/issue11_whitelaw.html
Shepard, "Finding and Evaluating the Code": http://newhorizons.eliterature.org/essay.php?id=12
CHECK OUT: Golan Levin ; Casey Reas ;
Discussion: The significance of code, the Demoscene, procedural art and literature

FALL RECESS - No Class

Week 15 - November 28/30/December 2
Conclusions and catch up.
READ: TBA

Week 16 - December 5/7/9
Review for Exam

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday December 15 (12:30)

GOALS

This course is designed to help you:

- Think, speak, and write clearly and effectively, and to communicate with precision, cogency, and rhetorical force.
- Learn to analyze work of art/design perceptively and to evaluate them critically.
- Develop an understanding of the key critical theories related to or impacting the work of new media artists and designers.
- Explore the expressive qualities of digital technologies.

WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL ART 407 STUDENT?

- Can cogently discuss the work of new media artists/designers (as well as some cultural/political figures).
- Has general knowledge of key current theoretical trends and their recent historical antecedents.
- Can see and express the interconnectedness between historical periods, some key concepts, and the various design/art works.

CONCERNS AND CONSIDERATIONS

I firmly believe in open discussion and fair teaching practices. If you have any concerns or comments you are welcome to discuss them with me after class or feel free to contact me any time by email:

gtrahman@uidaho.edu

UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO CLASSROOM LEARNING CIVILITY CLAUSE

In any environment in which people gather to learn, it is essential that all members feel as free and safe as possible in their participation. To this end, it is expected that everyone in this course will be treated with mutual respect and civility, with an understanding that all of us (students, instructors, professors, guests, and teaching assistants) will be respectful and civil to one another in discussion, in action, in teaching, and in learning.
Should you feel our classroom interactions do not reflect an environment of civility and respect, you are encouraged to meet with your instructor during office hours to discuss your concern. Additional resources for expression of concern or requesting support include the Dean of Students office and staff (5-6757), the UI Counseling & Testing Center's confidential services (5-6716), or the UI Office of Human Rights, Access, & Inclusion (5-4285).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability.Please notify me during the

first week of class of any accommodation(s) needed for the course. Late notification may mean that requested accommodations might not be available. All accommodations must be approved through Disability Support Services located in the Idaho Commons Building, Room 333.

You can call DSS at 885-7200 or email at the following address:

dss@uidaho.edu

DSS Website: http://www.access.uidaho.edu/ or http://www.webs.uidaho.edu/aap