

IMA CAPSTONE 1 (Fall 2025) ASSIGNMENT PROMPTS

Submissions & Due Dates

Participation (10%)

Actively engage in weekly workshops.

Advisory Meetings (15%)

Attend 1:1 meetings as scheduled with your advisor.

Midterms (30%)

1. [Essay / Literature Review \(1,500 words +/- 150\) \(15%\) – Due Friday Oct 24 \(11:59 pm\)](#)
2. [Notes Database \(1,500 words +/- 150\) \(15%\) – Due Friday Oct 24 \(11:59 pm\)](#)
3. [Video Presentation \(5-8 minutes\) \(15%\) – Due Friday Oct 24 \(11:59 pm\)](#)

Finals (45%)

1. [Oral Exam \(15-20 minutes\) \(20%\) – On Friday Dec 5 \(times TBD\)](#)
2. [Final Essay \(4,000 words +/- 400\) \(25%\) – Due Monday Dec 15 \(11:59 pm\)](#)

Midterms - Component 1: Essay / Literature Review ([link](#))

Submit a 1500-word paper on the subject you are investigating within the realm of new media arts. This paper should be submitted in **.docx** file format or as Google Doc. The content may overlap with your oral presentation, but it is

essential that the written version is polished, well-structured, and properly formatted.

Core Requirements

To meet the expectations for this assignment, your paper should:

- **Relate to Texts in Detail:** Your paper must engage deeply with the texts you are drawing upon. This includes discussing specific arguments, theories, and perspectives from the literature. Be sure to provide detailed references and integrate these sources seamlessly into your analysis.
- **Demonstrate Understanding:** Show a strong grasp of the concepts, ideas, histories, and contexts related to the technologies and subjects you are studying. Your analysis should reflect a nuanced understanding of how these elements intersect in the field of interactive media art/design.
- **Persuasive Argumentation:** Write in a manner that is not only informative but also persuasive. Your paper should clearly present your research, backed by solid evidence and logical reasoning.
- **Original Thought:** Your writing should demonstrate originality, offering new insights or perspectives on the subject matter. Avoid simply summarizing existing literature; instead, contribute your interpretation or critique, or put sources together in an insightful manner.
- **Engaging Style:** Aim to write in an interesting and engaging way, making your research compelling to the reader.

Additional Guidelines

Consider the following guidelines:

1. Structure and Organization:

- **Introduction:** Begin with a strong introduction that outlines the focus of your paper and provides a brief overview of the key themes and arguments you will explore.
- **Main Body:** Develop your arguments in a structured manner, using clear headings and subheadings if necessary. Ensure each paragraph transitions smoothly to the next, building a cohesive narrative.
 - i. **Literature Review:** Include a focused literature review that situates your research within the broader academic discourse. This section should highlight the most relevant sources, drawing connections between them, and identifying gaps or areas of contention.
- **Conclusion:** Conclude with a summary of your findings and their implications for your broader research project. You might also suggest areas for future exploration or pose questions that your ongoing research will address.

2. Critical Analysis:

- **Evaluate Sources:** Critically evaluate the sources you are referencing, rather than simply describing them. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of different arguments, and explain how they relate to your own research.
- **Conceptual Integration:** Show how the theoretical concepts you are engaging with integrate into your analysis. This could involve applying a particular theory to your subject, challenging an existing framework, or proposing a new conceptual approach.

3. Proper Formatting:

- **Citation Style:** Ensure that all references are correctly cited according to the academic style guide (MLA or Chicago). Include a properly formatted bibliography or works cited page.
- **Document Formatting:** Use appropriate formatting for your paper, including a clear font, double-spacing, and standard margins.

4. Final Submission:

- **Rework and Integration:** Consider how this paper can be reworked and integrated into your final Capstone project submission. This might involve expanding on the ideas presented, refining your arguments, or linking this material to other sections of your final project.

5. Ethical Considerations:

- **Acknowledgment of Sources:** Ensure all sources are properly acknowledged, avoiding any form of plagiarism. Be transparent about the origins of ideas, whether they are drawn from existing literature or are your original contributions. The work you submit should be original and yours.

Midterms - Component 2: Notes Database ([link](#))

As part of your ongoing research for the Capstone Project, you are required to provide a link to your Notion research database. This database should include your current research and demonstrate your engagement with relevant scholarly literature.

See an interactive example [here](#).

Book List

Artificial Womb and Future Motherhood

All Grouped by status Books Articles Film + TV Finished list +

Name	Author	Link	Relevance	Status	Type
Daedalus, or, Science and the Future	JBS Haldane	marxists.org/arc...us.htm	★★★★...	Done	Article
The Dialectic of Sex	Shulamith Firestone	marxists.org/sub...ex.htm	★★★★...	In progress	Book
What's So Good About Natural Motherhood? (In F	Pence, Gregory	repository.library.georgetow	★★★★...	Done	Article
The Artificial Womb Is Born	Perri Klass	go.gale.com/psf/_S=true	★★★★...	Done	Magazine
The path toward ectogenesis: looking beyond the	Seppe Segers	ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc...2072		In progress	
What is a Mother? Hybrid Motherhood and Biorot	Ferreira, Aline		★★★★...	Done	Academi...
Not of woman born: a scientific fantasy	Jennifer S. Hendricks	go.gale.com/psf/_S=true	★★★★...	In progress	Academi...
An extra-uterine system to physiologically suppo	Emily A. Partridge, Marcus	nature.com/art...s15112	★★★★...	Done	
Parental adjustment and attitudes to parenting af	Frances L Gibson, Judy A	sciencedirect.com/sci...towa	★★★★...	In progress	
Artificial Wombs are Science Fiction: But Artificia	Zimmer, Katarina	ieeexplore.ieee.org/sta...393	★★★★...	Done	Article
Ectogenesis and Representations of Future Moth	Allaga Lavrijsen, Jessica	eds.s.ebscohost.com/eds...6	★★★★...	Done	Article
Gender Identity and Future Thinking About Paren	Fiona Tasker, Jorge Gato	frontiersin.org/art...5/full	★★★★...	Done	Article
On the History of the Artificial Womb	Oscar Schwartz	daily.jstor.org/on...-womb/	★★★★...	Done	Magazine
ORPHANS BY DESIGN: THE FUTURE OF GENETIC	Bowman-Smart, Hilary	onlinelibrary.wiley.com/dol...	★★★★...	Done	Academi...
Theoretical approaches to studying technology a	Devine, Diana Smith, Cynt	psycnet.apa.org/ful...4.html	★★★★...	Done	Academi...
The Mother-Child Relationship Following In Vitro	Frances L. Gibson, Judy A	acamh.onlinelibrary.wiley.co	★★★★...	Done	
The (Un)Ethical Womb: The Promises and Perils c	Aline Ferreira	link.springer.com/art...0184	★★★★...	Done	Academi...
The Future of Motherhood: How tech is revolutio		mashable.com/adf...enting	★★★★...	Done	Article
The "Good Wife and Wise Mother" as a Social Dis	Fengxian, Wang	eds.s.ebscohost.com/eds...5	★★★★...	Done	Academi...
Understanding Technology's Impact on Youth: At	David R. Hodge, Molly M.		★★★★...	Done	Academi...
The Relationship of Technofence in Conjugal In	Shao T, Zhu C, Quan X, W		★★★★...	Done	Academi...
The Uncertain Body: Lin Tianmiao's Mother Mach			★★★★...	Done	Academi...
THE FUTURE OF FILM			★★★★...	Done	Magazine
The Oxford Handbook of Film Theory	Kyle Stevens (ed.)	academic.oup.com/edi.../44	★★★★...	In progress	Book
Postcinematic Vision: The Coevolution of Moving	Roger F. Cook	jstor.org/sta...x5w8sw	★★★★...	In progress	Book
POST-CINEMA: Theorizing 21st-Century Film	Shane Denson, Julia Leyd	reframe.sussex.ac.uk/pos...li	★★★★...	In progress	Book
China's Progress toward Gender Equity: From Boi	Hagedorn, Linda Serra; Zf	eric.ed.gov/?id...913061	★★★★...	Not start...	Academi...
Only Hope: Coming of Age Under China's One-Ch	VANESSA L. FONG	sup.org/boo...d=5009	★★★★...	Not start...	Book
'Parents can look at their foetus in real time': are arti	Jenny Kleeman,	theguardian.com/lif...future		Not start...	
Investigation of Digital Technology Use in the Transit				Not start...	
Reproductive Technologies and the Future of Mother			★★★★...	Done	Article

Required Sources

The graded competent of your database must contain at least ten relevant scholarly publications:

- Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles
- Book Chapters
- Monographs
- Other Academic Sources as Directed by Advisor

While these ten sources are mandatory, you are encouraged to add additional materials for your own benefit. These supplementary sources could include:

- News Articles
- Popular Magazines

- Blog Entries
- Social Media Posts
- Design Project / Exhibition Links
- Others

It is highly recommended that you utilize the [Capstone collection](#) for books and journals, as well as the library's [collection](#) for the Interactive Media Arts (IMA) program.

Source Annotations

For each source in your database, you are required to include the following:

1. **Complete Bibliographic Details:** Ensure that each entry includes all necessary citation information, formatted according to the relevant academic style guide.
2. **Notes and Reflections:** Provide your notes and reflections on the text, focusing on its relevance to your project. Your notes should include:
 - The main arguments and ideas presented in the text.
 - Your thoughts and comments on how the text contributes to your research.
 - Any further questions that arise from the reading.
 - Citations or key quotes you might use later in your essay.
3. **Summaries and Key Points:** Include detailed summaries of the text and its key points for your own reference.

While Generative AI (GenAI) tools can assist with text summaries and readings, a workshop will be provided to guide you on how to use these tools effectively.

What Constitutes Good Notes?

Notes that could be graded with an A or A- should excel in the following areas:

- **Engagement with Main Arguments:** Your notes should engage with the core arguments of the texts. This could be done through rephrasing the

content, highlighting significant paragraphs, copying key quotes, or organizing the material in a way that suits your learning style.

- **Conceptual Interaction:** Your comments and questions should interact with the text conceptually, demonstrating that you have not only grasped the main arguments but are also able to be in a dialogue with them. Show your ability to extend or challenge the ideas presented.
- **Depth and Diligence:** Your notes should clearly reflect that you have read the texts diligently, deeply, and with curiosity. This means not just skimming or summarizing the material but engaging with it slowly and thoughtfully.
- **Originality:** Your notes should also indicate your potential for original thought. This could be shown through your unique interpretations, connections to other readings, or the formulation of new research questions.

Midterms - Component 3: Video Presentation ([link](#))

Good research actively engages with relevant debates and acknowledges its own heritage and implications. For this assignment, approach it as though you are preparing a short lecture on your chosen subject, showcasing the knowledge you've acquired during your research.

Purpose and Focus

This assignment is an opportunity to contextualize your work within a broader academic and creative field. You should aim to position your project among the most pertinent projects and intellectual peers relevant to your future endeavors. For instance, if your project involves virtual reality (VR), you should explore the history of VR and delve into both past and current discussions surrounding this medium. Focus on various perspectives—historical, sociopolitical, cultural, philosophical, and speculative—that will help you understand and frame your work within a larger context.

Example

Consider a [previous project](#) that culminated in an audio walk capturing the soundscape of the *lilong* (a type of neighborhood in Shanghai). The student needed to research the architecture and history of *lilongs*, as well as cultural and social issues related to soundscapes, alongside the history and aesthetics of audio walks. This research informed and contextualized the final project, grounding it in both historical and cultural understanding.

Presentation Requirements

You are required to prepare a five to eight-minute oral presentation based on the research you have conducted during the first half of the term. Your presentation should meet the following formal requirements:

1. Key Sources:

- **Discussion of Sources:** Discuss your key sources in detail, explaining how they connect, relate, or contradict one another. Show a deep engagement with the material, reflecting on the relationships between different texts and ideas.
- **Visual Representations:** Include visual aids that illustrate these links and connections. These could be diagrams, mind maps, organized databases, or other visual tools that help convey how you have synthesized your research sources.

2. Incorporation of Specific Arguments:

- **Quotations and Arguments:** Include and discuss at least five specific arguments or quotations from your research texts. Ensure each is properly annotated with page numbers, and explain their relevance to your project.

3. Presentation Delivery:

- **Rehearse Your Presentation:** Rather than reading directly from a script, rehearse your presentation to ensure a smooth and confident delivery. The goal is to communicate your ideas clearly and engage your audience effectively.

Example Presentation Topics

Here are some presentation topics from previous Capstone projects:

- 'Cyberpunk and Video Games: Posthumanist Perspectives'
- 'Design and Inclusion: Mental Health, Disability Studies, and Immersive Technologies'
- 'Avatars and Identity: Gender and Race in the Chinese Cyberspace'
- 'Coding and Co-creation: Artificial Intelligence and Web Design'
- 'Dance and Computation: The Body and Information Technologies Between Real and Virtual Spaces'

These students have successfully contextualized their work within broader debates and intellectual traditions, offering insights that are relevant to their specific areas of interest.

Finals - Component 1: Oral Exam (schedule TBD)

Note: students *can* bring one printed A4 page of notes (1.5space, font 12) with key arguments and talking points. Students *can* also prepare a few slides introducing the project. These are optional.

Presentation of Research

You will participate in a short presentation and discussion of your research with your advisor and one other faculty member. Your project introduction should take no more than 2-5 minutes, for which you can use slides if you want, though it is not obligatory. Afterwards, your two examiners will ask you questions.

This session serves two main purposes:

1. **Verbal Articulation of Your Project:** It allows you to discuss your project in person, offering an opportunity to convey your ideas, research findings, and conceptual framework verbally.

2. **Advisor's Assessment of Research Comprehension:** The faculty will assess your understanding of the research material, including your ability to articulate your arguments, analyze case studies, and connect them to your overall project goals.

Areas of Focus

Depending on your advisor's approach, the discussion may cover any of these key areas:

- **Content of Selected Articles:** You may be asked to discuss the articles you chose for your literature review. Be prepared to discuss the theoretical frameworks underpinning your project. You should demonstrate a solid grasp of the theories you are employing and how they inform your research and proposed project.
 - What are the main debates in your area of interest?
 - How does [x] source inform your project?
 - What are your key intellectual inspirations and why?
 - You may also be asked to explain in more detail and depth specific arguments you cite in your literature review.
- **Argumentation:** Your examiners may probe into the strength and clarity of your arguments. They will be interested in how well you support your claims, the logical flow of your argumentation, or how effectively you integrate evidence from your research.
 - What is your own interest, in relation to your field of study? What do you hope to contribute to the discussion?
 - Is there an article that you strongly take inspiration from or disagree with? How would you reply to the arguments they make?
 - You may also be asked to explain in more detail and depth specific arguments you make in your literature review.
- **Choice and Analysis of Case Studies:** Expect questions about the case studies you selected. You should be ready to explain why these case studies are relevant, how you analyzed them, and what conclusions you drew from this analysis.

- How does [x] case study relate to your own project?
- Discuss the technical, cultural, philosophical etc. implications of the case study in relation to the literature review.
- **Identifying and Addressing Weaknesses:** Your examiners may point out potential weaknesses in your project thus far. This could include gaps in your research, inconsistencies in your argumentation, or areas where your work could improve. You should think on the spot through solutions to the problems they point out to you, demonstrating your proactive approach to refining your work.
- **Connection Between Theory and Practice; Future Plans and Practical Development:** You may be asked to explain how your theoretical insights will translate into practical outcomes in your project. This includes the implications for design, medium, or methodology in the next phase of your Capstone.
 - Tell us how your proposed exhibition project addresses or relates to the debates you sketched in the literature review.
 - How you intend to build on your current research, any practical experiments you plan to conduct, and how you will measure the success of your project as it progresses.
 - Why did you select the medium that you did? Which of its properties or inherent possibilities lend itself particularly well to achieving your desired outcomes? Which other approaches or media did you consider?
- **Reflection on Positionality and Ethics:** Your understanding of your own position in relation to the research. This includes how your personal background, biases, and considerations may have influenced your research choices and project design.
 - What unique contribution do you envision making to the debates mentioned through your practical project?
 - How is your project setting itself apart from your case studies?
 - What do you want the audience to experience, and take away from engaging with your project? How do you plan to design your project in a way that allows the audience to connect with your unique perspective or view of the world? (Which

freedoms - which pre-made choices - do you put on your visitors, e.g. in an interactive project.)

Purpose

The oral exam tests several competencies:

1. **Comprehension of Material:** Your ability to understand and engage with your research material at a deep level.
 2. **Verbal Communication:** Your capacity to clearly and confidently explain your research and proposed project.
 3. **Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving:** Your ability to identify potential weaknesses in your project and propose effective solutions.
 4. **Fluency in Academic Discourse:** Your skill in discussing your research in an academic context, including responding to questions, defending your choices, and engaging in debate.
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Finals - Component 2: Essay Submission (link TBD)

At the end of this semester, students are required to submit a 4,000-word paper that serves as the foundation for their Capstone Project in the Spring semester. See the proposed template [here](#).

Format

In the final paper, you outline the measures of success for your work through a combination of written analysis and visual representation. The goal is to clearly articulate how the research you've completed aligns with your project's objectives, and to explore various possibilities for your final installation.

Written Analysis

The final paper will include the previous literature review, expanded with relevant case studies (artworks or design / computing projects) and/or written accounts of practical experiments or prototypes you created.

Alongside examining case studies, the paper should also offer an initial articulation of your proposed exhibition or project.

Proposed Structure

We propose the following structure, though you are welcomed to modify it, for example by opting for section titles that reflect your themes more closely.

Project Title: Subtitle

Literature Review (Or, your Field/Subject/Context)

Case Studies and/or Experiments / Prototypes

Project Objectives / Project Proposal

Ideas for Case Study Analysis in Final Paper

- **Choose Relevant Case Studies.** Select artworks, design projects, computing projects that share themes, mediums, or techniques relevant to your project.
- **Contextualize within Research Literature.** Explain how this project or artwork contributes to, or expands on, this research. Identify what the case study demonstrates about the field or topic you're engaging with. Cite literature.
- **Analyze Key Components of Each Case Study.** This may include discussing themes or objectives, methods or creative processes, or specific uses of media.
- **Audience and Engagement:** Discuss how the project or artwork is intended to engage with its audience.
- **Draw Parallels to Your Project Goal.** You should lead from this section into your own project proposal. Connect insights from each case study to your project objectives. How did analyzing this project shape or inspire your own creative goals? Articulate specific elements you may adopt, adapt, or rethink based on the strengths or limitations identified in the case study.

Project Proposal Guidelines

- **Defining Goals:** What does success mean for your specific project? This could include criteria such as audience engagement, aesthetic impact, or innovation in the chosen medium.
- **Alignment with Goals:** Explore how the project's goals are informed by the literature review and case studies.
- **Medium Selection:** Discuss the rationale behind the choice of medium for your project. How does this medium best convey your research and how does it relate to the histories, theories, and case studies reviewed?
- **Design Considerations:** Elaborate on concrete insights you have gained from your research and how they will translate into your project.

Visual Diagrams and Charts: Examples

In addition to writing about these questions, include elements of visual thinking. Here are some examples of what this may look like:

- **Mapping Possibilities:** Create diagrams that map out various possibilities for your final project. This might include different layouts, media options, or conceptual approaches, each visually linked to relevant case studies or theoretical frameworks.
- **Flowcharts:** A flowchart could be used to illustrate the decision-making process for key aspects of the project. This might involve tracing the development of ideas from research through to initial design choices.
- **Success Metrics Chart:** You could develop a chart that outlines specific success metrics. For example, a table could be created to compare different media or design choices against criteria such as audience engagement, or alignment with the project's conceptual goals.
- **Conceptual Framework Diagram:** You could create a diagram that visually represents your conceptual framework, showing the relationship between different theories, case studies, and how these inform your project's design.

- **Audience Perception Matrix:** A matrix could be used to explore how different elements of the project might be perceived by various audience segments. This can help in refining the project to better align with the intended audience's expectations.
- **Positionality Map:** A visual map could be developed to explore the artist's or designer's positionality in relation to the case studies and chosen medium. This could include how personal experiences, cultural background, and professional influences shape their approach to the project.

Practical Experiments (Optional)

While practical experiments and prototypes are optional for this semester, they may be encouraged depending on the direction of your project. It is advisable to focus on learning about the subject matter and developing a coherent concept in your paper. If practical experiments and prototypes are deemed necessary, your advisor will guide you on this.

Advisor's Role

Your advisor will play a crucial role in determining the appropriate balance between theoretical development / practical experimentation, and between written / visual elements. They may decide that some students should begin practical work in this semester, depending on the project's scope and needs.

Guidelines and Expectations

This assignment is designed to encourage deep thinking and (as) clear (as possible) articulation of your forthcoming project. By thoroughly exploring your project's conceptual underpinnings now, you will set a strong foundation for the practical development in the Spring semester.