Aesthetics of Interactive Arts

REVISED August 24, 2005

All information in this syllabus, including course content and required reading, is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Overview

An investigation of contemporary aesthetic issues in new media. Topics will include interactive digital art and other emerging forms. Students will develop original interactive art projects, deliver presentations, and participate in discussions based on assigned readings.

Prerequisites & Preparation

This course is designed for Arts & Humanities / Arts & Technologies graduate students. It assumes you have some fine arts training and experience using the Macintosh and imaging applications. Students lacking this background may have to do additional remedial work to be successful. Students are also expected to have web access and e-mail.

Projects

Projects will center on individual creative development and will consist of expansion of ongoing investigations and/or new explorations involving interactive arts. Team projects are encouraged.

Final projects will culminate in an installation, website, film/DVD, presentation, or performance project.

Required Texts:

New Media
Martin Lister
ISBN: 0415223784

First Person : New Media as Story, Performance, and Game
Noah Wardrip-Fruin (Editor), Pat Harrigan (Editor)
ISBN: 0262232324

Suggested Texts:

Hamlet on the Holodeck
Janet Murray

The Language of New Media
Lev Manovich

New Media Reader
Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort

Online Resources:

Online resources and class information can be found here:
www.utd.edu/~dean.terry/courses/6331/

Materials

• Blank DVD-R disks for backup and presentation. Do not rely on lab drives to store your work – it may be deleted at any time.
• Various equipment, books, and learning resources are available for checkout. Check with the lab attendant.
• Highly recommended (especially for video projects) but not required: 40-80 GB Firewire Drive.

Learning Environment

This course requires open minded, flexible, critical thinking and analysis of interactive media and art. Students are expected to be honest and self critical while being fair in their criticism of others. You should be prepared to do substantial work outside of class in preparation for class discussions and critiques.

This class is a poor choice for students who are primarily interested in learning new technology and software applications. This course emphasizes conceptual understanding and creative development over technical learning.
Evaluation

This is an interactive course. Interface, feedback, and communication with Professor Terry and other students is part of the process. Students are evaluated on their projects, participation, effort, focus, quality of discussion, attendance and overall continuous development.

Grading Criteria
- Effort, Participation, Contribution, book reports: 50%
- Projects / Research: 50%

Projects are evaluated based on various factors, and depending on the type of project, include but not are not limited to: concept, quality of research, intellectual rigor and clarity, strength of argument, artistic innovation, consistency, technical competency, team and collaboration skills, and successful execution.

In order to receive full credit for projects they must be received on time, be complete, and be technically competent. Project and course grades will be significantly reduced for late or incomplete projects.

Grades of "Incomplete" are rarely given and are entirely at the discretion of the professor. A minimum of 70% of course work must be completed for this grade to be assigned.

Attendance
It is essential that students be present for each and every class, and active participation is mandatory for success.

Course Deliverables:
1) 1 page overview or commentary on each section of the required books.
2) 10 minute presentation and up to 10 minute discussion. It can be something that is part of the research for your project, an artist or book that supports your project, etc. Students may will also be asked to present "in progress" reports.
3) Interactive Project (see 'Projects' section) or a demonstrated step in ongoing research. 50% of grade. Due last day.

Lab Issues

Storage space: There is a good deal of storage space on the Lab machines – but no guaranteed storage. Project files are often deleted by other students or lab assistants. To make sure your files are secure, back them up and take them with you either on CDR, DVD-R, or a firewire drive. Late or missing projects related to missing, deleted, or damaged files will not be accepted.

Regarding the Mac & OSX: This course often requires an intensive use of the Macintosh platform. If you are unfamiliar with Mac OS10.x it is highly suggested you study the book recommended above, and spend time early in the semester to familiarize yourself with the OSX environment. Unfamiliarity with the platform will not be accepted as an excuse for any problem.

Contact Information
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