

Isla Hansen

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Collaborative Colloquium: Visual Metaphor and Performance in the Age of the TED Talk

Fall 2016
T/TR 1:30 – 4:30

Professor: Isla Hansen
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Course Description

Over the course of this class, students will develop performances, physical manifestations, visualizations, or responses of another nature, to accompany an interdisciplinary lecture series. Conceptually, we will address various strategies of information and idea dissemination, and take on as our primary focus the conference as learning model. Taking as secondary models examples from radio, youtube, and experiencing a variety of lecture styles on campus and in the greater Pittsburgh area, we will explore together the ways in which disciplines create both exclusive and inclusive forms of language and metaphor, and the tools they use to visualize these. Dialogue will include discussion of historical examples, the power of social assembly, propaganda, and technological developments that have changed modes of presentation and data visualization. Each student or group of students will do research into an outside discipline of their choosing, and with Isla's help, invite a speaker from another academic area within the school to provide a lecture for our culminating collaborative colloquium. It will be expected that each student develop some form of visual or performative vocabulary in contrast to a specific discipline's traditional style in order to in some manner illustrate their chosen speaker's lecture topic.

Course Objectives / Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, each student should find that they have:

1. Learned to pursue a topic and conduct research in a field of study in which they are not an expert
2. Allowed their work or practice to be influenced by an academic discipline outside of art, and by the social context of an interdisciplinary audience
3. Created an experience – social, visual, or performative – that exposes an audience to a new way of seeing, understanding, or feeling
4. Apply critical analysis to ways in which information and ideas are disseminated and learned in and out of social context

Detailed Course Overview

Week 1:

TED Talks

Radio Lab Live & Isabella Rosellini's Green Porno

Assignment: Find one example of a contemporary lecture or talk you find interesting, and one example from history. Post on class blog and write a paragraph for each that explains your interests, discoveries, questions.

Week 2:

Rembrandt's Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp

Field Trip to Anatomy Lecture at Pitt's School of Medicine – Sketches, Drawings, ideas

In class Discussion

Assignment: Create a work or proposal for a work influenced by the Anatomy lecture we saw. Post 1-3 examples of lectures / talks you find interesting online.

Week 3:

Discussion of class project

More examples from Film and youtube. We will discuss everything posted on the blog.

Assignment: Attend 2-4 lectures you find going on on campus. Write a review for each. Post to class blog.

Week 4:

Class Guest: 3 faculty members discuss lecture style of their discipline (History Dept, Computer Sciences, Engineering)

Go over lecture reviews together and discuss.

Review disciplinary traditions of the school and optional faculty guests.

Assignment: Each artist or groups should draft 3 invitations to the Colloquium for your topic 3 speakers choices & sketch possible ideas for lecture topics & performances / visualizations

Week 5:

Review of Week 4 Assignment, 1 on 1 meetings with Isla discussing interests, possible invitee

Isla sends invitations out

Assignment: Create a work or proposal for a work based on lecture / talk found online or one we've discussed. Begin researching optional Faculty members you might be interested in inviting to come to colloquium.

Week 6:

In class work – discussion of ideas & sketches, work on proposal

Some Lecturers confirmed

Assignment: Post proposals & sketches to blog, review peer proposals & sketches by commenting

Week 7:

All Speakers confirmed, some speakers will have submitted texts for lectures

Crits on proposals / sketches / project ideas

Assignment: continue working to develop performance ideas

Week 8:

Work with submitted texts for lectures in and out of class

1 on 1 meetings with Isla

Assignment: Set up a meeting outside of class with your speaker, meet and discuss ideas, write a brief summary of meeting & post to class blog

Week 9:

In-class work time

Trouble shooting & class discussion of ideas

Assignment: final plans should be outlined with speaker's text, Gather materials, design anything to be constructed, solidify any extra performers, resources you will need

Week 10:

As a class, work on promotional materials for Colloquium

Continue to work in and out of class

Assignment: continue to work – should be in midst of construction of any props, etc.

Week 11:

Out of class work time

1 on 1 meetings with Isla to discuss progress

Week 12:

In and out of class work time

Week 13:

Rehearsal & Troubleshooting, early documentation

Week 14: COLLABORATIVE COLLOQUIUM

Week 15:

Review documentation, discuss & crit

Speakers and audience members will visit class to participate in critiques

Assignment: Post a reflection to the blog, write a thank you note to your speaker

Week 16:

Review reflections, discussion

Requirements & Evaluation

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend and fully participate in all class sessions and scheduled individual meetings. Exceptions are foreseeable absences excused 1 week in advance for valid reasonable conflicts or unforeseeable sickness / emergencies.

Work, Assignments, and blog discussion:

Every student will be expected to participate in the collaborative colloquium project and complete assignments with new work that does not overlap with projects done for other classes or prior to entering this course. Per required assignment, every student should post to the blog and writing should be original material or credited and in quotation marks.

Critiques and class discussion:

While I recognize that due to different personality types and learning styles, not everyone may be as eager to participate in class discussion. However, out of respect and generosity for your peers, each student will be encouraged to make an effort to reflect upon the work we are discussing and the work of each other student – if not in the form of verbal comment during class dialogue and critiques, then in writing.

Grading:

Whether you are successful in this course will be evaluated based on your level of enthusiasm and effort while participating in this group project. You may demonstrate effort by engaging thoughtfully in class discussion, working on original proposals and projects, and posting fresh material to the class blog.