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Internet Art (3001): Networks, performative programming, and web as context for art

Department of Art - Art & Tech area
The Ohio State University

Fall 2016, Tues & Thurs 3:55-6:40
354 Hopkins Hall

Assistant Professor: Isla Hansen
Email: Hansen.492@osu.edu

Course website & blog: netwerkartwerk.com

Course Description

This course examines the history, theory, and practice of making art on the web. Beginning with early examples of systems theory, we will trace the utopian ideals of the web's origin to the commercial and social complexity of the net today. We will examine: models of information exchange, early net.art communities, monetary exchange in the art world and the digital realm, net porn as early adopter of technology, social networks, data surveillance and visualization, political and virtual online identities, experimental game design and game-related art, hacking as both social and antisocial, programming as performance, DIY communities, egalitarianism in a digital society, contemporary art in and about the web, and the concept of "post-internet."

This course takes internet as context for art that makes practical and conceptual use of toolkits developed for communication, control, and commerce. In this course, we will cover the fundamental programming languages used to speak with those tools, such as HTML (Hypertext Markup Language), CSS (Cascading Style Sheets), and Javascript, as well as software and platforms built to more easily use these languages. We will also develop a better understanding for programming concepts by making use of the artist-developed open source language Processing. Through various small programming assignments, open-ended larger projects, "artistic tactical surfing," collaborative research, and an ongoing online dialogue with each other, this class will form a community that is developing their (our) own definition for what it means to make art on, for, with, against, or about the world wide web.

Course Objectives

- Examine the early history and development of both the internet as information technology and of internet art as subculture
- Create websites, style sheets, digital drawing machines, interactive programs, games, and custom software applications
- Experiment with different ways of using programming languages and digital toolkits to explore new concepts, resist dominant commercial web culture, or reach new audiences through the network
- As individuals, continuously redefine our artistic methods and goals as we better understand ourselves in relation to a greater art world, history, and an immense broader culture
- As a collective group, continuously redefine what it means to be artists making work on, for, with, against, or about the internet

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students should be able to creatively express their ideas through contextual site-specific works on the internet that could take a wide variety of forms including, but not limited to, websites, videos, communication and correspondence, browser extensions, custom software programs, animations, more...
- Students should gain an understanding of the tools and techniques used in web art and related fields, and should demonstrate an ability to critically recognize and analyze the ways in which these tools are being put to use by artist as well as commercial industry, military researchers, technologists...
- Students should gain an understanding for the cultural history and theory that surrounds: the development of the network, early web art, contemporary internet art, and the term “post-internet” as it relates to the art world
- Students should be able to demonstrate that they understand fundamental programming concepts through a very basic knowledge of the following languages - HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Processing
- Students should demonstrate an ability to discuss, articulate, and generate new ideas in relation to the critical dialogue that surrounds digital media, internet art, and the other learning outcomes as listed above

Course Texts:

Note: These books and articles are relevant as whole texts, but optional. Shorter readings, additional articles, & excerpts will be provided for group readings and discussion and study in and out of class.

- Rachel Greene – *Web Work: A History of Internet Art*
- *Mass Effect: Art and the Internet in the Twenty First Century* – edited by Lauren Cornell and Ed Halter
- Fred Turner – *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, The Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism*
- Claire Evans – *An Oral History of the First Cyberfeminists*
- Curt Cloninger – *Commodify your Consumption: Tactical Surfing / Wakes of Resistance*
- Astra Taylor – *The People’s Platform: Taking Back Power and Culture in the Digital Age*
- Matthew Mirapaul – various historical New York Times articles as digital art emerged in the 90s
- Gliad Lotan – *Israel, Gaza, War & Data: Social Networks and The Art of Personalizing Propaganda*
- Mary Flanagan – *Critical Play: Radical Game Design*
- Johanna Fateman - *Women on the Verge : Art, Feminism, and Social Media*
- Karen Archey - *Bodies in Space: Identity, Sexuality, and the Abstraction of the Digital and Physical*
- David Garcia & Geert Lovink – *The ABC of Tactical Media*

References to relevant Artists and works can be found here:

<https://netwerkartwerk.com/reference-materials/>

Schedule

This schedule is subject to changes. It will be updated online and I will notify you of dramatic differences in class and, if necessary, via reminder emails. Each class I will post to the blog the assignments & reading for the next class as well as art you should be looking at.

Tues 8/23

Go over syllabus, internet experiments

Assignment: Get lost on the internet (find art!), post to the blog

Read: Rachel Greene's "Web Work: A History of Internet Art"

Thurs 8/25

A history of the Network, early internet art, tactical surfing
blog logistics, sign up for readings

Assignment: surfing & trail blazing – blog posts

Project 1: NETWORK - DUE THURS. 9/1

Read: Fred Turner excerpts, Curt Cloninger Excerpts

Optional readings TBA

Tues 8/30

Web sites as art, Intro to HTML

Assignment: Keep brainstorming about your new site and work on it– it could even relate to your network, which is due next class !

CodeAcademy & Lynda HTML tutorials

Thurs 9/1

PROJECT 1 DUE!

HTML, FTP, CSS, Getting your site up live

Assignment: website up, link on the blog, work on tutorials

Read: Introduction to net.art – 1994-1999

Optional: "Rich User Experience, UX, & Desktopization of War"

Presenters: _____ & _____

Tues 9/6

Reading presentation, Net art versus Web in pop culture, HTML structure

Assignment: Blog entry – website feedback, work on sites

Project 2: DUE THURS 9/15 – "For Love or Money"

Read:

There May Be Money in Internet Art After All (Matthew Mirapaul)

Best of 2015: Our Top 10 Works of Internet Art

Optional: Astra Taylor – Excerpts from ch. 2 For Love or Money

Thurs 9/8

For Love or Money, e-commerce, copyright, class work time

Assignment: Work on Project 2 & websites, sneak peak at processing artists

Tues 9/13

Drawing machines, intro to Processing

Assignment: Finish your first drawing, post to OpenProcessing.org

Remember that Project 2 is due Thursday!

Thurs 9/15

PROJECT 2 FOR LOVE OR MONEY DUE!

Crits, Processing and interactivity

Assignment: Processing program that responds to some form of input

Processing.org, Lynda, and hand out tutorials

Tues 9/20

Variables, assets, & making things move in processing

Assignment: drawing application, post to Processing.org

Thurs 9/22

Loops, functions, transformations & more in Processing

Assignment: Sol Le Witt instructional processing program and turn it, data visualization tutorials

Read:

Optional – Gilad Lotan – “Israel, Gaza, War, & Data: Social Networks and the Art of Personalizing Propaganda”

Presenters: _____ & _____

Tues 9/27

Reading presentation, time, data, and emergence in Processing

Assignment: clock, data vis, or emergence in a processing program

Thurs 9/29

Generative / computational literature, RiTa library for Processing

Assignment: Use RiTa to make a text generator

Read: “Internet Famous” (Mike Pepi)

Internet famous, game building in processing

PROJECT 3: DUE TUES 10/11, Processing Game

Read:

processing game tutorials

Optional: Excerpts from Mary Flannagan

Tues 10/4

Reading presentations, Games! as art, culture, experimental design, & platforms including Processing

Assignment: Play games & write a review

Keep working on your processing Game – due Tuesday

Read: Snowcrash & Ready Player One excerpts

Thurs 10/6

Work day – work on your games

Tues 10/11

PROJECT 3 GAME DUE

game play & discussion, politics of identity in games

Assignment: Blog post

Read: TBA

Thurs 10/13

NO CLASS, FALL BREAK

Tues 10/18

Art about games and political identity, machinima, cyberbullying, memes & appropriation art

Project 4: DUE TUES 10/25 Net community / subculture / meme

Read: Netporn & DIY communities, Astra Taylor excerpt

Optional: Women on the Verge

Thurs 10/20

Project 4 prep, Netporn & DIY communities, Fred Turner & Astra Taylor, Web Refresher, JS next class

Assignment: Work on Project 4

Read:

Optional: The Dads of Tech – Astra Taylor
Presenters: _____ & _____ (For 10/27)

Tues 10/25

PROJECT 4 NET COMMUNITY / MEME DUE!

Crits, intro to Javascript

Assignment: Javascript tutorials

Thurs 10/27

Reading presentation, Javascript, intro to JQuery

Assignment: tutorials, change something on your website

Read: The Conservatism of Emoji

Optional: Hack the Planet – Andrew Hultkrans

Presenters: _____ & _____

Tues 11/1

Javascript & JQuery, plug ins & extensions, discuss emoji, work time

Assignment / mini project: Due tues 11/8 (ELECTION DAY!)

browser plug in

Read: Daniell Vasiliev & Julian Oliver

Thurs 11/3

Reading presentation, surveillance, hacking, phone app development

Assignment: Bad app blog post, Continue working on browser extensions (due Tuesday)

Lynda Dreamweaver / PhoneGap tutorial

Read: Welp, There is Now A Tinder App For Art

Tues 11/8 – ELECTION DAY

DUE TODAY – MINI PROJECT Browser Plug in

Play with plug ins, bad app discussion, app development

Assignment: make progress on your own app

Thurs 11/10

App development skills continued, exporting apps, class work time, **introduction of final project**

Assignment: Finish your app, brainstorm for final project

Tues 11/15

Discuss app projects, intro to “Post-Internet” art

Assignment: Post ideas for final projects to blog

Read: Post Internet Art Waits Its Turn – Scott Reyburn

Thurs 11/17

“Post Internet” and connecting software to the real world - physical computing, computational production methods, networked objects

- Feedback on final project ideas

Assignment: Work on your final projects! Schedule individual meeting with me for next week

Tues 11/22 –

Individual meetings about final projects

Thurs 11/24

NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING BREAK

Tues 11/29

Final discussion, Work time for final projects

Reading: TBA

Thurs 12/1

Work time for final projects

Tues 12/6

LAST CLASS – FINAL PROJECTS DUE - CRITS OF FINAL PROJECTS

12/9-12/15

exams week – send me edits, documentation, & writing on your final projects

Grading

Assignments - Blog Posts 15%

There will be a few times throughout the semester when I ask you to post to the blog. If you post something productive when you are not required to - in response to a reading or in response to an art work – you will get extra credit.

Assignments, Mini Projects, & Reading Presentations 25%

Often these assignments will also need to be posted to the blog but will be weighted slightly heavier if they involve a little extra work.

Participation 20%

At the end of each class I will assess how you contributed to class discussion & critiques. If you miss class, your participation for that day is a 0 and cannot be made up. However, making unrequired (and productive) blog posts will be counted towards extra participation credit.

Projects 40%

Since this is where your creative efforts will shine and where your ideas will coalesce, your projects will count towards a large percentage of your grade (though not the majority). If at any time you are adding to a project after it was due, changing it, or remaking something and you want to show it to me again, I am willing to re-grade it.

Grading on Projects

Projects are graded out of 18 possible points, with the opportunity for 4 extra credit points added to your grade in the event that dialogue about your work prompts really great class discussion or if the class just loves your project (no matter what I think!). If you get 15/18, that is pretty good, you did fairly well in all categories. In percentage terms that's 83%, which is a B. But I will refrain from giving you letter grades for projects.

CONCEPT -

0- 3 points - Background thinking / research

0- 3 points - Creativity – idea novelty

0- 3 points - Intentionality

1- 2 extra credit points - Dialogue

EXECUTION -

- 0- 3 points - Technique
- 0- 3 points - Context
- 0- 3 points - Aesthetics
- 1-2 extra credit points - Class Feedback

Grade Scale: 93 -100% A, 90 - 92% A-, 87 - 89% B+, 83 - 86% B, 80 - 82% B-, 77 - 79% C+, 73 - 76% C, 70 - 72% C-, 67 - 69% D+, 63 - 66% D, 0 - 62% E

Class Participation

Is a big deal. We are a community who will be reading together, working together, getting to know each other, and looking at each other's expressions of the changing self. This can be very personal and hard at times, but communities like the one we are building are so important to good art making. I expect that each student in this class will attempt to respond to readings, contribute to class dialogue, and participate in critiques of your fellow artists' work. You should behave as equally participating collaborators. I hope that you will not need me to prompt you to speak, but if I should need to, I may call on you. I understand that some people are more outspoken than others, and some of you may feel shy about sharing your ideas. I hope that you will learn in this class to overcome that, but should you feel it is effecting your participation or you feel uncomfortable, please reach out to me and we will work out a way for you to participate in your own manner.

Note on crits

My expectation while we are reviewing the work, thoughts, and ideas of your peers – whether in casual conversation, while going over blog posts, or during critiques of larger works – is that you will treat one another with respect. This includes respecting one another enough to give honest feedback and helpful criticism. Say what you think! We will begin each crit by finding out just the very basics of what the class sees in the work as “objective” viewers (not necessarily as artist-friends). Based on what we see or how we interact, we will suss out what we believe the artist's intentions to be, possibly hear from the artist her or himself, and then, only after these first three aspects of crits, will we finally give suggestions for how to improve the piece. These suggestions will be based on the differences between how the class sees piece itself, the perceived intentions of the artist, and what the artist states they were actually attempting to accomplish.

Department of Art Attendance Policy

Timely and regular attendance is an expectation of all courses in the Department of Art. We understand that each student may upon occasion need to be away from class due to illness or other important matters. The following policy recognizes these life issues while establishing a set of academic standards that must be adhered to.

Attendance Policy: Absences are not excused, Attendance is mandatory in all scheduled classes and labs as all absences in a studio environment impede student progress. For absences occurring during the withdrawal period:

For courses meeting twice per week, students who are absent a sixth (6) time will be required to withdraw from the course.

If the above absence maximums is reached after the withdrawal period, the student will receive a failing (E) grade in the course.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations and artwork created in studio courses. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct at http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp. The Foundation Program in the Department of Art adheres to all aspects of this Code of Conduct especially in matters relating to the following: Academic Misconduct, Endangering Health or Safety, Sexual Misconduct, Destruction of Property, and Theft/Unauthorized Use of Property.

Disability Services

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact The Office for Disability Services which is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; Telephone #: (614) 292-3307, TDD #: (614) 292-0901; web address: <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/> to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Statement on Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu