

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies (COMS) 401.55 L01
Technology and Visual Representation

Spring 2018

May 14 – June 26 (excluding May 21)

Lectures: Monday/Wednesday 13:00-15:45

Instructor: Gerry Kisil
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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This course will investigate contemporary discourses that form the context for the production and reception of science-based contemporary visual art practices. Utilizing a combination of lectures and seminar discussions, the class will focus on how science and technology are experienced and imagined as cultural phenomena. It will examine the broader social contexts and theoretical implications of the overlapping domains of art, science, and technology. We will explore the place of imagination, representation, cultural use and interaction within such constructs as cyber-culture, augmented reality, trans-genics, animal studies, body modification, neurobiology/cognition, artificial life systems and interactive entertainment media in the context of contemporary visual arts practices.

Objectives of the Course

The course will help the student to:

- Develop research skills in the production of a paper on a topic related to the course;
- Work effectively and cooperatively in groups, and hand work in on time;
- Practice oral presentation skills;
- Encourage the development of a pedagogical community through group work and discussion;
- Gain an awareness of how science and technologies construct, impact and disseminate representations of everyday life, shaping our cultural experience;
- Define and apply technical and scientific principles relevant to visual culture;
- Develop skills in thinking critically about how meaning is being produced in images;
- Develop skills in descriptive and interpretive methods necessary to the analysis of visual imagery.

Textbooks and Readings

All readings will be posted to D2L; see reading list below. Students are expected to have all readings completed prior to scheduled class times in order to contribute effectively during class discussions and activities.

Internet and electronic communication device information

All electronic devices (laptops, cell phones, etc.) should be turned off during class unless alternative arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course Components (with hypothetical examples only)	Due
15%	Participation	May 14 - June 25
15%	Paper Proposal	June 6
20%	Comparative Analysis Assignment	June 13
20%	Major Paper	June 18
20%	Group Presentations	June 11 - June 20
10%	Final Take-home Exam	June 25

Class Participation on going (15%)

Regular participation is expected and will be essential not only to your success, but to the experience that each student has in the class. Your participation will be assessed based on the frequency and quality of your contributions to class discussions and your participation in in-class group activities. Given the importance of participation, regular attendance is essential. You should come to every class with the readings completed and ready to discuss them. Be prepared to participate actively by engaging with your fellow students and by offering thoughtful and constructive commentary during class discussions and in groups. Attendance will be taken in this class, and you are expected to arrive on time, avoid distractions while in class, and stay for the duration. Chronic absences or lateness will negatively affect your grade.

Group presentations are peer reviewed and peer review worksheets will be filled out by each student (except the group members presenting on that day) for every presentation. These worksheets will be collected and used to assist the instructor in tabulating the group, attendance, participation and reading marks.

Comparative Analysis Assignment (20%)

Due in-class on June 13

A four (4) to five (5) page essay (approximately 1,250 words, please include a word count at the end of your text) with a bibliography that includes all source material. For this assignment students will use comparative analysis to compare and contrast **one (1)** of the articles from the class reading list with a related text (any media: print, internet, television, radio, or film) found by the student outside of the course material. While providing a close reading of the two articles the assignment should highlight one or more of their similarities and differences. The paper must conclude with an analysis and overview of the two texts. Use APA citation style to cite all source material. **A copy of the found article/program must be included with the paper.**

Major Paper

Topic approved by May 28

Proposal due in-class on June 6

Major Paper due in-class on June 18

You will be expected to choose your own topic for your Major Paper. Papers may be as creative as you wish, provided they address the issues raised in this course. Start thinking early about what topic you would like to explore. All research paper topics must be

approved by the instructor. Although there is a significant amount of latitude in the choice of topics, students are expected to engage in an on-going dialogue with the instructor concerning their research and progress. If required, class time will be set aside on May 28th for students requiring additional input about their paper to pitch their ideas to the class for feedback. **All research paper topics must be approved by MAY 28th.**

Major Paper Proposal (15%)

Due in-class on June 6

A proposal of no more than three pages outlining the research you will pursue for your Major Paper. Your proposal must address each of the following points: 1. a clear outline of your topic and its parameters; 2. it should describe your aim in a clear thesis statement; 3. a clear statement regarding how your topic relates to the overarching theme or themes of this course; 4. questions you will explore in this research; 5. a general statement regarding why you have selected this topic; 6. a preliminary annotated bibliography properly APA formatted with at least two (2) scholarly sources at this point, one (1) of which must be from the class reading list. Each annotation should: i) Convey the overall content of the source; ii) Describe the relevance of the source for the argument you will be making; and iii) Be properly APA formatted.

The proposals are peer reviewed, so please bring 2 hard copies to class on the date it is due. Peer Review Worksheets will be handed out and completed in-class. The Worksheets must be completely filled out and attached to your Major Paper in order to receive the proposal marks. Because of the nature of this class you will not be able to make up this assignment if you are absent and will be assigned a zero (0).

Major Paper (20%)

Due: June 18

A formal essay six (6) to eight (8) pages in length (approximately 1,750 words, please include a word count at the end of your text) with a bibliography containing a minimum of three (3) sources from scholarly books or journals, and at least one (1) source from the class reading list, so a minimum of four (4) in total. If you choose to cite online sources apart from academic, peer-reviewed e-journals, these must be in addition to the three (3) academic sources. Papers must be submitted to the instructor in the form of a hard copy at the beginning of the class on the date it is due.

No extensions will be accepted without prior consultation with the instructor or a medical certificate.

In-class Presentation (20%)

Each student will be expected to give a presentation as part of a group. There are to be no more than FOUR individuals per group. You will choose the topic of your presentation from the list of topics being covered in the course syllabus. Presentations occur on the day of the assigned topic — see reading schedule. There is only one presentation per topic. Class time will be devoted to group organization and the research process.

You are encouraged to illuminate and support your presentation with examples gleaned from other classes, previous research, or even from your own personal experiences. This additional material **MUST** be clearly linked to the topic. Each presentation will be a maximum of 45 minutes in length and will be used as a forum for further discussion of the topic, presenters are asked to prepare 2 or 3 questions related to their presentation and/or topic for class discussion. Presenters should be prepared to lead the discussion that follows. Main concepts from the articles assigned for that day's readings must be

introduced and integrated into the presentation. The presentations should develop related ideas: the critical/historical context; artwork/media that is subject, exemplary or inspired by these ideas, etc.

Presentation criteria to consider:

- 1) Comprehension of the ideas in the essay(s);
- 2) Clear and coherent communication of these ideas;
- 3) Diligence in researching relevant material and clear linking of that material to the ideas of the text(s);
- 4) That the above is done in an interesting and engaging manner (power point, show and tell, etc....).
- 5) Your ability to connect the article of your choice with your own experiences.
- 6) Facilitate an engaging class discussion.

You are responsible for ensuring that you attend your presentation. If you do not present with your group and do not have supporting documentation from a physician for your absence, you will be assigned a zero (0) for this section of your course. You may not change your presentation topic after you have signed up.

Group presentations are peer reviewed. Grading forms will be handed out and filled in by each student (except the group members presenting on that day) for every presentation and will be collected and used to assist the instructor in tabulating marks for the presentation, attendance, participation and reading. Groups do not prepare grading forms for their own presentations. A final mark and report is prepared by the instructor and will be given to the presenting group by the next class. The instructor will consult with the peer review worksheets before assigning a final grade. The instructor reserves the right to evaluate groups and/or individuals separately. The group is responsible for seeking assistance from the instructor regarding group process issues but only after members have discussed any concerns amongst themselves.

TIPS: Give the kind of presentation you would be interested in hearing. You may be as creative as you wish, provided you fulfil the requirements of this assignment. However, there must be a "resource" aspect to each presentation, meaning that you must bring in examples to illustrate and help explain key concepts or ideas. The format of the presentation beyond this will be up to you.

Final Exam (10%)

Due in-class: June 25

This take-home exam will test student knowledge of relevant terms, concepts and theoretical arguments that have been introduced during the course presentations, lectures, discussions and selected readings. A choice of essay questions will be distributed two weeks prior to the exam due date.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

All assignments and exams must be completed, or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments:

Please hand in your essays directly to me, in class, on the day that it is due. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

- Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the University Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Grading System & Department of Communication, Media and Film

Work in this course will be graded using letter grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department grade scale equivalents	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance.	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance.	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%

3.00	Good performance.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance.	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance.	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance.	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	00 - 49.99%	0%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calgary Police Service• Emergency Text Messaging• Emergency Evacuation & Assembly• Safewalk Program	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessages http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IT help line	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing Support Services• Student Services Mobile App	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Faculty of Arts Reps• Student Ombudsman	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counselling Services• Health Services	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	<p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>
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Schedule of Lectures and Readings

MAY 14

INTRODUCTION

MAY 16

CONSUMING IMAGES/SEMIOTICS

Barthes, Roland. "Death of the Author." *Image-Music-Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang Publishers, 1977: 248-252.

<http://artsites.ucsc.edu/faculty/Gustafson/FILM%20162.W10/readings/barthes.death.pdf>
 Accessed 14 March 2018.

WAYS OF SEEING

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Trans. Harry Zohn' in *Illuminations*. London: Jonathon Cape. 1970. pp. 219-53.

<http://faculty.winthrop.edu/stockk/contemporary%20art/benjamin%20mechanical%20reproduction.pdf>
 Accessed 14 March 2018.

Marshall McLuhan, Marshall. "The Medium is the Message," *Understanding Media*. New York: New American Library. 1964.

<http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/mcluhan.mediummessage.pdf>
 Accessed 14 March 2018.

MAY 21

VICTORIA DAY

MAY 23

GROUP WORK/PRESENTATION PREPARATION AND RESEARCH CLASS

MAY 28

RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC APPROVAL DEADLINE

In-class research proposal pitches if required.

THE ELEGANT UNIVERSE

SCIENCE STUDIES

Stephen Wilson. "Art and Science as Culture." *Information Arts*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 2002: 3-30.

MAY 30

SINGULARITY

POSTHUMANISM

JUNE 4
PROPOSAL PEER REVIEW CLASS (15%)

JUNE 6
**STELARC
CYBERNETICS/THE BODY IS OBSOLETE**

Dery, Mark. "Ritual Mechanics: Cyborg Body Art." *Cybercultures Reader*, New York: Routledge. 2000: 577-587.

Farren, Anne and Andrew Hutchison. "Cyborgs, New Technology, and the Body: The Changing Nature of Garments." *Fashion Theory*, Vol. 8, Issue 4, 2004: 461-476.

**CARNAL ART
CLINICAL PRACTICES/BODY MODIFICATION**

Clarke, Julie. "The Sacrificial Body of Orlan." *Body & Society*. Vol. 5.2-3 (1999): 185-207

Davis, Kathy. "Pygmalions in Plastic Surgery." *Wild Science*. Eds. Marchessault, Janine and Kim Sawchuk. New York: Routledge. 2000: 105-119.

JUNE 11
ANIMALS IN HUMAN THOUGHT

DeMello, Margo. "Animals in Human Thought." *Animals and Society: An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2012: 283-300.

CYBER-SECURITY/SURVEILLANCE

Finn, Jonathan. "Surveillance Studies and Visual Art: An Examination of Jill Magid's Evidence Locker." *Surveillance & Society* 10(2), 2012: 134-149. <http://www.surveillance-and-society.org> | ISSN: 1477-7487.

Newell, Bryce Clayton. "The Massive Metadata Machine: Liberty, Power, and Secret Mass Surveillance in the U.S. and Europe." *I/S: A Journal of Law and Policy for the Information Society*, vol. 10(2). 2014: 481-522.

Ożóg, Maciej. "Your Boy is You: new media art as a critical analysis of biometric surveillance." *Archiving and Questioning Immateriality: Proceedings of the 5th Computer Congress*. Paris: Europa Productions. 2016: 71-86.

JUNE 13
**THE SINGULARITY IS NEAR
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT DUE (15%)
ARTIFICIAL LIFE, A.I. AND BIO-MECHANICS**

Chatterjee, Anjan. "Nearoaesthetics." *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 2010, Vol. 23, No 1: 53-62.

Kurzweil, Ray. "Reinventing Humanity: The Future of Machine-Human Intelligence." *The Futurist*. March-April 2006: 39-46.

Turkle, Sherry. "Artificial Life as the New Frontier." *Life on the Screen*. New York: Touchstone Books. 1997: 149-174.

Penny, Simon. *The Darwin Machine: Artificial Life and Interactive Art*
<http://simonpenny.net/texts/darwinmachine.html>

Accessed February 27, 2018

Technology Recapitulates Phylogeny: Artificial Life Art

http://www.faculty.umb.edu/gary_zabel/Courses/Art%20and%20Philosophy%20in%20SL%20and%20Other%20Virtual%20Worlds/Texts/Technology%20Recapitulates%20Phylogeny-%20Artificial%20Life%20Art.pdf

Accessed February 27, 2018

From Virtual Reality & Artificial Life to Real Life: The Emergence of Bio-Tech Art
<http://www.immersence.com/publications/2003/2003-EDaubner-full.html>
Accessed February 27, 2018

JUNE 18

EDUARDO KAC

Final Exam handout

ROBOTICS

Kac, Eduardo. "Foundation and Development of Robotic Art." *Art Journal* Vol.56 no. 3 (Fall 1997): 60-67. http://beausievers.com/bhqfu/computer_art/readings/kac-robotic_art.pdf
Accessed February 27, 2018

Critical Art Ensemble. "Chapter 6 Contestational Robotics." *Digital Resistance*.

<http://www.critical-art.net/books/digital/index.html>

Accessed February 27, 2018

ECOLOGICAL ART

Stephen Wilson. "Ecological Art." *Information Arts*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 2002: 129-146.

JUNE 20

MAJOR PAPER DUE (20%)

JOYSTICK WARRIOR

VR, SIMULATION AND IMMERSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

D'Aloia, Adriano. "Adamant Bodies. The Avatar-Body and the. Problem of Autoempathy." *E C. E|C Serie Speciale. Anno III*, nn. 5, 2009: 51–58.

Grau, Oliver. "Historic Spaces of Illusion." *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003: 25-71.

Schaeffer, Jonathan, Vadim Bulitko, Michael Buro. "Bots Get Smart: Can video games breathe new life into AI research?" *IEEE Spectrum*. 1 December 2008.

<http://spectrum.ieee.org/computing/software/bots-get-smart>

Accessed February 27, 2018

JUNE 25

FINAL EXAM (10%)