MC23: Digital Media
Spring 2013

This course introduces students to the study of digital media. Moving from video games to alternative art installations, from cyberpunk fiction and films to social media sites, it focuses on the theory, history, politics and aesthetics of digital media. Special attention will be paid to the tensions between our perceptions of technology and its actual operations and to technology's intersections with social/cultural formations (gender, sexuality, race, global flows) and with issues of control and freedom.

Professors:
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Co-ordinates:
Lectures: M.W. 1:00-1:50 p.m., Wilson Hall, rm 309
Labs: T. 7-11 p.m., Granoff
Screenings: T 7-11, List 110
Sections (***more may be added***):
               F. 11-11:50 a.m., 155 George Street, rm 106
               F. 1-1:50 a.m., 155 George Street, rm 106

READINGS

Required:
  • Electronic Readings

The readings can be accessed through the Canvas website (canvas.brown.edu).

IMPORTANT: CHANGE IN YOUR DISCUSSION SECTION SCHEDULE

Disregard Banner section assignment. The second week of class we will re-assign you to a discussion section. Available times and procedures for sign-up will be announced then. **Unless you follow these procedures, you will not be properly enrolled in the course**. PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN, THOUGH, TO THOSE ALREADY ENROLLED IN SECTIONS IN BANNER.

There will be no section meetings the first week of class.

LABS/SCREENINGS (T 7-10 p.m.)

For many, but not all weeks, you are required to attend a lab or screening. Although the lab is scheduled to run from 7-10, it will be divided into three one-hour slots. You will sign up for one slot. It is imperative that you attend the lab sessions.

The labs will generally be held in the Granoff. Locations for the film screenings will be announced and posted on our website.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND GRADES:

1) READINGS AND LABS/SCREENINGS: You should have done the reading by the day assigned, since lectures may assume knowledge of the readings without reviewing them. Attentive attendance at the Tuesday night events is absolutely necessary for lectures, discussions and graded assignments.

2) DISCUSSION SECTION ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Attendance is required at discussion sections and lectures as well as the Tuesday night events. Roll will be taken in section. **Three unexcused absences from section will result in an NC for the class. Two unexcused absences may affect your final grade**. Generally speaking, excused absences require documentation from health services, a physician, or a dean, as well as approval of the excuse by your section leader**.**

   When you come to section, you are expected to be ready to discuss all class materials (screenings, lectures, readings) for the week.

3) ELECTRONIC ASSIGNMENTS:
 • 10 Weekly blog responses to the readings/lectures to be posted the night before your section (by 7 p.m.). Reading responses allow you to share your questions and reactions to the texts with the class before we meet. Ideally, these responses not only engage the readings, but also all the other blog postings. In general, they make our short time together more rigorous and focused (we go

over them carefully in order to come up with a "road map" for discussion). In a reading response, you may want to:

   • cite a passage you found particularly challenging/intriguing and state why you found it so.
   • identify a larger topic or question that you think connects the different texts.
   • offer a critique of one or more of the pieces.

Or, since the readings for any given week engage the same topic in a different manner, you can also argue for one interpretation over another. They can be as long or as short as you think appropriate. **Each response is worth 1.5% of your final grade, be sure to post a response.**

- 3 creative/analytical assignments (roughly equivalent to 2-3 pages double spaced), responding to questions that cover one or more, readings, concepts from lecture, and/or screenings. Generally, you will be expected to demonstrate control over major arguments and/or concepts from readings and lectures, often in connection with selective but detailed attention to one or more films seen in class. More on these and the grading when the first posting is assigned.

- **Note: There will be penalties for late postings / papers.** All assignments will be graded on a scale of 0-12. A routinely satisfactory performance will be evaluated as 7. If you receive less than 7 on any paper, you should meet with your section leader at once about your performance. More information will be provided when the first assignment is given. Blogs will be graded on a scale of 0-3.

4) GROUP PRESENTATION / PROJECT: Sections will be broken into groups for a collaborative project/paper, worth 20% of your grade.

5) FINAL GRADE:
   weekly blogs   15%
   class participation   5%
   3 assignments   60%
   group presentation/project   20%

   Note: you must post all responses and assignments and participate in the group presentation to pass the course. (That is, you cannot decide to take a zero in one of these assignments and let the four others carry your grade.)

Syllabus

1.23   Introduction

I. HALLUCIATIONS, VISIONS, AND DIAGRAMS
      Cyberspace
1.28
- William Gibson, "Part I: Chiba City Blues," *Neuromancer* (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1984)
- --, "Johnny Mnemonic," *Burning Chrome* (New York, Harpers: 1986).
- --"Burning Chrome," *Burning Chrome* (New York, Harpers: 1986).
- Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces" (1967), (http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html)

1.29
- Screening: *The Matrix* (Wachoswki Brothers, 1999, 136 minutes),

1.30
- Jean Baudrillard, "7. Simulacra and Simulations," *Jean Baudrillard, Selected Writings.* Ed. Mark Poster (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford UP, 1988), 166-184.

      Hypertext
      ***weekly blog postings begin this week
2.4
- Vannevar Bush, "As We May Think" (http://www.press.umich.edu/jep/works/vbush/vbush.shtml)
- Ted Nelson, "A File Structure for the Complex, the Changing and the Indeterminate," 20th National Conference, New York, Association For Computing Machinery, 1965.

      <u>Highly recommended</u>:
- Cornelia Vismann, "Out of File, Out of Mind," *New Media, Old Media: A History and Theory Reader.* Eds. Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Keenan (NY: Routledge, 2006), 97-104.

2.5
- Lab: Shelley Jackson, *Patchwork Girl* (MA: *Eastgate Systems,* 1995)
- Shelly Jackson, "Stitch Bitch: the patchwork girl" (http://web.mit.edu/m-i-t/articles/jackson.html)

2.6
- Selections from Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974)
- Stuart Moulthrop, "You Say You Want a Revolution? Hypertext and the Laws of Media," *PMC* 1:3 (May 1991) [library resource]

      assignment #1 given out*
      Networks
2.11
- Alexander Galloway, "Introduction," 1. Physical Media" + "2.Form," *Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralization* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 1-79.
- Nicole Starosielski, "Underwater Flow," *FlowTV* (http://flowtv.org/2011/10/underwaterflow/)
- Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," *October* 59 (Winter 1992), 3-7. http://www.jstor.org.ezp1.harvard.edu/view/01622870/ap030057/

03a00010/0?frame=noframe&userID=80673ce1@harvard.edu/01cc e44066d910fee19bc70&dpi=3&config=jstor

2.12   Networking Lab

2.13
- Philip Agre, "Surveillance and Capture: Two Models of Privacy," *The Information Society* 10:2 (1994), 101–127.
- Michel Foucault, "Panopticism,"*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage. 1979), 195-228.

Interface

2.18 **No class—University Holiday**

2.20
(J)
- Lev Manovich, "2.The Interface," *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 62-115.
- Scott McQuire, "The Politics of Public Space in the Media City," (http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/articl e/view/1544/1459)

****assignment #1 due****

Navigate

2.25
- Lev Manovich, "Navigable Space" *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2000), 244-285.
- Derek Gregory, "From View to a Kill: Drones and Late Modern War," *Theory, Culture & Society* 28(7-8), 188-215.

2.26
- *Myst*

2.27
- Nigel Thrift, "Movement-Space," *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 89-106.
- Ganaele Langlois, "Participatory Culture and the New Governance of Communication," *Television & New Media* (2012), 1-15.

****presentation assignment given out****

Expose

3.4
- Julian Dibbell, "A Rape in Cyberspace," *The Village Voice* (1993) (http://www.villagevoice.com/2005-10-18/specials/a-rape-in-cyberspace/)
- Gabriella Coleman, "Our Weirdness is Free," *Triple Canopy* 15, (http://canopycanopycanopy.com/15/our_weirdness_is_free)
- Yiping Tsou, "From 'Flash Mob to 'Human Flesh Search,'" Eds. Nishant Shah and Fieke Jansen, *Digital* Alter*Natives With a Cause?*: *Book 2 – To Think* (Bangalore: CIS, 2011), 32-46.

Screen on Your Own:

3.5
- Browse: http://wikileaks.org/
- Screening: *I Love Alaska,* episodes 1-13(Engelberts and Plug, 2008) (http://www.minimovies.org/documentaires/view/ilovealaska)

3.6
- Cristina Beltran, "Undocumented, Unafraid, and Unapologetic: DREAM Activists, Immigrant Politics, and the Queering of Democracy" [unpublished paper – circulated in class]
- Taina Bucher, "You Want to be On Top," *New Media & Society* 14:7 (2012), 1164-1180.

- Thomas Keenan, "Windows: of Vulnerability," Ed. Bruce Robbins, *The Phantom Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 121-141.

      Give

3.11
- Tiziana Terranova, "Free Labor," *Social Text* 63(2): 33-57.
- Milburn, "FoldIt" [TBD]

3.12   **Screen on your own**:
- *Steal This Film* (http://www.stealthisfilm.com/Part1/)

3.13
- Lawrence Liang, "Porous Legalities and Avenues of Participation," *Sarai Reader 05: Bare Acts* (www.sarai.net/publications/readers/05-bare-acts/02_lawrence.pdf)
- Kavita Philip, "What is a Technological Author," *Postcolonial Studies,* 8:2 (2005), 199-218.

      <u>Highly Recommended:</u>
- Ravi Sundaram, "Recycling Modernity," *Sarai Reader 2001: The Public Domain* (www.sarai.net/publications/readers/01-the.../093-099piracy.pdf)

3.18   (presentations)
3.19   (presentations)
3.20   (presentations)
3.21   RAQs keynote
3.22-3   *Habits of Living Conference*

3.25   **March Break**

      Participate

4.1
- Alex Galloway, "Gamic Action, Four Moments," *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture* (Minneapolis: Minnesota, 2006), 1-38.
- Roger Callois, Eds. Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, "The Definition of Play *and* The Classification of Games," *The Game Design Reader: A Rules of Play Anthology* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2006), 122-155.

4.2
- Games to be played at home

4.3
- McKenzie Wark, *"*Agony (On the Cave)" *Gamer Theory* (Harvard University Press, 2007): 1-18.
- Henry Jenkins, "Game Design as Narrative Architecture" (http://web.mit.edu/cms/People/henry3/games&narrative.html)

      *****assignment #3 given out****

      Mobilize

4.8
- Selections from Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011).
- Ramesh Srinivasan, "Taking Power Through Technology in the Arab Spring," (http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/09/2012919115344299848.html)
- Vicente Rafael, "The Cell phone and the Crowd," *New Media, Old*

	Media: A History and Theory Reader. Eds. Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Keenan (NY: Routledge, 2006), 297-313.

4.10   • Jacques Rancière, "Does Democracy Mean Something?", *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics.* Trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum, 2010), 45-61.

Archive

4.15   • Matthew Kirschenbaum, "Every Contact Leaves a Trace," *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2008), 25-72.

      • Sterne, "Format Theory," *MP3: The Meaning of a Format* (Duke University Press, 2012), 1-31.

4.16   • Screen: *Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story* (dir. Todd Haynes, 1987)

4.17   • Hilderbrand, "Grainy Day's and Mondays," *Camera Obscura,* 57, vol. 19 no. 3 (2004), 56-91.

      • Hito Steyerl, "In Defense of the Poor Image," *e-flux* (http://www.e-flux.com/journal/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/)

     *****assignment #3 due****

4.22   • Big Data, TBD

4.24   **Conclusion**
     *****assignment #4 given out****

5.10   *****assignment #4 due****