

Lingnan University
Department of Visual Studies

Course Title	: Visual Culture and the Digital Media
Course Code	: VIS3201
Recommended Study Year	: Year 3 and 4
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture and tutorial
Class Contact Hours	: 2 hours lecture per week 1 hour tutorial per week
Category in Major Programme	: Programme Elective
Prerequisite(s)	: N/A
Co-requisite(s)	: N/A
Exclusion(s)	: N/A
Exemption Requirement(s)	: N/A

Brief Course Description

Digital technologies, pervasively employed in the production, processing, distribution, and reproduction of images, have had a profound impact on the terrain of the visual in the contemporary mediascape. The “new media” have become a privileged site where discussions of technology, visuality, global media, identity and contemporary popular culture converge. This course will focus on some of the key debates in the field. It will examine how digital technologies have changed conceptions of presence and reality, and transformed experiences of the body and self. We will also look at the implications of digital technologies for urban and architectural space, for artistic practice, scientific communication, and entertainment. The debates will be examined in light of examples of digital imaging, interfaces, websites, animation, videogames, electronic art, and virtual reality simulations.

Aims

To acquaint students with current debates on digital technologies and visual culture.

Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to enhance students’ critical, appreciative, and expressive skills as well as to promote an enhanced understanding of a number of central issues raised by the digital media.

By completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Describe key histories and debates pertinent to digital art and media, such as: the development of digital technology and the internet; the value of open source vs proprietary software; and the “digital divide”.
2. Explain aesthetic value of key examples of digital art and media
3. State the impact of digital technologies on art, film, leisure, news and information media, identities, bodies and communities
4. Assess claims made about the value, significance and impacts of digital media.
- 5.

Indicative Content

1. Global views: The development and functions of digital technologies; the “digital divide”; open source vs proprietary operating systems and software; copyright issues; surveillance and on-line privacy.
2. Digital knowledge-sharing: Wikipedia vs conventional encyclopedias; internet journalism and blogs; censorship issues; the influence of the open source ethic on digital art and activism.

3. Digital gaming: ethical issues; digital games as art; digital game modifications; artists' digital games; digital game iconography.
4. Digital art and cinema: the development of digital art; digital media as a tool and a medium; networked digital art; digital art in Hong Kong; cinema between special effects and anime; database aesthetics.
5. Digital art, the body and identity: digital identity formation, avatars and fabricated selves; virtual environments and simcities; the "technologised" body.
6. Collaboration in digital art; the influence of digital technologies on artistic identity and process; politically-engaged digital art.

Teaching Method

Lectures and discussions

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Methods			
	Participation	Tutorial Presentation	Assignments	Final exam
1. Describe key histories and debates pertinent to digital art and media, such as: the development of digital technology and the internet; the value of open source vs proprietary software; the "digital divide."			✓	✓
2. Explain aesthetic value of key examples of digital art and media.		✓		
3. State the impact of digital technologies on art, film, leisure, news and information media, identities, bodies and communities.			✓	✓
4. Assess claims made about the value, significance and impacts of digital media.	✓	✓		

Assessment

The course will be taught in the lecture and tutorial format. A range of visual materials drawn from a variety of digital media will be used for analysis. Students will also be expected to explore digital media in self-directed ways and to analyse them critically in presentations and an assignment which may be presented in a digital format.

Class Participation: 10%

Tutorial Presentation: 20%

Assignments:	30%
Final Exam:	40%

Required Readings

Tribe, Mark and Reena Jana. *New Media Art*. Köln: Taschen, 2006

Paul, Christiane, *Digital Art*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2003.

Supplementary Readings

Card, Stuart K., Jock D. Mackinlay, and Ben Shneiderman. *Readings in Information Visualization: Using Vision to Think*. San Francisco: Morgan Kaufmann Publishers, 1999.

Clarke, Andy and Grethe Mitchell (eds). *Videogames and Art*, London: Intellect Books, 2007

Corby, Tom (ed.). *Network Art: Practices and Positions*, London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

Darley, Andrew. *Visual Digital Culture: Surface Play and Spectacle in New Media Genres*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Dodsworth, Clark. *Digital Illusion: Entertaining the Future with High Technology*. New York; Reading, Mass.: ACM Press; Addison-Wesley, 1998.

Druckrey, Timothy. *Electronic Culture: Technology and Visual Representation*. New York: Aperture, 1996.

Everett, Anna, and John Thornton Caldwell. *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Gauntlett, David, and Ross Horsley. *Web.Studies*. 2nd ed. London; New York: Arnold, 2004.

Gierstberg, Frits, Warna Oosterbaan, and José van Dijck. *The Image Society: Essays on Visual Culture*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2002.

Gilster, Paul. *Digital Literacy*. New York: Wiley Computer Pub., 1997.

Grau, Oliver. *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.

FemaleMan©_Meets_Oncomouse™: Feminism and Technoscience. London: Routledge, 1997.

Heiferman, Marvin, Lisa Phillips, and John G. Hanhardt. *Image World: Art and Media Culture*. New York, N.Y.: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1989.

Helfand, Jessica. *Screen: Essays on Graphic Design, New Media, and Visual Culture*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001.

Hocks, Mary E, and Michelle R Kendrick. *Eloquent Images: Word and Image in the Age of New Media*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.

Holtzman, Steven R. *Digital Mosaics: The Aesthetics of Cyberspace*. New York: Simon &

Schuster, 1997.

Jenkins, Henry. "The Work of Theory in the Age of Digital Transformation." In *A Companion to Film Theory*, edited by Toby Miller and Robert Stam, 234-61. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.

Johnson, Steven. *Interface Culture: How New Technology Transforms the Way We Create and Communicate*. San Francisco: HarperEdge, 1997.

King, Lucien. *Game On: The History and Culture of Videogames*. London: Laurence King, 2002.

Lunenfeld, Peter (ed.). *The Digital Dialectic*. Boston: MIT Press, 1999

McLuhan, Marshall, and Quentin Fiore. *The Medium Is the Massage*. New York: Random House, 1967.

Poole, Steven. *Trigger Happy: Videogames and the Entertainment Revolution*. New York: Arcade Pub, 2000.

Turkle, Sherry. *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.

Wardrip-Fruin, Noah, and Nick Montfort. *The Newmediareader*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.

Weibel, Peter, and Timothy Druckrey. *Net Condition: Art and Global Media, Electronic Culture - History, Theory, Practice*. Graz, Karlsruhe, Cambridge, Mass: Steirischer Herbst ZKM/Center for ART and Media MIT Press, 2001.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is "the presentation of another person's work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student's own work". Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students' understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course "Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness" is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.