

The arts themselves rest on fine motor coordination and kinesthetic responses, and they need some kind of tools, outside or inside the body for their expression.

Lewis Mumford
Art And Technics, 1952
p 35

radio television film **319** introduction to digital media

Thus the attuned craftsman asks
“What can this medium do?” as much as
“What do I wish to do with this medium?”

Malcolm McCullough
Abstracting Craft, 1996
p 198

The role of imagination in creating interactive representations is clear and cannot be overrated. In an important sense, a piece of computing software is a collaborative exercise of the imaginations of the creator(s) of a program and people who use it.

Brenda Laurel
Computers As Theatre, 1993
p 29

University of Texas At Austin
College Of Communication
RTF 319 INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL MEDIA
Unique Numbers 07270 & 07275
Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30 – 2:00PM & 5:00 – 7:00PM

Arie Stavchansky, Instructor
ariestudents@sbcglobal.net | CMA 7.266 | Hours TBA
Chris McConnell, Teaching Assistant
mcchris@mail.utexas.edu | Studio 4B | Hours TBA
Course website <http://courses.utexas.edu>

The Nitty-gritty

GOALS

To develop a working knowledge of theories concerning the relationship between technological development and the arts.

To expose you to different disciplines, forms and intricacies of digital media.

To understand the design process for creating digital media content.

To gain experience in producing digital media content using a variety of software tools.

To exercise BOTH sides of your brain!

DESCRIPTION

Welcome to RTF 319 Introduction To Digital Media. In recent years, media production tools have incorporated digital technologies. The course's foundation rests on technological development in relationship to craft. During the course of study, students will be introduced to several digital content creation software packages. Our readings will include, but are not limited to: theories of tools and technique, interaction, information, and interface design, computer graphics, online communities, video gaming, and digital compositing. These readings will act as springboards for in-class discussion time. As a supplement, you will be exposed to examples of what these readings propose so that you can make practical connections to the literature. We will discuss conceptual models for digital content creation software so that by the end of the course you will feel comfortable approaching any specific piece of software. Lab sessions will help you master the software tools needed for your assignments, as well as provide time for specific questions regarding the assignments. After working through the assignments, students will gain a solid understanding of the design process for creating digital media artifacts and products.

EXPECTATIONS

Come to class with readings already completed so you can respond to questions I will ask during class. It is expected that you bring in questions of your own to add to our discussion. A good work ethic is necessary to complete assignments with high quality and in a timely manner. Please be prepared to work hard—details count a great deal in this course. It is expected that you understand many basic principles of file management on the Macintosh and Windows operating systems. For this course, and many like it, you should invest in a system for backing up files. If you do not already understand how to make a new folder on a desktop, copy files to another folder, rename files, or navigate through a website then **DO NOT TAKE THIS COURSE.**

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WHAT YOU WILL NEED

FROM WITHIN YOU

A strong work ethic
An open mind
A positive attitude
Curiosity
Enthusiasm

FROM OUTSIDE OF YOU

Course Packet & Text
Process Sketchbook
UT WebSpace Account (<http://webspace.utexas.edu>)
Backup discs or drives
Bevo Bucks for printing

READINGS & QUIZZES

Some readings address theoretical issues concerning technological development in relationship to the arts, while others address practical issues for producing digital media content. Come to class with readings already read so that you can add to discussion. Please refer to the page in this syllabus detailing the schedule of reading assignments. You will have **a total of three quizzes** for the semester, one for each unit of study. These quizzes will cover all material covered in class as well as readings. Short answer and multiple choice questions will appear on the quizzes. Also, on our class website, you are required to post a weekly question regarding the assigned literature. **IMPORTANT:** Please visit the course website frequently.

ASSIGNMENTS

You will be required to turn in eight assignments. These will expose you to the tools required to produce digital content, and the design process for producing digital content. Many of the assignments require that you perform a few tasks that should take you between two to three hours of outside class time—on your own & not during lab. **ALL DOCUMENTATION NOTES AND PROCESS SKETCHES** for assignments should be recorded in your process notebook which count toward your assignment's grade. You will have opportunities to work on your assignments during lab sessions as well. Late assignments are not accepted, so please be sure to turn in **WHATEVER** you have. Please refer to the assignment schedule for due dates.

FINAL PROJECT

Your weekly assignments are intended to help you build your final project website. This website is **an online portfolio** that demonstrates your work from the semester including process notes and sketches. Also, you will make a streaming video demonstrating all the work you completed during the semester.

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ATTENDANCE & LATE WORK

Attendance will be taken every session! You will be required to sign a sheet of paper with your name on it in order for me to know you are in class and lab. After four unexcused absences your final grade will drop by one letter. After five unexcused absences it will be advised for you to withdraw from the course.

If you have an emergency that requires you to miss class, it is best to contact me via email to let me know that you will be absent. Please inform me PRIOR to any chance of you missing class, so that we can DISCUSS the situation. Late work is NOT accepted under any circumstance. This class emphasizes deadlines. Do your best to submit your assignments on time.

Only one opportunity will be given to make up a missed quiz. The makeup quiz will be given towards the end of the semester and will be cumulative.

GRADES

The following is an overview of the grade breakdown in percentages. It is advisable that you keep track of your grades in order to ensure your instructor or TA does not miscalculate your final grade.

Quizzes	25%
Weekly Assignments	35%
Final Project	30%
Participation	5%
Attendance (Labs & Class)	5%
TOTAL	100%

Grades for assignments are based on the quality of work submitted and attentiveness to details. I will be looking at whether or not you paid attention to details while completing assignments, NOT how much content you give me. You will know the details of what I am looking when the assignment sheet is handed out. If you do not turn in any work for an assignment on the day that it is due, you will get a zero for that assignment.

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Reading Schedule. Read articles by the following dates.

CONSTRUCTING, PROCESSING & INTERPRETING SYMBOLS	Sept. 2	Pye. <i>Workmanship of Risk, Workmanship of certainty.</i> 1968
	Sept. 9	McCloud. <i>The Vocabulary of Comics.</i> 1993
	Sept. 23	McCullough. <i>Symbols.</i> 1996
	Sept. 30	Brinkmann. <i>The Art & Science Of Digital Compositing.</i> 1999
SIMULATION & CYBERSPACE	Oct. 7	Mumford. <i>Art & The Symbol.</i> 1952
	Oct. 14	Zaleski. <i>Cyberspace.</i> 1997
	Oct. 21	Limber. <i>Secrets Of The Synthetic World Builders.</i> 1998
	Oct. 28	Essex. <i>Digital Sound Technology.</i> 1996
INFORMATION SPACE, INTERFACES & INTERACTION	Nov. 4	Rosenfeld & Morville. <i>Defining Information Architecture.</i> 2002
	Nov. 11	Tufte. <i>Narratives Of Space & Time.</i> 1990
	Nov. 18	McCullough. <i>Interfaces.</i> 1996
	Dec. 2	Mumford. <i>From Handicraft To Machine Art.</i> 1952

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Assignment Schedule. Complete assignments by the following dates.

PROCESSING, CONSTRUCTING & INTERPRETING SYMBOLS	Sept. 7	Workmanship of Risk & Workmanship of Certainty DUE
	Sept. 14	The Art of Abstraction DUE
	Sept. 21	Symbol Processing with Photoshop DUE

SIMULATION & CYBERSPACE	Sept. 28	Self Portrait: Creating A Primitive Avatar DUE
	Oct. 12	Animated Collage DUE
	Nov. 2	Interactive Product Group Project DUE

INFORMATION SPACE, INTERFACES & INTERACTION	Nov. 9	Portfolio Website Architecture DUE
	Nov. 23	Skinning a Website Tutorial DUE

FINAL PROJECT	Dec. 14	Final Project Website DUE
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Lecture Schedule. I will talk about the topics on the following dates.

PROCESSING, CONSTRUCTING & INTERPRETING SYMBOLS	Aug. 26	Introduction, Syllabus, Survey
	Aug. 31	Vector Graphics: Illustrating
	Sept. 7	Raster Graphics: Imaging
	Sept. 14	Spectrum of Digital Artefacts and Aesthetics

SIMULATION & CYBERSPACE	Sept. 21	3D Modeling & Design
	Sept. 28	Digital Compositing
	Oct. 5	Audio Vision
	Oct. 12	Virtual Spaces & Communities
	Oct. 19	Video Game History

INFORMATION SPACE, INTERFACES & INTERACTION	Nov. 2	Information Architecture
	Nov. 9	Information Design
	Nov. 16	Interface Design
	Nov. 23	Interaction Design
	Nov. 30	Industry Structure & Finding a Job

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University Policy

ACCOMMODATIONS

At the beginning of the semester, students with disabilities who need special accommodations should notify the instructor by presenting a letter prepared by the Services for Students with Disabilities Office. To ensure that the most appropriate accommodations can be provided, students should contact the SSD Office at 471-6259 or 471-4641 TTY.

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. For more information on scholastic dishonesty, please visit the Student Judicial services Web site at <http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>.

UNDERGRADUATE WRITING CENTER

The Undergraduate Writing Center, located in the FAC 211, phone 471-6222, offers individualized assistance to students who want to improve their writing skills. There is no charge, and students may come in on a drop-in or appointment basis.

NOTICE

Dates appearing in schedules are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Notice will be given in advance if this happens to be the case.

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Student Questionnaire

In order to help me gauge the skill set of this class and to help me get to know you better, please take the time to fill out this survey and **attach a simple photo of yourself to this sheet**. Detach this sheet from your syllabus and turn it in to me at the end of the second class period. If you can not find a photo of yourself, photocopy your UT ID card.

Name _____

Classification Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

Age _____

Major _____

What kind of operating system are you most familiar with? (circle one) Windows Macintosh

Please circle the programs you have used in the past.

Adobe Illustrator	Adobe Photoshop	Adobe Premiere	Adobe AfterEffects
Apple Final Cut Pro	Pro Tools Audio	Dreamweaver MX	Flash MX
3D Studio Max	Corel Painter	Corel Bryce	Curious Labs Poser

If you have created and published a website in the past, please write down the web address.

Have you ever edited video on a desktop computer? If so, what was the video for, and what software did you use?

Why did you choose to enroll in RTF 319?

What do you see yourself doing in the next five years?

