

CNTV 602: Practice of Media Arts

Time: Thursday 6:00 pm to 8:50 pm
Location: EGG A
Professor: Andreas Kratky
Units: 4
Prerequisites: none
Office Hours: Thursday 5:00 to 6:00 pm. EGG 124 or by appointment
Contact: akratky@cinema.usc.edu

Course Description

This course focuses on the development of the practical skills in media authoring. It is conceived on the notion of a tight integration of theoretical and practical research and development and introduces a broad spectrum of different approaches and techniques in the field of media arts. Introductions to the technological aspects of media creation are offered in conjunction with a rigorous consideration of the historical embedding and development of these practices. The field of media arts is broad and fast moving and it is impossible to be an expert on all of its aspects. But in order to be a versatile and competitive theorist-practitioner it is important to develop a deep technological understanding that allows to follow and evaluate the movements of the field and gain expertise in at least one area of media practice. An essential ability will be the development of a methodology of form finding and the conduct of practical research and development.

The class consists of two parts that extend over two semesters. The first module offers a range of technology introductions along with role models of successful media artists giving an insight into the breadth of applications and methodologies, as they are instantiated by invited guest speakers. The second module of the class offers the possibility for the students to apply the technologies learned in the first part and to develop a more extensive semester-long investigation of research methodologies and their practical application. Students are required to take the class at least once with the module that best suits their needs. Students who have already extensive knowledge of technologies and tools can take only the second module to focus on the development of their practical research and students who need to develop the technological expertise are encouraged to take both modules. The class is repeatable to give the opportunity to follow through both modules and use them as scaffolding towards the development of a dissertation project.

CNTV 602 Module 2:

The second module of CNTV 602 is a project studio class where students develop a semester-long research project in their respective fields of interest. The goal of the class is to develop a research methodology that focuses on the practical realization of media work that is informed by theoretical research and embodies one or more of the questions arising from the student's

specific area of interest. The class will start out with a case study in form finding, which will continue through the first part of the class as a creative finger exercise that is meant to challenge our habitual patterns of perception and invites to innovative form finding. Along with a historically rooted investigation of the process of form finding as an hybrid practice shared by art and science, the main part of the class focuses on the development of the project, iteration and idea prototyping, and critical reflection.

Course objectives

- Develop a deep understanding of form finding
- Learn essential tools of media creation
- Develop a personal methodology to conduct research and development
- Critically reflect your work within the larger cultural and historic context
- Get acquainted with existing and successful role models
- Provide constructive criticism and support for your fellow students.

Grading Structure

CNTV 602 criteria for grading are as follows:

- Class participation and reading reviews: 20%
- Form finding case study: 15%
- Class project: 50%
- Critical feedback and peer review: 15%

Missing an Exam, Incompletes:

The grading of this course is based mainly on the projects completed and presented throughout the class (see the grading section). There are no particular mid-term or final exams but the presentation of the projects on the scheduled dates plays the same role and is mandatory along with peer reviews. The only acceptable excuses for missing a presentation or taking an incomplete in the course are personal illnesses or a family emergency. Incompletes may only be given after the twelfth week of classes. Students must inform the professor before the project presentation and present verifiable evidence in order for a make-up to be scheduled. Students who wish to take incompletes must also present documentation of the problem to the instructor before final grades are due.

Mid-term Conferences

These conferences allow you to get a sense of your overall progress, areas for improvement and an estimated grade at mid-point in the semester. If you are in danger of failing, you will be alerted in writing and in a conference; we will outline together what steps must be taken in order for you to pass. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of USC's add/drop and withdrawal deadlines.

Academic Integrity

The School of Cinematic Arts expects the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical performance from USC students. It is particularly important that you are aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, submitting a paper to more than one instructor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade and be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. If you have any doubts or questions about these policies, consult "SCAMPUS" and/or confer with the Professor or Department Chair. The Student Conduct Code can be found in Section 11.00. Recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS.gov>

Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure that the letter is delivered to the Professor as early in the semester as possible.

DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30am – 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Course Outline:

1. Week

- Aug 25, 2011: Introduction
Overview over course structure
Discussion and first part of form finding case study

2. Week

- Sept 1, 2011: Epistemologies of the eye:
Reading: L. Daston, P. Gallison: Representation to Presentation, in:
Daston/Gallison: Objectivity, chapter 7
Form finding case study
Project discussion

3. Week

- Sept 8, 2011: Epistemologies of the object:
Borges: The Analytical Language of John Wilkins, in: Borges:
Form finding case study
Project proposals

4. Week

- Sept 15, 2011: Epistemologies of the machine:
Reading: Joel Snyder: Visualization and Visibility, in: Jones,
P. Gallison: Picturing Science, Producing Art
Form finding case study
Research presentations

5. Week

- Sept 22, 2011: Recording versus synthesis:
Reading: J. Crary: Reinventing Synthesis, in: Crary: Suspensions of Perception
Form finding case study
Project workshop

6. Week

- Sept 29, 2011: The world in the image:
Reading: W. J. T. Mitchell: Beyond Comparison: Picture, Text, and Method, in: Mitchell: Picture Theory
Form finding case study
Project workshop

7. Week

- Oct 6, 2011: The image in the world:
Reading: B. L. Whorf: Language, Mind, and Reality, in: Whorf: Language, Thought, and reality
Form finding case study
Project workshop

8. Week

- Oct 13, 2011: Intermediate project presentations
Discussion and peer review

9. Week

- Oct 20, 2011: Design and evolution:
Reading: C. S. Peirce: Design and Chance, in: Peirce: The essential Peirce, chapter 15
Form finding case study
Project workshop

10. Week

- Oct 27, 2011: Epistemologies of language:
Reading: B. L. Whorf: Language, Mind, and Reality, in: Whorf: Language, Thought, and reality
Form finding case study
Project workshop

11. Week

- Nov 3, 2011: Epistemologies of chaos:
Reading: Varela / Maturana: Cognitive Function in Particular, in: Varela / Maturana: Autopoiesis and Cognition, chapter 4
Form finding case study
Project workshop

12. Week

- Nov 10, 2011: Epistemologies of data:
Reading: J. Cayley: Time Code Language: New Media Poetics and
Programmed Signification, in: Morris / Swiss New Media Poetics
Form finding case study
Project workshop

13. Week

- Nov 17, 2010: Final presentation and review of form finding case study
Discussion and peer review

14. Week

- Nov 24, 2011: Thanksgiving

15. Week

- Dec 1, 2011: Final presentation of projects
Discussion and peer review
Class round-up