

IML 295
Race, Class and Gender in Digital Culture

Spring 2014
4 units
Tuesdays, 1:00 – 3:50 pm
SCI L106

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Office Hours TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

IML 295: Race, Class and Gender in Digital Culture fulfills the Diversity Requirement by focusing on three different forms of difference: race, gender and to a lesser extent class. The course offers students an opportunity to explore and understand the complex issues of race, class and gender in digital culture within the United States and the “global” community. In particular, it will examine the relationships between race, class, gender and digital technology, and question how digital media serves to complicate, diversify, deconstruct and recreate cultural and social boundaries in the understanding of race, class, and gender, as well as, how concepts of race, class and gender are embodied in digital technologies.

Students will examine tensions, anxieties and conflicts around race, class, gender, technology, and hegemonic culture, as well as the possibilities for alternative identities, communities, and cultures that digital technology offers. As all classes at the IML integrate multimedia authoring and theory, students will create scholarly multimedia projects to express, reflect and analyze their own attitudes on the issues of race, class and gender in digital culture, and consider how living in a diverse society can function as a form of social and cultural enrichment.

GRADING BREAKDOWN AND COURSE STRUCTURE

Grading in this course allows students to navigate their own paths in terms of their interests and goals for the course. Each student must generate 400 points in each of the three achievement categories listed below to earn a medal. The maximum total points in any single category is significantly higher than what is needed to earn even an “A” grade in the course, which means that students can select which assignments, readings, and even exams, to take on in order to pass each achievement level. Within each category there are goals that help accrue points so students who generate effective strategies for the course will earn a high grade with less work. Students earning 1500 total points will earn an “A” in the course / 1400 total points will earn a “B” / and 1300 total points will earn a “C”. There is no maximum number of points a student can earn in each category, but remember, students must have a medal from each category to pass the class.

Write (see course wiki for assignment details)

- Blog posts and discussion questions (7 points each / 532 possible points)
- Flickr posts (2 points each / 30 possible points)
- Midterm exam (400 possible points)

*Any student who achieves 200 points by the end of week 7 will automatically double his/her point total and can skip the midterm exam and potentially still achieve an “A” in the course.

Design (see course wiki for assignment details)

- Media production assignments (200 points each / 600 possible points)
- Web tool applications (20 points each / 240 possible points)

*The first 2 students to reach 500 points in this category automatically earn 100 points in the “Create” category.

Create (see course wiki for assignment details)

- Final project (500 possible points)
- Collaborative work - live blogging, community Prezi, and Flickr “re-writes” (10 points each / unlimited total points)

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Individual external hard drive
Size and price can vary (see “SCA Approved and Supported Hard Drives on Student Resources wiki)
- All other readings are either provided as a URL or posted on the course wiki.

POLICIES

Fair Use

Fair use is a legal principle that defines certain limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders. The MAP program seeks to apply a reasonable working definition of fair use that will enable students and instructors to develop multimedia projects without seeking authorization for non-commercial, educational uses. In keeping with section 107 of the Copyright Act we recognize four factors that should be considered when determining whether a use is fair: (1) the purpose and character of use, (2) the nature of the copyrighted work, (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. In general, we regard the reproduction of copyrighted works for the purposes of analysis or critique in this class to be covered by the principle of fair use.

Citation Guidelines

All projects will need to include academically appropriate citations in the form of a Works Cited section, which covers all sources, in order to receive a passing grade. The Works Cited is either included in the project or as a separate document, as appropriate to your project. The style we use is APA 5th edition and you may refer to these guidelines: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Statement for 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 the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Emergency Plan

In the event that classes cannot convene at the university, all IML courses will continue via distance education. Specifically, the IML portal and course wikis will be deployed to enable faculty-student interaction (asynchronously and also via virtual office hours), complete syllabi, course readings and assignments, software tutorials, project assets, parameters and upload instructions, peer review processes and open source alternatives to professional-level software used in the IML curriculum. Further details are available on the course wiki.

Disruptive Student Behavior

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

The following weekly schedule is subject to change. Please consult the course wiki for the most current information, assignments and due dates.

Week 1

- Course Structure
- Portal Registration
- Syllabus
- Demo: Delicious.com and social bookmarking
- Demo: flickr.com and sharing ideas through images

Week 2

- What is digital culture?
- What does it mean to be a digital citizen? Who has access? Who is empowered?
- An approach to race, class, and gender in digital culture
- Demo: Skitch and image mark-up
- Globalization photo homework

Week 3

- How do theories of race, class, gender and sexuality respond to globalization?
- What is the relationship between globalization and capitalism?
- What are the industrial origins of digital culture?
- View "globalization" flickr stream
- Demo: Zotero.org and works cited applications

Week 4

- Science fiction and societies of tomorrow

- What is Cyberpunk?
- How are race, class, gender, and sexuality envisioned in societies of the future?
- Screening: *Bladerunner* (1982) and a multicultural future?
- Screening: *Matrix* (1995), humanity vs. technology
- Screening: *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), gender, sexuality, technology
- Demo: Aviary.com (Phoenix) and photo editing

Week 5

- The cybernetic era and the erasure of the body
- In what instances is technology used to erase difference? In what ways is it used to reinforce inequalities?
- How do race, class, gender, and/or sexuality structure optimistic and pessimistic narratives about the future in science fiction?
- View: *Neuromancer* book covers
- Demo: Prezi.com and idea mapping

Week 6

- How is globalization tied to issues of class?
- What is the so-called "digital divide"?
- What is the "second level" of the digital divide and how is this problem even more systemic of social inequalities?
- Demo: Aviary.com (Vector Editor) and scalable graphics

Week 7

- Do we live in a post-racial society?
- What is a cybertype?
- Art and Activism, the example of "Rent-A-Nego.com"
- View: family tree infographics
- Demo: Wordpress.com and blogging
- Midterm Review

Week 8

MIDTERM

Week 9

- How do various feminisms interpret the potentials and limitations of our highly technologized and networked culture?
- Has digital culture dispensed of the body? What is the role of the body in queer and feminist theories?
- View: feminist digital art examples
- Demo: Digital Editing (Jaycut.com), the basics

Week 10

- Sex, violence and gaming controversies
- Avatars and representing the self
- What is collective intelligence?
- Discrimination in online environments
- Demo: Digital Editing II (Final Cut Pro), the sound mix

Week 11

- What is posthuman identification?
- Posthuman identities & critiques of Enlightenment humanism
- Cyborg identities and race, class, and gender: the case of Detroit Techno
- Demo: Snapz, Compressor, and transforming media

Week 12

- Are there new social organizations in digital culture?
- Has social media changed our approach to studying race, class, gender, and sexuality in digital media?
- How does the “digital divide” still structure communities in the era of social media?
- Cyberbullying and groups of exclusion: the case of Tyler Clementi
- Demo: Handbrake and ripping to remix

Week 13

- How do alternative digital media and digital art practices address issues of social inequality and issues of race, class, and gender/sexuality?
- How does technology mediate artistic practices: MOCA street art exhibit (2011) and *Ecstasy: In and About Altered States* (2004)
- The battle over copyright and fair use
- Demo: Digital Editing III (Final Cut Pro), tinkering and fine-tuning

Week 14

- What is neoliberalism?
- The “what” and “why” of cyberactivism
- What is the difference between a cyberactivist and cyberterrorist?
- How do theories of race, class, gender and sexuality fit into distinctions between cyberactivism and cyberterrorism?
- Demo: DVD Studio Pro and project rough cuts

Week 15

In-Class Work Time

FINAL EXAMINATION

FINAL PRESENTATIONS