USC School for Cinematic Arts | iMAP Media Arts + Practice PhD

CNTV 602: Practice of Media Arts

Time: Thursday 5:00 pm to 8:50 pm
Location: SCI L 106
Professor: Andreas Kratky
Units: 4
Prerequisites: none
Office Hours: Thursday 12:30 to 2:00 pm. SCI 201Q or by appointment
Contact: akratky@cinema.usc.edu

Course Description

This course focuses on the development of research methodologies and 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 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 1:

The first module of CNTV 602 serves as a general introduction to the field of practical research and development in the media arts. The class introduces the notion of open and hybrid research methodologies spanning the arts, sciences and humanities. It provides an overview over examples of applied methodologies in various fields of the arts. The class further introduces technical skills and tools in a sequence of workshops and peer review sessions.

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: 5%
- Still Life Exercise: 15%
- Semester project: 60%
- Critical feedback and peer review: 20%

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

CNTV 602 Practice of Media Arts
Instructor: Andreas Kratky
iMAP Media Arts and Practice PhD Program
USC School of Cinematic Arts

2/4

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 28, 2014: Introduction
  Overview over course structure
  Screening: V. Pudovkin, *Mechanics of the Brain*, 1926 (excerpt)

2. Week
- Sept 4, 2014: Discussion "What is research", overview over different research approaches and designs
  Reading: Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, A survey of some fundamental problems

3. Week
- Sept 11 2014: Discussion "Research methodologies", philosophies and concepts of research methodologies spanning arts, sciences and humanities
  Reading: Roland Barthes, *From Work to Text*. In: The Rustle of Language

4. Week
- Sept 18, 2014: Presentation of student research interests and semester projects

5. Week
- Sept 25, 2014: Methodology case-studies "The Artist as collector"
  Reading: Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, *Atlas/Archive*
  Individual project workshop

6. Week
- Oct 2, 2014: Methodology case-studies "The Artist as traveller"
  Reading: Guy Debord, *Theory of the dérive*
  Individual project workshop

7. Week
- Oct 9, 2014: Methodology case-studies "The Artist as ethnographer"
  Reading: Hal Foster, *The Artist as Ethnographer*.
  In: The Return of the Real
  Individual project workshop

8. Week
- Oct 16, 2014:	Methodology case-studies "The Artist as archaeologist"
Reading: Michel Foucault, *Archaeology and the history of ideas.*
In: The archaeology of knowledge

9. Week
- Oct 23, 2014:	Methodology case-studies "The Artist as scientist"
Reading: Joel Snyder, *Visualization and Visibility*. In: Jones, C. A. and
P. Galison: Picturing Science, Producing Art
Screening: Jean Painlevé, *Science is fiction* (selection)

10. Week
- Oct 30, 2014:	Methodology case-studies "The Artist as engineer"
Reading: Billy Klüver, *The garden party*
Screening: E.A.T., *9 Evenings* (excerpt)

11. Week
- Nov 6, 2014:	Individual project workshop and peer review

12. Week
- Nov 13, 2014: Individual project workshop and peer review

13. Week
- Nov 20, 2014: Individual project workshop and peer review

14. Week
- Nov 27, 2014: Thanksgiving

15. Week
- Dec 4, 2014:	Presentation of final projects
Discussion and peer review
Class round-up