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

IML 602: Practice of Media Arts

Time: Thursday 6:00 pm to 8:50 pm
Location: SCI L 104
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

The class IML 602 is a general introduction to the field of practical research and development in the media arts at the doctoral level. It introduces the notion of open and hybrid research methodologies spanning the arts, sciences and humanities and provides an overview over examples of applied methodologies in various fields of the arts. The class further introduces technical skills and tools in a series of individual workshops and peer review sessions.

Course Structure

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. An introduction to the technological aspects of media creation is offered in conjunction with a rigorous consideration of the historical embedding and development of these practices. The class will examine interdisciplinary cross-overs between the arts, the humanities and the sciences. In the course of these discussions students will formulate a research profile and methodology specific to their individual interests that balances theoretical and practical creative work. Students will consider how their work relates to other disciplines and their established discourses, methodologies and prior art. The field of media arts is broad and fast moving and we are interested in methodological diversity. An important part of the class is dedicated to providing guidance in the practical implementation of projects and technological questions. We will follow an iterative approach based on peer review using the group as peer critics.

Students are required to take the class at least once. The class is repeatable to give the opportunity to use the workshop and feedback structure to further pursue the development of practical research methodologies and project work. The class can be sued as a scaffolding towards the development of a dissertation project.

Course objectives

- Develop a deep understanding of form finding
- 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.

Description of Assignments

Over the course of the semester students will develop one practical creative project that embodies their research and artistic approach. This project will go through several iterations and review sessions. At the end of the semester it has to be in a finished presentable form.
The project and its theoretical background will be reflected in a semester paper, which is intended to be in a publishable state at the end of the semester.
Besides the project and paper every student is expected to prepare the assigned readings and participate actively in their discussion. In peer review sessions students are expected to provide constructive criticism for their fellow students. The assignments are evaluated according to the grading structure specified below.

Grading Structure

CNTV 602 criteria for grading are as follows:
- Class participation: 5%
- Semester project: 50%
- Semester paper: 30%
- Critical feedback and peer review: 15%

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.

Course Outline:

1. Week
- Aug 27, 2015: Introduction
  Overview over course structure

2. Week
- Sept 3, 2015: Discussion: Research and methodologies
  overview over different research approaches and designs
  Student introduction presentations of prior work

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Reading: Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method*, excerpt

3. Week
- Sept 10 2015: Cross-overs: Humanities
  Reading: N. Katherine Hayles, *How we read*.
  In: N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Think*
  Individual project workshop

4. Week
- Sept 17, 2015: Cross-overs: Sciences
  Reading: Gaston Bachelard, *Non-Cartesian Epistemology*.
  In: Gaston Bachelard, *The New Scientific Spirit.*
  Individual project workshop

5. Week
- Sept 24, 2015: Presentation of student research interests and semester projects

6. Week
- Oct 1, 2015: Artist methodologies
  Reading: Andrew Hugill, *Pataphysics*
  Individual project workshop

7. Week
- Oct 8, 2015: Perceiving the world: Observation
  Reading: Omar W. Nasim, *Scribbles in Space*
  Individual project workshop

8. Week
- Oct 15, 2015: Making the world perceivable: Translation
  Reading: Hankins/Silverman, *Science since Babel.*
  Individual project workshop

9. Week
- Oct 22, 2015: Experimental cultures
  Reading: Rom Harré, The Materiality of Instruments in a Metaphysics for Experiments. In: Hans Radder, *The Philosophie of Scientific Experimentation*
  Individual project workshop

10. Week
- Oct 29, 2015: The project as process
  Reading: Sheringham, *Configuering the Everyday*
  Presentation and discussion of paper concepts

11. Week
- Nov 5, 2015: Art activism
  Reading: Rita Raley, *Speculative Capital*, excerpt.
  In: Rita Raley, *Tactical Media*
  Individual project workshop

12. Week
* Nov 12, 2015: Individual project workshop and peer review
              Paper drafts due

13. Week
* Nov 19, 2015: Individual project workshop and peer review

14. Week
* Nov 26, 2015: Thanksgiving

15. Week
* Dec 3, 2015: Presentation of final projects
              Final papers due
              Discussion and peer review
              Class round-up

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.

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.

The University provides various resources in respect to academic conduct:
Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards*https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* http://equity.usc.edu/ or to the *Department of Public Safety* http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Students with Disabilities

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information http://emergency.usc.edu/*will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.