Future Cinema

IML 365 | 4 units | Room SCI 209
37429R | Spring 2019
Thursdays, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Course Site

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Marshmallow Laser Feast | Half Life | 2015

In the Future Cinema class, students will work collaboratively as members of a research lab to investigate the futures of moving image storytelling across a full range of new and emerging practices. We will bring a critical perspective to developments in VR, AR, sound art, immersive theater, artificial intelligence, live streaming, urban screens and more. We will consider topics such as Karen Palmer's sensory storytelling, the Neurospeculative Afro Futurism of Hyphen-Labs, and the immersive visual worlds produced by artists such as Marshmallow Laser Feast. During the first week's session, we will survey the core interests of all class participants, and map our research project accordingly. Some students may be interested in the creative possibilities of emerging forms; others may want to engage social issues; still others may be intrigued by a focus on technological innovation, financial and industry-related questions, or the evolution of storytelling itself as it moves from platform to platform. The class will adjust to align with these interests and encourage students to create a meaningful project to advance their studies.

Our research will be situated historically and critically through readings, screenings and media experiences, and our primary goal will be to create a collaborative report that describes and critically analyzes the present and possible futures of contemporary cinema, understood in its broadest sense. Participants will be asked to read popular tech blogs; interview LA-based mediamakers; write a short company profile; create an annotated project list to be included in our research report; and contribute a

chapter to our final document, with images and/or video clips. Each student will leave the class with their own projects, as well as a version of the final collaborative research report.

With regard to structure, our class sessions will resemble weekly check-in meetings of a research group along with active experimentation and reflection. Participants will work with diverse media forms, exploring an array of VR and AR projects; interactive documentaries; live streaming; wearables; and artificial intelligence applications. Rather than a seminar or lecture class, *Future Cinema* strives to be active, open and inquisitive, and while participants need no previous experience with any of the media technologies we will explore, they should be willing to roll up their sleeves and experiment! We will not sit back passively; instead, everyone in the class will ask questions, investigate, generate answers and teach each other.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will leave the course with:
• the ability to analyze examples of emerging forms cinema, exploring their formal, conceptual and thematic elements using the language specific to the fields of cinema and new media;
• the ability to draw connections between expanded cinema and contemporary social and political issues, focusing specifically on how emerging tools and platforms align with new forms of subjectivity, identity, and power in a networked culture;
• the ability to respond with expertise to various media forms, with an awareness of their own physical, emotional, and embodied responses;
• and the ability to engage productively with artists and audience members in supporting and sharing experiences of expanded cinema in a sophisticated manner.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Short Paper #1 | Due Week 3 (January 24)
Short Paper #2 | Due Week 6 (February 14)
Short Paper #3 | Due Week 9 (March 7)
Research Report Chapter | Due Week 17 (May 7)

Short Paper #1: Organization or Company Profile | Due Week 3 | January 24, 2019
Working from a list of mediamaking collectives or groups (such as Hyphen-Labs, Black Gotham Experience, V2_ Lab for the Unstable Media, Electric South or Rapport Studios), for example, or a small tech company (such as Survios, Jam3, Kite and Lightning, Mirada, xRez, Mycotoo, Weaver or Form Follows Function), write a three-page company profile. Discuss the intersection of historical, technological and socio-political factors contributing to the organization's goals, and assess at least one project.

Short Paper #2: Tech Blog / Site Critical Review | Due Week 6 | February 14, 2019
Subscribe to or monitor at least one of the following newsletters for three weeks and write a critical analysis of it, including a description, analysis of the site's values, and assessment of the overarching goals of the site.

- TechCrunch: https://techcrunch.com/
- The Verge: https://www.theverge.com/
- Venture Beat: https://venturebeat.com/newsletters/

- Co.Design: https://www.fastcompany.com/co-design
- Engadget: https://www.engadget.com/

Short Paper #3: Annotated Project List | Due Week 9 | March 7, 2019
Expanding on your area of interest, write an annotated project list that includes at least five projects and critically reflects on interface design, user experience and storytelling innovation.

Final Project: Research Report Chapter
Each class participant will create a chapter for our Research Report on the Future of Cinema. We will discuss the design of the document in class, but it should offer a critical and in-depth report on a specific idea, technology, company or experience. Detailed guidelines for the project will be distributed prior to week 5.
First Draft Due Week 13 | April 14, 2019
Final Presentation in Class Week 16 | April 25, 2019
Final Portfolio of Projects Due | Tuesday, May 7, 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Cloud Eye Control | Half Life | 2015

Tiffany Trenda | Proximity Cinema Black Forest | 2013
Photo taken by Xarene Eskandar

SCHEDULE

Week 1 | January 10, 2019
Introduction to the Course and Context: What Is "Cinema" in 2019?
This session examines an expanded understanding of the cinematic as cinema leaves the movie theater and becomes participatory, immersive, mobile, playable, wearable and more. How do we define the cinematic within this new context? What role does moving image storytelling play in our current moment?

Week 2 | January 17, 2019
Mediated Cities
We will start our exploration by studying how various collectives are using media to help us understand our city better. We will talk with participants from a local place-based media studio, the Spatial Awareness Network, and groups who use media to make our cities more playful and creative.

Reading for this week:
Chrissie Iles, "Between the Still and Moving Image"

Week 3 | January 24, 2019
Urban Screens
Due: Short Paper #1

Our experience of Los Angeles is increasingly mediated by networked apps and large-scale outdoor screens. What does it mean that much of the media screened in public space on architectural surfaces or media facades is owned and distributed by corporations? Some scholars refer to our movements through cities with our location-aware devices as "performative cartography," suggesting a positive and creative role for users. We will consider what role artists play in these networks and on these screens.

Reading for this week:
Krzysztof Wodiczko, "Interrogative Design."
Holly Willis, "Big (Beautiful) Data: Refik Anadol's Media Architecture."

Week 4 | History of 3D | January 31, 2019
Visit LACMA 3D: Double Vision Exhibition
To gain some historical context related to 3D, we will meet at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art at 11:00 a.m. to tour the 3D: Double Vision Exhibition, which offers a survey of "a full range of artworks, dating from 1838 to the present, that produce the illusion of three dimensions."

Reading for this week:
Nick Jones, "Variation Within Stability: Digital 3D and Film Style"

Week 5 | February 7, 2019
360-degree Storytelling
Recent technological innovations have made 360-degree filmmaking relatively inexpensive and accessible. In this session, we will work with an array of cameras to examine the affordances and limitations of this new form.

Reading for this week:
To come

Week 6 | February 14, 2019
VR/AR
Due: Short Paper #2
This week delves into VR and AR, considering both their histories and current state. We'll review several current VR and AR projects, and talk with Scott Fisher, who defined the term "virtual environment" in the 1970s. We'll also visit to the World Building Media Lab and explore the process of world building as a collaborative, nonlinear workflow designed for transmedia storytelling that integrates VR and AR design.

Reading for this week:
"Immersive Environments" (Where Did VR Come From?)

Week 7 | February 21, 2019
Immersive Theater and Live Cinema
This week's session will explore the intersection of cinema, theater and technology, with a case study dedicated to LA's Two Bit Circus with its story rooms and interactive stage shows, as well as an exploration of the work of LA-based artist Miwa Matreyek.

Reading for this week:
David Fodel, "Live Cinema: Context and "Liveness.'"

Week 8 | February 28, 2019
Live Streaming
While we know live streaming as a venue for gaming and, increasingly, for social interaction, how else is it being used and how does it affect how we understand contemporary storytelling?

Reading for this week:
Danielle Lottridge, et al, "Third-Wave Livestreaming: Teens' Long Form Selfie"

Week 9: | March 7, 2019
Chat Fiction/Twitter Fiction/Social Fiction
Due: Short Paper #2
The launch of Hooked in 2015 solidified the chat fiction format as a new storytelling form. This week, we will look at several other apps for message-based stories and compare the form to an array of mediated writing experiments. We will also look at the tools for designing these projects.

Reading for this week:
To come.

Week 10 | March 14 24, 2019
SPRING BREAK

Week 11 | March 21, 2019
Cyborgs, Wearables and the Body
From a jumpsuit that transforms your body into a celestial sensing body to a data-generative garment that visualizes the effects of global warming, wearables are increasingly moving beyond fitness tracking apps to play a larger role in storytelling. In this session, we'll examine the world of wearables and query the potentials for storytelling in this arena.

Reading for this week:
To come.

Week 12 | March 28, 2019
iDocs
Interactive documentaries offer one of the strongest arenas of new media practice, with a long list of projects that offer new interfaces for storytelling.

Reading for this week:
Jon Dovey, "Documentary Ecosystems: Collaboration and Exploitation"
Kate Nash, "Clicking on the World: Documentary Representation and Interactivity"

Week 13 | April 4, 2019
Artificial Intelligence and Filmmaking

Due: First Draft of Report Chapter
AI is having a powerful impact on Hollywood, from Benjamin, the first AI responsible for directing a film, to screenwriting tools and digital effects tools that can place an actor's face onto another actor's body. We'll explore the various "Digital Humans" groups appearing at various studios and discuss the ethical ramifications of AI in its various manifestations within the entertainment industry.

Reading for this week:

Week 14 | April 11, 2019
Digital Dance
How are dancers incorporating media into their practice? This session will explore the work of artists such as Troika Ranch and William Forsythe.

Reading
Andrea Davidson, "Extending the Discourse of Screendance"
William Forsythe, "Choreographic Objects"

Week 15 | April 18, 2019
Sound Artworks / Podcasting
This week's session is dedicated to sound art.

Week 16 | April 25, 2019
Presentations

May 7, 8:00 a.m.: Final Draft of Report Chapter Due

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

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 Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/. 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.

Support Systems
Student Counseling Services (SCS) - 213-740-7711 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - 213-740-4900 - 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/

Sexual Assault Resource Center
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: http://sarc.usc.edu/

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – 213-740-5086
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. https://equity.usc.edu/

Bias Assessment Response and Support
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/

The Office of Disability Services and Programs
Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. http://dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – 213-821-4710
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/

Diversity at USC
Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. https://diversity.usc.edu/

USC Emergency Information
Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, http://emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime.
Provides overall safety to USC community. http://dps.usc.edu

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.

Citation Practices
Fair use is a legal principle that defines certain limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders. Media Arts + Practice 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. 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.

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. There are several different citation styles and practices; please ask your professor(s) what style manual s/he would prefer. Below you'll find some online resources for the most popular options.

Style Manuals
Modern Language Association (MLA)
Purdue OWL: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11/

Chicago Manual of Style
Purdue OWL: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/12/

PLEASE NOTE:
FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX

Hypen-Labs | Neurospeculative Afro-Futurism | 2017