

Course Instructor: Qiuzi Guo Lecturer, Division of Humanities

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Office Hours: Mondays: 11:00-12:30

Office: Room 2378

## **Course Description:**

This course will explore how digital technologies are transforming art production and presentation. From early photography to virtual reality, it will examine art forms at the turn of the mechanical age (e.g. photography, film) as well as artistic practices in the digital age such as virtual reality, data visualization, artificial intelligence, and NFT (Non-fungible token). Situating art and digital culture within a cross-disciplinary context, the course also considers the following key issues: how do digital technologies change our art, culture, and contemporary life? How does art in the digital age define key issues in the digital world such as privacy, copyright, and identity? How can we create art through interdisciplinary practice? Students will learn to analyze new forms of art and related technologies and to discuss the key issues of the body, identity, and surveillance in the digital age.

## **Intended Learning Outcomes:**

This course exposes undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds to a wide range of topics in art and digital culture. The students will

1. Develop a critical knowledge of art and related technologies in the digital age
2. Cultivate specialized knowledge of art forms (e.g., photography, film, video art, nft)
3. Engage disciplines outside their majors
4. Develop competencies and digital literacies that provide a foundation for future careers

## **Assignments:**

- Attendance (10%):

Students are required to attend classes and guest lectures. One point will be deducted for each absence, up to 10 points.

- Class Participation (20%): You are encouraged to join in the discussion in the class and Canvas, **up to 20 points**. You will be rewarded in the following situations:
  1. Join in the discussions (in total 3-4 times) in Canvas led by the instructor or TA (**up to 6 points**). Reply no less than 250 words, reasonable, inspiring, 2 points for each discussion.
  2. Answer a question in the class (Register your name with TA), 2 points for each response (**up to 10 points**)
  3. Group discussion behavior, assessed by the instructor (**4 points**)
- Final group Presentation (35%)

Students are organized into smaller groups (5 people per group) to make 20-minute presentations. Potential topics will be given. Students sign up for their topics of interest. Teams will be formed based on the chosen topic.

The final presentation is to be presented orally in the class, with a written report handed in afterward. The team members should be clearly divided into their respective roles, and each contributed to the presentation.

- Written Assignment (35%)

Students are required to write an essay (1500-1800 words) that addresses the issues and debates emerging in art and digital culture research. Students can make an appointment with the instructor to discuss the chosen topic (not mandatory).

### **Notes:**

AI writers like ChatGPT can change the process of creating an essay. It is permitted to use AI writers to enable natural-language content, but it is important to indicate where and how they are used, and to specify the AI-generated content. Additionally, you need to explain the ways of using them, as well as the prompts provided. The evaluation of the AI-generated content will not be based on the content itself, but on how it is used, and the AI-generated portion should not exceed 20%.

## **Weekly Topics:**

### **Week 1**

**Wednesday 8 Feb      Welcome and Introduction**

Review the syllabus, introduce the goal, and assignments of the class.

**Week 2**

**Wednesday 15 Feb    A Loss of Aura: Photography in the Age of Mechanical  
Reproduction**

Outline the early histories of photography, discuss how photography technology transform the way of seeing

- Readings:
  - - Required:

Marien, M. W. (2021). The Origin of Photography. In *Photography: A cultural history* (pp. 3–21). essay, Laurence King Publishing.

“Is Photography Art?” <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/photography-art.htm>

- - Recommended:

Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 217–253.

- - Videos:

[John Berger / Ways of Seeing](#)

**Week 3**

**Wednesday 22 Feb    New Ways of Seeing: Moving Images, Cinema and Emerging  
Media Technologies**

Discuss the role of movies at the turn of the mechanical age, and how new media technologies changed the modern world.

- Readings

- - *Required:*

Dixon, W. W., & Foster, G. A. (2013). The Invention of Movies. In *A short history of film* (pp.1-21). Rutgers University Press.

Manovich, L. (1996). Cinema and digital media. *Perspectives of Media Art. Ostfildern, Germany: Cantz Verlag.*

- - *Recommended:*

Barsam, R (2016). Looking at Movies. in *Looking At Movies: An Introduction to Film* (pp.1-34). W.W. NORTON & COMPANY

## **Week 4**

### **Wednesday 1 March After Photography: The Rise of Digital Art**

Examine the use of computers in the art-making process; Explore Internet art, theories, practices and projects of internet art, ways of digital storytelling

- Readings

- - *Required:*

Greene, R. (2004). *Web Work: A History of Internet Art*

Fritz, D. (2016). International Networks of Early Digital Arts . *In A Companion to Digital Art* (pp. 46–68). Wiley-Blackwell.

- - *Recommended:*

Taylor, Grant D. “Introduction.” In *When the Machine Made Art: The Troubled History of Computer Art*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

## **Week 5**

**Wednesday 8 March            The Myth of VR (Virtual reality)/AR (Augmented reality)**

Explore VR /AR projects, the application of VR/AR in museums

- Readings
  - Required:

Greengard, S. (2019). *Why Augmented and Virtual Realities Matter*. In *Virtual reality* (pp. 1–36). MIT press.

Greengard, S. (2019). *The Many Shapes and Forms of AR and VR*. In *Virtual reality* (pp. 37–64). MIT press.

**Week 6**

**Wednesday 15 March            Digital Cultural Heritage**

Introduce the digital technology used by GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums) to manage and curate digital collection; discuss the multiple ways of digitalizing the collections; 3D Visualization and Modelling

- Readings
  - *Required:*

Drucker, J. (2013). Is There a “Digital” Art History? *Visual Resources*, 29(1–2), 5–13.

- - *Recommended:*

Shep, S. J. (2016), ‘Digital Materiality’, in S. Schreibman, R. G. Siemens, & J. M. Unsworth (eds.), *new companion to digital humanities*, Toronto, Wiley, pp. 322–330.

- Project to explore

[Harvard FAS CAMLab Digital Luoyang](#)

**Week 7**

**Wednesday 22 March            Artificial Intelligence and Creativity**

Explore AI art by analyzing artworks; identifies the significant factors essential to the creative process.

- Readings
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  - *Required:*

Miller, A. (2020). What Make Us Creative. In *The artist in the machine: The world of ai-powered creativity* (pp. 85–95). MIT Press.

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  - *Recommended:*

Miller, A. (2020). The Birth of Artificial Intelligence. In *The artist in the machine: The world of ai-powered creativity* (pp. 85–95). MIT Press.

Kelly, K. (2022, November 17). What ai-generated art really means for human creativity. Wired. Retrieved January 1, 2023, from <https://www.wired.com/story/picture-limitless-creativity-ai-image-generators/>

## Week 8

### Wednesday 29 March      NFTs, Games, and the Future of Art

Invite guest speakers from NFT (Non-fungible token) start-ups

- Readings:
  - *Required:*

Clark, M. (2021, March 3). *NFTs, explained*. The Verge. Retrieved January 2, 2023, from <https://www.theverge.com/22310188/nft-explainer-what-is-blockchain-crypto-art-faq>

TRLab. (2022, September 3). *Cai Guo-Qiang brings fine art to emerging collectors with second NFT drop: Exploding the self*. Medium. Retrieved January 1, 2023, from <https://trlab.medium.com/cai-guo-qiang-brings-fine-art-to-emerging-collectors-with-second-nft-drop-exploding-the-self-82bbc34c5348>

## Week 9      Holiday

## Week 10

**Wednesday 12 April**      **Social Media and Surveillance**

Discuss the growing presence of social media in the surveillance of everyday life.

- Readings
  - *Required:*

Trottier, D. (2015). Introducing Social Media Surveillance In *Social media as surveillance: Rethinking visibility in a converging world* (pp. 1–32).

- - *Recommended:*

Smith, B. (2021, December 6). *How tiktok reads your mind*. The New York Times. Retrieved January 1, 2023, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/05/business/media/tiktok-algorithm.html>

**Week 11**

**Wednesday 19 April**      **Art and Identity in the Digital Age**

Discuss issues of identity and art production in the context of artificial intelligence, digital surveillance, and data dignity

- Readings
  - *Required:*

Jones, A. (2006). 1990–2005: In the Clutches of Time, In *A companion to contemporary art since 1945*(107-124). Blackwell Pub.

- - *Recommended:*

Oscar Ho. *Hong Kong: A curatorial journey for an identity*. Asia Art Archive. Retrieved January 1, 2023, from <https://aaa.org.hk/en/ideas-journal/ideas-journal/hong-kong-a-curatorial-journey-for-an-identity>

**Week 12**

**Wednesday 26 April**      **Final Presentation**

Presentations and discussion of each project.

**Week 13**

**Wednesday 3 May      Final Presentation**

Presentations and discussion of each project.