Department of Studio Arts, Concordia University

IMCA 221 - Programming for Artists

Winter 2025 - **Instructor**: lee wilkins

Class: Tuesday 1:30 - 5:30 PM EV-S2-625

Office hours: by appointment

E-mail l.wilkins@concordia.ca *
I will not reply to messages over the weekend, otherwise within 24h

Website: http://leecyb.org
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Teaching Assistant: Hailey Guzik

E-mail: hello@haileyguzik.ca

Website: http://haileyguzik.ca
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Technician: James Schidlowsky Office: EV-S2-713

E-mail: james.schidlowsky@concordia.ca

Learning Objectives:

- Learn the basics of interactive installation using MaxMSP
- Learn the basics of Arduino based interactive installation
- Explore the possibilities of interactive installation in a variety of contexts
- Learn how to constructively critique work
- Learn to document your work

Tools:

- **MaxMSP/Jitter:** download at https://cycling74.com/ for free trial (you can't save your work) or use a lab computer with a full licence
- **Arduino:** download at https://www.arduino.cc/ on your computer or use at the lab. Arduino physical hardware can be found in EV-S2-713 with James
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Zoom: https://zoom.us/download used for in-class video tutorials

- **Model:** : https://moodle.concordia.ca/moodle/login/index.php used to post all of the class materials, assignments, and hand-ins

Resources

Cycling 74 Tutorials - https://cycling74.com/learn
Max Cookbook - https://music.arts.uci.edu/dobrian/maxcookbook/
Don't hesitate to ask your peers, YouTube, your instructor or technician for assistance.

Grading Breakdown:

See detailed breakdown on Moodle for each assignment

30%: Experimentation Patches

10% Audio Experimentation: Exploring audio in max/MSP using any techniques

10% Video Experimentation: Exploring video in Jitter using any techniques

10% Sensor Experimentation: Exploring sensors and Arduino

25% Mid term Site Specific Installation: A group project (2 or 3 people) about a site specific project around campus

35% Open Project: An individual project about anything, using any techniques or tools from the class

10% Prototype: Presented briefly in class for critique November 12

25% Final: Final critique November 26

10% participation: Attendance, participation, engagement

Grading Criteria:

25% **Exploration & Functionality:**
The goal of this grade is to help you push your boundaries but work within your capabilities. Having a more complex project is part of the grade, but it is more important that your work functions. Be intentional and spend time trying to understand your problems instead of abandoning things that don't work.
A good way to excel in this area is to explore a new technique we did not touch on in class OR expand meaningfully on something we touched on in class.

25% **Creativity & Concept:**
Every project should have a concept. Concepts don't have to be elaborate or in depth, they can be as simple as evoking a feeling, exploring a moment, explaining a subject or cause, sharing something you like, making the viewer feel something briefly. Keep your concepts simple as you start. This grade is measured by how effective your concept is on the viewer so don't try anything complex when you start. Some really simple ideas: colours, nostalgia for a particular time, surprise, de-contextualize a space, etc. As you get better at concepts, you can explore larger ideas. Always have a concept, no matter how simple.
A good way to excel in this area is to have a clear concept that is evident to the viewers without explanation.

25% **Execution & presentation quality:**This is measured by how well presented your work is. This is aside from the creativity,
but how well it is physically or digitally assembled. How would it look in a gallery?
A good way to excel in this area is to make sure your work is polished and clean. This can vary widely depending on the work. Clean up your cables, good presentation, well made objects or assets etc. Be mindful of how the work is shown and viewed. Its

okay if you can't make it perfect, but have an idea of how you'd like to

25% **Documentation:**
Project is documented as outlined below. Remember: if you don't document your project, nobody else will know it happened!
Part of your documentation grade is how you present your work in class during critique. Come ready to discuss your work and tell us about your process and purpose.

Late Policy

All projects are expected to be handed in **by midnight of the due date**. Feel free to make changes after critique or finish documentation. Students will be deducted 5% per day after that. If there is any reason why you can't meet the deadline, notify the instructor via email or in class. The sooner you notify the instructor, the sooner they can help you find a solution or avoid late marks. If you need help accessing student services or resources, please reach out.

Handing in projects:

Each project should include **a .zip file that contains:**

- A saved file (File > Save as Project) .maxpat
- A screen capture of your max patch
- A video or audio recording of your project working (can be a video or a link to a private video on YouTube, Vimeo or Google)
- A 50-100 word explanation of your project inside your maxpatch

Be sure to name files properly (no untitled-1.zip)
All files are expected to be cleaned up and arranged in a reasonable, legible way.
Videos should be clear, well light and show your project working.

Schedule

January 16
Week 1: Introduction, Studio Tour + intro to MaxMSP

January 23
Week 2 - Using Audio & Midi, loops

January 30
Week 3 - More audio, studio time & **Audio Experimentation due by midnight** & in class sharing

February 6
Week 4 - Using Jitter, video input/output, controlling video -

February 13
Week 5 - More video, studio time & **Video Experimentation due by midnight** & in class sharing

February 20
Week 6 - Open GL graphics + Jitter

February 27
>> NO CLASS, HAVE A GOOD BREAK! <<

March 6
Week 7 - **Mid Term Project due** - Group Project: Site Specific Installation Critique (Presentations in class)

March 13
Week 8 - Arduino & sensors introduction

March 20
Week 9 - More sensors & **Sensor Exploration due by midnight** & in class sharing

March 27
Week 10 - Prototype/Progress Critique

April 3
Week 11 - Studio time

April 10
Week 12 - Final Critique

Critique Policy:
See Critique Cheat Sheet on Moodle for additional information. Critiques are critical opportunities for artistic development and growth. Students are expected to be both supportive and constructively critical with each other. You are expected to engage actively in critique and be prepared to engage deeply with concept and technical aspects of projects

Work outside class:
Students are expected to work 3-4 hours outside of class each week. If you don't explore outside of class, you will not get better or comfortable with the software!

Mandatory lab/class fees:
Students enrolled in IMCA 221 are required to pay a mandatory class fee of $40.00. Non- payment could result in an Incomplete. The deadline for fee payment is the Deadline for withdrawal with tuition refund (DNE) (see the Undergraduate Academic Calendar for date). Class fees unlock access to equipment, edit suites, and the production studio. Lab fees amounts are determined accordingly, to refurbishment costs for facilities, supplies, parts, and basic repair & maintenance necessary to operate during the semesters.
Payment procedures:

1. Log into the Student Hub OR (https://adsys2.concordia.ca/OFAF/pages/Default)

2. Select the course group or department.

3. Pick the Class fees from the drop-down list and add it to the cart.

When you have added all the fees you would like to pay, go to the cart and carefully review the contents. Make sure there are no duplicates (Quantity=2) or fees added by mistake.
Click "Pay Now" and fill in your credit card information. When the transaction is completed, you will receive a confirmation on screen and a copy of your invoice by email.
There is no lab fee to have access to the CDA (Center for Digital Arts) facilities, including the Hybrid Lab computers. Still, students must register for a CDA account. For CDA questions, see CDA counter on 5th floor of the EV building or https://www.concordia.ca/finearts/cda.html
Students will be able to access most IMCA facilities (video editing suites, video production studio, project lab, electronic arts studios, etc) as well as some of the IMCA equipment. Prior booking through the IMCA portal or the IMCA technician will be necessary.

COVID Safety Policy:

Surgical masks are not mandatory, but recommended. If you are sick, do not attend class. Wash hands and sanitize frequently especially in shared lab spaces.

Plagiarism:

The most common offence under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism, which the Code defines as “the presentation of the work of another person as one’s own or without proper acknowledgement.” This includes material copied word for word from books, journals, Internet sites, professor’s course notes, etc. It refers to material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It also includes for example the work of a fellow student, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased from any source. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone –it can refer to copying images, graphs, tables and ideas. “Presentation” is not limited to written work. It includes oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. Finally, if you translate the work of another person into any other language and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism.

In Simple Words:

Do not copy, paraphrase or translate anything from anywhere without saying where you obtained it.

(Source: The Academic Integrity Website

In a class like this, you will frequently use other people’s code and examples. This is totally fine, but you should indicate where you get it from AND change it meaningfully. Work that is a direct copy from a tutorial will not be accepted, even if it is cited. Work based on a tutorial should be indicated and linked.