

Intro to Digital Media
ART ARS 162 01
Tue-Thu 9:25 - 12:05
Hillyer 320

Professor: [Cati Bestard](#)
[Office Hours](#): Mon 4:30 - 6:30

Intro to Digital Media is a class that explores the tools, systems and frameworks of digital media in the context of contemporary art practice. In this class you will learn a variety of tools and techniques, their potentials and limitations. What are the possibilities of digital media? How can we communicate our ideas with digital tools? Can we question the tools themselves? With basic building blocks (text, image, sound), you will make works that will be distributed and presented offline and online. Theoretical readings, in class discussions, historical and contemporary references will be a main part of this course, in which we will try to define and challenge the boundaries of traditional and digital media.

Main Assignments: This course includes 6 main assignments. You will have time during class to work on these assignments, but you are expected to dedicate time outside of class. Information regarding each assignment will be provided in advance in class and also linked to the syllabus schedule.

Work days are meant to be dedicated to work on your main assignments during class. Take advantage of this time, as it will save you work time outside of class! It is also during work days that I can offer one on one feedback on your work and help you navigate any challenge that comes up.

Lectures, reading discussions and in-class participation: An important part of the learning process of this course is to engage in lectures and reading discussions. By coming prepared to class, having read the texts, you will be ready for each assignment. All readings are selected to broaden your knowledge. If you are interested in an artist shown in class, I strongly encourage you to research them further. The library is a great resource where you can find books about most artists shown in class.

Critiques/presentations are important days when you and your classmates get to share your projects and give feedback to each other. We will often do "cold reads" where your classmates and I talk about your work before learning about it. The goal of that methodology is to allow for new meanings to emerge.

Grade Breakdown

- 90% → Assignments
 - Printed Publication (10%)
 - Digital Collage (10%)
 - GIF (15%)
 - Artificial Intelligence (15%)
 - Animation: Video and Sound (20%)
 - Website (20%)
- 10% Participation (attendance, being present, readings, in-class participation, discussions, presentations, artist lectures, etc)
- You will receive mid term grades and feedback

Course expectations

- Kindness, respect and generosity
- Being present, participating in critiques and class discussions
- Punctuality
- Completion of the main assignments, readings and homeworks
- Use of phones affects your presence and your capacity for being focused during class. Please keep your phone put away during class, to help build a more focused environment. There will always be a computer available for showing references or any other information.
- Be curious: research artists and ideas that will inspire you and will help you grow your practice.

Requirements

- Complete all main assignments and homeworks by the due date, following the requirements explained in class. If there are special circumstances please communicate with me as soon as possible so we can make a plan. To deliver an assignment late can affect your final grade.
- All images and works used in this class must be new work made specifically for each assignment of this class. You are welcome to work with appropriation or using existing archives of images, just communicate with me beforehand.
- Class attendance is required, including work days. Consistent attendance and participation is crucial to the learning process. Critiques cannot be rescheduled and are a community building experience.
- Come prepared for work days.
- Come to class on time.

Office Hours

I would be happy to see you during office hours (Mon 4:30-6:30 @ Hillyer 208). If possible, [make an appointment](#), but if not, just show up and I might have time. Any question regarding the class, technical issues, assignments, your art practice in general or any other advising can be addressed during these times. If for some reason these times don't work for you, don't hesitate to email me and we will find another time to meet.

Readings and other materials

All readings and lecture materials will be provided in advance, either through a link in the syllabus or on a pdf inside of the shared readings folder in Google Drive. Because of the nature of this class, I encourage you to actively participate in the reading discussions, since it is the best way to engage in the curriculum and assignments.

Materials

-A hard drive of at least 256GB. It needs to be compatible with Mac.

Examples:

- https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1666725-REG/transcend_ts250ges_d270c_250gb_external_ssd_esd270c.html/overview
- https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1710528-REG/emtec_ecssd256gx2_10_portable_ssd_x210_256gb.html

Funding

Funding is available for ARS course materials through the Smith Student Aid Society (SSAS). Smith students with financial need can apply for support to cover costs of required course materials as listed on the syllabus or approved by the class instructor. Five College students should seek out available support on their home campuses. Funding is limited, so students should apply for amounts according to their financial need. The funds may not be used for equipment or software, but students are encouraged to use the Imaging Center equipment checkout and department/campus computer labs.

The deadline to apply is the last day a student may enroll in a fine arts class each semester (this semester it is **Friday, February 14, 2025**). Late requests are not considered. Applications are not reviewed or funded until after the deadline, so the funds would reimburse for any supplies needed earlier in the semester. To apply, sign in through the following link: <https://socialnetwork.smith.edu/forms> (once signed in, select "Academic Funding Application" and then "Fine Art Supplies" as the funding type).

Contacts / Resources

Visual Arts Digital Specialist

Noah Thompson: ajmaurer@smith.edu

Safety Issues

Kevin Pomerleau: kpomerleau@smith.edu

Digital Printing either at Imaging Center or at VCRC

Dan Bridgman: dbridgma@smith.edu

Equipment Loan

Betsy Coulter: bcoulter@smith.edu

Woodshop Manager

Drew Palmore: apalmore@smith.edu

Accommodations

Please speak with me at the beginning of the semester if you require accommodations, or have any other concern or challenge that I should know about. Don't hesitate!

Resources

- Academic Resources
 - [Spinelli Center for Quantitative Learning](#)
 - [Jacobson Center for Writing, Teaching, and Learning](#)
 - Teaching, Learning and Research Librarians
- Mental Health and Wellness Resources
 - [Crisis Resources](#)
 - [Counseling Services](#)
 - [Wellness](#)
- [Gender Identity and Expression Resources](#)
- [Report sexual misconduct and other forms of discrimination](#)