MAT 200C

Research Tactics
and other practical actions
for artistic and academic agendas

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course goal:

To help you become better media arts researchers.

1) how to write research papers
2) how to position your work to particular audiences
3) how to evaluate the work of others
4) how to evaluate your own work
5) how to best articulate and defend your work

course theme:

you are already doing interesting work.

you should be presenting it to the world, getting feedback from as many different people/communities as possible.

course theme:

the concepts are ultimately more important than the specific implementation...

(exercise: look at old issues of Computer Music Journal..., or any other technical journal)

but articulating the concepts is more difficult...

course theme:

there is a connection between evaluation (sometimes called "critical thinking") and doing good work.

how to become better media arts researchers?

reading articles, analyzing research, investigating disciplines and conferences, writing analyses, summarizing, brainstorming, developing a system of evaluation, defining and articulating an artistic aesthetic and a research agenda, learning LaTeX and citation software, keeping a research blog...

evaluation:

Focus on **CONCEPT** more than **IMPLEMENTATION**

How can it be evaluated?

Why is it important, compelling, appropriate, original?

What is it similar to?

What research agendas does it fit into?

Which audiences will care about it?

How can it be contextualized in terms of previous or ongoing work?

implementation:

MAT is an implementation-heavy program.

Most courses end up focusing on how to make something, implement new technologies, fuse together technologies, tool building, etc.

Of course this is super important...

but in order to present your work to audiences you need to be able to explain why the work is important...

explain why...:

    why should you give me funding?

    why should you accept my paper?

    why should you give me a job?

    media arts is not, for example, medicine...
    how then can you justify the work your doing?
    in terms of practical considerations...
    in terms of existing arts/research agendas...

course specifics:

lots of little exercises that focus on CONCEPT and the presentation, contextualization, evaluation of concept.

one big final peer-reviewed paper submission to a journal or conference appropriate to a project of your choice.

little exercises:

as much as possible I will try to make these
implementation free.

that is, I don't want you to stress about your
programming skills or your signal processing chops

emphasize conceptual creativity
emphasize conceptual evaluation

little exercises:

    writing short essays

    making short videos

    giving short presentations

    brainstorming tons of ideas

    fun, low stress, projects that are easy to implement

in-class exercise 1:

take 5 minutes and write down 3 papers you want to write.

they can be based on an existing project, or just something cool you'd like to do.

write down the title of each of the imaginary papers

describe it very briefly

tell us what journal you will submit it to

in-class exercise 2:

you are going to be PR agents for each other.

conduct an interview:

who are you? what do you do? why are you interested in it? why is it important to you? how do you justify it to the world? what are the main concepts, issues, themes you explore? what are some of the major works you've done so far? what metaphors would you use to describe yourself? what artists/researchers is your work similar to? etc...

in-class exercise 2:

write the most compelling artist/research statement possible for the person you interviewed.

write it in the first person.

feel free to be creative, informal.

don't be modest.

homework for THURSDAY

set up a blog

post : 3 artists and 3 researchers that you like, why do you like? how are you similar? anything you don't like?

post: evaluate some of their artist/research statements and biographies. spend some time thinking about the way in which you evaluate...