

Interdisciplinary Seminar in Digital Media Art

ART 104

Spring 2026 Section 80 Fully Online 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/21/2026

Course Description and Requisites

Investigation of theoretical topics in digital media art and analysis of contemporary technology research issues.

Prerequisite: Upper division standing or instructor consent.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

Technology Intensive, Hybrid, and Online Courses

This course will be taught online via synchronous meetings on Zoom. Students will need access to a computer with internet connection, camera, & speaker/microphone.

Canvas and Course Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on Canvas Learning Management System course login website at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through Canvas to learn of any updates.

For help with using Canvas see Canvas Student Resources page at

http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/canvas/student_resources.

Email

I am available during class and during my office hours to answer questions in person by Zoom. If you have questions that were not answered in class or in office hours, please send an email with "ART104: Topic of Email" in the subject line. Expect a reply in 2-3 business days (Monday-Friday). See Classroom Protocol for emails regarding missed class.

Classroom Protocol

Show up on time. If you need to miss a class, make sure to turn in all assignments on CANVAS. You can turn in assignments and classwork late, but there will be a loss of percentage points due to lateness. Find at least two classmates who can help answer questions and fill you in on content if you need to miss a class.

If you are absent, first check with your classmates to learn what you missed. You will also be able to find notes and presentation slides on CANVAS and in the Google Drive. If you still have questions, you can email me with the subject "ART104: Missed Class". Expect a reply in 2-3 business days (Monday-Friday).

AI Policy*

My goal for you in this class is deep learning, creative thinking, and development of YOUR CREATIVE VOICE. In my opinion, AI is *not recommended* in *some* situations in the academic environment because it does not *always* support a process that facilitates the fullest, deepest learning potential that you can reach. AI can have some important applications in the world if it 1) has good training data, 2) there is work to reduce bias, 3) it is deployed in an equitable manner, 4) the power over its design and implementation is not held in the hands of a select few individuals and corporations, 5) it supports deep and wide learning, and 6) it is designed and implemented in ways that support humans (and the earth) now and in the future. If you choose to use it in this class, be cautious and critical of the results and larger societal impact, as AI results can be inaccurate, biased, narrow, exclusionary, and filled with mistakes and the system can be exploitative of human labor and potentially harmful to the environment.

In this class, I encourage you to use your own mind and imagination when it comes to your personal opinions, lived experiences, and rendering of the final images for speculative artworks, because this is where art can really have an impact and emerge from YOU in novel ways. This is YOUR CREATIVE VOICE. If you choose to use AI, think critically about whether it is replacing your creative voice or supporting it. Be aware of when it might do neither or both too. From my perspective, the bottom line in this class is critical thinking, awareness, and learning when it comes to AI use. Always ask yourself "Is it supporting my learning and critical thinking? Is it helping me to construct my creative voice that is specific to me and novel due to

my lived experience, thoughts, opinions, ideas?” Some AI tools can be thought of as “automation”. When you use certain AI tools, consider replacing the term AI with “automation”. Do you think using these “automation” tools in this context serves your learning and creative voice?

This all being said, in the spirit of debate and critical thinking, you might write your papers on issues that either support or critique the use of AI and I welcome all discussion around this topic in class.

OVERVIEW

→I WILL NOT be using any AI detection tools/checkers to determine if you have used AI.

PERMITTED

→AI tools like Grammarly can be used to support writing by checking spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.

→AI tools can be used for support with coding, if your speculative artworks require code.

NOT PERMITTED

- **TEXT:** AI tools *cannot be used* to write word-for-word text directly turned in for writing assignments. If you want to reference word-for-word text generated by AI, please put it in quotes and cite the AI generation software.
- **IMAGES:** For speculative artwork ideas, you *cannot turn in* an AI generated image generated directly from a single prompt by programs such as Midjourney, Adobe Firefly, etc. In these cases, the image from one prompt is generated without manipulation, alteration, or adjustments made by you. If you generate an AI image, and then adjust it, manipulate it, glitch it, collage it, and it is important that it is AI generated, then disclosing the AI generation aspect of the piece is part of the piece, so this is permitted. If you are inspired by an AI generated image, redraw/remake the image yourself in your own style, so that the result is done by your “hands” and “mind”. If your piece critiques AI, and having an unaltered AI image represented AS IS is part of the concept, let’s discuss it.

*NOTE: Technology is changing rapidly today. If I need to change this policy, I will let you know right away.

Department Name: Art and Art History
Department Office: ART 116
Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/art
Department Email: art@sjsu.edu
Department phone number: 408-924-4325

Course Goals

Students enrolled in Art 104 will write papers, present research, and create speculative artwork ideas that investigate contemporary themes and topics related to Digital Media Art practices in the 21st century. In preparation for their final paper and project, students will spend the first part of the semester writing responses, presenting their research, and creating ideas for projects that make connections between 1) themes in Digital Media Art, 2) technology, and 3) interdisciplinary issues. Inspired by readings, student presentations, interactive lectures, and discussions, students will work together as a class to identify ideas and themes for each of their final papers.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

L01 Analyze and discuss digital media art and culture through weekly readings

L02 Author weekly written responses to the assigned course readings and topics

L03 Prepare and present reading presentations and lead seminar discussion

L04 Undertake creative research and analysis of digital media art and culture

L05 Demonstrate a working vocabulary of digital media culture and technologies

L06 Expound upon cultural, historical, and newly emerging contexts for digital media art through academic research and creative collaboration

Course Materials

Required Texts/Readings

No textbook is required; all reading material will be available on Canvas or Google Drive.

Other technology requirements / equipment / material

Essential Software

We will make extensive use of Google Suite (free online):

Google Docs

Google Slides

Google Sheets

Text Editor (free download: Sublime, Brackets, etc)

Adobe CC - Request free download for SJSU students here: <http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/adobe/index.html>.

Photoshop, Illustrator, Premiere, or other digital media creation tools

Essential Hardware

A computer capable of running Zoom (mic & camera)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy F15-7 [pdf] requires students to be honest and ethical in all academic coursework. Faculty members are required to report any or all infractions upon academic integrity to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development (<https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>). These reports can have adverse effects upon a student's academic career. Please visit the Student Conduct and Ethical Development website for more information.

In cases of plagiarism, the assignment grade will drop to a 0%. Depending on the severity of the infraction, there could be additional impacts on the grade in the course. *When in doubt, cite your sources.*

All papers in this class are to be the original work of the student. Directly using text generated from artificial intelligence (e.g. on a platform such as Chat GPT) constitutes a form of plagiarism, unless all of the AI-generated text is placed in quotation marks and both the source and prompt are referenced.

Per University Policy S16-9 (<https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>) please find relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class. Student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with Disabilities - Presidential Directive 97-03 [pdf] requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/>) to establish a record of their disability. Every reasonable effort will be made by your Professor to accommodate student needs in order to facilitate learning and the development and improvement of skills.

Please bring accommodations or other issues to my attention in the first weeks of class to facilitate collaborative response and implementation. You can notify me by email, set up a meeting with me over Zoom, or let me know through the student questionnaire.

Course Requirements and Assignments

COURSE THEMES

HUMAN/IDENTITY/SELF – What does it mean to be human in today's digital age? Physical Self vs. Virtual Self, Augmented Reality, Digital Social Media, AI Bots, Humanoid Robots, AI Images of People, Mind-Body Divide/Connection, Representation of Self in Digital Imagery, DeepFakes, Social Media Self, Gender, LGBTQ+ Issues, DEI in STEM Fields, Digital Humanism, Wearable Computing, Posthumanism, Xenofeminism, Afrofuturism, Health

INFORMATION– Information Economy, Networks, Simulation, The Alignment Problem, Information Systems, Big Data, Data Bias, Techlash, AI, Surveillance Capitalism, Attention Economy, Privacy, AR, Database Visualization, Complex Systems

COMMUNICATION – Video Conferencing, Teleconferencing, Television Broadcast, Satellite Imagery, Streaming Media, Marketing, Social Media, Social Structures, Telepresence, Telerobotics, Activism

REALITY – Privacy, Surveillance, Augmented Reality, Mixed Reality, Reality, Virtual Reality, Surrealism,

Real Time Systems, Real-Time Virtual Space, Real-Time Real Space, Fiction/non-fiction, Video Games, Physical Computing, Quantum Mechanics

ECOLOGY/NATURE/ENVIRONMENT – Ecology, Environment, BioTech, Artificial Life, AlphaGarden, AI – Atlas of AI, Sustainability, Biology, Ecofeminism

ARCHITECTURE/BUILT ENVIRONMENT/TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE – Urban planning, parks, cities, buildings, houses, transportation, infrastructure, landscape architecture, trains, airplanes, cars, buses, maps, google maps

COURSE STRUCTURE

MODULES #01 - #06

DAY 1: Technologies Research + Artist Research + Reading

Written Summary Due

Presentation File Due & Shared with Class

DAY 2: Interdisciplinary Article Reading + Speculative Artwork Idea Creation

Written Summary of Article Due

Speculative Artwork Idea Written Summary Due

Speculative Artwork Idea Presentation/Sharing

MODULE 07

DAY 1: Final Project Proposal Due

DAY 2: Final Project Outline Due

DAY 3: Final Project Draft Due

DAY 4: Final Project Paper, Presentation, Project Due

COURSE ACTIVITIES

- **In-Class Work**

All of these activities will include CANVAS assignments for you to post your responses and get credit with the number of points available included in the CANVAS assignment

- **In-Class Questions**

Questions for discussion will be shared in class and also posted on CANVAS

Questions posed during lecture will be shared in class and posted on CANVAS

Sometimes questions will be answered in online apps that I share.

- **Google Doc Notes**

Questions for discussion will be posted in Google Docs and posted on CANVAS

Notes during class might be turned in via Google Docs and will be posted on CANVAS

- **Interactive Live Participation**

Participate verbally in discussion

Participate in online, live chat

- **Presentations**

Presentations will be conducted as part of the MODULES

Presentations for Final Paper will be conducted

- Outside of Class Work

- Written summaries & reflections

- Each written response will prompt you to consider one or more of the following topics. Each assignment prompt will describe which parts to complete. Each assignment on CANVAS will define the number of points possible.
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 - **Overview:** 2-3 Sentences that introduce the main ideas in the response, including 1) Digital Media Art Concepts, 2) Technology, 3) Interdisciplinary Issues, and 4) your perspective.
 - **Digital Media Description.** Discuss the concepts and content, as it relates to digital media art themes, technologies, and ideas.
 - **Artwork Discussion.** Describe the work, including the content, form, and media.
 - **Technology Discussion.** Describe the technology discussed. How does it work? What thematic issues are raised by the use of this specific technology?
 - **Contextual/Interdisciplinary Issues Raised by the work.** Describe at least one interdisciplinary issue raised by the work. Link this issue to the formal, content, or conceptual elements of the work in your discussion.
 - **Personal Response.** Describe your reaction/response. This can include questions that it raises for you, opinions you have, ways in which it connects to your lived experience, thoughts about how it connects to other ideas that you are interesting in, ideas about future areas of research that interest you, or other personal reflections on its importance, ethical concerns, cultural concerns, etc.
 - **Abstract.** Some writing responses will require you to write an Abstract. Abstracts might include 1) a short introduction or background to put the ideas into context, 2) purpose of the project, 3) a problem statement or thesis, 4) a brief description of media, materials, and content, and/or 5) conclusions and future areas to explore.
 - **Summarize.** Summarize the key ideas in the text.
 - **Discussion Question.** Write discussion questions that you would pose to the class in order to inspire a discussion about your research.

- Presentations Created on Google Slides

- **Slide presentations of your research** will be part of all MODULES and the FINAL PAPER. Presenting your ideas in words is essential to your future in creative careers.
 - Plan to present for **2-3 minutes**, depending on the assignment.
 - In the event of an absence, you can **present during Office Hours**.

- Speculative Artwork Ideas Created & Presented

- Imagine an artwork that you would like to create that is inspired by your chosen technology and artwork.
 - Describe this artwork in terms of its concept, content, form, and media.
 - Create sketches and a visual representation of your artwork idea

- **Final Project & Paper & Presentation**

1. **Proposal:** You will make a proposal for your final paper and speculative artwork. This will include various parts, including 1) a summary/ abstract, 2) an outline of your key ideas as they relate to digital media art, technology, and interdisciplinary issues, 3) bibliography, and 4) relevant images.
2. **Final Paper Outline:** You will turn in an outline of your final paper and project idea
3. **Final Paper Written Draft:** You will turn in a draft of your final paper and project.
4. **Presentation:** You will present the ideas from your paper in a 3-5 minute slide talk.
5. **Final Written Paper:** Your finished article should be approximately 1200 words (no less than 1000 and more than 1400 not recommended) and approximately 8 paragraphs.

✓ Grading Information

GRADING POLICY & RUBRIC

The work will be assessed according to the following rubric:

A 100-90% Excellent. Paper/presentation/writing exhibits exemplary effort in terms of comprehension and application of the required materials. All creative work and writing is engaging and the quality is exceptional.

B 89-80% Good. Paper/presentation/writing includes completed assignments and demonstration of a grasp of key ideas and creative concepts. Project shows creative effort and engagement.

C 79-70% Satisfactory. Paper/presentation/writing includes mostly completed assignments, but not all. The work lacks creative and aesthetic effort. The work is underdeveloped or incomplete.

D 69-60% Unsatisfactory. Student does not complete the work as assigned. Substantial problems exist in the student's work, as it relates to the assignment. Much of the assigned components of the project are missing. Writing shows lack of editing and poor grammar.

F < 60% Fail. Work is not submitted. OR the work includes very few of the requirements for the assignment.

Late Work Policy

Work is considered late if posted after the due date/time. The default time for submission of work is 11:00 AM before class starts, unless specified otherwise in the schedule. You can turn in ANY assignment late. For the first day late, there will be a 5% point reduction. There will be another 5% point reduction if the assignment is turned in a week late. After that, no additional points will be deducted for lateness, so there is a maximum of 10% deducted for lateness. Keep in mind, however, that you might fall behind if you do not stay on top of the due dates.

Resubmitting Final Projects

If students would like to improve upon their grades, they can always resubmit their work. The only points that cannot be recouped are from lateness.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Due Date	Percentage of Total Grade	Module	Topic
Jan 29, 2026 @ 11 am	6.25%	MODULE 01 [P1]	COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY HISTORY & DIGITAL MEDIA
Feb 5, 2026 @ 11 am	6.25%	MODULE 01 [P2]	COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY HISTORY & DIGITAL MEDIA
Feb 12, 2026 @ 11 am	6.25%	MODULE 02 [P1]	HUMAN/SELF/IDENTITY/BODY
Feb 19, 2026 @ 11 am	6.25%	MODULE 02 [P2]	HUMAN/SELF/IDENTITY/BODY
Feb 26, 2026 @ 11 am	6.25%	MODULE 03 [P1]	INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

Mar 5, 2026 @ 11 am	6.25%	MODULE 03 [P2]	INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION
Mar 12, 2026 @ 11 am	6.25%	MODULE 04 [P1]	REALITY
Mar 19, 2026 @ 11 am	6.25%	MODULE 04 [P2]	REALITY
Mar 26, 2026 @ 11 am	6.25%	MODULE 05 [P1]	ECOLOGY/NATURE/ENVIRONMENT
Apr 9, 2026 @ 11 am	6.25%	MODULE 05 [P2]	ECOLOGY/NATURE/ENVIRONMENT
Apr 16, 2026 @ 11 am	12.5%	MODULE 06 [P1]	ARCHITECTURE/BUILT ENVIRONMENT/TRANSPORTATION
Apr 23, 2026 @ 11 am	2.00%	MODULE 07 [P1]	FINAL PAPER & PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE
Apr 30, 2026 @ 11 am	2.00%	MODULE 07 [P2]	FINAL PAPER & PROJECT OUTLINE
May 7, 2026 @ 11 am	2.00%	MODULE 01 [P3]	FINAL PAPER & PROJECT DRAFT DUE
Tuesday May 19 @ 10:45 - 12:45	19%	MODULE 07 [P4]	FINAL PAPER & PROJECT DUE & FINAL PRESENTATION