ART 112: DIGITAL MEDIA I

Monday / Wednesday 8:50–11:20, Fields 205
https://github.com/brianhouse/ART112

Prof. Brian House (he/him), brianhouse@lclark.edu
Office hours MTW 11:30–12:30

Course Description

Introduction to computer programming for artists. With creative coding, students will explore drawing and animation, interactive text, the web, and real-time video processing. Accompanying critical discussion will unpack primary texts from the history of digital media and consider key practitioners. Through progressive weekly projects, students will gain a foundation for working with digital form. No prior programming experience is required.

Objectives:

- Cultivate an ability to think abstractly in terms of algorithms
- Understand the broad historical context of contemporary digital tools
- Survey contemporary artists working formally with code and digital media
- Build a foundation for expanding into other areas of media art practice
- Gain proficiency programming in javascript with p5.js

Assignments and Grading

Sketches

This course is built around open-ended code "sketches" that progress through the use of text, images, animation, sound, video, and various forms of physical interaction. We will begin each one during class time, and you will (usually) complete them as homework. Starting with Sketch #3, you will post work online through your GitHub account. Sketches must include a title and a 3-sentence artist statement and will be critiqued during class.

Sketches cumulatively account for 90% of your final grade. In order to receive credit for your sketch, you must post a version of the code to your GitHub account and email me the link *before* the class that it is due. However, you may continue to make changes indefinitely and improve your grade if necessary. Sketches will be graded on both concept and craft.

Survey presentations

Each student will give a 10-minute presentation on an artist working in digital media. These presentations, which must be organized in slides, should give an overview of the context in which the artist is working and then precede to show one or two artworks in detail. Students should comment thoughtfully on how the work relates to the themes discussed in class as well as to their own practices. Students will choose artists to present from an approved list on a first-come, first-served basis. These presentations make up 10% of your final grade.

Reading

It is required that you purchase Getting Started with p5.js: Making Interactive Graphics in JavaScript and Processing by Lauren McCarthy, Casey Reas, and Ben Fry for a general reference that will be helpful throughout the course. Additional primary texts may be provided to provide background for the development of digital form.

Attendance and participation

You must attend and thoughtfully participate in every class. After the first absence, every absence will result in a reduction of your final grade by 2.5%. Being late twice will be treated as the equivalent of one absence. **Use of social media in class twice will also be treated as the equivalent of one absence.**

Policies

Values

It is my intent to lead a course that serves students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, and that our varied life experiences may be a common benefit. Content in this studio art course may at times challenge our aethestic and/or ethical values; free exchange of ideas and critique is encouraged and expected, but harassment and disrespect will not be tolerated. During class discussion and critique we aim to be mindful and generous in our interactions and to make everyone feel heard.

Dynamic Syllabus

The version of this syllabus posted online will be updated periodically and is the definitive version. It is your responsibility to consult it and stay up-to-date.

Laptop Use

Work for this course should be done on a personal laptop—recent hardware and MacOS is preferred. If you do not have access to a laptop, email me and we will make arrangements for you to borrow a machine.

Open Studio

All students must complete their own work but are encouraged to help each other. To facilitate collective learning, students are encouraged to work in Fields 205.

Course Fee

There is a course fee automatically paid through student accounts when registered for this class. The fee helps cover software licensing and sensor hardware. However, open source software will be used whenever possible.

Accommodations

If you have a disability that may impact your academic performance, you may request accommodations by submitting documentation to the Student Support Services Office in Albany Quadrangle (x7192). Staff in the SSSO will notify me of the accommodations for which you are eligible; please also make an appointment to discuss with me personally.

Academic Integrity

Please refer to the policy on Academic Integrity available on the College's 'Policies and Procedures' webpage. The work submitted in Digital Media courses must be conceived of and programmed by you. While learning from and incorporating code from other sources is a natural part of programming (e.g. Stack Overflow and OpenProcessing), you must demonstrate understanding and intentionality in your work, and you may not copy and paste others' code wholesale. Always credit your inspirations and be confident in your original concepts.

Land Acknowledgement

The Fields Center for Visual Arts stands on the ancestral homelands of the Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Tumwater,

Watalala bands of the Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, and other indigenous nations of the Columbia River. It is important to acknowledge the original inhabitants of this place and recognize that we are here because of the sacrifices forced upon them. As artists working in Digital Media, we must be aware of and resist the many ways computation capitalizes upon and perpetuates violence toward marginalized people.

Schedule

Week 1

Wednesday 1/22

- Introduction
- In-class exercise, via Sol Lewitt and Yoko Ono: scores

Week 2

Monday 1/27

- In-class work and crit, Sketch #1: Turtle drawing
- **Homework for next class**: download Zork and play it on an online Apple IIe emulator

Wednesday 1/29

- Introduction to text editors and the command-line
- Introduction to variables and conditionals
- Begin Sketch #2: Nonlinear Narrative

Week 3

Monday 2/3

- Survey presentations 1: Lynn Hershman Leeson, Alison Parrish
- Work time

Wednesday 2/5

- Sketch #2 crit

Week 4

Monday 2/10

- Introduction to HTML
- Begin Sketch #3: Homepage

Wednesday 2/12

- Sketch #3 crit

Week 5

Monday 2/17

- Survey presentations 2: Jodi, Roman Verostko
- Introduction to p5.js and coordinate systems
- Begin Sketch #4: Digital Interpretation

Wednesday 2/19

- Work time

Week 6

Monday 2/24

- Digital Interpretation crit
- Survey presentations 3: American Artist, Liat Berdugo

Wednesday 2/26

- Introduction to events and randomness
- Begin Sketch #5: Drawing Tool

Week 7

Monday 3/2

- Survey presentations 4: Lia, Casey Reas
- Work time

Wednesday 3/4

- Work time

Week 8

Monday 3/9

- Survey presentations 5: Cory Arcangel, Ryoji Ikeda
- Drawing Tool crit

Wednesday 3/11

- Introduction to data structures and animation
- Begin Sketch #6: Simulator

Week 9

Monday 3/16

- Survey presentations 6: Lauren McCarthy, Claudia Hart
- Work time

Wednesday 3/18

- Sketch #6 preliminary crit
- Work time

Week 10

Monday 3/30

- Survey presentations 7: Raphael Lozano-Hemmer, Blast Theory
- Sketch #6 crit

Wednesday 4/1

- Begin Sketch #7: Machine gaze
- Work time

Week 11

Monday 4/6

- Survey presentations 8: Addie Wagenknecht, Trevor Paglen
- Work time

Wednesday 4/8

- Work time

Week 12

Monday 4/13

- Sketch #7 crit

Wednesday 4/15

- Begin Final Project

Week 13

Monday 4/20

- Project proposals due

Wednesday 4/22

- Work time

Week 14

Monday 4/27

- Final project preliminary review

Wednesday 4/29

- Evaluations
- Work time

Exam Week

Monday 5/4 18:00–21:00

- Work installed, final crit