Art 80F: Introduction to Issues in Digital Media
with Kyle Lane-McKinley (kyleforu@ucsc.edu)
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11:30am-1:30pm, or by appointment, in DARC 233
TA Office Hours: T.A.s are highly available during section times, or by appointment.

Course Description: Digital media was positioned as a radical new social and creative medium in the 1980s and 1990s. The ensuing decades have seen this area become ubiquitous mass media with structural inequalities, centralized ownership, environmental damage and precarious labour conditions. At the same time it has become the language of our time and remains a site of creativity and intervention and offers opportunities for social change. This course provides an introduction to key issues in this area through the lens of race and ethnicity.

This course is an introduction to the ways art and technology intersects. Readings and lectures address how artists have influenced and experimented with technological innovations both historically and in the present. You will experiment with a range of creative technical concepts to create projects. Assignments include readings, section discussions, writings, and the completion of computer intensive art projects.

Lecture and Section Times: All lectures and sections are mandatory, failure to attend will count against attendance and participation grade. Also, more than 3 unexcused absences may be cause for automatic failure of the course. Attendance means being present and prepared– which means having done readings and fulfilled assignments, but also having fed and rested your body so that you can be fully present.

Lectures are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-3:45 pm in Kresge 321.

Sections are in the Porter Computer Lab (D-240):
Section A: (Rolando Vargas) Mondays and Wednesdays 9:30-12
Section B: (Alexandra Riggs) Mondays and Wednesdays 12:30-3
Section C: (Kelly Skye) Mondays and Wednesdays 3:30-6
Section D: (Kelly Skye) Mondays and Wednesdays 6:30-9
Section E: (Alexandra Riggs) Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-12
Section F: (Rolando Vargas) Tuesdays and Thursdays 5-7:30

Academic Misconduct: Submitting someone else's work as if it were your own will be dealt with severely. It will result in automatic failure for the course and formal academic disciplinary hearings, which can result in expulsion from the University of California. This course takes Copy (COMMAND + C) and Paste (COMMAND + V) to be both the tactical means and the cultural logic of our era——an invisible religion for a digital world—and seeks to investigate the ideological underpinnings of authorship and authenticity. But we do not condone nor cynically overlook misrepresentation of intellectual property nor those plagiarisms that fail to add to our collective knowledge. We will deal **harshly** with cheating.

Laptop Policy: Laptops are to be used in lecture or section only for the purpose of taking notes or participating in websites and demos presented in class. Use of laptops in class for non class activities (games, social media, etc), is a distraction for you, your fellow students, and your instructors. Such use will result in stern warnings, banned use of laptop during class time, grade deductions, and public humiliation—not necessarily in that order.
Use of cell phones is forbidden during class time. Please, please, please set them to silent. See "Laptop Policy" for consequences.

Grading:
Attendance and Participation: 20%
1st draft of a personal website (due week 2): 5%
draft of avatar screenshots (due week 3): 10%
literature, review of readings, first draft (due week 3): 5%
annotated list of key terms and practitioners (due week 5): 5%
critique of practice, first draft (due week 6): 5%
transdisciplinarity of listening (due week 8): 20%
revised drafts of review of readings and critique of practice (due week 9): 5%
group presentations (due week 10): 15%
Final draft of personal website (due week 10): 10%

Except where noted elsewhere, assignments are due at the end of the second section meeting of each week.

Course Requirements

• Students are required to attend every class and section meeting (unless excused by the instructor/TA with prior notice,) and arrive on time. More than 3 absences without prior consultation with the instructor will result in a failing grade for the class.
• Frequent absences due to illness, personal issues, etc. will require consultation with the instructor.
• Assignments must be complete and on time. Late assignments will only be accepted up to one week after the due date. Late assignments will be assessed the loss of one grade. After the one week grace period, late assignments will not be accepted.
• Students must do assigned readings and participate in class discussions and collaborations.
• Students must participate in critiques of projects, providing feed back about other students' work.
• Students who are having apparent difficulties in course will be asked to arrange to meet with the instructor.

A Note on Readings: Almost all of the readings for this course can be found on the eCommons site of this course, as .pdfs for download, listed alphabetically by the last name of the author. Thus, when you see the reading in week 3 that is listed as "Hansen, M (2006) *Bodies in Code: Interfaces With Digital Media.* Chapter 3 'Digitizing the Racialized Body'. Routledge." you will know that the reading can be found on eCommons under Hansen, Mark. In a few cases, we have multiple readings from the same author, but the titles of the files, and the headings within, should make clear which reading is which. The exceptions to the eCommons readings are some web-based readings, art projects, blogs, and radio segments that you'll find linked directly from the syllabus. Of course, you could also type in the URL and access the readings in that manner.

The course is divided into three blocks:

1) 'Orientations' this sets up the field of digital media in the context of historical precedents, digital divides and multiculturalism and introduces the critical language that will be developed during the course.

2) 'Tropes' looks at three figures of digital culture – flame wars, databases and social networks and uses these to explore digital media culture as it intersects with racism, racialization and reconfiguration, introducing a range of ways of making digital media and consolidating a critical vocabulary in this area.

3)   'Practices' examines examples examples of digital art/cultural practice concerned with reconfigurations of race and ethnicity.

Course Schedule

BLOCK 1: ORIENTATIONS:
Week 1: **Introducing issues in digital media**

Readings:
- Introduction and Chapter 1 of - Nakamura, L. Chow-White, P. and Nelson, A. (2010) *Race After the Internet.* New York: Routledge. (chapter 1 is McPherson, Tara 'US Operating Systems at Mid-Century: the intertwining of race and UNIX' and there is a copy of this here: http://history.msu.edu/hst830/files/2014/01/McPherson_2012.pdf)
- Chapter 1 'Cybertyping and the work of race in the digital age of reproduction' of - Nakamura L (2002) *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet.* Routledge.
- Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mecahnical Reproduction" *Illuminations*.

Practice: Create a personal webpage for use in this class, hosted in your personal directory at *http://people.ucsc.edu/~[ucsc_id]),* or at a subdirectory thereof (i.e.*http://people.ucsc.edu/~[ucsc_id]/art80f*). Add a paragraph about yourself and this class, and add at least one image of your making. (assignment handout: "web page instructions").

Week 2: **Digital divides: access and sustainability**

Reading:
- Coleman, B. (2011) *Hello Avatar.* Cambridge: MIT Press. (chapter 2 'Putting a Face on Things')
- Taborn, T.D. (2008) Separating Race from Technology: Finding Tomorrow's IT Progress in the Past – pages 39-62 in - Everett, A. (ed) *Learning Race and Ethnicity: Youth and Digital Media.* The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning.

Practice: doing avatars, profiles and bodies online. Create a digital image of the person who you will represent as via your personal website. This might take the initial form of a simple photograph (a

"selfie" even), or a drawing on paper that you scan, or images of a character / persona you take on in a virtual world, MMOG, social network platform, etc., or a character rendered in either 2D or 3D animation software, or some combination thereof. Regardless, it will be modified throughout the quarter, and documented in a series of images on your personal website.

Assignment Due: first draft of personal website completed and public by end of Wed/ Thursday sections.

Week 3: **Reproducing race in digital space.**

Reading:
- Daniels, J (2012) 'Race and racism in Internet studies: A review and critique.' *New Media and Society*, 15: 695-719
- Hansen, M (2006) *Bodies in Code: Interfaces With Digital Media*. Chapter 3 'Digitizing the Racialized Body'. Routledge.

Assignment due (first draft): Provide a screen shot of your avatar (you'll have time to work this up further and change it later) and embed this on your web page. Modify the paragraphs you wrote previously about "yourself" so that they instead reflect the biography of the "avatar" of yourself you are creating for use in this class.

Assignment due: Literature, review of readings (draft). Write 300+ words reflecting critically on one or more of the readings assigned so far, and post this to your personal web page in a manner that your TA can easily find it. "Reflecting critically" means that this needn't be a formal essay, but it should make at least one argument (agreeing or disagreeing with one or more authors on some portion of his/ her argument, and supporting your opinion with evidence), and refer to specific texts with citations. Short quotations would be a good idea as well. Final draft due week 9.

BLOCK 2: TROPES:

Week 4: **Flame wars: community and difference, racial discourses and computer mediated communication**

Reading:
- Gosine, A (2007) Brown to Blonde at Gay.com: Passing White in Queer Cyberspace – chapter 8 of - O'Riordan, K. and Philips, D (2007) *Queer Online: Media Technology and Sexuality.* London: Peter Lang.
- Natalie Bookchin. "Now He's Out in Public and Everyone Can See", 2012. http://bookchin.net/projects/out-in-public.html
- Steve Henn, NPR News Morning Edition (February 13th, 2014). (note: this is a radio story. You are supposed to listen to it). http://www.npr.org/blogs/alltechconsidered/2014/02/13/276176612/through-the-internet-gay-teens-connected-to-larger-community
- Glenn Greenwald, "How Covert Agents Infiltrate to Manipulate, Deceive, and Destroy Reputations" February 24, 2014. *The Intercept.*

https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2014/02/24/jtrig-manipulation/
- Hard Dawn (http://harddawn.com/). What is this?

Practice: Begin work on "Transdisciplinarity of Listening" assignment. See handout. Due week 8, in-progress critique in sections week 6. Also, continue working on a good set of screen-shots of your avatar (this is a work in progress and you will ideally end up with different versions and engage with this as a creative process).

Week 5: **Databases and surveillance: Collecting race, ethnicity and identities**

Readings:
- Daniel, Sharon (2007) 'The Database: an aesthetics of dignity' – chapter 8 in Vesna, V eds (2007) *Database Aesthetics: Art in the Age of Information*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Nelson, A and Hwang, J.W. (2010) 'Roots and Revelation: Genetic Ancestry Testing and the Youtube Generation' in Nakamura, L. Chow-White, P. and Nelson, A. (2010) *Race After the Internet.* New York: Routledge.
- Daniel, Sharon (2008) 'Public Secrets' *Vectors: Journal of Culture and Technology in a Dynamic Vernacular,* 4, 2008, http://vectors.usc.edu/issues/4/publicsecrets/ and http://vectors.usc.edu/projects/index.php?project=57

  recommended reading:
- Herrera, Linda (2011) "Egypt's Revolution 2.0: The Facebook Factor*" CLOSER: Anthropology of Muslims in Europe (a modest attempt by Martijn)*
  http://religionresearch.org/martijn/2011/02/18/egypts-revolution-2-0-the-facebook-factor/

Assignment Due: Post to your personal website an annotated list of key terms and key practitioners in digital media art/electronic art. "Annotated," here, means that you provide some notes explaining the meaning and/or importance of each term or practitioner, supplying links to additional materials where applicable.   Continue work on "Transdisciplinarity of Listening" assignment.

Week 6: **Social networks: databases and surveillance talk back – interactivity and participation**

Reading:
- boyd, d (2010) "White Flight in Networked Publics: How Race & Class Shaped American Teen Engagement with MySpace & Facebook. (2010) *Race After the Internet.* New York: Routledge.
- Shereen Sakr, Laila (VJ Um Amel) "A Digital Humanities Approach: Text, The Internet, and the Egyptian Uprising," *Middle East Critique*, 22:3, 247-263, DOI: 10.1080/19436149.2013.822241
- YesLabs (2012) 'Three Strikes and You're In' http://yeslab.org/threestrikes (watch video, review project and similar Yes Men satires / interventions).
- McKinley, Kyle & Epps, Cheyanne. 'The Objects Project.' http://objcts.org/ (explore website).

Practice: In-class critiques of work-in-progress for "Transdisciplinarity of Listening" during discussion section. Take notes on what your fellow students say about your work; such critique is an incredibly valuable experience, and difficult to find outside of the academy.

Assignment Due: Critique of practice (draft) 500+ words posted to your personal website that take a critical look at one or more example of digital media practice. Use any of the examples of practitioners used in this class, or find your own examples of digital media art, and explore the role of race or ethnicity in this work, making reference to course readings. This essay needs to more than just describe the example of digital media, it should have something to say about it and act as a critique. This means it should evaluate and analyze the piece of practice, offering interpretation, argument and context. Final draft due week 9.

BLOCK3: PRACTICES:

Week 7: **Virtual practices shaping physical bodies, physical bodies shaping virtual practices.**

Reading:
- Fusco, Coco "At Your Service: Latin Women in the Global Information Network" in *The Bodies That Were Not Ours and Other Writings.*
- Ketchum, Karyl. "Facegen and the Technovisual Politics of Embodied Surfaces"
- Gonzalez, Vernadette and Rodriguez, Robyn Magalit. "Filipina.com: Wives, Workers, and Whores on the Cyberfrontier." in *Asian America.Net: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Cyberspace*, Edited by Rachel C. Lee, Sau-ling Cynthia Wong. Routledge, 2003.

Practice: Begin work on Student Group Presentations in section. See handout. Personal websites should be functional and ready to grade, minus the assignments which still need to be posted; this should include multiple versions of "avatar" screen-shots, avatar biography, your writings and experiments from this course, and any additional media that you see fit. Continue work on "Transdisciplinarity of Listening" assignment (due week 8).

Week 8: **Activism and artivism: art as antibody to digital culture**
'I think in these perilous times, a third way is emerging, a kind of escalated passion — a creative energy that comes from giving one's heart and soul and imagination to the struggle. Not aggression but fierceness. Not hurting but confronting. Not violating but disrupting. This passion has all the ingredients of activism, but is charged with the wild creations of art. Artivism — where edges are pushed, imagination is freed, and a new language emerges altogether.' (Eve Ensler, 2011)

Reading:
- Blais, J and Ippolito, J. (2006) *At the Edge of Art.* Thames and Hudson. (Introduction & chapter 1)
- Sandoval, C. and Latorre, G. (2008) "Chicana/o Activism: Judy Baca's Digital Worth with

Youth of Color," in Anna Everett, ed. *Learning Race and Ethnicity: Youth and Digital Media.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press: 81-108.
- Cárdenas, Micha, et al (2009) The Transborder immigrant tool: Violence, Solidarity and Hope in Post-NAFTA Circuits of Bodies Electr(on)/ic (2009), Mobile HCI Proceedings, Bonn University, 2009
- Fusco. Coco (2003) "On Line Simulation/Real Life Politics: A Discussion with Ricardo Dominguez on Staging Virtual Theater," The Drama Review, (T178), vol. 47, no. 2, pp. 151-162.

Assignment due: "Transdisciplinarity of Listening" due at beginning of section Wednesday / Thursday for critique.

Week 9: **Surveying digital art and activism: engaging change**

Readings:
- Haraway, Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto:Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" (1985) as published in *The New Media Reader,* (2003 MIT Press Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort, eds).
- Engelbart, Douglas. Excerpts from "Augmenting Human Intellect: A Conceptual Framework" (1962) as published in *The New Media Reader,* (2003 MIT Press Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort, eds).
- Mason, Paul. *Why It's Kicking Off Everywhere: The New Global Revolutions.* Chapter 7, "'I Tweet in My Dreams': The Rise of the Networked Individual" (pgs 127-152). (2012, Verso).

Practice: continue work on Student Group Presentations.

Assignment due: Critique of practice essay and Literature Review essay final drafts due.

Week 10: **Revisiting race and digital culture**

Reading:

- González, Jennifer (2009) "The Face and the Public: Race, Secrecy and Digital Art Practice," in Camera Obscura 70, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2009): 37-65

Assignment: Student Group Presentations in sections, and posted to your each group member's personal website.

It's been an honor to work with you all.
Have a great summer!