USC School
of Cinematic Arts
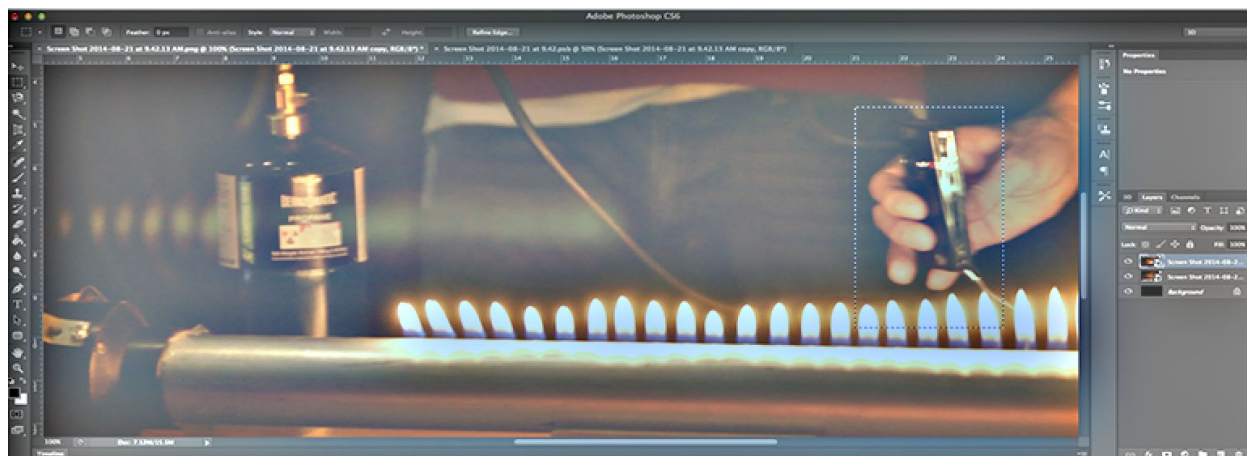*Media Arts + Practice Division*

IML 102: Digital Studies Studio

Professor

Gabriel Peters-Lazaro
gabrielpeterslazaro@gmail.com
310.804.8347
SCI 101C - Office hours by appointment

Overview

This course introduces students to the history, theory and foundational authoring skills of digital media, art and culture, asking how various forms of contemporary media impact experiences of identity, citizenship, commerce, politics, communication and collaboration.

The course emphasizes thinking through making and is organized around a series of critical design projects in which students explore key theoretical concepts through the creation of real and speculative objects. In each project, process is as important as product and effective techniques for documentation and presentation are integral. A key goal for the semester is for each student to develop and articulate a personal methodology founded on a shared vocabulary of theory and practice.

Our investigations are motivated by understanding what is at stake in contemporary digital media and its implications for the culture we live in. Of particular interest are the potentials of digital media for scholarly argumentation, effective presentation of research and work that engages social issues.

Required Text

Practices of Looking by Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright. Oxford University Press 2001.
First edition is preferred and much cheaper on Amazon. Selections will be made available
electronically.

Grading Breakdown

Participation - 10%

Students are expected to come to class on time and prepared to contribute to reading
discussions and provide productive feedback to their classmates during critique sessions.

In-class exercises and presentations - 15%

These include small-group reading discussions from which students will conceive and
then present design ideas inspired by and enhancing understanding of key theoretical
concepts. Others exercises will include laboratory assignments on various digital
authoring platforms.

Constructions - 15%

There will be a minimum of 3 constructions during the semester. Students will be
expected to carry out their work with care and to document their process and their
individual contributions to group projects.

Reflections - 15%

Building on process documentation of the constructions, as well as readings and other
curricular experiences, students will be asked to practice written reflections on their
progress and understanding. The form and frequency will be determined in consultation
with instructors, but should include layers both diaristic and formal by which key insights
are gleaned from the flow of experience and solidified by semester's end into a personal
articulation of methodology based on a shared vocabulary developed by the class.

Midterm Exam - 20% (October 22, tentative)

Presents an opportunity for instructors to check-in and understand to what extent each
student is connecting with and assimilating key concepts and practices. Form TBD.

Final Exam - 25% (Tuesday Dec. 15, 8AM-10AM)

Likewise, presents students with an opportunity to demonstrate the scope and depth of
their insights and practices developed over the course of the semester. Form TBD

Class Wiki: https://mapwiki.sca.usc.edu/wiki/projects/iml102fall2015section37400

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 - 8/27
> Introduction
> In-class exercise
> *Practices of Looking*
> Wiki
> Syllabus

Unit 1 - *Practices of Looking,* Chapter 1: Images, Power and Politics

> Key Concepts: Representation, Myth of Photographic Truth, Ideology, Negotiated Meaning

> Constructions: Precinematic Deivce - Camera Obscura, Magic Lantern, Panorama, Zoetrope, etc.

> Skills: Drawing, photography, photoshop, language of critique

> Deliverables: Construction with documentation and reflection

Week 2 - 9/3
> Introduce construction project for Unit 1 - form groups, create detailed materials list.
> Skills workshop - Photoshop Introduction
> Reading discussion

Week 3 - 9/10
> Work on constructions, still-image documentation, discuss reflection assignment
> Reading discussion, plan group presentations for Week 4
> Skills workshop - Photoshop II

Week 4 - 9/17
> Deliver construction, documentation and reflection
> Group presentations on readings and constructions
> Key Concepts

Unit 2 - *Practices of Looking,* Chapter 2: Viewers Make Meaning

Key Concepts: Aesthetics, Interpellation, Hegemony, Encoding/Decoding, Appropriation

Construction: Speculative construction / design fiction

Skills: video and video editing

Week 5 - 9/24
Brainstorming as a skill
Reading discussion and design charette I
Skills workshop - Video basics

Week 6 - 10/1
Reading discussion and design charette II
Rapid prototyping, user testing
Skills workshop - Premiere Pro editing

Week 7 - 10/8
Beginning to formulate a methodology
Work session, additional instruction TBD
Meet with professor

Week 8 - 10/15
Presentations
Reflections due
Key Concepts

Week 9 - 10/22 - Mid term

Unit 3 - *Practices of Looking*, Chapter 3: Spectatorship, Power and Knowledge

Key Concepts: Psychoanalysis, the Gaze, the Panopticon, Orientalism

Construction: Korsakow project

Skills: database filmmaking

Week 10 - 10/29

 Reading discussion, design exercise, presentation
 Skills workshop - Korsakow system I

Week 11 - 11/5

 Reading discussion, design charrette for Korsakow projects
 Skills workshop - Korsakow system II

Week 12 - 11/12

 Work session
 Individual meetings

Week 13 - 11/19

 Playtesting Korsakow projects

Week 14 - 11/26 Thanksgiving

 No class meeting

Week 15 - 12/3 Last class meeting

 Reflections and documentation due
 Presentations

Final Exam Time - Tuesday Dec. 15th 8AM-10AM

Evaluation

In general, you will be graded using these criteria:

Conceptual Core

 The project's controlling idea should be apparent.
 The project should be productively aligned with one or more multimedia genres.
 The project should effectively engage with the primary issue/s of the subject area into which it is
 intervening.

Research Component

 The project should display evidence of thoughtful engagement with its subject matter.
 If the project includes sources, they should be cited appropriately.

Form and Content

 The project's structural or formal elements should serve the conceptual core.

The project's design decisions should be deliberate, controlled and defensible.
The project's efficacy should be unencumbered by technical problems.

Creative Realization

The project should approach the subject in a creative or innovative manner.
The project should use media and design principles effectively.
The project should achieve significant goals that could not be realized on paper.

Policies

Fair Use and Citation Guidelines

We assert that all of our course work is covered under the Doctrine of Fair Use. In order to make this claim, however, all projects will need to include academically appropriate citations in the form of a Works Cited section, which covers all sources, in order to receive a passing grade. The Works Cited is either included in the project or as a separate document, as appropriate to your project. The style we use is MLA and you may refer to these guidelines: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/05/

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Emergency Plan

In the event that classes cannot convene at the university, all MA+P courses will continue via distance education.