Art 7D:
Introduction to Contemporary Practice III - Arts, Engineering and Technologies

Instructor: Prof. Marko Peljhan
Lecture: Thursday 12:30-14:20, PHELPS 3515
Class website: ACTIVATED ON JANUARY 12
Reader: The required readings will be sent to students and posted on the class website as an online reader.

Sections:
101: M/W 1:00-2:50 M in Arts 1345 (Foundation Room) and Art 2220 (E-Studio), W Phelps 1518
TA: Patrick Gilbert
Section 101 Website: ACTIVE ON JANUARY 12

102: M/W 3:00-4:50 M in Arts 1345 (Foundation Room) and Art 2220 (E-Studio), W in Phelps 1518.
TA: Vanesa Gingold
Section 102 Website: ACTIVE ON JANUARY 12

103: T/TR 9:00-10:50 T in Arts 1345 (Foundation Room) and Art 2220 (E-Studio), TR in Phelps 1518.
TA: Shannon Willis
Section 103 Website: ACTIVE ON JANUARY 12
CLASS CONTENT
The study of the foundations of digital and technological arts in all forms, including the history, theory and practice of kinetic, interactive, interdisciplinary, tactical media, network and systems-oriented art. Lectures and assignments introduce concepts, methods, movements and practitioners that have shaped the fields.

We cannot escape technology in our daily lives. Cultural practice is on some level informed or influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by the technologies we live with and within. This class intends to create a larger awareness of the cross-pollination between culture and technology, by examining, encouraging and enabling creative and inquisitive investigations and uses of technology. We will look at “traditional” art practices that have influenced artists working specifically with such investigations, and we will examine how technologies have enabled new art forms, and ways of thinking about art. In addition we will look at how new technologies might have generated a common creative contextualization for arts, sciences and engineering and the new interdisciplinary forms of art and research that are emerging.

CLASS STRUCTURE
The class consists of weekly lectures and twice weekly studio sections. The quarter is divided into 4 periods with different thematic foci i.e. (Cybernetic Histories, Software, Networks, Hardware and physical computing).

Students are advised to follow the MAT program seminar series. The February 2 lecture on EXPERIMENTS IN ART AND TECHNOLOGY is obligatory for all students except for those enrolled in other classes during the seminar series period. (MON 12 noon to 1.30).

http://www.mat.ucsb.edu/595M/

ASSIGNMENTS
You can expect to spend 12 hours per week doing out of class work including projects and readings. All assignment descriptions will be posted on the class website.

INTRO/CYBERNETIC HISTORIES:
Introduction to HTML web development and readings relating to the history of digital/technological art.

FOUR READING ASSIGNMENTS

Required Readings
Selected readings from the online texts and texts given/sent to you by the TA’s. The exact readings for each period will be announced in lecture and posted on the class website before the first lecture of the period. There will be a written assignment for each of the four readings. The details of each reading assignment will also posted to the website. The reading assignment is due the second section of each period, except the first reading assignment, which is due the first section in week 2. Be prepared to answer questions about the readings in the second lecture of each period.

There is a fair amount of text. Some of the text will be more difficult, don’t let it intimidate you; try to get something out of the reading. Do not start reading it thoroughly in the beginning of the text and give up after a couple of pages. The main points of the text and the parts that you find interesting or inspiring might be at the end of the text. First skim the text to find a sense of its structure, main points, conclusions, and importantly, the things that interests you. Then go back and read the text more carefully. If you then find it difficult to read through the whole text carefully because it is dense and complicated, read the parts that seem most important and interesting to you. Discuss the texts with the TA/s and professor if you have issues understanding it.
**Recommended Readings**
The texts in the online reader that are not required are recommended. Additional recommended readings might be posted on the section Web sites.

**3 Projects**
The project assignment specifications will be provided in the second lecture and/or section of each period as well as on the class website. The projects should provide hands on experience with the concepts dealt with in the lectures and readings. There will be a selection of project assignments to choose from in each of the four periods. You will be able to work with a wide range of materials of your choice depending on your interest and experience. The projects could for example be realized as drawings, paintings, sculptures, performances, installations or web based art. The project assignments will be designed to allow you to creatively digest and experience the concepts discussed in class, not to teach a specific technique or medium. All projects should be described on your class web page, accompanied by documentation. The projects are due the fourth section of each period and have to be finished on the due date.

**Supplies:** The required supplies will vary greatly depending on what project you choose to work with. A personal uweb account is required of all students.

**Midterm and Final Exam**
The midterm and final exam will consist of a multiple choice answer test and the final exam will also include a comprehensive final project presentation.

**GRADING**
Grades are based on: introductory project/reading (5%), projects (30% total, 10% each), reading assignments (20% total, 5% each), engagement in lectures and sections (10%), midterm and final exam (35%), mitigated by attendance as defined below.

**ABSENCES**
You may miss only 1 lecture and not more that 3 total of lectures and lab sections. If you miss more than that it will be reflected in your final grade. If you miss more than 6 lectures and lab sections combined (without a very serious and documented reason), or more than 2 lectures, you cannot pass the class.
SCHEDULE

CYBERNETIC HISTORIES
The history of cybernetics, computers and digital media arts.

Week 1:
M 1/5, T 1/6: Web/Computer Techniques Intro, History Project/Reading Introduced
W 1/7, TR 1/8: Web/Computer Techniques Lab

1/8 Lecture 1: SCREENING AND INTRODUCTION: DAS NETZ (THE NET)

Week 2:
M 1/12, T 1/13: History Project/Reading Due
W 1/14, TR 1/15: Web/Computer Techniques Lab (Phelps)

1/15 Lecture 2: CYBERNETIC HISTORIES – FROM SYSTEMS TO SYSTEMICS AND BEYOND

SOFTWARE (LANGUAGE)
Definition of ‘software’: Programs, procedures, rules, and any associated documentation pertaining to the operation of a system. Instruction Art, Interactivity, Code, Algorithmic Art, Visualization, Database Art (and Categorization), Games, Artificial Intelligence/Life

Week 3:
M 1/19, T 1/20: NO SECTION - HOLIDAY
W 1/21, TR 1/22: Studio/Lab

1/22 Lecture 3: SOFTWARE

Week 4:
M 1/26, T 1/27: Studio/Lab
W 1/28, TR 1/29: Studio/Lab

1/29 Lecture 4: SOFTWARE II

NETWORKS (INTER-CONNECTIVITY)
Definition of ‘network’: Systems of interconnected components.
Computer Networks, Social Networks, Relational Art, Hacking (System Interventions), Collective Intelligence, Distributed Authorship

Week 5:
M 2/2, T 2/3: Studio/Lab
MONDAY 2/2: NOON – MAT SEMINAR SERIES OBLIGATORY LECTURE ON E.A.T.
W 2/4, TR 2/5: Software projects and readings due

2/5 Lecture 5: THE INTERNET(S) - A NETWORK OF NETWORKS
Week 6:
  M 2/9, T 2/10: Studio/Lab
  W 2/11, TR 2/12: Studio/Lab

2/12  Lecture 6: NETWORKS II

HARDWARE AND PHYSICAL COMPUTING

Definition of ‘hardware’: The physical components of a (computer) system.
Robotic Art, Machines, Devices, Electronics, Telepresence, Cyborgs

Week 7:
  M 2/16, T 2/17: Holiday
  W 2/18, TR 2/19 Networks reading assignment and project due.

2/19  Lecture 7 and MIDTERM TEST, lecture THE MACHINES AND THE WORLD ABOUT –

Week 8:
  M 2/23, T 2/24: Studio/Lab
  W 2/25, TR 2/26: Studio/Lab

2/26  Lecture 8: HERE COME THE ROBOTS – GUEST LECTURE BY DANNY BAZO

Week 9:
  M 3/2, T 3/3: Studio/Lab preparation for final project
  W 3/4, TR 3/5: Hardware reading assignment and projects due

3/5  Lecture 9: STATE OF THE ART – an overview of contemporary practices in the field

Week 10:
  M 3/9, T 3/10: Studio/Lab
  MARCH 9 NOON-1.30PM, OBLIGATORY LECTURE BY ERIC PAULOS IN THE MAT SEMINAR SERIES
  W 3/11 TR 3/12: Studio/Lab finalization

3/12  Lecture 10: FINAL EXAM AND FINAL PROJECTS PRESENTATION AND CRITIQUE