New York University

Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development

Media 2013

Welcome to **Media Literacy and Contemporary Art 2013**. In this course, students will experiment with a variety of digital media technologies and will be asked to assess them in relation to the creation, teaching and learning of art. Students will be challenged to critically and creatively analyze the roles that technology and digital media play within our contemporary society and will be encouraged to explore the implications of these roles for schooling.

Throughout the term, we will examine the related concepts of freedom, social practice, and DIY (or more precisely, Do-It-Ourselves). We'll get our hands dirty (figuratively at least) by playing with the tools, platforms, and processes of contemporary media and culture. Along the way, we'll skillshare, theorize, and even make stuff.

Class Rules

The class will be governed by one overarching principle inspired by the sage words of **Bill and Ted**: "Be excellent to each other."

Course Ethos

A special emphasis will be placed on openness, collaboration, and sharing. Course technologies will be measured against the **Maker's Bill of Rights** (If you can't open it, you don't own it).

Throughout, we will attempt to establish a balance between **Burning Man's** creed of radical self-reliance and **BarCamp's** philosophy of openness and participation. This means that students will be expected to share information and skills and assume responsibility for their own and each other's learning. Students should first utilize the vast resources of the Internet before seeking additional support from others. Failure to do so may result in a **Let Me Google That For You** response. Ultimately, this course is intended to serve as a laboratory for creative experimentation, artistic exploration and critical reflection.

Course Instructor

- David Darts
- Office: 3rd Floor **Barney building**
- Office Hours: darts[at]nyu[dot]edu

Class Google Group

Students will be expected to join and use the class **Google Group** for all electronic group communications. Please send course emails to: media-2013-group[at]nyu[dot]edu

Required Texts

- *Little Brother* (2008) by Cory Doctorow (can be purchased here or downloaded for free here).
- Electronic Readings (.pdf) To be provided by the instructor (see Class Schedule below)

Required Equipment

- Students should have a laptop.

Class Schedule

Classes will be held in the Digital Studio (Rm. 204) of NYU Steinhardt's**Barney building**.

Please note the class schedule and syllabus are subject to change. Students should check this site regularly for updates and modifications.

January 28

- Introductions to course, instructor and students.

Frebrauary 4

- Lecture: Making Culture

February 11

- Lecture: 3D Printing and Desktop Fabrication

February 18

- Presidents Day – NO CLASS

February 25

- Workshop: Liberating Culture – Part 1

March 4

- Workshop: Liberating Culture – Part 2

March 11

- Workshop: WordPress – Part 1

March 18

- NYU Spring Break – NO CLASS

March 25

- Workshop: WordPress – Part 2

April 1

- Workshop: Raspberry Pi & Arduino – Part 1

April 8

- Workshop: Raspberry Pi & Arduino – Part 1

April 15

- Workshop: Large Format Printing – Part 1

April 22

- Workshop: Large Format Printing – Part 2

April 29

- Workshop: 3D Printing – Part 1

May 6

- Workshop: 3D Printing – Part 2

May 13

Course Assignments

1. Skillshares

40% (October 24 – December 5) Working in teams of 3, students will design and facilitate 2-hour skillsharing workshops on a topic inspired by the course ethos (openness, collaboration, and sharing) and connected to the course themes (freedom, social practice, and DIY). Team members will be responsible for all aspects of planning & instruction.

A. Practical Considerations

- **Duration:** Skillshare workshops should last a total of 2 hours. Team members are responsible for arriving early to set up and also staying at the end of class to ensure the studio is clean.
- **Materials & Equipment:** Skillshare teams are reponsible for all materials, supplies, and equipment required for the workshop. If participants require laptops for the workshop, they should be notified well in advance. If your skillshare requires software, you are encouraged to use free and open source software (FOSS). This will ensure that all members of the group (regardless of computer type or operating system) will be able to participate. Open Source Mac and Open Source Windows are two great FOSS resources.
- **Safety:** Participant safety is of paramount importance. Please plan accordingly.

B. Specific Criteria

Skillshares should include the following elements:

- **The Hook:** Workshop facilitators should provide a compelling introduction to the topic that captures participants' attention and provides a basic overview of the topic and workshop agenda.
- **Foundations:** Workshop participants should be introduced to key skills and bodies of knowledge related to the skillshare topic. Hands on activities or exercises are strongly encouraged.
- **Resources:** Participants should be provided with a comprehensive listing (electronic) of links and resources that will support and extend the ideas and skills covered in the workshop. This listing should also include contemporary artists and projects directly connected to the skillshare topic.

2. Critical Design

35% (Due: December 12) Students will conceptualize and create a prototype for a critical design. One of the key criteria for the assignment is that your design serve as a form of social critique. As a reminder, critical design can be described as design to make you think, rather than to make you buy. It should serve to stimulate debate about technological, social, psychological, or ethical issues. This differentiates critical design from other forms of design. You may want to review the definition of critical design here.

As you develop your project, be sure to ask yourself how it will serve as a form of social critique. What conversations or debates might it stimulate? What questions or problems is your project attempting to respond to?

Finished critical design projects must include a prototype (does not need to fully function), 60-second intro video, title, brief description (2-3 paragraphs), and photographs and design sketches documenting the project. Students will be expected to present their work in class.

3. Weekly Readings, Homework Assignments, Class Projects, and Personal Engagement

25% (Due: TBA) Throughout the semester, students will be required to complete exercises, projects, and homework assignments related to the course themes. Students will also be asked to critique and respond in writing to the readings and class activities. These reflections and critiques should be both critical and constructive — they will form part of the basis of our weekly discussions in class. Students will often be required to submit them to the class Google group for feedback and critique.

Students are expected to regularly attend class and actively engage in ALL discussions, exercises, and activities. The course carries a heavy reading load and students are expected to complete all of the weekly readings before the beginning of each class.

Policies

Evaluation

You will be evaluated based on successful completion of all course assignments and activities. The work you complete for this class should represent graduate quality scholarship and art making. It will be evaluated based on its intellectual rigor, originality, artistry, and craftsmanship. Final grades will be awarded according to the NYU Department of Art and Art Professions guidelines.

- A 95 to 100
- A- 90 to 94
- B+ 85 to 89
- B 80 to 84
- B- 79 to 75
- C+ 70 to 74
- C 69 to 65
- C- 60 to 64
- D 59 and below

Disabilities Statement

Any student attending NYU who needs an accommodation due to a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is Deaf or Hard of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212 998-4980, 240 Greene Street.

Academic Integrity

All students are responsible for understanding and complying with the NYU Steinhardt Statement on Academic Integrity. A copy is available here.

University Policy on Student Conduct

The relationship between students and faculty is the keystone of the educational experience at New York University. This relationship takes an honor code for granted. Mutual trust, respect and responsibility are foundational requirements. Thus, how you learn is as important as what you learn. A University graduate school education aims not only to produce high quality scholars, but to also cultivate honorable citizens. For specific details about the NYU University Policy on Student Conduct please download and refer to the NYU guide on student conduct.