Practices in Data Art and Design

ARST484/CIS284 | SUMMER 2016

Christopher Chenier (cchenier@wes)
Wesleyan University
301 High Street
Middletown, CT
Overview

This course examines areas of contemporary digital arts practices concerned with data, information, and design. Students will execute projects that generate, manipulate, and remix information for the purposes of art and visual communication. Moving between a range of software platforms, students will learn to draw, composite, animate, and code original artworks. In addition to rigorous studio work and in-class presentations, students will encounter readings, films, and discussions on topics including information design, computational art, data visualization, and digital culture.

Goals

1. Students will conceive, plan, execute, and present original, data-driven artworks.
2. Students will become independent agents in learning new creative skills and processes.
3. Students will think creatively and critically about data, technology, and information in contemporary art and design.
4. Students will become critical makers through an iterative, hands-on learning process that validates making and doing as forms of intelligence and meditation.

Requirements

Participation:

Active participation throughout this course is necessary for the successful completion of assigned work. Students are expected to maintain sustained and rigorous studio practices throughout the term. In addition to art production, students will encounter reading and research assignments, discussions, and critiques.

Students are expected to be present for all class meetings. Please email me with significant notice if you must miss a class. Chronic lateness and/or absences will jeopardize your grade. Following 1 absence, each missed session is calculated against your final grade in 1/2-letter increments (i.e. if you miss 2 classes, an “A” grade becomes an “A-“).
Students will be evaluated based on the following: Participation/attitude, creative/conceptual work, technical dexterity and progress over the term. Participation and attitude grades are calculated for the class in-aggregate.

**Statement of Commitment:**

This course is aggressively structured. For every hour spent in class, expect two hours of out of class work. Please commit to the following this term:

Put in the time. Be respectful of both your peers’ time and mine. Work your hardest, be self-motivated, learn through trial and failure. Share what you learn and know freely with all. Push yourself beyond your comfort zone. Be brave, adventurous and surprising.

**Presentations:**

Twice during the term, students will be assigned an artist, collective, or concept around which they will craft a 15-20 minute presentation. Presentation materials - texts, images, links, etc. - will be circulated amongst the class prior to the presentation. These materials will be high quality and generous in number. Presentations will be coherently organized and thoughtfully articulated. This is service both to yourself and the group. Students may not show more than 2 minutes of a video during their presentations. You are the medium, not your sources!

**Grading**

- **Milestone Projects:** 30.00%
- **Participation:** 30.00%
- **Short Assignments:** 20.00%
- **Presentations:** 20.00%
Milestone Projects

I. Project 1: PhotoViz Due July 7

II. Project 2: Animate Due July 14

III. Project 3: You, Abstracted and Objectified Due July 21

IV. Project 4: Synthesis Due July 28

Resources

People:

Casey Raes - Brian
Ben Fry - Brian
Luke DuBois
Stefanie Posavec - Eva
Sol Lewitt
John Maeda - Eva
Daniel Rozin
Hasan Elahi - Shelli
Jer Thorp
Martin Wattenberg
Laurie Frick
Jason Salavon - Shelli
Paola Antonelli
Rafael Lozano Hemmer

Kyle McDonald
Mike Lyon - Max
Jennifer Steinkamp - Max
Heather Dewey-Hagborg
James Bridle
Penelope Umbrico
Jonathan Harris
Amanda Cox
Allan McCollum
Nicholas Felton
Golan Levin
Nathalie Miebach
Stefan Thiel
Cory Arcangel
Trevor Paglen
Kim Rees
Websites:

Rhizome: http://rhizome.org/
BitForms Gallery: http://www.bitforms.com/
Ars Electronica: http://www.aec.at/news/
Eyebeam: http://eyebeam.org/
eyeo Festival: http://eyeofestival.com/
The Teaming Void: http://teemingvoid.blogspot.com/
Generative Gestaltung: http://www.generative-gestaltung.de/
Generator.x: http://www.generatorx.no/
FAT (Free Art Technology Lab): http://fffff.at/about/
Art F City: http://artfcity.com/
FORM+CODE: http://formandcode.com/
We Make Money, Not Art: http://we-make-money-not-art.com/

Beginner's Guide to the Quantified Self: here
Flowing Data: http://flowingdata.com/
Ask Me Every: http://www.askmeevery.com/
Visual Complexity: http://www.visualcomplexity.com/
Information Aesthetics: http://infosthetics.com/
Good Magazine: https://www.good.is/infographics
DataArt BBC Backstage: http://data-art.net/
GapMinder: https://www.gapminder.org/
DayTum: http://daytum.com/
Happy Planet Index: http://www.happyplanetindex.org/
OECD Better Life Index: http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/
Platforms and Libraries:

- Processing: https://processing.org/
- Paper.js: http://paperjs.org/
- openFrameworks: http://openframeworks.cc/
- Scriptographer: https://scriptographer.org/
- vvv: https://vvvv.org/
- D3.js: https://d3js.org/
- Cinder: https://libcinder.org/

Readings:

- Casey Raes and Chandler McWilliams, LUST: *Form+Code*
- Hartmut Bohnacker, et al. *Generative Design*
- Nicholas Felton: *Photoviz*
- Data Portraits: [here](here)
- Lev Manovich. “The Anti Sublime Ideal in New Media.” [here](here)
- Mitchell Whitelaw. “Art Against Information: Case Studies in Data Practice.”: [here](here)
- Brian House. “Open Paths: Empowering Personal Geography.”: [here](here)

Videos:

- Eyeo Festival 2012 - INSTINCT: https://vimeo.com/eyeofestival
- Casey Raes: https://vimeo.com/66190691
- Golan Levin: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BBnw04YgEU
- Paola Antonelli: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbYTLfEsjQC
- Manuel Lima: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7oYSHWi17o
- Amanda Cox: https://vimeo.com/29391942
- Ben Fry: https://vimeo.com/45091945
- Nicholas Felton: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxYuLAvVqXM
- Hasan Elahi: [here](here)
- Jonathan Harris: [here](here)
- Luke Dubois: [here](here)