

## Description

This workshop supports study and production in the media arts, including digital video, sound, installation/performance, and Internet and new media art, for students with a range of experiences with media technologies. Conceptual development is stressed through regular readings and screenings, while technology skills are built in hands-on workshops using a range of media production equipment and platforms. In class and short-term projects lead to the development of a significant final piece of work that may relate to students' ongoing creative interests.

## Goals and Objectives

1. Develop a deeper understanding of media art theory and practice through readings and viewings.
2. Experiment with new themes and forms in time-based practice through in-class workshops.
3. Build aesthetic, critical, and verbal skills through the creation and critique of new time-based artwork.
4. Engage in an interdisciplinary, collaborative learning environment.
5. Create one finished, original piece of media art over the course of the semester.

## Course and Faculty Information

01J:104:001: Media Art Lab  
1703 Studio Arts  
Wednesdays, 3:30-7:30 PM

Instructor: Sarah Kanouse  
1642 Studio Arts  
Wednesdays, 12-3 PM and by appointment  
319-384-0992  
sarah-kanouse@uiowa.edu

Teaching Assistant: Derek Andes  
1648 Studio Arts  
Office hours by appointment  
derek-andes@uiowa.edu

DEO: John Scott  
School of Art & Art History  
Seashore Hall, 6th Floor

The administrative home of this course is the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

## **Expectations**

This multi-level course hopes to balance an open, experimental approach to doing media art, instruction in specific technologies, and an advanced discussion of contemporary media art practice. Some in-class work will be done in multi-level groups to encourage an atmosphere of mutual education. This structure demands that everyone - students and instructor alike - be exceptionally cooperative, respectful, good-humored, and well-prepared while also willing to take intellectual and creative risks. Students are expected to make a serious, sustained commitment to individual and group research, discussion, and production over the course of the entire semester.

The course is divided into three units relating to recent developments in media arts practice. "Video Visions" is dedicated to non-interactive video work, primarily single channel. "Media Codes" explores artists' increasing use of visual programming languages to create unique production tools as well as interactive projects. "Sound Unbound" provides a foundation in sound for video and more experimental approaches, including the use of micropower radio in transmission art.

Concept and content is stressed in this course, but a rigorous practice of making will be expected of all students because execution inevitably changes conception. You will complete one major project during the semester as well as smaller, short-term and in-class experimental and/or group projects around a certain concept or technology. Specific technologies will be taught in in-class workshops, but students will need to supplement this in-class instruction with self-teaching at their own pace, outside of class hours. To this end, students are encouraged to sign up for Intermedia's Friday Workshops, which provide refreshers on basic technology skills and introductions to new practices on a weekly basis. Per CLAS guidelines, expect to spend about eight hours per week outside of class meetings on your coursework and projects.

As course instructor, I expect to be consistently challenged to expand my knowledge and deepen my understanding of media art over the course of the semester. I pledge to personalize each student's experience of the course by forwarding information, articles, and announcements, returning email within 24 hours (excepting weekends), and meeting with students outside of class and office hours when necessary for discussion and technical assistance.

## **Texts**

There is no required text for this course; readings will be distributed to members of the class as pdfs via the Intermedia Xsan. They are arranged by date due in [skanouse>public>SP10\\_MAL>Readings](#).

## **Materials and Equipment**

Intermedia makes every effort to provide equipment for its students. There is a \$70 course fee to cover the cost of some supplies, maintenance for lab software and use of the Intermedia Equipment Pool.

Equipment must be returned on time. Equipment loans are subject to late fees of one dollar per hour, and up to five dollars daily. Habitual late returns will result in loss of checkout privileges.

Please be sure to make sure that equipment checked out is in working order and that all components are included at the time of check-out. Also be sure batteries are charged before using battery-operated gear.

To help insure equipment is available and in working order for everyone, please report equipment problems, damage or loss as soon as possible. Please email the equipment pool and describe, in as specific terms as possible, any problems that you have with the equipment. This can be done upon check-in as well.

Students will be charged the cost of repair or replacement of equipment if damaged or lost.

Other required materials are 4 AA batteries and 1-2 Panasonic mini-DV tapes. Students must get in pairs to purchase a basic soldering kit from Radio Shack (about \$10). The purchase of an external storage device, such as an external harddrive, is highly recommended for backing up during the semester and archiving work once the class is concluded. Students are expected to acquire any additional supplies their work requires.

Experimentation with different materials is encouraged, but students must exercise judgement. Due to the communal space of the Studio Arts Building, the use of solvents, spray paint or any fume producing chemical is prohibited outside of designated areas. Guns, blood, bodily fluids, live animals, smoke, fire, alcohol, and broken television tubes (which contain lead) are absolutely prohibited. Be aware of the toxicity of your materials and consult with the instructor if you are uncertain about the safety of a material.

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## **Coursework and Grading**

All students will complete the coursework outlined below, with grade weighting indicated. In addition, students must turn in a final digital portfolio via the Intermedia XSAN by the end of finals week documenting all the final project and all experimental projects in order to receive a grade in the course. **Failure to turn in documentation of coursework will result in a failing grade in the course.**

In-class and short-term media art experiments: 30%

Students will complete short-term, experimental media projects that take place either in class or over few days. Projects may be individual or group, as assigned. These experimental projects

teach technology skills and extend thematic explorations. Documentation of these projects must be included in the comprehensive digital portfolio submitted at the end of the semester.

**Verbal Participation/Discussion: 20%**

Given the structure of the class, active participation in class discussions and workshop days is vital. Students must arrive prepared and willing to help less-experienced peers. Attendance at the performance by Sabine Gruffat and Bill Brown at PS1 on February 25 is part of your participation grade. Those who share their thoughts and talents generously, respectfully, and frequently will earn a top grade in the course.

**Final Creative Project: 50%**

All students will complete one major piece of original media art over the course of the semester. Projects should represent mature, thoughtful work that is conceptually and aesthetically relevant to current debates in the field, but the form is open and may or may not represent an extension on a theme or technology covered in class. Proposals for final projects will be due in written form (2-4 pages, with sketches) and for in-class presentation (10-15 minutes with slides) on March 25. Final projects are due for critique during finals week on May 12 and must be included on the final digital portfolio.

## **Grading**

Grading will be on a A to F scale, with plus and minus grades awarded. While I do not notify students of grades on individual course components, I will prepare written feedback for each student at midterm that indicates progress to date and an approximate midterm grade. Students are also welcome to contact me at any time to learn how they are doing in the course. I interpret letter grades to mean the following:

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| A+ / A / A- | Superior accomplishment                   |
| B+ / B / B- | Above average achievement                 |
| C+ / C / C- | Average work                              |
| D+ / D / D- | Below average achievement                 |
| F           | Failure to meet basic course requirements |

## **Course Policies**

Because class meets only once per week, attendance is imperative. Students may be absent for any reason or no reason ONCE during the semester. Any absences beyond the first will result in a grade reduction, excepting probable H1N1 infection or other extreme and documented circumstances to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. An unexplained habit of late arrival or early departure will also result in a grade reduction. Late digital portfolios will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Student work completed in this course will be archived by the Intermedia program and the instructor and may be used for documentation, demonstration, and promotional purposes.

**Course Outline (subject to change)**

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|-----------------------|--|
| Unit I: Video Visions | <p>The revolution in consumer technology that today gives us YouTube and the Flip began forty years ago with the release of the first portable video camera, the Sony PortaPak. Soon, artists began pooling their money to purchase camcorders that were like nothing ever seen before, even if by today's standards they seem neither lightweight (over 18 pounds) nor cheap (\$8000 in 2010 dollars). Early video art was inherently interdisciplinary: musicians and painters, activists and dancers, sculptors and performers all experimented with the technology, and video, performance, installation, and community-based art all "grew up" together. Today, video art draws on a forty year legacy of formal, conceptual and technological innovation and encompasses work ranging from single-channel narratives to multi-screen installation works to short pieces distributed over the internet and mobile devices to images that migrate between stillness and motion. This unit will explore shooting video, digital non-linear editing, digital and analog video manipulation, and single- and multi-channel installation possibilities for the moving image.</p> |
|                       | <p>January 20      Course introduction, skill inventory</p>  |
|                       | <p>January 27      Video Visions introduction<br/>Reading due: Spielmann, Child, Huber, Halleck</p>  |
|                       | <p>February 3      Camera, shooting, and FCP introductory workshops</p>  |
|                       | <p>February 10     Guest Presentation: Evan Meaney<br/>Reading due: Almond, "Glitch Art" on Wikipedia<br/>Digital and analog glitching workshops</p>   |
|                       | <p>February 17     Projection/video installation workshop<br/>Reading due: Mondloch</p>  |
| Unit II: Media Codes  | <p>At the most basic level, digital images and sounds are ones and zeros, zeros and ones, just more code in the data stream. But because they are built around assumptions about form and process based on cinema and music, conventional digital editing software impose limits on the artist who wants to explore digital media as data. Increasingly, artists are using computational processes and languages to create their own tools and manipulate digital media directly in its native form: code. Although the tools and languages used today are far more sophisticated and commonplace, artists have been collaborating with computer engineers since the 1960s, not to mention developing new technologies since the earliest cave paintings. This unit focuses on manipulating video and sound with code, breaking apart media into its basic units and designing our own tools to achieve the effects we want.</p>   |

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|-------------|--|
| February 24 | Media Codes introduction<br>Reading due: Hertz, Manovich, Mansoux<br>Guest Presentation: Sabine Gruffat and Bill Brown |
| March 3     | Max/MSP Workshop I   |
| March 10    | Max/MSP Workshop II  |
| March 17    | Spring Break   |
| March 24    | Project Proposals  |
| March 31    | Project Proposals  |

Unit III: Sound Unbound Although visuality--the cultural primacy assigned to the sense of vision, with all its attendant technologies and art forms--has long been seen as a hallmark of modern Western culture, many artists and scholars are turning to sound and auditory culture for critical insight and creative material. Sampling--now a digital age commonplace--was raised to an art form by early hip-hop artists and experimental musicians long before the word "download" was coined, and technologies of sound recording and transmission have their own cultural lives, independent of moving images. This unit looks more closely at audio, too often overlooked in favor of the visual, teaching field and studio techniques in greater depth and exploring experimental approaches to sound as art.

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|----------|---|
| April 7  | Sound Unbound introduction<br>Reading due: Chion, Jordan, Sowienski                                       |
| April 14 | Field recording and microphone making workshops   |
| April 21 | Sound editing and sound lab workshops   |
| April 28 | Guest presentation: Brett Ian Balogh (via Skype)<br>Reading due: Friz, Mikas<br>Microtransmitter workshop |
| May 5    | Transmission arts and streaming experiments   |
| May 12   | Final Critiques   |
| May 15   | Digital portfolio due in Prof. Kanouse's Drop Box   |

## Bibliography

### Video Visions

Richard Almond, "Exploring the Glitch," *Fading Mnemonics and Digital Decay*, (MA thesis in Architecture and Digital Media, University of Westminster, 2009), 44-68.

Abigail Child, "Handcrank That Globalism: A Digi-Dialogue," in Janine Marchessault and Susan Lord, eds., *Fluid Screens, Expanded Cinema*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 111-125.

Dee Dee Halleck, "Paper Tiger Television" and "Tiger Dreams: Midwest Museum Intervention," *Hand-Held Visions* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002) 114-127.

Jorg Huber, "Video-Essayism: on the Theory-Practice of the Transitional," in Ursula Biemann, ed., *Stuff It: The Video Essay in the Digital Age*, (Wein/New York: Edition Voldemeer Zurich/ Springer, 2003), 92-97.

Kate Mondloch, "Be Here (and There) Now: The Spatial Dynamics of Screen-Reliant Installation Art," *Art Journal* 66:3 (2007), 21-33.

Yvonne Spielmann, "Video: From Technology to Medium," *Art Journal* 65:3 (2006), 55-69.

Wikipedia, "Glitch Art"

### Media Codes

Paul Hertz, "Art, Code, and the Engine of Change," *Art Journal* 68:1 (2009), 59-75.

Lev Manovich, "Database as Symbolic Form," in Victoria Vesna, ed., *Database Aesthetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 39-60.

Aymeric Mansoux, "Digital feedback as another state of matter. Automated creation processes as a new clay," [the] xxxxx [reader], <http://goto10.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/09/digital-feedback-creation-process.pdf> (2006)

### Sound Unbound

Michel Chion, "The Three Listening Modes," in *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 25-34.

Anna Friz, "Transmission Arts in the Present," *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 31:1 (2009), 46-49.

Ken Jordan, "Stop. Hey. What's That Sound?," in Paul D. Miller, ed., *Sound Unbound: Sampling Digital Music and Culture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008), 245-264.

Matt Mikas, "Tune((In)) Radio Community in Microcosm," in Galen Joseph-Hunter, ed., *Waveguide* (Acra, NY: free103point9, 2005)

Richard Sowienski, "An Interview with Jeff Porter," *The Missouri Review* Podcast, [http://www.missourireview.org/content/dynamic/text\\_detail.php?text\\_id=748](http://www.missourireview.org/content/dynamic/text_detail.php?text_id=748) (2007).

**Spring 2010**  
**School of Art and Art History Syllabus Information**  
**The University of Iowa**  
**Course policies are governed by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences**

**Electronic Communication**

University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences.

**Homework Expectation**

For each semester hour of credit that an Art and Art History course carries, students should expect to spend approximately two hours per week outside of class preparing for class sessions. That is, in a three-credit-hour course, instructors design course assignments on the assumption that students will spend six hours per week in out-of-class preparation.

**Your Responsibilities**

Your responsibilities to this class -- and to your education as a whole -- include attendance and participation. This syllabus details specific expectations the instructor may have about attendance and participation. You have a responsibility to help create a classroom environment where all may learn. At the most basic level, this means you will respect the other members of the class and the instructor and treat them with the courtesy you hope to receive in return.

**Student Classroom Behavior**

The ability to learn is lessened when students engage in inappropriate classroom behavior, distracting others; such behaviors are a violation of the [Code of Student Life](#). When disruptive activity occurs, a University instructor has the authority to determine classroom seating patterns and to request that a student exit the classroom, laboratory, or other area used for instruction immediately for the remainder of the period. One-day suspensions are reported to appropriate departmental, collegiate, and Student Services personnel (Office of the Vice President for [Student Services](#) and Dean of Students).

**Academic Fraud**

Plagiarism and any other activities when students present work that is not their own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is a serious matter and is reported to the departmental DEO and to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum. Instructors and DEOs decide on appropriate consequences at the departmental level while the Associate Dean enforces additional consequences at the collegiate level. See the CLAS Academic Fraud section of the [Student Academic Handbook](#). [www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/x/#2](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/x/#2)

**Making a Suggestion or a Complaint**

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS [Student Academic Handbook](#).

**Accommodations for Disabilities**

A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. For more information see [Student Disability Services](#) at [www.uiowa.edu/~sds/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~sds/)

**Understanding Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI [Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment](#) for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

**Reacting Safely to Severe Weather**

In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Public Safety [web site](#).

**Resources for Students**

- [Writing Center](#) 110 English-Philosophy Building, 335-0188, [www.uiowa.edu/~writingc](http://www.uiowa.edu/~writingc)
- [Speaking Center](#) 12 English-Philosophy Building, 335-0205, [www.uiowa.edu/~rhetoric/centers/speaking](http://www.uiowa.edu/~rhetoric/centers/speaking)
- [Mathematics Tutorial Laboratory](#) 314 MacLean Hall, 335-0810, [www.uiowa.edu/mathlabTutor](http://www.uiowa.edu/mathlabTutor)
- [Referral Service](#) Campus Information Center, Iowa Memorial Union, 335-3055, [www.imu.uiowa.edu/cic/tutor\\_referral\\_service](http://www.imu.uiowa.edu/cic/tutor_referral_service)

**CLAS Final Examination Policies**

Final exams may be offered only during finals week. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. Students should not ask their instructor to reschedule a final exam since the College does not permit rescheduling of a final exam once the semester has begun. Questions should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum.

**Missed exam policy**

University policy requires that students be permitted to make up examinations missed because of illness, mandatory religious obligations, certain University activities, or unavoidable circumstances. Excused absence forms are required and are available at the Registrar web site: [www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/absence.pdf](http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/absence.pdf)

**University Examination Policy Final Examinations**

An undergraduate student who has two final examinations scheduled for the same period or more than three examinations scheduled for the same day may file a request for a change of schedule before the [published deadline](#) at the Registrar's Service Center, 17 Calvin Hall, 8-4:30 M-F, (384-4300).

**Plus-Minus Grading**

All the department's instructors can append plus or minus grades to the letter grades they assign for the course. If the instructor does not specifically indicate in the syllabus that he or she will not assign plusses or minuses, students should assume that this form of grading will be used.



**Woodshop Use and Fees**

The School of Art and Art History Woodshop is a common use facility for any student enrolled in a studio art class. The woodshop has a \$25 per student per semester buy-back fee. All students who use the woodshop must pay this fee, which goes towards the replacement of consumables as well as equipment repairs, replacements and other shop related expenses. Students can opt to pay a one-time use fee of \$5 to work for one day only. However if they come back in for further use they must pay the \$25 lab fee at that time. This will mean that in total they will be charged \$30. The students will be U-Billed by the lab coordinator before they begin working. Students must also complete safety training and fill out a woodshop safety release form every semester to work in the shop. To do this they must see the Woodshop Lab Specialist, Adam Krueger. Woodshop open hours and schedules are posted on the door of the woodshop. Students enrolled in classes that require the use of woodshop as part of their class instruction will be U-billed at the time of use.