

AHST 4342-001 (87272)
History of Media and New Media Art
Fall 2019
Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
University of Texas at Dallas
Arts & Humanities
Tuesdays-Thursdays 10:00-11:15
Class Location: CB 1.222

**Office Hours: Thursday 11:30-3:00 (please be sure to
make an appointment via email or in person!)**
Office Location: ATC 2.704
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This class focuses on the history of art, science, and technology, a field referred to as “media art” or “new media art.” We will look to the role of scientific and technological mediation in works of art and architecture, that is to say, the ways in which science and technology function to shape and midwife the form of a work of art or architecture. The first month of the course is devoted to the deeper history of the genre of new media art, after which it focuses on various forms of analogue and digital algorithms in twentieth- and twenty-first-century art. This latter portion of the course entails a close reading of the course textbook, Hannah B. Higgins and Douglas Kahn’s *Mainframe Experimentalism: Early Computing and the Foundations of the Digital Arts*. The class traces new media art across mediums, media, and devices, including painting, daguerreotypes, photography, chronophotography, television, computers – and analogue and digital algorithms. This course is writing intensive, with short written assignments based on the reading due each week.

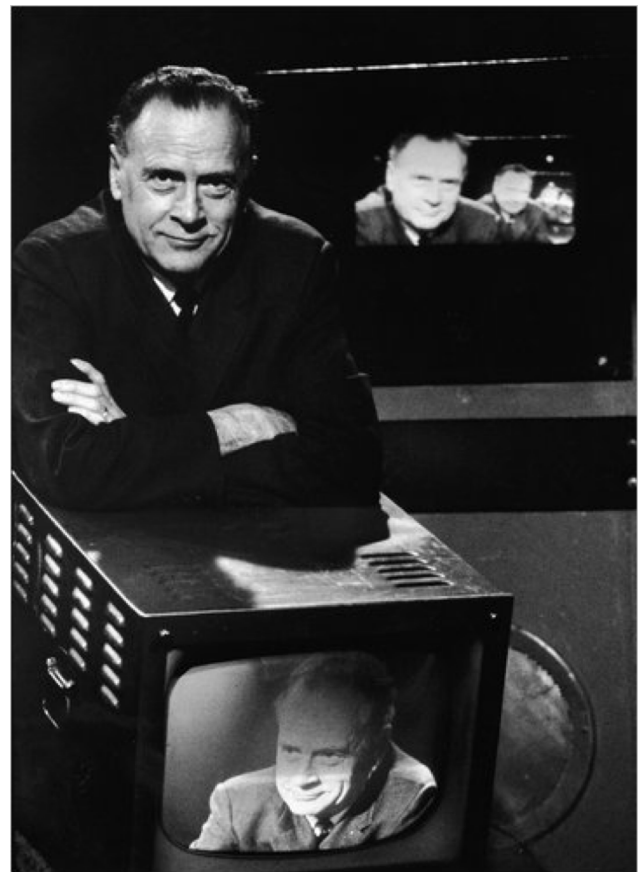
Goals of Course:

- Learn and engage the history of science and technology within art, 1832-present.
- Learn the philosophical meaning and artistic incarnation of medium, media, and mediation.
- Learn how to think critically about the history of media and new media art, and its cultural and political ramifications.
- Learn how to identify the salient and successfully formal components of a work of art, whether a painting or a performance.
- Habituate close and analytical reading of texts.
- Hone critical writing skills through weekly written assignments.

Requirements:

- Students are required to attend every scheduled class meeting, complete the assigned reading prior to class, and participate with verve and gusto in class discussions.
- Students are required to complete all written assignments and come to class ready to discuss weekly reading assignments.

Attendance Policy:



Media theorist Marshall McLuhan with TVs – an example of “recursion” or the technological nesting of images

- Students are allowed two unexcused absences after which every unexcused absence will result in a deduction of ½ grade in the computation of the final mark.
- Absences will be excused with a doctor's excuse.
- Absences for religious holidays are excused.

Readings:

The reading assignments are available in your textbook and at the Docutek website listed below:

- Textbook: Hannah B. Higgins and Douglas Kahn, *Mainframe Experimentalism: Early Computing and the Foundations of the Digital Arts*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012.

Docutek:

- Link: <http://utdallas.docutek.com/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=2441>
- Password: shape

Classroom Meetings:

This course meets twice a week. Tuesdays will be devoted to a lecture from the professor and note-taking by students. Thursdays will be devoted to classroom discussion of the reading and note-taking by students, driven by a powerpoint presentation given by the professor and questions from students.

Writing by Questioning – Reader Response Papers:

Students will submit a one-page reader response paper (no more than 250 words) **every Tuesday** starting **Tuesday August 27**. Papers that exceed this length will be marked down accordingly.

Responses should be based on a question about the reading, and then, by way of this query, briefly and cogently summarize the week's reading assignment. The goals of these papers are to: 1.) show that you have completed and understood the reading assignment and 2.) improve your writing skills. Each assignment should be formatted according to the following requirements:

- Submitted printed and in paper each Tuesday
- Left-hand justified heading with name of student, course number, professor's name, date
- Followed by your question as a title, center justified underlined or italicized
- Double spaced
- 12 pt. font
- 250 words
- Do not use the first person or passive voice. Write objectively using the active voice.
 - Passive voice: "The lecture was given by Cynthia."
 - Active voice: "Cynthia gave the lecture."
- Model your writing after that of sophisticated journalism outlets.
- Avoid hyperbole.

NOTE ON DATES AND ASSIGNMENTS: I do not accept late reader response papers submitted outside of class unless related to an illness that has been corroborated by a doctor's excuse. I do not accept digital reader response papers.

Grading:

Your grade in the course will be calculated from the following percentages:

- Written reader responses 14 assignments x 7.14% =100%

Standard UTD policies regarding classroom behavior, religious holidays, withdrawals, etc.:

<https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdsp5003>

<http://provost.utdallas.edu/>

<http://www.charissaterranova.com/syllabi/utd-policies.htm>

Schedule:

Tuesday August 20-Thursday August 22

- **Course Introduction: What is New Media Art?**
- **Medium, Media, Mediation, Remediation and Recursion, an Introduction to Terms**
- Edward Shanken, *Art and Electronic Media* (London: Phaidon, 2009) 10-53. DOCUTEK

Tuesday August 27-Thursday August 29

- **From Painting to the Daguerreotype**
-Sarah Kate Gillespie, "Mechanical Imitation," in *Samuel F. B. Morse's Gallery of the Louvre and the Art of Invention*, ed. Peter John Brownlee (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press/Terra Foundation for American Art, 2014) 100-110. DOCUTEK

Tuesday September 3-September 5

- **Photograph: The Construction of Vision**
- Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 2001) 3-26. DOCUTEK

Tuesday September 10-Thursday September 12

- **Chronophotography: Capturing Time and Movement in Image**
-Dimitrios Latsis, "Landscape in Motion: Muybridge and the Origins of Chronophotography," *Film History* Vol. 27, No. 3 (2015) 1-40. DOCUTEK

Tuesday September 17-Thursday September 19

- **Introduction to Mainframe Experimentalism**
-Hannah B. Higgins and Douglas Kahn, Introduction, *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 1-16.
-Grant Taylor, "The Soulless Usurpers: Reception and Criticism of Early Computer Art," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 17-37.

Tuesday September 24-Thursday September 26

- **Thinking Machines**
-David Bellos, "Georges Perec's Thinking Machines," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 38-50.

Tuesday October 1-Thursday October 3

- **New Tendencies, Op Art, and Gestalt Psychology**
-Margit Rosen, "'They Have All Dreamt of the Machines – and Now the Machines Have Arrived': New Tendencies – Computers and Visual Research, Zagreb, 1968-1969," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 90-111.
65.

Tuesday October 8-Thursday October 10

- **Sound and Algorithms: Between Alvin Lucier and John Cage**
-Christopher Cox, "The Alien Voice: Alvin Lucier's *North American Time Capsule 1967*," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 170-186.
-Robert A. Moog, "An Introduction to *North American Time Capsule 1967*," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 187-188.
-Alvin Lucier, "*North American Time Capsule 1967*," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 189-194.

Tuesday October 15-Thursday October 17

- **Fluxus and Computers**

- Hannah B. Higgins, "An Introduction to Alison Knowles's *The House of Dust*," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 195-199.
- Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "The Book of the Future: Alison Knowles's *The House of Dust*," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 200-208.
- Dick Higgins, "Computers for the Arts' (May 1968)," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 292-297.

Tuesday October 22-Thursday October 24

- **Sound, Algorithms, and Performance Art**
-Douglas Kahn, "James Tenney at Bell Labs," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 131-146.

Tuesday October 29-Thursday October 31

- **Early Computer Art: The Stuttgart School**
-Christopher Klütsch, "Information Aesthetics and the Stuttgart School," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 65-89.

Tuesday November 5

- **Mainframe Experimentalism, TVs, and Distributed Networks**
-William Kaizen, "Computer Participator: Situating Nam June Paik's Work in Computing," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 229-242.

Thursday November 7 No Class Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Conference, University of California, Irvine

Tuesday November 12-Thursday November 14

- **Experimental Exhibitions**
-Edward A. Shanken, "In Forming *Software*: Software, Structuralism, Dematerialization," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 51-65

Tuesday November 19-Thursday November 21

- **Hallucinations and Hippie Modernism**
-Zabet Patterson, "From the Gun Controller to the Mandala: The Cybernetic Cinema of John and James Whitney," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 334-354.

Tuesday November 26-Thursday November 28 No Class Fall Break

Tuesday December 3-Thursday December 5

- **Immersion and New Media Art**
-Gloria Sutton, "Stan VanDerBeek's Poemfields: The Interstice of Cinema and Computing," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 311-333.