

AHST 2331-001 (21573)
Understanding Art
Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
Spring 2019
Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30-12:45
ATC 1.102

Office Hours: By appointment
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DESCRIPTION:

This course offers a general investigation into the hybrid realm of **art-science-technology**. The class focuses on the nature of the visual arts and architecture and the role of science and technology therein. It emphasizes the influence of scientific and technological invention on the issues and ideas that artists explore through their work and how these ideas translate into the artwork. Attention is given to the interpretation of the role of science and technology within art and architecture and how the forces together relate to and constitute society over the last two millennia.

THEMES:

There are three primary themes in this class, which are often interwoven each week. This means, most lectures have elements of each theme.

- 1.) Virtual Reality: In the most basic sense, “virtual reality” or VR refers to an experience that is not exactly real, but near real. Humans have been creating near real experiences in VR for several millennia. This class will study the human penchant to recreate reality virtually in drawing, painting, architecture, and through digital technology.
- 2.) Infrastructure: The term infrastructure refers to the basic, underlying framework or features of a system or organization. Often, these basic frameworks serve a country, city, or defined area. Examples include sewer and light systems, transportation and communication systems, power plants, and schools.
- 3.) Extensions of the Senses and/or Prosthetic Extensions: The great Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan used the word “extension” to describe various technological media, ranging from writing and moveable print-type to film and the automobile to photography and the computer. This class explores how such technological extensions function as prosthetics which enhance the capabilities of the basic human body.

ORGANIZATION:

The class is organized around theme-driven modules that include short reading assignments, lectures, in-class note-taking, films, quizzes, and discussion.

REQUIREMENTS:

Students are required to attend every class, complete all assignments, and participate with candor and verve in class. Students are allowed two unexcused absences after which each absence will result in the lowering of the final grade by a half a letter grade. Students with illnesses that require extended periods of absence are encouraged to officially withdraw from class.

ASSIGNMENTS – QUIZZES, NOTEBOOKS, EXAMS:

- 1.) Quizzes: Each sub-module culminates with a quiz, which is then followed by discussion. The quizzes consist of one very general question derived from the week’s reading assignment(s). There are twelve quizzes in the class. Percentage of grade: 30%.
- 2.) Notebooks: Students are required to keep a notebook that records attendance and the notes you have taken based on lectures, in-class discussions, and/or films. Each entry should be dated and titled. The title should come from the professor’s lecture title and/or the syllabus. Students are encouraged to use bullet points and titles of works of art from presentations to organize notes. Notebooks must be **neatly handwritten** and **bound in a notebook**. The notebook may be spiral, three-ring, etc. Students submit notebooks for a grade at the midterm on **Thursday March 14, 2019** and **at the final exam, tba**. Percentage of grade: 40%.
- 3.) Exams: There are two exams in the course, a mid-term on **Thursday March 14, 2019** and **a final exam, tba**. The tests consist of slide identification and short answer questions. The test material is taken from the lectures. The professor distributes a review sheet prior to each test. Percentage of grade: 30%.

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

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

- 1.) Textbook: Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003.
- 2.) Docutek, an on-line resource offered by the university library
 - Docutek URL: <http://utdallas.docutek.com/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=2381>
 - Docutek Password: Cordoba

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:

- **No food or drink in the auditorium.**
- **No laptops or smart devices are allowed once the lecture has begun.**
- **Discussion is encouraged.** Please raise your hand to ask questions or make comments.

SLIDE PRESENTATIONS:

All slide presentations are available at www.charissaterranova.com.

STANDARD UTD POLICIES:

<http://www.utdallas.edu/deanofstudents/conductguidelines.html>

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

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

SCHEDULE:

VIRTUAL REALITY: FROM PREHISTORIC CAVES TO ANCIENT ROME

Tuesday January 15

Introduction and Lecture: *Techne* and Art; Virtual Reality and Prehistoric Cave Drawings

Reading Assignment

- a.) Chapter 1, "Introduction," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 2-22.
- b.) "Virtual Realities Then and Now: The Caves of Lascaux," <http://www.transparencynow.com/lascaux.htm>.

Thursday January 17

Film Screening: *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (2010) Directed by Werner Herzog

Tuesday January 22

Quiz #1 and Discussion

Thursday January 24

Lecture: Roman Urbanism, Architecture, and Infrastructure

Reading Assignment:

- a.) J. N. Hopkins, "The Cloaca Maxima and the Monumental Manipulation of Water in Archaic Rome," in K. Rinne, ed., *The Waters of Rome* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2007) 1-15.
<http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/waters/Journal4Hopkins.pdf>

Tuesday January 29

Lecture: Roman Interiors and Paintings

Reading Assignment:

- a.) Chapter 2, "Historic Spaces of Illusion," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 24-89.

Thursday January 31

Quiz #2 and Discussion

VIRTUAL REALITY AND SACRED SPACES

Tuesday February 5

Lecture: Hagia Sophia: Symbolisms and Strata of Structures and Time

Reading Assignment:

- a.) Emma Wegner. "Hagia Sophia, 532–37." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/haso/hd_haso.htm (October 2004)
- b.) Rowland J Mainstone. "Questioning Hagia Sophia." In *Hagia Sophia: From the Age of Justinian to the Present*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988. 158-176.

Thursday February 7

Quiz #3 and Discussion

Tuesday February 12

Lecture: Mosque of Cordoba: Spoilage and Repetition of Forms

Reading Assignment:

- a.) D. Fairchild Ruggles. "The Stratigraphy of Forgetting: The Great Mosque of Cordoba and Its Contested Legacy," in *Contested Cultural Heritage: Religion, Nationalism, Erasure, and Exclusion in a Global World*, ed. Helaine Silverman (New York: Springer, 2011) 51-67.

Thursday February 14

Quiz #4 and Discussion

Tuesday February 19

Film Screening: *Cathedral* (2012) PBS Documentary narrated by David Macaulay

Reading Assignment:

- a.) Jean Sorabella. "Pilgrimage in Medieval Europe." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pilg/hd_pilg.htm (April 2011).

Thursday February 21

Quiz #5 and Discussion

Distribution of Mid-Term Exam Review

TECHNOLOGICAL EXTENSIONS AND PROSTHETICS OF VISION

Tuesday February 26

Lecture: Lenses and Prosthetic Vision in Early Modernity: Italy and England

Reading Assignment:

- a.) "The Telescope," The Galileo Project, Rice University, <http://galileo.rice.edu/sci/instruments/telescope.html>
- b.) Samuel Pepys [Primary Source], "Samuel Pepys Describes the Fire of London" (1666) <http://media.bloomsbury.com/rep/files/Primary%20Source%209.5%20-%20Pepys.pdf>.

Thursday February 28

Quiz #6 and Discussion

Tuesday March 5

Lecture: Painting with Grids – From Vermeer to Photorealism

Reading Assignment:

- a.) Gerhard Gutruf and Hellmuth Stachel, "The Hidden Geometry in Vermeer's 'The Art of Painting'," <http://www.heldermann-verlag.de/jgg/jgg14/j14h2gutr.pdf>
- b.) "Vermeer and the Camera Obscura," http://www.essentialvermeer.com/camera_obscura/co_one.html#.WFB1qJIuqVs

Thursday March 7

Quiz #7 and Discussion

Tuesday March 12

Mid-Term Exam Review

Thursday March 14

Mid-Term Exam

Tuesday March 19 / Thursday March 21
Spring Break No Class

ARCHITECTURE, MOBILITY, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND VIRTUAL REALITY

Tuesday March 26

Lecture: Rolling Through the Landscape and Spatial Surrounds: Trains and Panoramas

Reading Assignment:

- a.) Chapter 3, "The Panoramas of the Battle of Sedan: Obedience through Presence," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 90-139.

Thursday March 28

Quiz #8 and Discussion

Tuesday April 2

Lecture: Mobile Prosthetics: Automobiles and Highways

Reading Assignment:

- a.) Paul Mason Fotsch, "The Building of a Superhighway Future at the New York World's Fair," *Cultural Critique*, no. 48 (Spring 2001) 65-97.

Thursday April 4

Quiz #9 and Discussion

Tuesday April 9

Lecture: Virtual Realities in Painting and Photography

- a) Chapter 4, "Intermedia Stages of Virtual Reality in the Twentieth Century: Art as Inspiration for Evolving Media," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 140-191.

Thursday April 11

Lecture: Virtual Realities Constructed, Edited, and Made: Film and Montage

- a.) David Bordwell, "The Idea of Montage in Soviet Art and Film," *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 11, No.2 (Spring, 1972) 9-17.

Tuesday April 16

Film Screening *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) Directed by Dziga Vertov

Thursday April 18

Quiz #10 and Discussion

Distribution of Final Exam Review

VIRTUAL REALITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Tuesday April 23

Lecture: The Digital Image in Art

Reading Assignment:

- a.) Chapter 5, "Virtual Art – Digital! The Natural Interface," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 192-211.
- b.) Chapter 6, "Spaces of Knowledge," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 212-269.

Thursday April 25

Quiz #11 and Discussion

Tuesday April 30

Lecture: Telecommunications and Biology in Art

Reading Assignment:

- a.) Chapter 7, "Telepresence: Art and History of An Idea," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 270-295.

b.) Chapter 8, "Evolution," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 296-337.

Thursday May 2

Quiz #12, Discussion, and Final Exam Review

FINAL EXAM TBA