
ADA288

Web Art, Design & Culture

Course Description

An investigation of practical, historical, and theoretical issues related to art and design on the Internet. Students write short essays, work with HTML, CSS & basic jQuery plugins to create web-based artworks, and design an information-based site. Beyond acquiring these basic skills, emphasis is on examining the history of the Internet, cultural implications of web technologies, and creative use of web technologies.

Keywords: net.art, media, performance, digital photography, tactical media, remix, sampling, information visualization, interactive design, web design

Course Goals

- Learn the history of web based technologies, and their precursors
- Develop critical skills, understand information design, and use basic programming with HTML and CSS
- Investigate the ways in which these and other web technologies have impacted online and offline culture
- Use these skills to make informed, challenging web based art work

Requirements

Students are expected to attend lectures and demonstrations, complete exercises and assignments, participate in class discussions, prepare individual research presentations, and create great art for a final project that demonstrates the skills learned in the course. Much of the material in this course is technical, each week builds on the material covered in previous weeks; attendance is necessary to keep up.

Evaluation & Grading

Assignments must be completed before class on the due date. Assignments may be re-worked at any point in the semester to reflect the feedback expressed during critiques and in consultation with the professor. Grading is based on conceptual and aesthetic merit as well as technical execution and effort (as in any arts course). Late assignments will be significantly downgraded. Attendance and participation in discussions is required.

Fall 2011

Section 01: Mondays 12:30-4:20

Section 02: Mondays 5:30-9:20

Professor Grady Gerbracht

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Office: AIMM 312

Office Hours: Mondays 4:30-5, Tuesdays 3-5
and by appointment

Materials

Required text: Adobe Dreamweaver
CS5 Classroom in a Book

It is recommended that you buy a
USB flash drive to back up and
transport your files

Milestones

Week 6

Project 1, Information design or
portfolio site due

Week 10

Project 2: website parody/ hack/
intervention due

Week 14

Project 3 (final project) due during
final exam week

Final grades will be based on class participation, assignments and projects. Class participation means more than simply speaking in class – it means preparing for class by carefully reading the assigned material, taking careful notes on the material presented in class, and asking thoughtful questions about the work we are discussing. Additionally, it means responding to the observations of your colleagues, in a serious, considered, yet open and creative manner which helps to forward a collective discussion.

Grading Breakdown

Assignments (various)	20%
Project 1 simple site	15%
Project 2 hack or parody	25%
Project 3 (final project)	30%
Participation	10%

Assignments

Assignment 1: critical evaluation of good and bad web sites due week 2

First, purchase the Adobe Dreamweaver CS5 Classroom in a Book. Then comb through the more than 255 Million sites on the Internet today and share with the class two examples each of web sites that you think are good and bad. Try to avoid obvious examples. Be creative. Post the urls of your chosen sites to the course discussion forum/blog along with a short paragraph explaining why you think each site is good or bad and explain your evaluation criteria. Please do not use examples that were used in my lectures or class demonstrations. Also be prepared to articulate your criticism or admiration for these sites in a class discussion.

Assignment 2: simple HTML due week 4

For this assignment, you will be required to create two simple web pages using the HTML tags that we covered in class. Complete the exercises in chapter 2 of the Adobe Classroom in a book. For the first page you will write and format your own HTML code with a plain text editor like Notepad (Windows) or TextEdit (Mac). Note: In TextEdit, you may need to choose Format > Format As Plain Text before you can save the file as .html. The second page will be created with Dreamweaver. Compare the two methods of generating web pages. Note how HTML is used to structure web pages in both plain text and Dreamweaver WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) software. Extra work will be reflected in your grade. You could, for example add the following elements to your sites: a list of items, a photo gallery with at least three images. To do this, you'll need to create at least three separate pages (one image per page). You will need to use hyperlinks to link your pages together. Each image should also include a short description.

Please be sure to validate your web pages using the HTML Validator before submitting your assignment.

When you are finished coding your pages, please upload them to your server space. Then, post a link to each web page in the course discussion forum/blog

Assignment 3: basic CSS formatting due week 5

Read chapters 3 and 4 in the book and complete the corresponding exercises. Create a Cascading Style Sheet for each of the web pages that you developed last week. This assignment will help you gain a better understanding of how to use CSS to stylize an HTML document. Feel free to experiment with properties such as: color, background, border, padding, etc. Be sure to validate your web pages using the CSS Validator before submitting your assignment.

When you are finished styling your pages, upload them to your server space. Then, post a link to each web page in the course discussion forum/blog

Assignment 4: more CSS formatting due week 6

Read chapter 6 in the book and complete the corresponding exercise. This assignment should help you to better understand how CSS rules appear in code view and in the CSS Styles panel. It is not necessary to post anything this week. Just complete the exercise on your own

Assignment 5: written response to reading due week 11

Submit a ½ -1 page proposal for your final project. Please think deeply about how the technologies we have discussed this semester can be used to create a meaningful experience for users across the vast distances via the web. You may choose to continue investigating aspects of projects 1 & 2 as long as you really take them further, or you can propose an entirely new project all together. Keep your proposal realistic, but challenge yourself. Each of your projects should be a little more complex than the last so that you are trying some new skills or techniques with each, not just cutting and pasting code or ideas from your other projects.

Projects

Project 1: Information design site due week 6

Can be a portfolio site for your own work (or someone else), a research site, blog site, club site, interest group, etc. You must design and implement the site through 3 levels of navigation. Please validate your HTML and CSS with the corresponding validators. Post the link to your site to the course blog on SOCS before class on week 6.

Project 2: Intervention/site parody/hack due week 10

This site should be more complex than the last two in both form and content. For examples of ways artists have creatively used web based technologies to make interventions, refer to the lectures and readings on tactical media, web art and hacktivism. What does it mean to parody or hack a preexisting site? Can the web be used to subvert the dominant paradigm? If so, how? You must design and implement a web based intervention, hack or parody site through at least 4 levels of navigation. Please validate your HTML and CSS with the corresponding validators. Keep in mind that you are making an intervention. What issues matter most to you in your life? Use techniques of over identification, activism, parody, etc. to make a critical commentary on an issue that is meaningful to you.

Examples of artists or artist collectives engaged with tactical media include: Laibach, RTMark, The Yes Men, Electronic Disturbance Theater, Critical Art Ensemble, Carbon Defense League, Institute for Applied Autonomy, 0100101110101101.ORG, Bureau of Inverse Technology, Ubermorgen, Irrational, subRosa, and I/O/D, and others. Have a look at their work to help inspire project Ideas.

Project 3: final project due finals week

Keeping in mind all the knowledge and skills you have acquired this semester, think very deeply about how you will go about making an Art piece that utilizes the web as a vehicle to express ideas, be critical, tell a story, convey an emotion, speak truth to power, raise questions etc. The concept and content are entirely up to you. As liberating as it will be to not have me dictate content, you may find complete freedom to be paralyzing. If necessary review the various historical movements and themes we have discussed this semester for inspiration. This piece should incorporate image and text, express a very clear concept and have at least 5 links or layers of navigation. Sometimes simple is the best route to express your ideas. Have a strong concept and make sure that all details and aspects of your project reflect that concept. Please validate your HTML and CSS with the corresponding validators.

Calendar

<p>Week one September 6</p>	<p>Historical Context Course Introduction, student introductions Lecture: History of web technologies Demo: Lab, Facilities, Accounts, Access</p>	<p>Assignment 1: get book, research good and bad web sites and post Read: Vannevar Bush “As We May Think” Tim Berners Lee’s historic proposal “The Web is Dead. Long Live the Internet” By Chris Anderson and Michael Wolff in Wired Magazine</p>
<p>Week two September 12</p>	<p>Assignment 1 due Intro to web design and a critical look at software Lecture: the good, the bad, and the ugly Discuss: your examples of good and poor design, with an emphasis on critical discourse and design issues</p>	<p>Assignment 2: Read chapter 2, do exercise. Create and post two simple web pages using HTML tags Read: Matthew Fuller, “It looks like you’re writing a Letter” “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” by Nicholas Carr</p>
<p>Week three September 19</p>	<p>Introduction to HTML Discuss: assigned readings Demo: plain text html coding, WYSWYG coding, FTP from FTP client(s) & from within Dreamweaver</p>	<p>Assignment 3: Read chapters 3 and 4 in the book and complete the corresponding exercises. Create a Cascading Style Sheet for each of the web pages that you developed last week.</p>
<p>Week four September 26</p>	<p>Assignment 2 due Introduction to CSS – the box model Discuss: assigned readings Demo: CSS</p>	<p>Assignment 4: Read chapter 6 in the book and complete the corresponding exercise</p>
<p>Week five October 3</p>	<p>Assignment 3 due Demo: working with images lab time to work on project 1</p>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Ross, Lecture including 21 <i>Distinctive Characteristics of Net.Art</i> • Rachel Greene, <i>Web Work: A History of Internet Art</i>
<p>Week six October 10</p>	<p>Project 1 & Assignment 4 due Critique: Project 1 Discuss: assigned readings Lecture: Net Art</p>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawrence Lessig, “Lucasfilm’s phantom menace” • Lawrence Lessig, “Make Way for Copyright Chaos” • Lawrence Lessig, “Protecting Mickey Mouse at Art’s Expense” • Lawrence Lessig, “Free Culture Transcript”
<p>Week seven October 24</p>	<p>Download Sample Remix Discuss: assigned readings Lecture: Copyright, Copy Left lab time to work on project 2</p>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lev Manovich, Remixability • Lev Manovich, What comes after remix?

Week eight October 31	Discuss: assigned readings Lecture: Remix Culture Demo: how to dupe a site lab time to work on project 2	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The ABC of Tactical Media,” by David Garcia and Geert Lovink • “The Language of Tactical Media,” by Joanne Richardson • “On the Tactic of Tactics,” McKenzie Wark http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors2/warktext2.html • Mattathias Schwartz, The Trolls Among Us http://nytimes.com/2008/08/03/magazine/03trolls-t.html
Week nine November 7	Discuss: assigned readings Lecture: Tactical Media and Culture Jamming lab time to work on project 2	Assignment 5: post proposal for final project
Week ten November 14	Open lab time for students to work on Project 2	
Week eleven November 21	Project 2 Due Critique: Project 2 Discuss: project proposals	
Week twelve November 28	Lecture: Web 2.0 lab time to work on final project	
Week thirteen December 5th	lab time to work on final project	
Week fourteen December 19th	Final project due Present final projects in class	

Additional Resources

Good design features <http://www.ratz.com/featuresgood.html>
Most popular web sites <http://mostpopularwebsites.net/>
HTML tutorial <http://www.html.net/tutorials/html/>
CSS tutorial <http://www.html.net/tutorials/css/introduction.asp>
CSS <http://webdesignfromscratch.com/introduction-to-css.cfm>
HTML Validator <http://validator.w3.org/>
CSS Validator <http://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator>

Selected TCNJ Policies

TCNJ's final examination policy is available on the web: <http://www.tcnj.edu/~academic/policy/finaevaluations.htm>

Attendance

Every student is expected to participate in each of his/her courses through regular attendance at lecture and laboratory sessions. It is further expected that every student will be present, on time, and prepared to participate when scheduled class sessions begin. At the first class meeting of a semester, instructors are expected to distribute in writing the attendance policies which apply to their courses. While attendance itself is not used as a criterion for academic evaluations, grading is frequently based on participation in class discussion, laboratory work, performance, studio practice, field experience, or other activities which may take place during class sessions. If these areas for evaluation make class attendance essential, the student may be penalized for failure to perform satisfactorily in the required activities. Students who must miss classes due to participation in a field trip, athletic event, or other official college function should arrange with their instructors for such class absences well in advance. The Office of Academic Affairs will verify, upon request, the dates of and participation in such college functions. In every instance, however, the student has the responsibility to initiate arrangements for make-up work. Students are expected to attend class and complete assignments as scheduled, to avoid outside conflicts (if possible), and to enroll only in those classes that they can expect to attend on a regular basis. Absences from class are handled between students and instructors. The instructor may require documentation to substantiate the reason for the absence. The instructor should provide make-up opportunities for student absences caused by illness, injury, death in the family, observance of religious holidays, and similarly compelling personal reasons including physical disabilities. For lengthy absences, make-up opportunities might not be feasible and are at the discretion of the instructor. The Office of Academic Affairs will notify the faculty of the dates of religious holidays on which large numbers of students are likely to be absent and are, therefore, unsuitable for the scheduling of examinations. Students have the responsibility of notifying the instructors in advance of expected absences. In cases of absence for a week or more, students are to notify their instructors immediately. If they are unable to do so they may contact the Office of Records and Registration. The Office of Records and Registration will notify the instructor of the student's absence. The notification is not an excuse but simply a service provided by the Office of Records and Registration. Notifications cannot be acted upon if received after an absence. In every instance the student has the responsibility to initiate arrangements for make-up work.

TCNJ's attendance policy is available on the web: <http://www.tcnj.edu/~recreg/policies/attendance.html>

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic dishonesty is any attempt by the student to gain academic advantage through dishonest means, to submit, as his or her own, work which has not been done by him/her or to give improper aid to another student in the completion of an assignment. Such dishonesty would include, but is not limited to: submitting as his/her own a project, paper, report, test, or speech copied from, partially copied, or paraphrased from the work of another (whether the source is printed, under copyright, or in manuscript form). Credit must be given for words quoted or paraphrased. The rules apply to any academic dishonesty, whether the work is graded or ungraded, group or individual, written or oral.

TCNJ's academic integrity policy is available on the web: <http://www.tcnj.edu/~academic/policy/integrity.html>

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Any student who has a documented disability and is in need of academic accommodations should notify the professor of this course and contact the Office of Differing Abilities Services (609-771-2571). Accommodations are individualized and in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992.

TCNJ's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policy is available on the web: <http://www.tcnj.edu/~affirm/ada.html>