AR312 CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES IN NEW MEDIA:
systems, mechanisms, and the instruments of power

Trevor Paglen. "Detachment 3, Air Force Flight Test Center, Groom Lake, NV: Distance ~ 26 miles" (2008)

Seminar Leader: **Heba y. amin**
Course Times: **Wed 15:15 – 18:30**
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Office Hours: **Wed 14:00 – 15:00, or appointment by email**

Course Description

This course will examine the domain of critical social practice and the broad range of art and artists who scrutinize systems of power and data-gathering methods utilized by current industries and governments. Who has control over information? What role do artists play in maintaining sovereignty of information? How can they contribute to the protection of data and privacy? Students will explore works of art that utilize forms of hacking, intervention, cloning, surveillance, and parody to critique and challenge pre-existing systems, mechanisms, and instruments of power. They will addresses "new media" as a medium that critically questions the influences of contemporary technology and explore

ownership of identity within the context of contemporary technological constructs.

This course will help students nurture their skills in social analysis and criticism through their art and design practice. Lectures and regular exercises will introduce students to conceptual works of art that relay new meanings through the manipulation and social re-engineering of techno-semiotic structures. Students may work with graphics, computer hardware, software, video, the body, and public space among other things.

Course objectives

By the end of this course students will:

• Acquire a broad survey of contemporary, new media artists
• Analyze the relationship between society and its art and cultural production, especially as it
   relates to new media studies
• Identify important arguments in the field of media studies
• Utilize interdisciplinary methods for creative thinking
• Demonstrate their ability in visualizing abstract ideas
• Understand the importance of concept in creative expression
• Have a greater knowledge and experience of a variety of art/design media and their use
• Use their technical skills in new ways
• Improve skills for articulating criticisms and defenses of creative ideas

Class Format

Class periods will be made up of lecture/demonstration time, class exercises, studio work time, discussions, student presentations and group reviews of work. Assignments will include readings, analyses of your own and others' work, and specified projects.

Requirements

You are expected to present your work at critiques, participate in critiques of your own and others' work, and show respect for your colleagues at all times. You are expected not just to "be" in class, but also to contribute to the class; your final grade will reflect your contribution to the class as well as the quality of your work. This means that you respect whoever is presenting and keep your laptop closed until it is appropriate for you to work on your own work.

ATTENDENCE

Attendance for this class is very important as it is not just about finishing projects outside of class but engaging in dialogue and brainstorming ideas. As such, your attendance will be considered and absences will affect your grade. More than two absences will drop your grade per absence (a B+ will become a B) and subsequently for each absence.

For periods of illness or leaves of absence, please consult the student handbook for regulations. Absences will be unexcused unless approved by instructor.

GRADING POLICY

Projects are graded according to the following criteria:

• **Concept**: ideas behind the work, creativity, creative problem solving
• **Technique and Presentation**: neatness, care in the making and execution of work. Was it presented effectively?
• **Objectives**: how successfully the criteria of the project goals have been fulfilled, is there understanding in the course material?
• **Writing and research component**: how well ideas are expressed in writing, sufficient research to support idea

Each criterion accounts for roughly a quarter of the grade for each project.

GRADE	CHARACTERISTICS
A	**Exceptional.** Student coherently integrates examples with explanations or analysis in both written and creative work. The work reflects in-depth engagement with the semester topic.
B	**Satisfactory.** Student is reasonably focused, and explanations or analysis in written and creative work are mostly based on examples or other evidence. Work reflects moderate engagement with the semester topic.
C	**Underdeveloped.** Student shows little consideration of alternative perspectives, and few connections are made between ideas. The work reflects passing engagement with the semester topic.
D	**Limited.** Student is unfocused, or simply rehashes previous ideas, and displays no evidence of engagement with the semester topic.
F	**No Credit.** Student is missing and shows no understanding or engagement with the course.

POLICY ON LATE SUBMISSIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Only under excused circumstances will late assignments be accepted, in which case it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and will not receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Please Consult the Student Handbook for Regulations.

COURSE WORK

Course work consists of four main components:

1. **Projects**: these projects make up the bulk of your work for the class. You will have <u>2 projects</u> for the duration of the semester. They will be introduced in class and you will be given time in class to develop, discuss, and work on them. You are expected to work outside of class to complete your projects. A typical expectation for a project-based class is minimum 6 hours a week.

=50% of final course grade (25% for each project)

2. Calls Exercises (5 exercises, 5% for each project)
=25% of final course grade

3. Written response (Transmediale)
=5% of final course grade

4. Contribution to the class: active class participation in class discussions, group critiques and personal blog
= 20% of final course grade

COURSE MATERIALS

• laptop/camera
• other materials as determined by your project proposals

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be grounds for awarding a grade of "F" for the entire course.

CLASS READINGS

- Papadopoulos, Dimitris, Niamh Stephenson, and Vassilis Tsianos. *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the Twenty-first Century*. London: Pluto, 2008. Print.
- Storey, David. *Territories*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012. Print.
- Gevers, Ine, Iris Van Der Tuin, Petran Kockelkoren, Dennis Kerckhoffs, and Friso Wiersum. *Hacking Habitat: Art of Control: Art, Technology and Social Change*. Utrecht: Niet Normaal Foundation, 2016. Print.
- Shanken, Edward A. *Art in the Information Age: Cybernetics, Software, Telematics, and the Conceptual Contributions of Art and Technology to Art History and Theory*. N.p.: n.p., 2001. Print.
- Weller, Toni. *The Information State: A Historical Perspective on Surveillance*. N.p.: Routledge, n.d. Print.

* texts will be provided digitally

COURSE SCHEDULE

Feb 1	<u>Hacking as an Attitude: Introduction to the Hacker Culture and its early pioneers</u> Artists: The Mentor, Marcel Duchamp, 0100101110101101.ORG, Jodi.org, Vuc Cosic, I/O/D, Surveillance Camera Players, Josh On, Natalie Jeremijemko, Net artists and more In-class reading: "The Conscience of a Hacker" The Mentor
Feb 3 -5	*Attend one lecture at The Transmediale Conference*:* *https://2017.transmediale.de/festival/2017/program/pre-list* *visit exhibition* *Write a one-page response*
Feb 8	<u>Hacking as an Attitude: Introduction to the Hacker Culture and its early pioneers</u> Class Activity: Hack Exercise Presentations: Hack successes and failures Discussion: Definitions of a hack; social criticism in art practice; Reflections on existing physical structures/systems *Required reading*: "Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the 21st Century" Dimitris Papadopoulos, Niamh Stephenson, Vassilis Tsianos "Territories: The Claiming of Space" David Storey
Feb 15	<u>Hacking and Space: Political Boundaries</u> Artists: Heath Bunting, Julian Oliver, Danja Vasiliev, Aram Bartholl, Francis Alys, Bruce Nauman, Maya Lin, Katerina Šedá, Trevor Paglen and more Class Activity: Boundaries *Required reading*: "Breaking the Border: Surveillance, Digital Counter-Movements and the Politics of (In-)Visibility" Huub Dijstelbloem

Feb 22	<u>Hacking and Space: Political Boundaries</u> Presentations: Boundary successes and failures Discussion: Reflections on public architecture, property, local geography and infrastructure
March 1	<u>Hacking Identity and the Body</u> Lecture: Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, Yes Men, Walid Raad, Marina Abramovich, Orlan, Yoko Ono, Wafaa Bilal, Pietro Manzoni, Eduardo Kac, Roger 10-4, Tobias Leingruber and more Class Activity: Prosthetics
March 8	<u>Hacking Identity and the Body</u> Presentations: Personal prosthetic successes and failures Discussion: Reflections on systems of identity *Watch Yes Men documentary*
March 15	*Studio Visit*
March 22	***************************PROJECT 1 DUE***************************
March 29	<u>Hacking and Information: Big Brother and Big Data</u> *Visiting Lecturer* *Required reading*: "Nineteen Eighty-Four" Orwell, George, pp. 3-31 "The information state: An Historical perspective on surveillance" Weller, Toni, pp. 57-63 "Art in the Information Age: Technology and Conceptual Art" Edward Shanken Social Media Intervention
April 5	<u>Hacking and Information: Big Brother and Big Data</u> Presentations: Intervention in Social Media: successes and failures

	Discussion: Reflections on privacy structures, surveillance, and personal information
April 12	*************NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK*************
April 19	<u>Surveillance: Privacy and Resistance</u> *Data Security Workshop*
April 26	Artists: Trevor Paglen, Hasan Elahi, Sophie Calle, Thomas Koener, Jill Magid, David Taylor, Doug Rickard, Mishka Henner, Rabih Mroue, Heather Dewey-Hagborg and others Class Activity: Covert Operations Presentations: Covert Operations: successes and failures Discussion: The fine art of spying, ethics of surveillance, modern surveillance structures
May 3	<u>Cloning and Plagiarism: Who owns our images? Privacy laws and Found Footage</u> Artists: Rogers vs Koons, Kyle McDonald, Andy Warhol, Ai Wei Wei and others Project 2 Sketches - Feedback
May 10	Discussion: Ethics in cloning and plagiarism, Image and information ownership, Privacy laws, Manifesto for CCTV Filmmakers Studio time
May 17	***************************PROJECT 2 DUE***************************