

**AVT 280: Introduction to New Media Art**  
**Course Syllabus – Spring, 2012**  
**George Mason University**  
**College of Visual and Performing Arts**  
**School of Art**

**Course Information**

Section 001: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1030 - 1320

CRN 14569

Classroom: Art and Design Building, Rm. 1023

Instructor: Sean Watkins

Email: [swatkins@gmu.edu](mailto:swatkins@gmu.edu)

Phone: 703.993.1976

Office Hours: By appointment

Office: Art and Design, Rm. 2009

Prerequisites: AVT 104 and AVT 180, or permission of Instructor

Website: <http://beauty.gmu.edu/AVT280/AVT280-001/>

<http://swatkins280.wordpress.com/>

**Course Description**

Introduction to Digital Arts 4 credits, 2:4 ratio lecture to studio hours (4:2:4)

AVT 280 - Introduction to New Media Art Investigates ways in which contemporary artists employ tools of digital culture. Referencing issues important to cultural and societal awareness, students create meaningful works of art that demonstrate conceptual understanding and technical skill.

During the semester, we will explore digital software and hardware tools, digital artists, art history, and conceptual thinking to develop your own skills and create project work culled from these resources. You will be composing two dimensional artworks which will be designed to be viewed both printed and on the web using primarily Adobe Photoshop CS4, Apple Final Cut Pro, QuickTime, Internet technologies, and Dreamweaver CS4. Adobe Illustrator CS4 may be used as needed, and if time permits, two-dimensional animating software Adobe After Effects, Flash, or a combination of both will be introduced. We will draw upon University resources, readings, and the Internet to explore ways in which computers influence, contribute to and assist in the processes of making New Media art.

**From Wikipedia:** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_media\\_art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_media_art)

**New media art** is a genre that encompasses artworks created with [new media technologies](#), including [digital art](#), [computer graphics](#), [computer animation](#), [virtual art](#), [Internet art](#), [interactive art](#), [computer robotics](#), and art as [biotechnology](#). The term differentiates itself by its resulting cultural objects and social events, which can be seen in opposition to those deriving from old visual arts (i.e. traditional [painting](#), sculpture, etc.). This concern with medium is a key feature of much [contemporary art](#). New Media Art often involves interaction between artist and observer or between observers and the artwork, which responds to them. Yet, as several theorists and curators have noted, such forms of interaction, social exchange, participation, and transformation do not distinguish new media art but rather serve as a common ground that has parallels in other strands of contemporary art practice.[3] Such insights emphasize the forms of cultural practice that arise

concurrently with emerging technological platforms, and question the focus on technological media, per se.

New Media concerns are often derived from the [telecommunications](#), [mass media](#) and [digital](#) modes of delivery the artworks involve, with practices ranging from [conceptual](#) to [virtual art](#), [performance](#) to [installation](#).

## **Course Objectives**

This course seeks to provide students with further skills in which to explore the creative process of New Media Art. Students will be encouraged to develop an awareness of issues involving all mediums of art and artists, aesthetics, and past and evolving methodologies in using technology for ethical, communicative, and research purposes. At the end of this course, students should be able to exhibit extensive abilities and be comfortable with theories behind New Media, and the technologies available to explore and experiment with relating ideas and the aesthetics of social and cultural awareness. Through critiques and in class demonstrations, students should be able to explain and discuss the content, methodology and technological aspects of their work and others. Students should have acquired competency with computer skills, and general knowledge of working in a digital environment as we progress through the semester.

## **Course Requirements**

### **Assignments and Projects:**

Projects with corresponding preparatory work will be assigned during the semester. Included in the projects will be at least two major assignments, with a parallel web page that posts your work, and simultaneously shows your progress in web page development. The third (and final) assigned project will be crafted in both print and web based medias.

Illustrator Project “Recycling Merit Badge”

Project 1: Compositing in Photoshop: Self Portrait/Identity

Project 2: Photomontage: “Recycling with Photoshop”

Project 3: Research and video: Mapping/Conceptual Metaphor TBD

Ongoing: Wordpress blog; research, writings, readings posted online

Group participation: FloatingLab Collective 5x5

Assignment and project guidelines and details will be given out in class. A class schedule accompanies this syllabus which gives approximate project due dates. Projects will be critiqued in class. Throughout the semester, students will conduct creative research related to their projects. All projects will be required on the due date assigned. Unexcused absences on critique or exam days may result in a lowered grade. Students who miss a critique will miss critical feedback from the professor and his/her peers. All student projects and assignments must be based on original ideas of the student and must incorporate original artwork, that is, artwork produced by the student. Projects must follow the assignments stated goal.

When reading assignments are given, students should be prepared to discuss these assignments during class periods. There will be in class discussions related to the history and research involved with your projects, as well as the project due at mid-term. Midterm projects must demonstrate an understanding of artists, and contemporary and prior artists works, their visual contributions to the way we understand events and critical thinking about how your art relates to theirs. The final project, due at the end of the semester will reflect a collection of print, web, and written essay on your work.

On the due dates for projects or preparatory work, you must come to class with the appropriate materials ready for critique or discussion.

### **Exams and Quizzes:**

Exams and quizzes are listed on the class schedule. (If assigned).

### **Highly Recommended Texts**

Adobe Photoshop CS5 Classroom in a Book: by [Adobe Creative Team](#). Published by [Adobe Press](#). Published: Nov 10, 2008 Copyright 2009 **Book** ISBN-10: 0-321-57379-X

ISBN-13: 978-0-321-57379-7

**eBook** ISBN-10: 0-321-57400-1 ISBN-13: 978-0-321-57400-8

Online Readings as assigned.

### **Other Texts**

Dreamweaver CS5 for Windows and Macintosh: Visual QuickStart Guide, by Tom Negrino, Dori Smith. Copyright 2009 by Peachpit Press (Book) ISBN-10: 0-321-57352-8; ISBN-13: 978-0-321-57352-0 (eBook) ISBN-10: 0-321-61831-9; ISBN-13: 978-0-321-61831-3

Photoshop CS5, Volume 2: Visual QuickStart Guide, by [Elaine Weinmann](#), Peter Lourekas  
Published Jul 7, 2009 by Peachpit Press ISBN: 0321635035

Photoshop User Magazine <http://www.photoshouser.com> This magazine is the official publication of the National Association of Photoshop Professionals (NAPP). As a NAPP member, you automatically receive Photoshop User eight times a year.

### **Supplies**

A portable personal storage device is required for this class in order to back up and carry your files to and from class. Projects and weekly assignments will be added to a digital portfolio stored on your USB Drives, portable hard drives, DVD's or CDs throughout the semester. A variety of devices are available to choose from, including Firewire drives, and USB Flash or "Thumb drives". These drives are available online (Google search), from stores such as Costco, Best Buy, or George Mason's Patriot Computer Store.

### **New Media Studios and Open Labs**

The schedule of classes and open labs will be posted outside the digital classrooms in the Art and Design Building within the first week of classes. SoA New Media schedules are also posted on the web at <http://soa.gmu.edu/LabSchedule.html>. Open labs are held in Rm. 2157 of the Art and Design Building (Top floor lobby area). Studio classrooms may be accessed when classes are not in session and while faculty or staff permit. They begin the second week of classes, and are staffed by *Lab Assistants* and SoA staff. *Lab Assistants* are students hired from within George Mason's student body. Their job is to provide SoA students with a secure and reliable facility to work outside normally scheduled class hours. As Lab Assistants may not be SoA students, they may not be familiar with the particular project, software, or hardware issues you may need help with. Please ask your teacher or other New Media staff for help with these issues.

Additionally, the Star Lab, located on the second and third floor of the Johnson Center, is available for you to use. For more information, visit the Star Lab's web site (<http://media.gmu.edu>). Star Lab configures their facilities as closely as possible with the same versions of Adobe software that the School of Art New Media Classrooms use, but as they are a

University facility, SoA cannot always guarantee this. While there are a few Macs at the Star Lab please note that the Star Lab is primarily comprised of PCs. An introductory tour and introduction to Star Labs will be held early in the semester. You should familiarize yourself with Star Lab's facilities as soon as possible.

## **Course Expectations**

### **Attendance:**

Attendance factors significantly in your final grade. Students are expected to attend every class, and attendance will be taken. Students need to be on time, and attend the entire class. As each class builds on the previous one, it is very difficult to keep up with new information and concepts being introduced if you miss class, arrive late, or leave early. Chronically late arrival and early departure from class may result in a lowered grade. Unexcused absences on critique or exam days may result in a lowered grade. Three occurrences of arriving late to class will equal one unexcused absence. Three unexcused absences will result in a lowered grade. An unexcused absence will subtract four points off of your attendance grade.

### **Missed Assignments:**

Students are responsible for missed assignments and lectures and must contact a fellow student for missed assignments. Students who are falling behind in their work need to make an appointment to see me before problems become critical.

### **Class participation:**

It is expected that you complete assigned readings before class, and that you come prepared to discuss them in class. Working on an assigned project during lecture times may cause you to be unprepared for additional materials that will be introduced that day.

There will be scheduled time to work on projects in class. We will be critiquing assigned projects on their due dates. Participation in critiques is extremely important to the learning process not only for you, but also for others in the class. Come to critiques expecting to offer opinions and evaluations in a constructive manner. Aesthetic and technical aspects of projects will be discussed and analyzed.

## **Grading Policy**

Grades will be determined based on project work, assignments, critiques, active participation, tests, and attendance. All assignments/projects are due on the specified due date. A late assignment/project will result in a grade reduction. Any assignment/project that is handed in on time may be redone for a better grade. Only projects that are turned in on time will be accepted for a re-grade. The percentage breakdown is as follows:

Project 1:	25%
Project 2:	25%
Project 3:	35%
Attendance, Class Participation, Critiques, Research:	15%

<b>A+: 97-100%</b>	<b>A: 93-96%</b>	<b>A-: 90-92%</b>	<b>– Excellent, Outstanding work.</b>
<b>B+: 87-89%</b>	<b>B: 84-86%</b>	<b>B-: 80-82%</b>	<b>– Good, Above average work.</b>
<b>C+: 77-79%</b>	<b>C: 74-76%</b>		<b>– Average, Satisfactory work.</b>
<b>C-: 70-72%</b>			<b>– Average, but unsatisfactory work.</b>
<b>D: 60-69%</b>			<b>– Below Average, Unsatisfactory, passing work.</b>
<b>F: Below 60%</b>			<b>– Failure</b>

**\*Please note that everything on this syllabus is subject to change.**

### **University and AVT Department Policies**

In accordance with George Mason University policy, **turn off all beepers, cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class.** The instructor of the class will keep his/her cell phone active to assure receipt of any Mason Alerts in a timely fashion; or in the event that the instructor does not have a cell phone, he/she will designate one student to keep a cell phone active to receive such alerts.

### **Commitment to Diversity**

This class will be conducted as an *intentionally* inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran's status, or physical ability.

### **Statement on Ethics in Teaching and Practicing Art and Design**

As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the School of Art adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

### **Open Studio Hours**

SOA teaching studios are open to students for extended periods of time mornings, evenings and weekends whenever classes are not in progress. Policies, procedures and schedules for studio use are established by the SOA studio faculty and are posted in the studios.

### **ArtsBus**

The dates for Spring 2012 ArtsBus trips are **Feb 25, March 31 and April 21**

**If you need ArtsBus credit** for this semester as part of your class assignment or AVT degree requirement, you must enroll in AVT 300. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment. If you plan/need to go on multiple ArtsBus trips this semester and need them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300. Please go to the ArtsBus website: <http://artsbus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy. Non-AVT majors do not need Artsbus credit BUT may need to go on the Artsbus for a class assignment. You can sign up for AVT 300 or buy a ticket for the bus at the Center of the Arts.

### **Visual Voices Lecture Series**

Visual Voices is a year-long series of lectures by artists, art historians and others about contemporary art and art practice. Visual Voices lectures are held on Thursday evenings from 7:20- 9:00 p.m. in Harris Theater.

### **Spring 2012**

January 26	John Mason	Art Business and Law
February 2	Tom Sherman,	Messages that Stick: Tom Sherman
February 16	Joel Snyder	The Visual Made Verbal

April 12 Sangram Majumdar  
April 26 Monica Amor

Recent Works  
Gego Weaving the Space In Between

### **Important Deadlines**

Last Day to Add	Tuesday, Jan 31
Last Day to Drop (No Tuition Penalty)	Tuesday, Jan 31
Selective Withdrawal Period	Mon Feb 27-Fri Mar 30
Incomplete work from Fall 2011 due to instructor	Fri Mar 30

Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for *late adds* (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the SOA office (or the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid being processed), LATE ADD fee will apply. Requests for non-selective *withdrawals* and *retroactive adds* (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student's major is located. For AVT majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, Performing Arts Building A407.

### **Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences**

If you have a diagnosed disability or learning difference and you need academic accommodations, please inform me at the beginning of the semester and contact the Disabilities Resource Center (SUB I room 234, 703-993-2474). You must provide me with a faculty contact sheet from that office outlining the accommodations needed for your disability or learning difference. All academic accommodations must be arranged in advance through the DRC.

### **Official Communications via GMU E-Mail**

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

### **Attendance Policies**

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

### **Honor Code**

Students in this class are bound by the Honor Code, as stated in the George Mason University Catalog. The honor code requires that the work you do as an individual be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas. (This does not prohibit collaborative work when it is approved by your instructor.) As a faculty member, I have an obligation to refer the names of students who may have violated the Honor Code to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously.

No grade is important enough to justify cheating, for which there are serious consequences that will follow you for the rest of your life. If you feel unusual pressure about your grade in this or any other course, please talk to me or to a member of the GMU Counseling Center staff.

Using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is *plagiarism*, a very serious Honor Code offense. It is very important to understand how to prevent committing plagiarism when using material from

a source. If you wish to quote verbatim, you must use the exact words and punctuation just as the passage appears in the original and must use quotation marks and page numbers in your citation. If you want to paraphrase or summarize ideas from a source, you must put the ideas into your own words, and you must cite the source, using the APA or MLA format. (For assistance with documentation, I recommend Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*.) The exception to this rule is information termed *general knowledge*—information that is widely known and stated in a number of sources. Determining what is general knowledge can be complicated, so the wise course is, “When in doubt, cite.”

Be especially careful when using the Internet for research. Not all Internet sources are equally reliable; some are just plain wrong. Also, since you can download text, it becomes very easy to inadvertently plagiarize. If you use an Internet source, you must cite the exact URL in your paper and include with it the last date that you successfully accessed the site.

### **Writing Center**

Students who are in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). The services of the Writing Center are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis.