

HDCC

106 - LAB

Course Description

At DCC we aim to provide a living-learning environment that challenges traditional classroom boundaries and embraces hybridity in both theory and practice. This course is therefore aggressively interdisciplinary, coupling hands-on experimentation with a curriculum designed to focus awareness on the historical, theoretical, and cultural contexts in which digital creativity happens. As a result, an integral component of HDCC106 will be your lab. Students will focus on either the “digital,” on “culture” or on “creativity.” Along with dialogue and discussion each lab will provide an introduction to Adobe Creative Suite. Labs will meet every other week for three hours and operate in tandem with class lectures.



Introduction to Digital Cultures and Creativity

Spring 2013

“CULTURES” LAB

Professor

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The “Cultures” Lab

How do digital technologies shape and/or reflect culture? Why has cyberspace been connected to both the end of history and geography? This lab will look at digital technology through a cultural lens. In particular, specific focus will be given on issues regarding the sustainability of digital technologies and on developing a long-term approach toward design. Through experimental and creative projects students will explore ideas of biomimicry, planned obsolescence, e-topia and digital ecology. In addition, case studies of artists, architects, educators and designers working with these ideas will be highlighted. Some of these include:

- Maya Lin: What is Missing (<http://www.whatismissing.net/#/home>)
- Rural Studio: (<http://apps.cadc.auburn.edu/rural-studio/Default.aspx>)
- Paul D. Miller (D.J Spooky): Sinfonia Antarctica (http://www.djspooky.com/art/terra_nova.php)
- Lynn Cazabon and Neal McDonald: Junkspace (<http://lynncazabon.com/>)
- The Long Now Foundation: (<http://longnow.org/>)
- Anthony Goh and Neil Mendonza: Escape (<https://vimeo.com/15769292>)
- Natalie Jeremijenko: (<http://howstuffismade.org/>)

Learning Outcomes

- Students will identify their own assumptions and values about emerging technologies and understand the underlying political, social, environmental, and ethical dimensions in these assumptions.
- Students will learn how organizations and artists develop methodologies for addressing the intersections of technology and “nature” and will creatively explore and critically analyze these strategies through hands-on projects.
- Students will understand the main questions and debates regarding planned obsolescence and cradle-to-cradle design.
- Students will gain practical skills with the Adobe Creative Suite.

Lab Readings:

Experts from the following texts will be required and will be discussed alongside lab assignments:

Survival of the Beautiful: Art, Science and Evolution

by David Rothenberg

Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature

by Janine M. Benyus

The Three Ecologies

by Félix Guattari

Assignments:

1) Ecological Footprint

This assignment will continue and expand upon the first semester project, "Digital Footprint," in which you explored ideas of presence and identity on the web. This "Ecological Footprint" will ask you to consider your current environmental impact as it relates to technology where you will explore the relationship evident between your digital and ecological footprint. There will be 3 parts to this assignment.

Part 1: Take a week and document your consumption. Consider how many digital devices you use and to what extent.

Part 2: Complete a life-cycle assessment of 2 digital devices you use daily.

Part 3: In response to the above, create an object or objects of your choice. These might take the form of photography, software, board games, drawings, paintings, audio, video, written narratives, collages, poetry, performances, etc. However, Photoshop must be utilized in some capacity. In addition, you must provide a 300 word critical analysis of the things you considered while working on this assignment.

2) Migrations Flows in Birds and Data

In her book, Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature, Janine M. Benyus states the following:

"In a biomimetic world, we would manufacture the way animals and plants do, using sun and simple compounds to produce totally biodegradable fibers, ceramics, plastics, and chemicals. Our farms, modeled on prairies, would be self-fertilizing and pest-resistant. To find new drugs or crops, we would consult animals and insects that have used plants for millions of years to keep themselves healthy and nourished. Even computing would take its cue from nature, with software that "evolves" solutions, and hardware that uses the lock-and-key paradigm to compute by touch."

This assignment will utilize ideas of biomimicry as the starting point for both lab discussion and creative work. In particular, we will look to birds as a way of re-thinking and visualizing data flow. First, as a group, you will go on a bird walk through the UMD campus with a guide. This journey must be documented through text, video, sound, or photo. In addition, individual research of local bird migration patterns will be completed. Your final project will incorporate all of this gathered information into a final data visualization. A 300 word critical analysis will also be required.

3) A Video Triptych

An image separated into three distinct but integrally connected panels, triptychs have been a visual device utilized by artists for centuries. This concept will be used as a jumping off point to discuss Felix Guattari's ideas of mental, social and environmental ecology.

For this assignment each student will be introduced to Adobe Premiere and create an original video triptych. Taking from Guattari's holistic approach the themes that must be addressed include technology, the environment and culture. Students must link ideas addressed by lab readings as well as lab discussions. The final project should be between 3-4 minutes. In addition, you must provide a 500 word critical analysis of the things that you considered while working on this assignment.

