

DIGITAL IMAGEMAKING 2/3

Arts 225/235, 727.2 (Graduate Photography)

Tuesdays, 2-5:50 pm*, I Building, Room 203

Instructor: Mariam Ghani

Office hours: Tuesdays, 1:30 – 2 PM, Klapper 431 (by prior appointment) or 5:50-6:20 pm in IB 203

Email: Mariam.Ghani@qc.cuny.edu

prerequisites: Digital Imagemaking 1, or permission of the instructor

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Digital Imagemaking 2/3 builds on knowledge and skills acquired in Digital Imagemaking 1 or equivalent outside experience through technical demonstrations, lab work, practical assignments, theoretical reading, classroom discussion, independent research, and field trips. Students will be introduced to and encouraged to experiment with new forms, techniques, and ideas in digital photography, image processing, and hybrid digital practices, and will be asked to think about both the formal qualities of images they find and produce, and the information those images carry in their content, metadata, and code. Students will complete three projects assigned by the instructor, and one final project of their own design, which must be pre-approved by the instructor. All projects will be presented for in-class peer critique. Students will also be introduced to a number of resources for in-depth, self-directed learning of specific techniques, and each student will be asked to explore one technique of particular interest to that student and then share their new skill set with the group. This independent research into advanced methods may, but does not have to, overlap with the form of the final project, and the instructor will be available to students for one-on-one advice and feedback during the independent research period. By prior arrangement with the instructor, students may spend the independent research period working towards a critical text or conducting archival research, rather than focusing on a technical topic; this work must also be shared with the group at the end of the research period.

Undergraduate students who have already taken Arts 225 or 235 with Professor Ghani, or graduate students enrolled through the Photography 727.2 course number, may take Digital Imagemaking as an independent projects class. These students will be required to produce the same number of projects as their peers (three smaller projects and one final project of more depth) and to present them for in-class critique on the same days. However, the independent projects students will be able to propose and design their own projects throughout the semester, not only for the final, and they may design their earlier projects as stages of a larger project with the instructor's approval. These students will meet with the instructor at the beginning of the semester to map out a plan for their first three projects, at which time the instructor will suggest readings, technical resources, historical research, field trips, and other resources appropriate to those projects. They will also be required to present some facet of their independent research to the entire class at the end of the general research period.

***Please note that unless it is a scheduled critique day, independent projects students will meet from 2-2:50 pm, while regularly enrolled students will meet from 2:50-5:50 pm. On days when a critique is scheduled, all students are asked to come in at 2 pm to join in the group critiques and present their own work to the larger group for feedback.**

This semester critiques/presentations are scheduled for 9/5, 9/26, 10/24, 11/28, and 12/5.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading, written responses, and discussion

If reading is required for the week, it will be indicated in the syllabus. All the required readings and technical resources are available online and the URLs are listed in the syllabus at the end of the course schedule. If you require a PDF or printed copy of the reading, please inform me beforehand.

When a reading is required, you are also required to write a brief (1-paragraph to 1-page) response to it (unless the schedule instructs you to respond by bringing a relevant image instead). Written responses should be typed and are due the same day as the reading. Please note that responses should not be summaries of the reading, but rather critical reflections on what you read. Find something in the text that sticks with you, and write about why it interests you, or why you disagree with it, or how it resonates with your own work or ideas. Or write about how the reading connects to the artists' work we have been looking at. If we have a guest lecture or a field trip, you will also be required to write a response to the lecture or field trip.

You should be prepared to discuss the reading in class based on your notes and written responses. You should also be looking at new photography on an ongoing basis – I will suggest some sites to check regularly, as well as some Instagram accounts to follow – and keeping some kind of file of images that inspire or provoke you. We will sometimes start class by sharing images that we've been looking at over the past week, so please be prepared to share something every week.

Occasionally, I may change the schedule of assigned readings to reflect the flow of discussion in the classroom. If you do not attend class, it is your responsibility to find out if such a change was made.

Assignments & final project

You are required to complete three projects assigned by the instructor, and one final project of your own design. You must submit a written 1-paragraph proposal for the final project, which must be discussed individually with the instructor before you may start work on the final project. Assignments are due for critique in class on the dates indicated in the course schedule, and may be revised to incorporate comments from critique over the following week before being submitted for a grade. Final projects are due on the last day of class, though we will have an opportunity for in-progress critiques before the semester ends. At the same time, you are asked to hand in a digital portfolio with final versions of all your projects from the semester, organized for grading. This can be submitted on a flash drive or by FTP, using Dropbox or the free FTP service hostb.org (please do NOT use Google Drive or WeTransfer).

If you are absent when a project is due for a grade, you may give your project to another student to hand in, or submit it electronically, or you must accompany your project the following week with documentation of an excused absence (illness or emergency). Please note whether an assignment is required to be submitted as prints, or can be submitted digitally. If prints are required, you should plan ahead so that you have time to submit prints to the on-demand system in the lab and pick them up before class starts.

You are expected to keep a physical or digital course notebook or sketchbook to develop ideas, make sketches, document experiments and results, document your critiques, and take notes during lectures and demonstrations. A tablet app may be used as your notebook, but a phone may not.

Lab & backup

You will need a valid Queens College user account to sign into the lab computers. Please report any technical problems that occur in the lab to the I Building lab staff. It is not your instructor's responsibility to resolve those problems.

I Building labs do not allow any food or drink into the lab areas. Please respect this rule. Remember: hot liquids can destroy thousands of dollars of technology in less than ten seconds.

Students are responsible for backing up all working and final files. Files are not guaranteed to remain on lab computers or camera memory cards. You should have at least a thumb drive, and preferably a 250 GB USB drive, as an external drive. Save early and often to your external drive, and be sure to back up your most important files (save them in two places). Corrupt, lost, or overwritten files will not be accepted as a valid reason for missing a project due date. Keep ALL files for each project until after the end of the semester.

Equipment checkout & printing

Equipment that can be checked out from the Klapper Digital Imaging Lab includes tripods, lights, seamless backgrounds, and portable background stands. There is only one DSLR camera available for checkout to Digital II/III students this semester, so if several of you need to check out the camera during the same week please let me know and we can hold a lottery, design a collaborative project, or organize a schedule for you to hand off the camera. You are welcome to use your own cameras and equipment for assignments, including phone cameras if they have enough resolution (we can look at your phones during the first week of class to check this).

You can also print-on-demand to a Digital-C printer (without paying for ink or paper). Please bookmark this link for the print ordering system: <http://www.photogize.com/bponet/main.aspx?cl=graphx646> and create an account if you have not done so already.

And here is a video explaining how to set up your printing for the Digital-C printer:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Rk-DmqiCH4&feature=youtu.be>

As advanced students, you can print different sizes of Digital-C prints during the semester, but in general we will use 8x10 prints for critique and you should edit your images down to final selection BEFORE printing in order to cut down on print waste. You may want to make some larger C-prints (16x20 or 20x24) for your final project, which you can order through the online system. Or you may want to experiment with even larger sizes or media other than photo paper, in which case you should consult with Matt in the lab about using the Epson large-format inkjet printer. We will likely visit the lab later in the semester to talk with him about different print media and methods.

The lab is open Mon-Thu, 9 am – 5 pm. If I have asked you to bring in prints for critique, please remember to allow at least one extra day for printing and another for pickup of prints. If you need to pick up your prints while the lab is closed, please write “leave in bin” in the special instructions field in the online ordering system, and your order will be left outside the door. Please save and return the envelopes in which your prints are delivered; the lab will re-use them.

Supplies & costs

essential: thumb drive (16-32 GB)

recommended: 250 GB – 1 TB USB drive (I recommend G-Tech)

digital camera (can be an SLR, a rangefinder style, or a recent phone)

recommended: extra memory cards & batteries, esp. for DSLRs, and an external USB card reader

tripod or other stabilizer (I recommend a Gorillapod – correct size depends on your camera size)
travel to Manhattan for field trip

ASSESSMENT & GRADING

Assignments	30%
Final project	20%
Written responses	10%
Presentation	10%
Class participation	30%

For independent projects students:

Projects 1-3	45%
Final project	30%
Class participation	25%

I assess writing assignments based on legibility, clarity of ideas, and demonstrated understanding of the material to which you are responding, with extra points for style.

I assess work on projects based on quality of ideas, artistic integrity of work, willingness to experiment, demonstration of effort, technical skills mastered, ability to explain your thought process, and success of execution.

I assess participation based on your attendance, first of all (you can't participate in critique if you don't show up; always show up, even if your own work isn't finished). Second, your preparation for and participation in class discussions, your use of time during tutorials and labs, and your effective balance of generosity of spirit, critical inquiry, and creative problem-solving in critiques.

Similarly, I assess presentations based on mastery of the material, ability to explain your ideas, and generosity with others in the role of discussion leader.

Assignments handed in late without an official excuse (i.e. note from the doctor or administration) will automatically be docked from A to A- after three days, A- to B+ after five days, B+ to B after a week, and so on.

Unexcused absences, latenesses, early departures or cuts will directly affect your grade. Students are expected to attend all classes. Three unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.

I will not change any grades unless you hand in a substantially revised project. I am happy to meet with you to suggest revisions, but I will not, under any circumstances, argue with you about your grade.

If you have to take an Incomplete in the course for medical or family reasons, please email or call me to work out a schedule for meetings and assignment submission next semester; I will be traveling quite a lot so it would be best to schedule in advance.

GRADE	QUALITY	EXPLORATION	WORK	DISCUSSIONS	ATTENDANCE
A	Outstanding	Insightful, generous, energetic	Excellent form & content	Always prepared for class, makes intelligent & considered contributions	Always present, work in on time
B	Good	Inquisitive, engaged	Good form & content	Usually prepared for class, able to make interesting contributions	Always present, work in on time
C	Average	Just sufficient	Holds together, but unconvincing	Not always prepared, only able to make obligatory contributions	Misses some classes, work sometimes late
D	Poor	Limited, formulaic	Work thrown together just before class	Only makes very limited contributions	Excessive absences, work late & incomplete
F	Unsatisfactory	Virtually none	Virtually none	Makes almost no contribution	Absent most of the time

COURSE POLICIES + PHILOSOPHY

All students must adhere to college-wide policies regarding plagiarism, academic integrity, computer and network use, health and safety, and students with disabilities. Academic integrity can be confusing in the age of appropriation, but please remember that if work is not your own, the source should be cited and documented appropriately. We will discuss fair use, appropriation, and the role/presentation of sources as part of our coursework.

During the course of this semester you may be shown artworks that include nudity, expressions of sexuality, strong language, political content, religious imagery, or other material that you may find personally difficult or offensive. If you anticipate that any particular material will present a problem for you, please let me know at the beginning of the semester, and I will try to notify you before such material is shown.

Education is cooperation. In this classroom we are all responsible for each other. All of you will be asked to both teach and learn from each other. This is also a course where you will have the scope to pursue independent research and develop your ideas over time. You can request additional feedback from me or your peers at any stage in the process. You should feel free to bring your own thoughts and interests into the classroom, while understanding that others in the room may have very different thoughts and interests. Please think of this course as a flexible space that can adjust as we get to know each other's strengths and needs.

COURSE SCHEDULE

*Please remember that the course schedule may change. If the schedule is changed, a new version will be distributed in class or via email. If you are not in class, it is your responsibility to make sure you have the latest version of the schedule.

Tuesday 8/29

WEEK 1: Introductions & expectations

Go over syllabus, fill out self-assessment survey, introduce lab facilities and equipment.

Look: sites & Instagram accounts to follow for new photography

Distribute list of NYC photo shows – you should visit at least three of these in the next month

Recommended reading: Martha Rosler, “In, around, and afterthoughts (on documentary photography)”

ASSIGNMENT #1: FIELD NOTES *due for critique Tuesday 9/5

Tuesday 9/5

WEEK 2

Due for critique: Field Notes assignment (digital)

Technical review: aperture and shutter speed, focal length and depth of field

Formal principles: color theory, focal points, symmetry and asymmetry, golden section

Look: William Eggleston, Stephen Shore, Fouad Elkoury, Alex Webb, Lyndsey Addario, Martha Rosler, Neil Chowdury, Teju Cole

Lab: shoot & compare phone pics to demo effects of different lenses etc

READING #1: Teju Cole, “Perfect and Unrehearsed”

9/7: Chelsea openings, 9/8: Brooklyn openings, 9/9: Lower East Side openings

Tuesday 9/12

WEEK 3

Due for discussion: reading #1 responses

Due for grade: Field Notes (in final order – numbered or composited into PDF)

Look: Bechers, Taryn Simon, Idris Khan, Penelope Umbrico, Lisa Oppenheimer, Walid Raad, Computers on Law & Order, I'm Google

Formal principles: repetition, unity, harmony, sequence, association

Lab: image capture, organization, and processing with Lightroom; batch processing with profiles & presets; exporting to disk and to other apps

READING #2: Teju Cole, “A Visual Remix”

ASSIGNMENT #2: SERIAL *due for critique Tuesday 9/26

9/13-17: Photoville Brooklyn

Tuesday 9/19 – no class – college on Thursday schedule

9/22-9/24: NY Artists Book Fair @ PS1/MoMA

Tuesday 9/26

WEEK 4

Due for discussion: reading #2 responses

Due for critique: Serial assignment (digital)

Discuss: How strong is each image alone? What is added (or subtracted) by making them a series? What were the principles used in ordering the series?

Technical review: compositing with Photoshop, non-destructive editing, drawing with Photoshop, Illustrator and sketch apps

Formal principles: layering, collage, scale, hierarchy, deconstruction, abstraction

Lab: setting up prints; printing options; working on the print surface

Tuesday 10/3

WEEK 5

Due for grade: Serial assignment (digital or prints, numbered in final sequence)

Look: photo books, artist's books, flipbooks; Never Odd or Even, War Primer 2, Triple Canopy projects

Discuss: text-image relationships

Technical overview: InDesign & Acrobat

Lab: use your Serial or Field Notes images and notes to mock up a multi-page InDesign layout

READING #3: Teju Cole, "Object Lesson"

Tuesday 10/10

WEEK 6

Due for discussion: reading #3 responses

Technical review: lighting

Lab: using scanners and camera stands to capture objects and patterns

Look: Pradeep Dalal, Chitra Ganesh, Petra Cortright, Michele Abeles, Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung, Wade Guyton, Joe Hamilton (indirect.flights), past Pattern v. Object projects

ASSIGNMENT #3: PATTERN V. OBJECT *due for critique Tues 10/24

READING #4: Data Ontology

10/14-10/15: Asian Contemporary Art Week Field Meeting

Tuesday 10/17

WEEK 7

Due for discussion: reading #4 responses

Discuss: data visualization, image code + metadata, steganography, disruptive design

Look: James Bridle, Josh Begley, David Birkin, Jonathan Hanahan, David Lu, Kari Altmann, Nancy Nowacek

Discuss: independent research and final project formats and methods

Tuesday 10/24

WEEK 8

Due for critique: Pattern v. Object assignment (prints)

How do the patterns & objects relate to each other? How do they integrate into a whole composition?

What techniques were used to composite the image, and were those the most effective methods that could have been used to achieve the effect desired?

Technical review: metadata, SEO, online portfolios, CMS; overview of online learning resources & code-sharing websites e.g. Github

Look: artists' websites; photo projects designed or reinvented for the web (AKAKurdistan)

Lab: exporting images for the web, persistent image tagging

Write proposals for independent research and final project

Tuesday 10/31

WEEK 9

Due for grade: Pattern v. Object assignment (prints)

Due for discussion: research & project proposals

Individual meetings to discuss proposals

READING #5: Hito Steyerl, "In Defense of the Poor Image"

Revise proposals based on feedback

Tuesday 11/7

WEEK 10

Hand in final proposals

Due for discussion: reading #5; bring in an example of a work made with “poor images”

Lab: Independent research

Begin work on final projects

READING #6: Trevor Paglen, “Invisible Images”

Tuesday 11/14

WEEK 11

Due for discussion: reading #6

Independent research

Work on final projects

Tuesday 11/21 – no class – college on Friday schedule

Tuesday 11/28

WEEK 12

Due for presentation: skill share from independent research

Tuesday 12/5

WEEK 13

Due for in-progress critique: final projects

Tuesday 12/12

WEEK 14 – LAST CLASS

FINAL DIGITAL PORTFOLIO DUE via hostb.org

FINAL PROJECTS DUE as prints *unless a digital native format

ASSIGNMENTS

1. FIELD NOTES

This assignment can be carried out in either of two ways. (Option 1) Over the course of your week, make sure to have a camera or good camera phone with you at all times. Pay attention to your surroundings. Whenever you see something that appeals to you, that repulses you, that intrigues you, that seems like a ready-made composition – basically that would make a good photograph according to whatever your own standard of “good photograph” may be – take a picture. Compile all the photographs at the end of the week. Examine them as if they were a series and try to understand what is the thread that ties them together. What is your everyday context? What consistently catches your eye? (Option 2) Visit a place that particularly interests you – this can be anything from a playground to a church to a hospital waiting room. Spend several hours (4-6 if you can) looking at and listening to that place. After you get a sense of the rhythms of the place, start taking pictures. Try to piece together images that explain this place's particularity – exactly what makes it so interesting – and capture some of those rhythms. You may also want to take some notes on what you hear, and then compare or link the images to the notes. Every photographer has recurring preoccupations with both form and content. This is a way to figure out what yours are.

2. SERIAL

Either find or shoot 6-12 photographic images that constitute a coherent series, both formally and

conceptually. If you are appropriating images by downloading or scanning them, they must be available under fair use or the correct Creative Commons license (see fairuse.stanford.org or creativecommons.org). Copy/capture your images to one folder, name each image with the same name plus a number, and bring your images in to the next class on your storage device. Be prepared to explain why you see these images as a series.

3. PATTERN V. OBJECT

Develop a composition that incorporates decorative patterns (e.g. fabric, wallpaper) with found or personal objects of interest. Patterns and/or objects can be scanned, drawn, and/or photographed, then combined (digitally or by gluing, sewing, etc. before re-scanning or re-photographing), in as few or as many layers as you feel necessary. You can organize them into a traditional still life (though this is discouraged). Negative space may also be present in the composition. The one requirement is that students should figure out a way of organizing pattern(s) and object(s) in the space of the picture plane so that the characteristics of one in some way affects the characteristics of the other.

REQUIRED READING

1. Teju Cole, "Perfect and Unrehearsed"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/15/magazine/perfect-and-unrehearsed.html>

2. Teju Cole, "A Visual Remix"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/19/magazine/a-visual-remix.html>

3. "Data Ontology," Fiona Shipwright interview with James Bridle

<http://rhizome.org/editorial/2015/jul/30/interview-james-bridle/>

4. Teju Cole, "Object Lesson"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/22/magazine/object-lesson.html>

5. Hito Steyerl, "In Defense of the Poor Image"

<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/>

6. Trevor Paglen, "Invisible Images: Your Pictures Are Looking at You"

<https://thenewinquiry.com/invisible-images-your-pictures-are-looking-at-you/>

RECOMMENDED READING

Martha Rosler, "In, around, and afterthoughts (on documentary photography)"

http://everydayarchive.org/awt/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/rosler-martha_in-around-afterthoughts.pdf

W.J.T. Mitchell, *The Reconfigured Eye*

Full book in library, or PDF of chapter 1 here:

http://kabul-reconstructions.net/mariam/teaching/Mitchell_ReconfiguredEye.pdf

Digital Foundations: Intro to Media Design

http://wiki.digital-foundations.net/index.php?title=Table_of_Contents_CS6

An excellent resource for technical questions, which also covers basic formal principles. I will be using this as a basis for technical lectures so that you can reference it at home as well.