

DIGITAL IMAGEMAKING 2/3

Arts 225/235, 727.2 (Photography)

Mondays, 8:10 AM – 12:00 PM, KP107

Instructor: Mariam Ghani

Office hours: Mondays, 12:45 – 1:30 pm

Email: mghani@qc.cuny.edu

prerequisites: Digital Imagemaking 1, or permission of the instructor

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will build on the 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 encouraged to experiment with new forms, techniques, and ideas in digital photography, image processing, and hybrid digital practices. Students will complete two projects assigned by the instructor, and one final project of their own design, which must be pre-approved by the instructor. 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.

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 foot of the course schedule. If you require a PDF or printed copy of the reading, please inform me beforehand.

Whenever a reading is required, you are required to write a one-page response to it. Written responses should be typed and are due on 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 reading/listening to/looking at the news on an ongoing basis – whether on Facebook, Twitter, Feedly, radio, a particular news site, etc. etc. - and keeping a file of stories and images that catch your eye. Bring one of these stories or images into class each week and be prepared to explain its meaning or context to the rest of the class.

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 two 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 at the end of exam period, though we will have an opportunity for in-progress critiques before the semester ends. 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).

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

Please do report any technical problems that occur in the lab to your instructor, but please also keep in mind that it is not your instructor's responsibility to resolve those problems. She will make a good-faith effort if it does not take away from teaching time, but ultimately lab upkeep is not her job.

You may only have food and drink in the lab if you keep it away from the computers, cameras, and any other unshelved equipment. Remember: hot coffee can destroy thousands of dollars of technology in less than ten seconds. Please be careful with hot liquids!

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 DSLR cameras, a basic light kit, and large tripods. You can also access Adobe CS6 software, print-on-demand to a Digital-C printer (without paying for ink or paper), and make both small and large-scale inkjet prints (we will discuss that procedure in depth later in the semester). Please bookmark this link for the print ordering system: <http://www.photogize.com/bponet/main.aspx?cl=graphx646>

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>

The lab is open Mon-Thu, 9 am – 5 pm.

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, rangefinder style, or 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)

photo or fine art paper for small inkjet prints (if needed)

travel to Manhattan for field trip

ASSESSMENT & GRADING

Assignments	30%
Final project	25%
Written responses	10%
Presentation	5%
Class participation	30%

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 in the winter/spring; 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	Not always prepared, only	Misses some classes, work

			unconvincing	able to make obligatory contributions	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.

A note about academic integrity: please remember that all work must be your own. If it is not, 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, 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 from your peers at any stage in the process, or you can bring ideas and/or work in for critique only at pre-scheduled moments. 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.

Monday 8/31

WEEK 1: Introductions & expectations

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

Technical review: cameras and camera phone apps

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

Look: William Eggleston, Stephen Shore, Lyndsey Addario, Martha Rosler

Lab: use DSLRs to explore depth of field and shutter speed; compare phone pix to explore effects of different lenses and filters.

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

ASSIGNMENT #1: FIELD NOTES *due for critique Monday 9/21

Monday 9/7

NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

Thursday 9/10 (Monday class schedule)

WEEK 2 – FIELD TRIP

Pick at least 3 shows from the list distributed by email. Visit the shows and write a 2-page response paper describing the artwork you saw, what photographic or digital methods were used to produce it, and how the form related to the content of the work. Remember to bring postcards, press releases, and/or photographs that you take (phone pix are fine) of the show to class with you in two weeks.

Monday 9/14

NO CLASS – College Closed

Monday 9/21

WEEK 3

Due for discussion: field trip responses

Due for critique: Field Notes assignment

Look: Bechers, Taryn Simon, Idris Khan, Penelope Umbrico, Lisa Oppenheimer, Walid Raad, Computers on Law & Order, Kari Altmann

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 #1: Teju Cole, "A Visual Remix"

Monday 9/28

WEEK 4

Due for discussion: reading #1 responses

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

ASSIGNMENT #2: SERIAL *due for critique Monday 10/19

READING #2: Info Hiding / Data Ontology

Monday 10/5

WEEK 5 – Guest lecture TBA; Mariam out of town

Due for discussion (also by email to MG): reading #2 responses

Discuss: disruptive design, data visualization, steganography

Look: James Bridle, David Birkin, Jonathan Hanahan, David Lu, Josh Begley

Monday 10/12

NO CLASS – Columbus Day

Monday 10/19

WEEK 6

Due for critique: Serial assignment

Discuss: How strong is each image alone? What is added (or subtracted) by making them a series?

Look: Pradeep Dalal, Chitra Ganesh, Petra Cortright, Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung, Wade Guyton, Joe Hamilton (indirect.flights), Printed Web 3 (http://archive.rhizome.org/Printed_Web_3/)

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

READING #3: Teju Cole, “Object Lesson”

ASSIGNMENT #3: PATTERN V. OBJECT *due for critique Monday 11/9

Monday 10/26

WEEK 7

Due for discussion: reading #3 responses

Look: photo books, artist's books, flipbooks; Never Odd or Even, War Primer 2, The Book of Books

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

Write proposals for independent research and final project

Monday 11/2

WEEK 8

Due for discussion: research & project proposals

Technical review: 3-point lighting, retouching

Lab: individual meetings / break into groups to shoot & retouch portraits

Revise proposals based on feedback

Monday 11/9

WEEK 9

Hand in final proposals

Due for critique: Pattern v. Object assignment

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, WordPress, Bootstrap; overview of online learning resources & code-sharing websites e.g. Github

Look: artists' websites

Lab: exporting images for the web, persistent image tagging

READING #4: Hito Steyerl, “In Defense of the Poor Image”

Begin work on final projects

Monday 11/16

WEEK 10

Due for discussion: reading #4 responses

Independent research

Work on final projects

READING #5: Michael Connor on machine vision

Monday 11/23

WEEK 11

Due for discussion: reading #5 responses

Independent research

Work on final projects

Monday 11/30

WEEK 12

Due for presentation: skill share from independent research

Monday 12/7

WEEK 13 – last class meeting

Due for in-progress critique: final projects

Monday 12/14

FINAL LAB PERIOD

Monday 12/21

FINAL PROJECTS DUE by email or FTP

(free FTP at hostb.org)

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, "A Visual Remix"

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

2. "Information Hiding – A Survey" *sections I-III only

www.petitcolas.net/fabien/publications/ieee99-infohiding.pdf AND
"Data Ontology," Fiona Shipwright interview with James Bridle
<http://rhizome.org/editorial/2015/jul/30/interview-james-bridle/>

3. Teju Cole, "Object Lesson"

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

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

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

5. Michael Connor, "Why is Deep Dream turning the world into a doggy monster hellscape?"

<http://rhizome.org/editorial/2015/jul/10/deep-dream-doggy-monster/>

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

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.