

City University of Hong Kong
Information on a Course
offered by School of Creative Media
with effect from Semester A in 2008 / 2009

Part I

Course Title: Information, Communication and Contemporary Art

Course Code: SM3149

Course Duration: One semester

No. of Credit Units: 3

Level: B3

Medium of Instruction: English

Prerequisites: *(Course Code and Title)* SM1205 Interactivity and SM1011 Introduction to Contemporary Art

Precursors: *(Course Code and Title)* Nil

Equivalent Courses: *(Course Code and Title)* Nil

Exclusive Courses: *(Course Code and Title)* Nil

Part II

1. Course Aims:

This subject extends the concepts developed in the Introduction to Contemporary Art course, which is typically taken by students in their first year. This new course aims to introduce students to the possibility of using informational and communicational technologies as artistic media. The approach combines historical, conceptual, and practical elements. Students will become familiar with the work of artists (e.g., the Oulipo group, the Art and Technology Movement, the Critical Art Ensemble, etc.) who have put information theoretic concepts to use. The course will emphasize the connection between information theory and contemporary art movements like conceptual art or land art. They will also read and discuss introductory ideas from information and communication theory, and theorize how

this material can impact their artistic practice. They will consider, for instance, the impact of information theoretic concepts on visual and audio representation. The focus throughout will be on the impact of information and communication technologies on the arts.

Since this course is mainly addressed to artists, students are not expected to develop a comprehensive understanding of all the technical details beyond an elementary level. The aim is to become familiar with the style of thinking that underpins information technologies. The approach will be broadly contextual. Students will theorize social and political issues concerning the organization of technologically-mediated communication and the debates surrounding it (for instance, Enzensberger’s theory of mediated communication, or the problems involved in collaborations between artists and engineers). Students also address these questions practically, discovering other possible artistic and cultural innovations through their own individual art projects. Coursework will therefore include not only critical analyses and presentations of historical material, but also studio-based projects that tackle issues about information and communication.

Intended mainly for students in their second year, this course also provides a foundation for the more advanced course History and Philosophy of Computation in year three. It is recommended, but not required, that this course should be taken in conjunction with, or immediately after, Fundamentals of Programming.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance)

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

No.	CILOs	Weighing (if applicable)
1.	Describe in detail the core ideas of information and communication theory, and theorize the main characteristics and expressive or conceptual possibilities of information arts.	
2.	Describe and analyze how various artists have in the past responded to the development of information and communication technologies.	
3.	Produce their own individual artworks and proposals that address core concepts about information and communication	
4.	Theorize the social, cultural, and political implications of information technologies.	

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs)

(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

ILO No	TLAs	Hours/weeks (if applicable)
3	Class presentation and critique of student proposals and works in progress.	
2, 4	Class discussions, debates, and presentations about individual artistic projects and collaborations between scientists and technologists.	
1,2,4	Lectures and in-class debates about the work of key figures in the development of information and communication, and the cultural impact of their ideas.	
1,3	Short programming exercises that enable students to discover the artistic application of communication and information theory.	

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities

(designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs)

(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

ILO No	Type of assessment tasks/activities	Weighting (if applicable)	Remarks
1,2,3,4	Preparation of an artistic project on a topic related to information and communication theory.		
1, 2, 3, 4	Production of a detailed research report explaining the various steps/decisions/changes in the creation of the student's art work.		
1, 2, 3, 4	In-class presentation and critique of the student's ongoing work, with a strong emphasis on how the student has engaged with historical and conceptual material.		
1, 4	Critical analysis of artworks in the fields of information and communication arts.		

5. Grading of Student Achievement: Refer to Grading of Courses in the Academic Regulations and to the Explanatory Notes.

100% coursework and in-class participation

Grading pattern: Standard (A+AA-...F)

Grading is based on performance in assessment tasks / activities.

Part III

Keyword Syllabus

Contemporary art; conceptual art; information arts; entropy; communication technology; media theory; digital media and visual representation; art as research.

References:

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Ascott, Roy.(ed). Reframing consciousness (Exeter : Intellect Books, 1999).

Cavallaro, Alessio, Jonson, Annemarie, and Tofts, Darren, Prefiguring cyberculture: an intellectual history (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002).

Druckrey, Timothy. Electronic culture : technology and visual representation (New York : Aperture, 1996).

Floridi, Luciano (ed). The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Computing and Information (London: Blackwell, 2004).

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Goodwin, Brian and Sole, Ricard. Signs of Life: How Complexity Pervades Biology (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

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Rush, Michael. New media in late 20th-century art (London : Thames & Hudson, 1999).

Shanken, Edward. Art and electronic media (UK : Phaidon, 2008).

Sommerer, Christa and Mignonneau, Laurent (eds.) Art@science (New York : Springer, 1998.)

Wilson, Stephen. Information Arts: Intersections of Art, Science, and Technology (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2002).

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