City University of Hong Kong

Information on a Course
offered by the School of Creative Media
with effect from Semester A in 2014 / 2015

Part I

Course Title: Contemporary & New Media: An Archaeological Study

Course Code: SM5335

Course Duration: one semester

Credit Units: 3

Level: P5

Medium of Instruction: English

Prerequisites: Nil

Precursors: Nil

Equivalent Courses: Nil

Exclusive Courses: Nil

Part II

Course Aims

This course adopts media archaeology as an alternative to the understanding of contemporary and media art. It seeks to develop a basic understanding of media art via an inter-disciplinary orientation. It provides an overview of the social context, aims and forms of contemporary art, with a strong emphasis on experimental film and video art, installation, performance, interactive and intermedia work, and modes of computational thinking in art practices. The main focus will be on *how media technologies are used in contemporary art practices.*

Beginning with a media archeological approach and tracing developments in recording and presentation technologies, the course examines how media adds meaning and innovation to making art.   The course also examines the conceptual

threads of both media and art, and how media art making is part of a social practice contingent to a larger social-cultural-technological framework. Students are encouraged to explore media technology as an ever-changing variable that is open for scrutiny, recycling, transformation and subversion.

Key questions to be discussed pertain to the nature of artistic media, the interaction between art and technology, the ecology of information technologies, the social and political aspects of avant-garde art, the nature of experimentation, the meaning of interactivity, etc., all of which will be illustrated by key works from around the world. The course will also examine how the merging of art with science has occurred in various art movements over the past century and how the two are being linked today.

Students will conduct historical analyses of individual movements and artists, compare different theoretical perspectives, and familiarize themselves with key literature. A creative work could be an alternative by which students demonstrate an awareness of key conceptual and formal issues in contemporary and media art. Extensive class discussions and practical assignments will encourage students to reflect critically about the fundamentals of their activity as creative media artists.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

No.	CILOs
1.	Identify the concepts of media archaeology and the social effects of early technological developments.
2.	Recognize how individual moments of art experiments used and reflected on media as part of their strategies
*3.	Reflect on and theorize the ways media affect an artwork: particularly how new formal properties and meanings are possible using emerging media
*4.	Discuss the complexity and diversity of media art
*5.	Conduct independent research from a media archaeology perspective

*Negotiated Learning Outcome (NLO) explicitly articulating the ele\ments of Discovery oriented learning.

Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)
(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)

TLAs	ILO No
Lectures	CILO 1 - 5
Discussions on assigned readings (group presentation)	CILO 2 – 4
Research Paper and/or New Media Artwork Proposal	CILO 3-5

Production of a New Media Artwork with an accompanying artist's statement describing the research process.	CILO 3-5	

Assessment Tasks/Activities

(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

Type of assessment tasks/activities	ILO No	Remarks
Research Project or Paper that demonstrates and understanding of the course concepts	CILO 3, 5	
Group presentations	CILO 2-4	
A Creative project that addresses an issue of art from an interdisciplinary perspective + Project statements	CILO 3-5	

Grading of Student Achievement:

Refer to Grading of Courses in the Academic Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Degrees.

Examination duration: Nil
Percentage of coursework, examination, etc.: 100% coursework
Grading pattern: Standard (A+AA-…F)
Grading is based on performance in assessment tasks / activities

A. <u>Presentation</u>

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well-organized presentation with their own argument and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of 'discovery' lied in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definitions	Description
A+ A A-	4.3 4.0 3.7	Excellent	– Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter – Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative – Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management – Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize
B+ B	3.3 3.0	Good	– Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter

B-	2.7		− Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition
			− Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management
C+	2.3	Adequate	− Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter
C	2.0		
C-	1.7		− Fair organization, weak structure and composition
			− Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management
D	1.0	Marginal	− Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter
			− Poor organization, structure and composition
			− Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, poor time-management
F	0.0	Failure	− Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter
			− No organization, structure or/and composition
			− Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management

Note: All A+/A/A- grade assignment should comply with the highest performance of Discovery-oriented learning.

B. Research Project/ Paper

Students should demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and skills to undertake independent research, build up argument and analysis. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.

Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definitions	Description
A+	4.3	Excellent	− Excellent grasp of materials, ability to explain key concepts, assumptions, and debates, demonstrating sound knowledge of the field
A	4.0		
A-	3.7		− Rich content, exceptional ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand;
			− Design and conduct research which is firmly built on thorough knowledge of existing theoretical frameworks
			− Evaluative judgments about existing research and demonstrate application of strong critical thinking

			skills
			− Strong ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools
			− Strong organization of research findings with effective organization and procedural clarity at the same time demonstrating the importance of the process
			− Insightful suggestion of how the research findings may lead to future research
B+ B B-	3.3 3.0 2.7	Good	− Firm grasp of materials, ability to explain key concepts and assumptions − Adequate content, strong ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand; − Design and conduct research which is built on thorough knowledge of existing theoretical frameworks − Appropriate judgments about existing research and demonstrate application of critical thinking skills − Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools
C+ C C-	2.3 2.0 1.7	Adequate	− Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts − Adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand − Design and conduct research which is built on knowledge of theoretical frameworks − Appropriate judgments about existing research − Weak ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools
D	1.0	Marginal	− Loose grasp of materials, cannot explain key concepts − Weak content, with primary and secondary levels − Design and conduct research which is appropriate for the research objective − Marginal judgments about existing research − Poor ability to approach a text or a theme using a

			variety of theories and analytical tools
F	0.0	Failure	– Poor grasp of materials – Inadequate content, without primary and secondary levels – Fail to design and conduct research which is appropriate for the research objective – Fail to make reasonable judgments about existing research – Fail to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools

Note: All A+/A/A- grade assignment should comply with the highest performance of Discovery-oriented learning.

C. Creative Project/ Technical Project/ Portfolio

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, execute creative ideas and projects. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.

Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definitions	Description
A+ A A-	4.3 4.0 3.7	Excellent	– Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of personal styles and signature – Excellent appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium – Work raises questions and instill insights about the process of conception, creative strategization and production – Innovative exploration by combining knowledge from different disciplines (e.g. mathematics, psychology, physics, anthropology, etc.) to create an inter-disciplinary project – Efficient adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available with constructive adjustment
B+ B B-	3.3 3.0 2.7	Good	– Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium – Ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration – Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available and

			constructive feedback/ suggestions
C+ C C-	2.3 2.0 1.7	Adequate	– Basic appreciation and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium – Limited ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration – Adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available
D	1.0	Marginal	– Marginal appreciation of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium – Marginal ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration – Limited adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available
F	0.0	Failure	– No appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium – Fail to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration – Minimal adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

Note: All A+/A/A- grade assignment should comply with the highest performance of Discovery-oriented learning.

Part III

Keyword Syllabus
Media archaeology, open work, indeterminancy, what is media art, medium specificity, intermedia, happenings, events and performance, improvisation, drifting, embodiment, the place of objects, participatory art, socially engaged art, and urbanism, art as forms of mechanical and digital reproduction, cybernetics, digital technology and social media, feminism and art, immersion, tactical media, documentation and archiving as art, art and anthropology, the archaeology of sights and sounds, expanded and future cinema, visual imaging in a digital age, sound as art, art and the machine, computational thinking in contemporary art, the use of photography, multisensory ethnography

Indicative Course Outline

The following is a suggested outline. It may vary or be reconfigured in different versions.

Week 1-2   Introduction: the curious stories of 'media archaeology': a different

way to examine the histories of art; archaeology of 20th –century art: innovations and frontier thinking; the place of photography and painting, conceptual art, space-oriented art

Week 3-4   The pivotal moments in 20th century art and paradigm cases: Dada and the Fluxus, *The 9 Evenings* and Robert Rauschenberg's Òpen Score etc.

Week 5-6   Art as critique of society and the intervention of everyday life; art as experimental action beyond the Fluxus: S.I., Blast Theory, hacktivism, mods, tactical and networked media

Week 7-8   Archaeology of sights and sounds; expanded and future cinema, generative cinema; sound -- an interdisciplinary view

Week 9-10   Cybernetics, computational thinking in contemporary art

Week 11   Immersive Environments and performative narrativity

Week 12-13   Anthropology and art, archiving as artistic practice, multisensory ethnography; from objects to archives to database

Recommended Reading
Text(s)

*This reference list is to provide key texts that inform the multi-tropic syllabus as well as provide the basic resources for research-based in-class presentations, group projects and the semester-end research paper.

Archaeology (methodology and scope)

Benjamin, Walter (2008): *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media.* The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London (UK).

Huhtamo, Erkki; and Parikka, Jussi, eds. (2011): *Media Archaeology: Approaches, Applications, and Implications.* University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London.

Kluitenberg, Eric, ed. (2006): *Book of Imaginary Media: excavating the dream of the ultimate communication medium.* NAi Pubishers, Rotterdam.

Latour, Bruno (2013): *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: an Anthropology of the Moderns*; translated by Catherine Porter. Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) and London.

Lombardo, Vincenzo; Valle, Andrea; Nunnari, Fabrizio; Girodana, Francesco; and Arghinenti, Andrea (2006): "Archaeology of Multimedia"

Lü Peng; Zhu Zhu; and Kao Chienhui, eds. (2011): *Thirty Years of Adventures: Art and Artists from 1979.* Blue Kingfisher.

Parikka, Jussi (2012): *What is Media Archaeology?* Polity Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

Underberg, Natalie M.; and Zorn, Elayne (2013): *Digital Ethnography: Anthropology,*

Narrative, and New Media. University of Texas Press, Austin.

Zielinski, Siegfried (2006): *Deep Time of the Media: toward and Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means.*   MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.) and London.

Contemporary Art (general, history, discourse, theory)

Armstrong, Carol; De Zegher, Catherine, eds. (2006): *Women Artists at the Millennium.* MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.) and London.

Belting, Hans (2003): *Art History after Modernism.* University of Chicago Press.

Bishop, Claire, ed. (2006): *Participation* (Documents of Contemporary Art series). White Chapel Gallery, London; The MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.).

Buskirk, Martha (2003): *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art.* MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.) and London.

Elkins, James (2008): *Six Stories from the End of Representation.* Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Higgins, Dick (1984): *Horizons: the Poetics and Theory of the Intermedia*. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale and Edwardsville.

Hopkins, David (2000):   *After Modern Art 1945-2000.* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Poggi, Christine (1992): *In Defiance of Painting: Cubism, Futurism, and the Invention of Collage.* Yale University Press, New Haven and London.

Rainer, Yvonne (1999): *A Woman Who…: Essays, Interviews, Scripts*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, London.

Robbe-Grillet, Alain; Morrissette, Bruce; Kirkpatrick, Diane; Racevskis, Karlis; and Leach, David (1983): *Generative Literature and Generative Art: New Essays*. York Press, Federicton, Canada.

Rodowick, D. N. (2001) *Reading the Figural, Or Philosophy after the New Media*. Duke University Press, Durham and London.

Stiles, Kristine; Selz, Peter, eds. (1996): *Contemporary Art: a Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London.

Tiampo, Ming; Munroe, Alexandra, eds. (2013): *Gutai: Splendid Playground*. Guggenheim, New York.

Cinema and its extension

Cubitt, Sean (2003): *Videography: Video Media as Art and Culture*. Palgrave.

Curtis, David (2007): *A History of Artists' Film & Video in Britain*. BFI, London.

Elsaesser, Thomas, ed. (1990, 1992): *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*. BFI.

EYE Film Institute Netherlands (2012): *Found Footage Cinema Exposed*. Amsterdam University Press.

Grice, Malcolm (2001): *Experimental Cinema in the Digital Age*. BFI, London.

MacDonald, Scott (1995): *Screen Writings: Scripts and Texts by Independent Filmmakers.* University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.

Margulies, Ivone (1996): *Nothing Happens: Chantel Akerman's Hyperrealist Everyday*. Duke University Press, Durham and London.

Meigh-Andrews, Chris (2006, 2014): *A History of Video Art*; 2nd edition. Bloomsbury, New York, London, New Delhi, Sydney.

Morgan, Robert C., ed. (2000): *Gary Hill*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London.

Rees, A.L. (1999, 2000): *A History of Experimental Film & Video*. BFI.

Schlicht, Esther; Hollein, Max, eds. (2010): *Zelluloid: Cameraless Film*. Schirn Kunstalle Frankfurt.

Shaw, Jeffrey; Weibel, Peter, eds. (2003): *Future Cinema: the Cinematic Imaginary after Film*. ZKM, Karsruhe; MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.) and London.

Svankmajer, Jan (2012): *Dimensions of Dialogue / Between Film and Fine Art.* Arbor Vitae, Revnice, the Czech Republic.

Sounds
Cardiff, Janet (2002): *The Walk Book.* Vienna: Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary.

LaBelle, Brandon (2006): *Background Noise, Perspectives on Sound Art*. Continuum, New York.

Schafer, R. Murray (1977, 1994): *Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Turning of the World*. Destiny Books, Rochester, Vermont.

Sider, Larry; Freeman, Diane; and Sider, Jerry, eds. (2003): *Soundscape: the School of Sound Lectures 1998-2001*. Wallflower Press, London and New York.

Visuality and photography
Campany, David (2008): *Photography and Cinema.* Reaktion Books, London.

Clarke, Graham (1997): *The Photograph.* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Elkins, James, ed. (2007): *Photography Theory*. Routledge, New York and London.

Marien, Mary Warner (2002, 2006, 2010): *Photography: a Cultural History*; 3rd edition. Laurence King Publishing, London.

Mitchell, William J. (1994): *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-photographic Era.* MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.) and London.

Wells, Liz, ed. (2003): *The Photography Reader*. Routledge, London and New York.

Wurzer, Wilhelm S. (2002): *Panorama: Philosophies of the Visible.* Continuum, New York, London.

Online Resources

Debalie Dossier on "media archaeology" at
http://www.debalie.nl/dossierpagina.jsp?dossierid=10123

- Erkki Huhtamo: "From Kaleidoscomaniac to Cybernerd: towards an archeology of the media"
- Richard Barbrook: "New York Prophecies: the future is what it used to be"
- Timothy Druckrey: "Imaginary Futures"
- Siegfried Zielinski : "The Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing through Mechanical Means"
- Lev Manovich: "An Archaeology of a Computer Screen"

Experimenta Playground, International Biennial of Media Arts:
http://www.experimenta.org/

Media Art History Archive: http://193.171.60.44/dspace/

Media Art Net (Medien Kunst Netz): http://www.mediaartnet.org/mediaartnet/ (home page) OR http://www.mediaartnet.org/themes/overview_of_media_art/ (overview of media art)

Media art in Japan: http://plaza.bunka.go.jp/english/

Re:live, Media Art History 09, The Third International Conference on the Histories of Media Art, Science and Technology: http://www.mediaarthistory.org/

Zielinski, Siegfried. "Media Archaeology" (1996) available at
http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=42