

SM5303: TECHNOFUTURES: CRITICAL APPROACHES TO THE METAVERSE, AI, AND BLOCKCHAIN

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Technofutures: Critical Approaches to the Metaverse, AI, and Blockchain

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

5303

Academic Unit

School of Creative Media (SM)

College/School

School of Creative Media (SM)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course is designed to provide students with a solid foundation in the current technological advancements related to Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain converging in web3. The seminar is focused on modern humanities and offers a high-level intellectual foundation to better understand the ongoing changes associated with web3. Students will explore the implications of Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain for technological societies and creative cultures. They will develop their technological quotient through a critical examination of Cybernetics, Media Ecology, Philosophy of Technology, New Phenomenology, New Materialism, Hauntology, Technofuturism, Accelerationism Digital Aesthetics, and other critical new media theories. This course is designed to develop critical thinking and analytical skills essential for leadership in the creative industry.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	To differentiate between different practices in the recent history of Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain. To assess these technologies in relation with their cultural and technological contexts. To analyse these technologies and their cultural and social impacts in relation to relevant theoretical concepts.	30		x	x
2	To discuss the creative strategies attached to Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain technologies. To be able to collaborate with creative managers and artists.	40		x	x
3	To have a knowledge of the media resources dealing with Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain topics and to be able to write critical reports or analyses about Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain in media.	20		x	
4	To be able to develop the ideation process/ conceptual thinking in the current fields of Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain.	10	x		x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures, discussions, Theory/Practice Investigation	Understand key concepts such as theories, technologies, aesthetics related to Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain	1, 3	3 hrs/wk
2	Lectures, discussions, Theory/Practice Investigation, class presentation	Synthesize and present orally the information and sources of information introduced in the lecture	2, 3	1 hr/wk
3	Lectures, discussions, Theory/Practice Investigation	Explain key concepts related to Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain	3	3 hrs/wk
4	Lectures, discussions, class presentation	Synthesize and present orally the personal research done during the semester	1, 2, 3, 4	1 hr/wk

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Media survey	1, 2, 3	20	-	Yes
2	Case study analysis	2, 3, 4	50	-	Yes
3	Quiz	1, 2, 3, 4	30	-	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Essays, Summaries, Quiz and Exam (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to use primary and secondary sources, and construct a well-organized argument and analysis. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories and concepts for her/his personal daily experience.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Excellent grasp of research material, able to explain key concepts, assumptions and debates
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, distinct thesis, properly argued with strong narrative

- Insightful interpretation of the subject matter with distinct themes and thesis
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize
- Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools
- Strong bibliography suggesting breadth and depth of coverage and informed insights

Good

- (B+, B, B-) - Firm grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts and assumptions
- Reasonable organization, balanced structure, adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand
 - Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret opinions independently
 - Organized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Fair

- (C+, C, C-) - Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts
- Fair organization, weak structure, adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand
 - Relevant points to the subject matter, fair ability to interpret opinions
 - Unorganized bibliography that can be utilized in accordance with the topic

Marginal

- (D) - Loose grasp of materials, cannot explain key concepts
- Poor organization and structure, weak content, limited use of resources
 - Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions
 - Insufficient and/or unorganized bibliography

Failure

- (F) - Poor grasp of materials
- No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources
 - Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions
 - Irrelevant bibliography

Assessment Task

Presentation (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

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

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - 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

Good

- (B+, B, B-) - Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter
- Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition
 - Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management

Fair

- (C+, C, C-) - Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter
- Fair organization, weak structure and composition

- Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management

Marginal

(D) - 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

Failure

(F) - 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

Assessment Task

Essays, Summaries, Quiz and Exam (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to use primary and secondary sources, and construct a well-organized argument and analysis. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories and concepts for her/his personal daily experience.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent ability to use primary and secondary sources, and construct a well-organized argument and analysis.

Good

(B+, B) Good ability to use primary and secondary sources, and construct a well-organized argument and analysis.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Average ability to use primary and secondary sources, and construct a well-organized argument and analysis.

Failure

(F) Lack of ability to use primary and secondary sources, and construct a well-organized argument and analysis.

Assessment Task

Presentation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

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

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Students show excellent co-operation in conducting a well-organized presentation with their own arguments and evidence from readings and notes.

Good

(B+, B) Students show good co-operation in conducting a well-organized presentation with their own arguments and evidence from readings and notes.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Students show average co-operation in conducting a well-organized presentation with their own arguments and evidence from readings and notes.

Failure

(F) Students show a lack of co-operation in conducting a well-organized presentation with their own arguments and evidence from readings and notes.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Metaverse; AI; Crypto; Blockchain; Web3; Cybernetics; New Materialism; Digital Aesthetics; Technofuturism; Accelerationism.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	Metaverse:
2	Stephenson, N. (1992). <i>Snow Crash</i> . Bantam Books.
3	Cline, E. (2011). <i>Ready Player One</i> . Crown Publishing Group.
4	Stephenson, N. (1995). <i>The Diamond Age</i> . Bantam Spectra.
5	AI:
6	Bostrom, N. (2014). <i>Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies</i> . Oxford University Press.
7	Tegmark M. (2017). <i>Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence</i> . Alfred A. Knopf.
8	Russell, S. (2019). <i>Human Compatible: Artificial Intelligence and the Problem of Control</i> . Viking.
9	Crypto:
10	Vigna, P., & Casey, M. J. (2015). <i>The Age of Cryptocurrency: How Bitcoin and Digital Money Are Challenging the Global Economic Order</i> . St. Martin's Press.
11	Popper, N. (2015). <i>Digital Gold: Bitcoin and the Inside Story of the Misfits and Millionaires Trying to Reinvent Money</i> . Harper.
12	Antonopoulos, A. M. (2016). <i>The Internet of Money</i> . Merkle Bloom LLC.
13	Blockchain:
14	Lewis, A. (2018). <i>The Basics of Bitcoins and Blockchains</i> . Mango.
15	Drescher, D. (2017). <i>Blockchain Basics: A Non-Technical Introduction in 25 Steps</i> . Apress.
16	Tapscott, D., & Tapscott, A. (2016). <i>Blockchain Revolution: How the Technology Behind Bitcoin and Other Cryptocurrencies Is Changing the World</i> . Portfolio.
17	Web3:
18	De Filippi, P., & Wright, A. (2018). <i>Blockchain and the law: the rule of code</i> . Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.
19	Zittrain J. (2008). <i>The Future of the Internet--And How to Stop It</i> . Yale University Press.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Berry, David M. <i>Critical Theory and the Digital</i> . Reprint edition. Place of publication not identified: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.
2	Citton Y. (2017). <i>The Ecology of Attention</i> . Cambridge: Polity Press.
3	Citton Y. (2020). <i>The Imaginary Institution of Society</i> . Cambridge: Polity Press.

4	Crawford, K. (2020). <i>Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence</i> . New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
5	Dijck, J. V., Poell, T., & De Waal, M. (2018). <i>The Platform Society: Public Values in a Connective World</i> . Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
6	Snowden, E. (2021). <i>Permanent Record: The Edward Snowden Reader</i> . Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press.
7	Galloway, Alexander R. <i>The Interface Effect</i> . Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity, 2012.
8	Gillespie, T. (2018). <i>Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, Content Moderation, and the Hidden Decisions That Shape Social Media</i> . New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
9	Lister, Martin, Jon Dovey, Seth Giddings, Iain Grant, and Kieran Kelly. <i>New Media: A Critical Introduction</i> . 2nd ed. Routledge, 2009.
10	Lovink G. (2020). <i>Sad by Design: On Platform Nihilism</i> . Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
11	Mitchell, W. J. T., and Mark B. N. Hansen, eds. <i>Critical Terms for Media Studies</i> . University Of Chicago Press, 2010.
12	Munster, Anna. <i>Materializing New Media: Embodiment in Information Aesthetics</i> . Annotated edition. Dartmouth, 2006.
13	Munster, Anna. <i>An Aesthesia of Networks: Conjunctive Experience in Art and Technology</i> . Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2013.
14	Noble, S. U. (2018). <i>Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism</i> . New York, NY: NYU Press.
15	Parikka, J. (2019). <i>A Geology of Media</i> . Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
16	Raley, R. (2018). <i>Tactical Media</i> . Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.