

SM5352: INFLUENCER TECHNIQUES: AESTHETICS, NARRATIVES, AND AUDIENCE

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Influencer Techniques: Aesthetics, Narratives, and Audience

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

5352

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 deploys an experimental pedagogy of artistic studio training and imaginative approaches to the influencer/creator techniques. It centres around cultivating students' aesthetic senses and familiarising students with the process of conceptualising and realising creative artworks. Instead of working with a singular established medium/formats such as AI generative tools, creative writing, storytelling, video, sound, photography or animation, students are encouraged to work across whatever formats and software/hardware skills at their disposal, especially with their mobile devices such as smartphones. In the lectures, students will learn from the history and aesthetics of new media art and how it influenced contemporary internet culture and more recently influencer aesthetics through case studies. In the studio classes, students will be provided with a creative context (i.e. a given social media platform or a cluster of similar platforms); they will experiment with, develop, and refine their transmedia skills in creative projects that explores the narrative and aesthetic potentials of digital cultures—narrative formats such as memes, "greentexts", GIFs, podcasts, livestreams, video essays, short vertical videos, and gameplay videos; aesthetic forms such as, #Lo-Fi, #Y2K, #Kawaii, and #Citywalk. Students will then reflect upon how their projects correspond to and challenge the dominant aesthetics of repetition and virality in the socioeconomic and cultural infrastructures of the influencer ecology.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 DEC-A2 DEC-A3 app.)			
1	Understand a brief history of new media art (especially net art) and its interactions with global and regional internet and influencer culture in terms of narratives and aesthetics		x	x	
2	Utilize the narrative experiments under a specified platform context existing repertoire of digital media and writing skills to create new aesthetics and narratives		x	x	x
3	Identify the connections and tensions between artistic creativity and influencer creativity		x	x	
4	Gain extensive knowledge of the correspondences between virality, aesthetics, marketing strategies, and economics		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	- a concise history of new media art in relation to the global and regional history of internet culture - Narrative and aesthetic tendencies of influencer culture	1, 3, 4	
2	In-class discussions	- discuss weekly readings - identify and recap influencer narrative and influencer strategies in real-world case studies	1, 3, 4	
3	Studios	- analyse and outline students' own social media accounts and unpack its aesthetic and narrative features in a visual exhibition. - start with a blank slate social media account and plan an influencer identity with a series of posts in various formats. - execute the plan during studio classes.	2, 3, 4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	In-class participation in lectures and studios	1, 3, 4	10	-	No
2	A weekly blog post on readings and reflections	1, 3, 4	20	-	No
3	A reflexive visual exhibition of student's own influencer or social media identity (a multimedia physical or virtual installation)	1, 2, 3, 4	30	-	No

4	Individual/group project designing a social media profile with a series of social media content highlighting a local or regional matter.	1, 2, 3, 4	40	-	No
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Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Participation in lectures and studios (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This assessment task reviews students' participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique during the studio sessions. The evidence of 'negotiation', the sign of discovery, lies in students' pre-class preparation and interpersonal sensitivity to their peer members.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

- Active in-class participation, positive listening, strong ability to stimulate class discussion and comment on other points
- In-depth pre-class preparation and familiarity with readings and other materials for the studio classes
- Readiness to share personal insight via analysis and debate others' views with an open mind

Good

(B+, B, B-)

- Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to initiate class discussion and comment on other points
- Adequate pre- class preparation and familiarity with readings and other materials for the studio classes
- Interpret opinions effectively during debates

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

- Attentive in in- class participation, listening with comprehension, but only infrequently contributing
- Adequate pre- class preparation but little familiarity with readings and other materials for the studio classes
- Fair ability in interpreting opinions

Marginal

(D)

- Unmotivated to participate in class discussion or comment on other people's views
- Little pre-class preparation and familiarity with readings and other materials for the studio classes
- Poor ability in interpreting opinions

Failure

(F)

- Unwilling to participate in class discussion and comment on other points, even when requested by the teacher
 - No pre-class preparation and familiarity with readings and other materials for the studio classes
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Assessment Task

2. Weekly blog post (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This assessment will grade on rationality, clarity and fluency of argument and comment on readings and lecture/studio class content. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's ability to negotiate a position that is informed, defensible, and standing on personal insight.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

- Excellent ability to interpret and integrate various resources
- Precision in argument, well defined and reasoned points of view grounded in insightful interpretation of existing literature

Good

(B+, B, B-)

- Good ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Clear elaboration of ideas that sticks to the point, with clearly differentiated issues, ability to interpret opinions independently

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

- Fair ability to integrate various resources
- Relevant points made to the subject matter in question

Marginal

(D)

- limited use of resources
- Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions

Failure

(F)

- no or irrelevant use of resources
 - Irrelevant points to the subject matter, no ability to interpret opinions
-

Assessment Task

3. Visual exhibition of social media identity (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This visual exhibition of student's own influencer or social media identity should demonstrate the student's ability to reflect on their own social media usage, identity, and self-presentation. This exhibition should demonstrate students' ability to create multimedia (physical or virtual) installations.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

- Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of one's own social media identity with in-depth introspection into personal social media history
- Rigorous organization, excellent aesthetics and presentation

Good

(B+, B, B-)

- Considerable content, excellent grasp of one's own social media identity that dissects the personal social media history
- Reasonable organization and aesthetics with a good presentation

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

- Adequate content, good grasp of one's own social media identity that acknowledges the personal social media history
- fair organization and aesthetics with an adequate presentation

Marginal

(D)

- Weak content, loose grasp of the one's own social media identity, with some disclosure of personal social media history
- Poor organization, structure and poor presentation

Failure

(F)

- Inadequate content, fail to grasp of the one's own social media identity.
 - No organization and presentation
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Assessment Task

4. Individual/group project designing a social media profile (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge and skills to undertake a project synthesizing various multimedia and artistic skills to create a series of social media content highlighting a local or regional matter.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

- Strong ability to produce social media content while experimenting with aesthetics and narratives
- Evaluative judgments about existing influencer trends and demonstrate critical adaptation
- Strong organization of with social media content and procedural clarity at the same time demonstrating the importance of the process
- Insightful suggestion of future trends

Good

(B+, B, B-)

- Good ability to produce social media content while experimenting with aesthetics and narratives
- Good evaluative judgments about existing influencer trends and demonstrate critical adaptation
- Reasonable organization of with social media content and procedural clarity at the same time demonstrating the importance of the process
- Some insights into future trends

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

- Fair ability to produce social media content while experimenting with aesthetics and narratives
- Good evaluative judgments about existing influencer trends and demonstrate critical adaptation
- Adequate organization of with social media content and procedural clarity at the same time demonstrating the importance of the process

Marginal

(D)

- Limited ability to produce social media content while experimenting with aesthetics and narratives
- Little judgments about existing influencer trends and demonstrate critical adaptation

Failure

(F)

- No signs of ability to produce social media content
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Assessment Task

1. Participation in lectures and studios (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

This assessment task reviews students' participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique during the studio sessions. The evidence of 'negotiation', the sign of discovery, lies in students' pre-class preparation and interpersonal sensitivity to their peer members.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Engaging participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique during the studio sessions.

Good

(B+, B)

Active participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique during the studio sessions.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C)

Passive participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique during the studio sessions.

Failure

(F)

Lack of participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique during the studio sessions.

Assessment Task

2. Weekly blog post (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

This assessment will grade on rationality, clarity and fluency of argument and comment on readings and lecture content. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's ability to negotiate a position that is informed, defensible, and standing on personal insight.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Excellent rationality, clarity and fluency of argument and comment.

Good

(B+, B)

Good rationality, clarity and fluency of argument and comment.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C)

Marginal rationality, clarity and fluency of argument and comment.

Failure

(F)

Lack of rationality, clarity and fluency of argument and comment.

Assessment Task

3. Visual exhibition of social media identity (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

This visual exhibition of student's own influencer or social media identity should demonstrate the student's ability to reflect on their own social media usage, identity, and self-presentation. This exhibition should demonstrate students' ability to create multimedia (physical or virtual) installations.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Excellent level of reflexivity, rationality, clarity of exhibition statement as well as creativity demonstrated in the multimedia installation.

Good

(B+, B)

Good level of reflexivity, rationality, clarity of exhibition statement as well as creativity demonstrated in the multimedia installation.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C)

Marginal level of reflexivity, rationality, clarity of exhibition statement as well as creativity demonstrated in the multimedia installation.

Failure

(F)

Lack of reflexivity, rationality, clarity of exhibition statement as well as creativity demonstrated in the multimedia installation.

Assessment Task

4. Individual/group project designing a social media profile with at least 10 posts (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge and skills to undertake a project synthesizing various multimedia and artistic skills to create a series of social media content highlighting a local or regional matter.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Excellent ability to apply social media knowledge and creative skills to undertake aesthetic experiments on social media platforms.

Good

(B+, B)

Good ability to apply social media knowledge and creative skills to undertake aesthetic experiments on social media platforms.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C)

Marginal ability to apply social media knowledge and creative skills to undertake aesthetic experiments on social media platforms.

Failure

(F)

Lack of ability to apply social media knowledge and creative skills to undertake aesthetic experiments on social media platforms.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Influencer practice, Internet art, Net art, Internet Aesthetics, Influence Industry, Social Media Marketing, Social Media Identity, Content Creation, Branding Strategy.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Bosma, J. (2011). <i>Nettitudes: Let's Talk Net Art</i> . Institute of Network Cultures.
2	Briant, E., & Bakir, V. (2024). <i>Routledge Handbook of the influence industry</i> . Routledge.
3	Kholeif, O. (2023). <i>Internet_Art: From the Birth of the Web to the Rise of NFTs</i> , Phaidon.
4	Baumgärtel, T. (2005). <i>Net.Art.2.0: New Materials Towards Net Art</i> , Verlag Fur Moderne Kunst Nurnberg.
5	Burrough, X. (2012). <i>Net Works: case studies in web art and design</i> , Routledge.
6	Stewart, P. (2018). <i>The live-streaming handbook: How to create live-video for social media on your phone and desktop</i> . Routledge.
7	Ye, Z., Dong, C., & Kavka, M. (2023). Navigating the economy of ambivalent intimacy: Gender and relational labour in China's livestreaming industry. <i>Feminist Media Studies</i> , 23(7), 3384–3400.
8	Han, X. (2021). Historicising Wanghong economy: Connecting platforms through Wanghong and Wanghong incubators. <i>Celebrity Studies</i> , 12(2), 317–325.
9	Lialina, O. (2020). <i>Net Artist</i> . Espace Multimédia Gantner.
10	Mandiberg, M. (2012). <i>The Social Media Reader</i> . NYU Press

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Nil