

SM6311B: TOPICS IN MEDIA ART II: CYBER-SHANZHAI AESTHETICS AND POST-INTERNET MEDIA ART

Effective Term

Semester A 2026/27

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Topics in Media Art II: Cyber-Shanzhai Aesthetics and Post-Internet Media Art

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

6311B

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 practice-based course explores Shanzhai cultures and their digital transformation, post-internet art, and Sino-cyberculture. Drawing on Shanzhai aesthetics (both hardware and software) and examining cyberculture and post-internet art, the course explores creativity and aesthetic production characterised by creative imitation, counterfeiting, parody, fetishisation and subversive playfulness in the remixing of existing cultural and technological elements.

Students will be asked to work collectively or individually to experiment with the flow of creation, both online and offline. Through developing installations, videos, graphics, images, and performances, they will have the opportunity to critically and experimentally engage with copying, invention, hacking, branding, power, fandom, memes, localisation, platform environment, and user behaviours through current and niche internet aesthetics. The course is supported by readings in media theory, culture studies, aesthetics and norm criticism, as well as screenings.

Enrolment for SM6311 depends on [School's permission](#), which will only be granted if the topic is essentially different from that covered in SM5316, [SM5347 offered in or before Semester B 2025/26](#) and [SM6327](#).

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Describe aspects of media art that are not already covered in the currently listed SCM courses.		x	x	
2	Discuss a new research agenda in response to topics and methods raised in the course.		x	x	
3	Design creative and research projects to verify new ideas			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	Students will engage in formal lectures where the instructor will present concepts, theories and case studies in selected issues pertaining to media art.	1, 2, 3	

2	Class discussions	Students will engage in structured discussion with peers and students to identify areas to improve on in their projects	1, 2, 3	
3	Research	Students will develop and in-depth understanding of relevant materials to write papers or create artistic projects as set by the instructor.	1, 2, 3	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Reaction papers	1, 2, 3	20	-	Yes
2	Creative projects	1, 2, 3	60	Usually 3 projects from low fidelity to high fidelity	Yes
3	In-class discussion and critique of classmates' work	1, 2, 3	20	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Assessment of in-class critique and class participation (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, research and peer critique during the tutorial sessions. The evidence of 'negotiation', the sign of discovery, lies in students' sensibility to art and interpersonal sensitivity to his/her peer members.

Excellent

- (A+, A, A-) - Active in-class participation, positive listening, strong ability to stimulate and positively steer class discussion.
- Evidence of extensive pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports.
- Readiness to share informed personal insights.
- Constructively critical, thus facilitating the discovery of new issues.

Good

- (B+, B, B-) - Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to initiate and contribute to class discussion.

- Adequate pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) - Attentive in in-class participation, listening with comprehension, infrequent contribution.

- Adequate pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports.

Marginal

(D) - Unmotivated to participate in in-class discussion.

- Inadequate pre-class preparation.

Failure

(F) - Unwilling to participate in in-class discussion even when requested by the instructor.

- No evidence of pre-class preparation.

Assessment Task

Assessment of Creative Projects (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

The evidence of 'discovery' lies in the students' demonstrated ability to address and approach problems in multiple perspectives.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - 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.

- Refined execution, evidence of a high level of technical competency.

- Highly efficient adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available with constructive adjustment.

Good

(B+, B, B-) - Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium.

- Successful execution, evidence of a satisfactory level of technical competency.

- Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available and constructive feedback/ suggestions

Fair

(C+, C, C-) - Basic appreciation and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium.

- Evidence of an adequate level of technical competency.

- Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

Marginal

(D) - Marginal appreciation of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium

- Limited adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

Failure

(F) - Little to no appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium.

- Fail to adjust plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available.

Assessment Task

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

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, execute creative ideas and projects.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Rich content, excellent ability to interpret and integrate various resources

- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition
- Precision in argument, well defined and reasoned points of view grounded in insightful interpretation of existing literature
- Readiness to respond to peer opinion and other views initiated in class discussion
- Discussion shed light on new dimensions of the issue

Good

(B+, B, B-) - Adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand

- Reasonable organization with balanced structure and composition
- Clear elaboration of ideas that sticks to the point, with clearly differentiated issues, ability to interpret opinions independently
- Sufficient responses to peer comments to sustain a discussion

Fair

(C+, C, C-) - Adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand

- Fair organization with adequate structure and composition
- Relevant points made to the subject matter in question
- Ability to respond to other statements and engage in class discussion

Marginal

(D) - Weak content, limited use of resources

- Poor organization, structure and composition
- Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions
- Ability to respond to other comments in simple terms

Failure

(F) - Inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources

- No organization, structure or/and composition
- Irrelevant points to the subject matter, no ability to interpret opinions
- Fail to respond to other comments

Assessment Task

Assessment of in-class critique and class participation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

This assessment task reviews students' participation and performance in discussions, research and peer critique during the tutorial sessions. The evidence of 'negotiation', the sign of discovery, lies in students' sensibility to art and interpersonal sensitivity to his/her peer members.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Active in-class participation, positive listening, strong ability to stimulate and positively steer class discussion.

- Evidence of extensive pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports.
- Readiness to share informed personal insights.
- Constructively critical, thus facilitating the discovery of new issues.

Good

(B+, B) - Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to initiate and contribute to class discussion.

- Adequate pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) - Attentive in in-class participation, listening with comprehension, infrequent contribution.

- Adequate pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports.

Failure

(F) - Unwilling to participate in in-class discussion even when requested by the instructor.
- No evidence of pre-class preparation.

Assessment Task

Assessment of Creative Projects (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

The evidence of 'discovery' lies in the students' demonstrated ability to address and approach problems in multiple perspectives.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - 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.
- Refined execution, evidence of a high level of technical competency.
- Highly efficient adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available with constructive adjustment.

Good

(B+, B) - Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium.
- Successful execution, evidence of a satisfactory level of technical competency.
- Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available and constructive feedback/ suggestions

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) - Basic appreciation and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium.
- Evidence of an adequate level of technical competency.
- Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

Failure

(F) - Little to no appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium.
- Fail to adjust plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available.

Assessment Task

Assessment of Papers (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, execute creative ideas and projects.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) - Rich content, excellent ability to interpret and integrate various resources
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition
- Precision in argument, well defined and reasoned points of view grounded in insightful interpretation of existing literature
- Readiness to respond to peer opinion and other views initiated in class discussion
- Discussion shed light on new dimensions of the issue

Good

(B+, B) - Adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Reasonable organization with balanced structure and composition

- Clear elaboration of ideas that sticks to the point, with clearly differentiated issues, ability to interpret opinions independently
- Sufficient responses to peer comments to sustain a discussion

Marginal

- (B-, C+, C) - Adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand
- Fair organization with adequate structure and composition
 - Relevant points made to the subject matter in question
 - Ability to respond to other statements and engage in class discussion

Failure

- (F) - Inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources
- No organization, structure or/and composition
 - Irrelevant points to the subject matter, no ability to interpret opinions
 - Fail to respond to other comments

Additional Information for AR

[Please fill in the Additional Information for AR here, if any]

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Shanzhai culture, Post-internet media art, Network art, Sino-cyberculture, Practice-based research

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Han, Byung Cul. Shanzhai: Deconstruction In Chinese, Merve Verlag, Berlin, 2011.
2	Greenspan, Anna. China and the Wireless Undertow: Media as Wave Philosophy, Edinburgh University Press, 2023.
3	De Kloet, Jeroen. Scheen, Lena. Yiu Fai, Chow. Boredom, Shanzhai, and Digitisation in the Time of Creative China, Amsterdam University Press, 2019.
4	Kholeif, Omar. You are Here: Art After the Internet, Cornerhouse, 2014.
5	Respini, Eva, ed. Art in the Age of the Internet, 1989 to Today. Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston in association with Yale University Press, 2018.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Hua, Yu. China in Ten Words: Essays, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011.
2	Rushkoff, Douglas. Cyberia: Life in the Trenches of Hyperspace. Clinamen Press, 2002.
3	Steyerl, Hito. The wretched of the screen, Sternberg Press, 2012.
4	Debord, Guy. The society of the spectacle, English Edit Ron. Adams, Unredacted Word, 2021.
5	Baudrillard, Jean. Simulacra and Simulation, University of Michigan Press, 1994.
6	Moss, Ceci. Expanded Internet Art: Twenty-First-Century Artistic Practice and the Informational Milieu. Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.