

SM6344: TECHNOLOGY AND AESTHETICS

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Technology and Aesthetics

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

6344

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 inquires into the fundamental relation between aesthetics and technology and the possible responses of art in our technological epoch dominated by discourses of artificial intelligence, transhumanism, eco-modernism, surveillance

societies, etc. This technological epoch is also characterized by the Anthropocene, in which the humans become the dominating geological force, ecological mutations, and extinction of species. What would be the possibility of art, especially media art, in face of this metaphysical force, which is modern technology? This necessitates a re-opening of the concept of technology and aesthetics as well as their relations. The history of modern and contemporary art seems to have privileged a particular trajectory of aesthetics and a particular relation between art and technology, consequently creates an impasse for thinking. This course wants to reintroduce the varieties of experience of art, for example and not limited to, the East and the West, and ask how can it contribute to the reconceptualization of technology and aesthetics today.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Understand the basic concepts of aesthetics and technology and their histories	30	x	x	x
2	Able to grasp and analyse different traditions of aesthetic thinking, West and East, and further	20	x	x	
3	Able to present conceptually challenging material orally	10		x	
4	Able to research on artistic and curatorial practices	10			
5	Develop a critical reflection on the relation between aesthetics and technology of the present	30		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 and discussions	Lectures and discussions involving key concepts and key texts	1, 2	
2	Lectures and discussions	Proposals for historical and theoretical research projects on media/technology-related topics	3, 4	
3	Lectures and discussions	Presentation of final research project/paper	3, 4, 5	
4	Lectures and discussions	Participation in and contribution to class projects	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Analytical essay	1, 5	50	-	Yes
2	Written reading summaries	2	20	-	Yes
3	Oral presentations	3, 5	20	-	Yes
4	Discussions	4, 5	10	-	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Analytic Essay, written summary of readings (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

Oral Presentation and Discussion (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

Analytic Essay, written summary of readings (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 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)

- 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

Marginal

(B-, 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

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

Oral Presentation and Discussion (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-)

- 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)

- 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

Marginal

(B-, 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

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

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

technology, aesthetics, digital media, anthropocene posthumanism, history of thought, technodiversity. Philosophy East and West

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

Title	
1	Martin Heidegger, "What are poets for?" in Poetry, Language, Thought (New York: Harper Perennial, 2001)
2	Michel Henry, "The Essence of Art," in Seeing the Invisible. On Kandinsky, trans. Scott Davidson (London: Continuum, 2009)
3	Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind" (1961), in The Primacy of Perception, trans.
4	Carleton Dallery (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 159-190
5	Theodor Adorno, Universal and Particular, in Aesthetic Theory, trans. Robert HullotKentor (London: Bloomsbury, 2012)
6	Francois Jullien, The Strange Idea of the Beautiful, (Seagull Books, 2015) Chapter I-VI.
7	Francois Jullien, The Impossible Nude (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007)
8	Francois Jullien, The Great Image Has no Form (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003)
9	Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Technical Reproducibility" The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008)
10	Bernard Stiegler, Symbolic Misery Volume 2: The Catastrophe of the Sensible (London: Polity, 2015) Chapter 3
11	Jean-François Lyotard, "After 6 Months of Work," In 30 Years after les immatériaux, ed. Yuk Hui and A. Broeckmann (Lüneburg: Meson, 2015)
12	Peter Sloterdijk, "The Anthropocene: A Process-State at the Edge of Geohistory?," in Art in the Anthropocene (London: Open Humanities, 2015)
13	Kodwo Eshun, More brilliant than the sun : adventures in sonic fiction (Quartet Books, 1998)
14	Yuk Hui, The Question Concerning Technology in China. An Essay in Cosmotronics (Falmouth: Urbanomics, 2016/2019)

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Donna Haraway, Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene (Duhem: Duke, 2016)
2	Jacques Rancière, "The sublime from Lyotard to Schiller Two readings of Kant and their political significance," Radical Philosophy
3	Martin Heidegger, The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking, in Time and Being
4	Bruno Latour, Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime (London: Polity, 2019)
5	Yuk Hui, Recursivity and Contingency (London: Roman and Littlefield International, 2019)
6	Jean-François Lyotard, "Can Thought go on without a body?," In The Inhuman: Reflections on Time (London: Polity, 1991), 8-23
7	François Cheng, Full and Empty. The Language of Chinese Painting, trans. Michael H, Kohn (Boston: Shambhala, 1994),
8	Mou Zongsan, Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy (Create Space: 2015)
9	Kitaro Nishida, "Form of culture of the classical periods of East and West seen from a metaphysical perspective," in Sourcebook for modern Japanese philosophy, trans. and ed. D. A. Dilworth et al, (London: Greenwood Press, 1998), 21