

SM3729: RELATIONAL AESTHETICS AND PARTICIPATORY MEDIA

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Relational Aesthetics and Participatory Media

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

3729

Academic Unit

School of Creative Media (SM)

College/School

School of Creative Media (SM)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

SM1701 New Media Art

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

Relational art is a broad tendency in contemporary art that primarily relies on performative and interactivity strategies to solicit responses of other people. The artist constructs a framework for the emergence of new social relations. The artist facilitates the creation of alternative ways to live together and structure social space and time, with the aim of transforming everyday life. Using various artistic media, students will produce experimental works that solicit audience participation and generate effective social change. This course will be contextualized with reference to the history of participatory art since the second world war, including the Situationists and urban events, Fluxus Happenings and experiments, environmental art, locative games, activist art, feminist art, etc. Additional context will be based on theoretical readings, including work by Roland Barthes, Walter Benjamin, Guy Debord, and Nicolas Bourriaud. Those readings and historical materials will encourage students to think critically about such questions as: the meaning of the concept of “participation” ; the role of the author in participatory art; and the connection between digital media, interactive art and social change.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Describe, analyze, and reflect on the history of participatory art since the second world war.		x	x	
2	Produce their own individual artistic projects that successfully invite participation and interaction.		x	x	x
3	Theorize the distinctive features and potentials of participatory and relational art, particularly the role of the author and her/his relation to the public.		x	x	
4	Associate, combine and integrate knowledge from different disciplines (e.g. mathematics, sciences, literature etc) into course assignments		x	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	Lecture	Students will learn the history of participatory art and key theoretical issues. Critique of student proposals and works in progress.	1, 2, 3, 4	3 hours/week
2	Reading and report	Students will read key texts and in-class short presentations.	1, 2, 3, 4	1 hour/week

3	Group project	Students will conduct a project geared towards social change.	1, 2, 3, 4	2 hour/week
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	In-class presentations of readings.	1, 2, 3	60	-	Yes
2	Group project and presentation.	1, 3	40	-	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Class Participation/ Discussion/ Critique

Criterion

This assessment task reviews students' participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique during the tutorial sessions. The evidence of 'negotiation', the sign of discovery, lies in students' pre-class preparation and interpersonal sensitivity to his/her 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 peer reports and other materials
- Interpret others' views with an open mind and ready to negotiate
- Readiness to share personal insight via analysis and synthesis with informed views
- Constructively critical, thus facilitating the discovery of new issues

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 peer reports and other materials
- Interpret opinions effectively

Fair (C+, C, C-)

- Attentive in in-class participation, listening with comprehension, but only infrequently contributing
- Adequate pre-class preparation but little familiarity with peer reports and other materials
- 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 peer reports and other materials

- 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 peer reports and other materials
- Minimal ability in interpreting opinions

Assessment Task

2. Presentation

Criterion

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.

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

3. Creative Project & Report

Criterion

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.

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
- 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

Good (B+, B, B-)

- 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

Fair (C+, C, C-)

- 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

Marginal (D)

- 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

Failure (F)

- 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

Additional Information for AR

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

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

Relational aesthetics and participation; author as producer; Situationist art and activism; Happenings; art and ordinary life; locative art; activist art; tactical media.

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

Title	
1	Alberro, Alexander and Stimson, Blake. Conceptual art: a critical anthology (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 1999).
2	Barthes, Roland. Image, Music, Text (1977), Hill and Wang: New York.
3	Benjamin, Walter. "The Author as Producer" . NEW LEFT REVIEW I/62, July-August 1970.
4	Bishop, Claire. Participation, Documents of Contemporary Art. London and Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel and the MIT Press, 2006.
5	----- "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," OCTOBER, 110, Fall 2004. pp. 51-79.
6	Bourriaud, Nicolas. Relational Aesthetics. Paris: Presses du réel, 2002
7	----- Touch: Relational Art from the 1990s to Now. San Francisco: San Francisco Art Institute, 2002.

8	Dezeuze, Anna. "Everyday Life, Relational Aesthetics and the Transfiguration of the Commonplace." <i>Journal of Visual Art Practice</i> Volume: 5, Issue: 3 (November 2006).
9	Foucault, Michel (1969), "What is an Author?", in Harari, Josué V., <i>Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism</i> , Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979.
10	Frieling, Rudolf. <i>The Art of Participation: 1950 to Now</i> . (New York and London: Thames and Hudson, 2008).
11	Friedman, Ken (ed). <i>The Fluxus Reader</i> . (John Wiley and Sons, 1998).
12	Grau, Oliver (ed). <i>MediaArtHistories</i> (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2007).
13	Hemment, Drew. "Locative Arts." <i>Leonardo</i> Vol. 39, No. 4 (August 2006): 348-355.
14	Jappe, Anselm. <i>Guy Debord</i> (University of California Press 1999).
15	Kaprow, Allan. <i>Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life</i> . (University of California Press, 2003).
16	Kester, Grant H. <i>Conversation Pieces, Community + Communication in Modern Art</i> . Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, Ltd., 2004.
17	Ken Knabb, ed. <i>Situationist International Anthology</i> . Bureau of Public Secrets 1981; Revised and Expanded Edition 2006,
18	McDonough, Tom (Ed). <i>Guy Debord and the Situationist International</i> (Cambridge: MIT Press 2002).
19	Nakajima, Seio. "Prosumption in Art." <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i> Vol. 56, No. 4 (April 2012): 550-569.
20	Raley, Rita. <i>Tactical Media</i> . (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).
21	Rancière, Jacques. <i>The Ignorant Schoolmaster, Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation</i> . (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).
22	Rush, Michael. <i>New media in late 20th-century art</i> (London : Thames & Hudson, 1999).
23	Wilson, Stephen. <i>Information Arts: Intersections of Art, Science, and Technology</i> (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2002).

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Situationist International Online: http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/index.html
2	Corpos Informaticos Research Groups: http://www.corpos.org
3	Walk and Squawk Performance Project: http://walksquawk.org
4	Blessing Conspiracy - Individual artist project: http://blessingconspiracy.blogspot.com
5	Post Secrets - Curatorial Project: http://www.postsecrets.com
6	Art & Society: http://www.mainsdoeuvres.org/uk_intro.asp
7	Art Factories: http://www.artfactories.net/uk_rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=236
8	The Village of Arts & Humanities: http://www.villagearts.org/
9	Performance Research Project: http://bryant2.bryant.edu/~pkuppers/
10	The Center for Performance Research: http://www.thecpr.org.uk/
11	Creative Time: http://www.creativetime.org/programs/index.html
12	Reap What You Sew: http://www.headlands.org
13	Common Ground: http://www.commonground.org.uk/