New Media in the Creative Arts

23086-AVT-180-K01

Class meeting days and time: M 5:00–7:40 p.m.
Location: Mason Korea ART Building A105

23087-AVT-180-K02

Class meeting days and time: W 5:00–7:40 p.m.
Location: Mason Korea ART Building A105

Instructor: Miriam Ahmed, MFA, PhD **Email:** mahmed62@gmu.edu
Office Hours: I'm available by appointment over Zoom. Please make appointment requests at least 24 hours in advance.
Faculty bio: https://art.gmu.edu/miriam-ahmed/ **Website:** www.miryum.com X (formerly Twitter): @miryum_

Course Description

Introduces computing from artist's perspective. Emphasizes computer use for artistic creation and research. Overview of image making and time-based media within the broad context of contemporary art, new media art, and mediated culture. Offered by School of Art. Limited to three attempts. **Mason Core**: Info Tech & Computing

Course Objectives

The student will understand different approaches to creating New Media work at the end of this course. Students will be knowledgeable in camera shots terminology and framing, and beginners levels software applications like Adobe After Effects, Premiere, Photoshop, and online AI sound and image generators.

Section Information for Spring 2024

This course introduces students to different software and online applications for creating media and artwork. We explore digital interfaces and use them as a place for experimentation and play. With the rise of Synthography and the creation of images by Artificial Intelligence, this course wrestles with the idea of authorship, originality, remix, sampling and reproduction.

Mason Core Foundation Requirement for Information Technology

This course satisfies a Mason Core Foundation Requirement for Information Technology. Information technology and computing can significantly augment humans' ability to produce, consume, process, and communicate information. Thus, students need to understand ways to use such technology to enhance their lives, careers, and society, while being mindful of challenges such as security, source reliability, automation, and ethical implications. These factors have made it essential for students to understand how to effectively navigate the evolving technological landscape. IT courses offered in the majors may focus on disciplinary applications and concerns of information technology.

IT courses meet the following learning outcomes:

1. Students will understand the principles of information storage, exchange, security, and privacy and be aware of related ethical issues.
2. Students will become critical consumers of digital information; they will be capable of selecting and evaluating appropriate, relevant, and trustworthy sources of information.
3. Students can use appropriate information and computing technologies to organize and analyze information and use it to guide decision-making.
4. Students will be able to choose and apply appropriate algorithmic methods to solve a problem.

Grading Requirements

Exercises and Project

Informed by lectures, experiential studio work, readings, discussions, and critiques, students will execute a series of exercises developed from rough schematic level to final presentation. The learning objectives are achieved through participation in coursework and completion of assignments. We will build on skills and concepts learned in the initial content areas and apply them in subsequent projects. Students will provide creative responses to the given prompts; keep records of the design process, conceptual development, and exploration of ideas that lead to the final product; refine outcomes based on critiques; and present the finished work.

Students will be required to research, create, imagine, storyboard, and undergo different processes depending on the software or applications type of media explored in each class.

The exercises and project details will be covered in class and/or on Blackboard. Deadlines must be adhered to for full credit. You will be required to review and/or complete software assignments to gain working knowledge of the software/tools.

Readings and Discussion

Students are required to read the assigned PDF handouts and resources in Blackboard, participate in discussions about these readings, and demonstrate understanding and application of the knowledge gained from these readings within assignments and projects.

Extra Credit

To be fair and equitable, all students are given the same opportunity to make up for lost points by taking advantage of extra credit assignments. It is your responsibility to complete the extra credit assignments if needed.

Grading Criteria

Assignments are generally graded by the following criteria: concept/development, process, execution, and presentation/critique:

- **Concept/development:** Creative, innovative, and unique concept/solution. Is the main idea of the piece communicated effectively? Evidence of successful creative articulation of themes, brainstorming and visual interpretation of written ideas.
- **Process:** Attention to the guidelines and overall comprehension of the given assignment. Are the instructions carefully followed and sensitively used? Successful sketches, thumbnailing, reference gathering, research / Trial and error
- **Execution:** Application of learned techniques and execution—Is the end-product well crafted, adding to the quality of the finished piece? Execution of the final work at a Professional Level, exhibiting knowledge of the subject.
- **Presentation & Critique:** Presentation and critique of the finished product, and craftsmanship. Production quality of your project, as well as your professional presentation (timeliness, verbal/written articulation, craftsmanship, and critique participation).

Exercises (9 @ 5% each)	45%	Presentations & Critiques (3 @ 5% each)	15%
Final Project	15%	Participation	5%
Readings/ Discussions (4 @ 5% each)	20%	**TOTAL**	**100%**
		Extra Credit	Up to 5%

Grade	Quality Points	Percentage Points	Grading Scale (Overview of grading standards)
A+	4.00	97 – 100	Superior execution; maximum originality; excellent concentration and initiative; cooperative with peers; excellent judgment; superior attitude and dedication; highly imaginative, original, and experimental; very consistent in work ethic; significant improvement.
A	4.00	94 – <97	
A-	3.67	90 – <94	
B+	3.33	87 – <90	Strong execution and originality; adequate concentration and initiative; cooperative with peers; good attitude, dedication, and judgment; imaginative and experimental; consistent in work ethic; noticeable improvement.
B	3.00	84 – <87	
B-	2.67	80 – <84	
C+	2.33	77 – <80	Average execution, concentration, organization, and attitude; some imagination and originality; lacks some consistency in work ethic; some improvement.
C (PASS in AVT)	2.00	74 – <77	
C-	1.67	70 – <74	
D	1.00	60 – <70	Poor execution and improvement; limited originality; little concentration and organization; poor judgment; evades responsibility and cooperation; lacks work ethic, concentration, organization.
F	0.00	59 and below	Fails to execute to minimum standards, insignificant improvement; no originality; minimum concentration and organization; evades responsibility and cooperation; no work ethic.

Required and Recommended Readings / Software / Equipment

Required Software: Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop, Premiere, After Effects, Illustrator, Media Encoder, and Acrobat Pro) subscription must be purchased for this course.

Required Equipment:

- Personal computer/ laptop with Adobe Creative Cloud applications. Mac or Windows.
- 2 independent storage devices – primary + backup systems (It is *critical* to backup your work). Cloud storage works. Video and media files can be very large; 500GB storage space should be ok.
- Camera – most recent cell phones are fine for this course. If you have a digital camera, you are welcome to utilize it
- Project-dependent materials that will vary per brief/concept
- Sketchbook, pens/pencils

Required Texts: Reading materials will be provided in Blackboard as PDFs or article links.

Enrollment

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class.
Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes. (Deadlines each semester are published in the Schedule of Classes available from the Registrar's Website registrar.gmu.edu.)
Last Day to Add: Feb. 26
Last Day to Drop: Mar. 4
After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons.
Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.

Attendance and Participation Policy

Attendance & Timeliness

Your attendance, participation, and punctuality are critical to successful completion of the class. You must be on time—and prepared with the required assignments completed, and materials necessary to work in class. Not being properly prepared is considered an absence from the class. Students can have three (3) absences (excused or unexcused). Any additional absence will result in failure of the course. Late arrivals and early departures are disruptive and unacceptable. Excessive tardiness will also affect your final grade. Two late arrivals = 1 absence. If absent or late, you (*not the instructor*) are responsible for retrieving and catching up on missed content.

In professional practice, graphic designers solve client problems with tight time requirements. Our projects will have deadlines to hit so you can get a feel for the pace set in professional practice. You will be given as much time as possible to work during the studio, but discussion and critiques will consume a significant amount of the time. The time spent in the studio may only be a fraction of the time that is necessary to complete the projects successfully so be prepared to make headway outside of the classroom.

Deadlines

Work due in class (such as presentations or critique materials) is due at the time and date given. There is no grace period for work due in class. Blackboard assignments are due at the date and time shown in Blackboard. There is a 3-hour grace period to account for technical difficulties and in-class revisions to submissions. Late work received 3 hours to 3 days after the deadline will receive a 50% grade deduction and late work received more than 3 days after the deadline will receive a grade of zero (0) unless there are documented extenuating circumstances (i.e. unforeseen emergencies) or prior arrangements have been made with the instructor's approval. It is your responsibility to ensure you submit work before the deadline, and to verify before the deadline that the submission was successful and is visible/accessible/not corrupted/etc. If you lose points due to late submissions (or for any other reason), extra credit assignments are equitably available to all students for the purpose of making up lost points.

Critiques, Presentations, and Participation

Critiques and presentations are the equivalent of exams. Students must attend all project critiques/presentations and work-in-progress critiques. You must be present at the start and for the full duration. Late arrivals or early departures on critique/presentation days, or missing any portion of the critique/presentation will result in a 50% grade deduction for the critique/presentation unless there are documented extenuating circumstances. Audio/visual presentation of work, submission of critique presentation files and project files, and participation in critique discourse (including during other students' presentations) are required and graded. Neglecting to attend, present, participate, or submit/upload required critique/presentation deliverables will result in a 50% grade deduction for the critique/presentation.

Critiques and presentations are important opportunities to shape verbal articulation, practice delivery skills, strengthen design solutions, and help your peers develop as professionals. It is imperative that you offer constructive criticism to your classmates in an effort to better their solutions. The classroom critique is an open forum for you to reflect upon, evaluate, and discuss concepts and solutions with your classmates. This is an extremely valuable tool, and you will be expected to utilize this forum to its fullest. Critiques/presentations may last multiple class periods. Be prepared to participate in the entire session. Students who fail to have adequate work to present will lose a valuable opportunity to learn, which will also directly affect their grades. Thoughtful feedback and inquiries during other students' critiques and presentations are evaluated as part of your own critique and participation grades. In addition, we will discuss readings and assignments, and your input is expected. A portion of your final grade will be based on class participation.

Course Expectations

What to expect this semester

- Expect to spend a minimum of 6 hours of work outside of class per week
- Come to class prepared to work and with homework completed
- Expect to verbalize: Critique requires you to speak/write about your work
- Expect to sketch your ideas (on paper or digitally)
- Expect to research how to use Adobe software on your own, learning the software capabilities will take exploration and trial and error on your part.

Hardware/software access, Storage and Backup

Digital work is produced in a volatile environment on software and hardware that are susceptible to crashes and bugs. These are NOT extenuating circumstances (not valid reasons for late work); these are part of the *normal* production process and you must *expect* them. Always keep a backup of your files. Train your left hand to hit CMD+S (save on Mac) or Ctrl+S (save on Windows) every 30 seconds while working. Get in the habit of copying all your files over onto a secondary backup storage device every time you complete a major step in your project. Your primary storage is guaranteed to crash/fail/be inaccessible at some point because that's just what hardware/software does.
When that happens, there are 2 types of people in this world: those who cry, and those who backed up. Which type are you?

Disability Statement/Accommodations

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit http://ds.gmu.edu/ for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. If at any point in the semester, you would like to apply for specific accommodations, please contact the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs (Jiye Chang - jchang22@gmu.edu) or Joanna Park (spark214@gmu.edu), who will connect you with Disability Services on the Fairfax campus. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me.

Disability Services (Fairfax Campus) Contact Information: Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email:ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

Honor Code

Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.
George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited.
All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.
Any student use of Generative AI tools should follow the fundamental principles of the Honor Code.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic perfor-

mance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran's status, or physical ability.

Title IX

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason Korea's Deputy Title IX Coordinator pursuant to University Policy 1202 and 1412. If you would like to speak confidentially with the Mason Korea counselor, please see https://masonkorea.gmu.edu/resources-and-services/counseling-and-wellness for more information. For more information about what Title IX is, please see https://masonkorea.gmu.edu/resources-and-services/title-ix

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

(Subject to change)

	Projects, Topics	**Exercises and Discussions**
Week 1 | Feb 19-25	Course Introduction/Syllabus Review **Topic: What is New Media**	**Exercise 1:** Introduction video
Week 2 | Feb 26 – Mar 3	**Topic: 2D Images** Resolution and image compression, raster v vector, Intro to Photoshop and image manipulation Photoshop basics demo/ tutorial	**Exercise 2:** New Me(dia) Self-portrait **Week 2 Discussion**: Comments on Introduction videos
	F Mar 1 Independence Movement Day (no classes)	
Week 3 | Mar 4-10	**Topic: Still to Moving Images** History and meaning of memes Photoshop demo: layers	**Exercise 3:** Create 3 memes **Week 3 Discussion**: Preparing for Critiques
Week 4 | Mar 11-17	In class **Presentation and Critique** feedback Choose 1 Exercise to present from Exercises 2/3	**Exercise 4:** Create 3 digital collages **Week 4 Discussion**: Wangechi Mutu and Representation
Week 5 | Mar 18-24	**Topic: Source Material, Copyright, Appropriation, Plagiarism** How to collect source material AI Plagiarism/ Appropriation	**Exercise 5:** Create an AI image (20 words) **Exercise 6:** Collective AI image (75 words)
Week 6 | Mar 25-31	**Topic: Introduction to Animation - Recording** Animation/ New media	**Exercise 7:** Create a NFT/ Avatar for animation **Week 6 Discussion**: AI
Week 7 | Apr 1-7	**Topic: Introduction to Animation** Animated GIFs as a medium Photoshop demo: creating an animated GIF	**Exercise 8:** Create 2 GIFs
Week 8 | Apr 8-14	M-T Apr 8-9 Spring Recess (no classes) W Apr 10 National Assembly Election (no classes)	
Week 9 | Apr 15-21	MIDTERMS In class **Presentation and Critique** feedback. Choose 1 Exercise to present from Exercises 4/7/8	
Week 10 | Apr 22-28	**Topic: Camera: Static and Dynamic shots** Cinematography – The Camera Storyboard Premier and After Effects demo	
Week 11 | Apr 29 – May 5	T Apr 30 Make Up Day 1 Follow Wed schedule W May 1 Labor Day (no classes) **Topic: The Moving Image** Video art PBS A Case for Video Art	**Exercise 9:** Animate the Avatar

	After Effects Demo: Animating the Avatar	
Week 12 | May 6-12	M May 6 Children's Day holiday (no classes) Wed K02 section: **Topic: The Moving Image** Video art examples In class exercise/ video research Adobe Premiere Demo	Wed K02 section: **Project:** Create a 2-minute video using live footage, animation, or archival footage
Week 13 | May 13-19	W May 15 Budha's Birthday (no classes) Th May 16 Make Up Day 2 Follow Wed schedule Mon K01 section: **Topic: The Moving Image** Video art examples In class exercise/ video research Adobe Premiere Demo Wed K02 section: Project studio	Mon K01 section: **Project:** Create a 2-minute video using live footage, animation, or archival footage
Week 14 | May 20-26	Project studio	
Week 15 | May 27 – Jun 2	Project studio (Mon K01 section) **Project Presentation & Critique (Wed K02 section)**	
Week 16 | Jun 3-6	W Jun 5 Reading Day Th Jun 6 Memorial Day (no classes) **Project Presentation & Critique (Mon K01 section)**	
Jun 7-14	Final Exams	Extra Credit due (*optional*)
Sat Jun 15	Graduation Ceremony	