

Art History 4745-001: Theories of Art and Technology Spring 2011

Instructor: James Hugunin Ph: 773-316-4295; Office: MC B1-03E (basement of 112 S. Mich. Bldg.) E-mail: Jim@uturn.org (webpage: (www.uturn.org) Laptops are permitted. Be on time to class. Miss three classes = NCR. No cell phones or pagers on and no knitting in class. As per school policy, special needs, disabilities, learning problems, etc. will be accommodated, see *instructor now*.

Plagiarism Policy: We are a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of SAIC, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other School officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution.

Synopsis: This seminar-style course is intended to broach a range of issues concerning the theoretical discussion of technology and art by a variety of thinkers in essays that range from the 1930s to the present. Positions both for and against technology are argued. Topics such as the impact of reproductive technologies on the unique artwork (Walter Benjamin), the effects of our technological society on our lives (Jacques Ellul, Jean Baudrillard), the essence of technology (Martin Heidegger), the impact of electronic media on society (Marshall McLuhan, Vilém Flusser, Bruno Latour), can art and technology shake hands or not (Jack Burnham), the negative aspects of cyberculture (Theodore Roszak) capitalism and virtual reality (Arthur Kroker), the cyborg (Adam Bostic, Mark Dery, and Donna Haraway), the Internet and cyberdemocracy (Joseph Lockard), the electronic revolution and architecture (Lebbeus Woods) are taken up for discussion. Slides lecture and in-class discussions of this material.

Texts: Professor pack purchased in class and a slim text which you buy from *Amazon.com* (\$8.00): Christopher Horrocks, *Marshall McLuhan and Virtuality*. **Graduate level students will also need to purchase *The Information Bomb* by Paul Virilio and do a 5-page paper on it.**

Evaluation: Two papers of *six pages each minimum* or one research paper of fifteen pages in length due at final class meeting or substitute a visual project related to the course's topic for both papers (see *instructor first about this latter option*). Master's students also do an additional 5-page paper (see below).

- 1) **Midterm paper** in which you will either:
 - a) do a synopsis of key points and common threads running through the readings;
 - or b) a critical discussion of any essay(s) in Professor Pack readings that includes any of the three FYI essays included therein.
- 2) **Final paper** in which you will either: a) do a synopsis of key points and common threads running through the readings; or b) a critical discussion of any essay(s) in our texts.
- 3) **Visual project option** students will give a *short presentation* (scheduled during last four weeks of course) of their artwork AND a three-page paper discussing the project.
- 4) **Graduate MA students** will read Paul Virilio's *The Information Bomb* (order on Amazon.com) and write a five page critical engagement with its main theses (pro or con) due at the final class meeting.

WEEK # / PROFESSOR PACK, REQUIRED READINGS

- 1) Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (Read in class)
 - 2a) Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" (excerpts)
 - 2b) Richard Polt, "The Question Concerning Technology," from *Heidegger: An Introduction*
 - 3) Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (excerpts)
 - 4a) Christopher Manes, "Nature and Silence" (and brief article on Gaia Hypothesis)
 - 4b) Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (excerpts)
 - 5a) Jean Baudrillard, "Requiem for the Media"
 - 5b) Jack Burnham, "Art and Technology: The Panacea That Failed"
 - 6a) Charles H. Traub and Jonathzn Lipkin, "If We Are Digital" (from *Leonardo*, 31:5 (1998))
 - 6b) Oliver Grau, "History of Telepresence: Automata" Illusion, and Rejecting the Body," (from *The Robot in the Garden: Telerobotics and Telepistemology in the Age of the Internet*).
 - 7a) John Zerzan, "Interview with John Zerzan"
 - 7b) Theodore Roszak, "Preface" and "Introduction" to *The Cult of Information*
 - 8a) Simon Penny, "The Virtualization of Art Practice: Body Knowledge and the Engineering Worldview."
 - 8b) Arthur Kroker, "Virtual Capitalism"
 - 8c) Joseph Lockard, "Progressive Politics, Electronic Individualism and the Myth of Virtual Community"
- Midterm paper ue (doing the long paper option, hand in short abstract of your topic)**
- 9a) William J. Mitchell, *City of Bits* (excerpts)
 - 9b) Lebbeus Woods, "The Question of Space"
 - 10) Vilém Flusser, excerpts from *The Shape of Things* and *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*
 - 11) Miscellaneous readings on Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory
 - 12) Mark Dery, *Escape Velocity* (excerpt). **Begin short Visual Project Presentations.**
 - 13a) Adam I. Bostic, "Automata: Seeing Cyborg Through the Eyes of Popular Culture, Computer-Generated Imagery, and Contemporary Theory" from *Leonardo*, 31:5 (1998)
 - 13b) Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century"
 - 14) Discussion of Christopher Horrocks, *Marshall McLuhan and Virtuality*
 - 15) Continue discussion of Christopher Horrocks's *Marshall McLuhan and Virtuality*
- Final papers (long or second short paper) due. Visual Project Presentations.**

FYI (suggested, not required, readings):

- 1) Shannon Spanhake, "Telepresence as the Ultimate Intimate: Human Desire, Narcissism, and Teledildonics" from *Research, Writing, and Culture: The Best Undergraduate Thesis Essays, 1998 - 2000* (No.2);
- 2) Eduardo Kac, "Dialogical Telepresence and Net Ecology," from *The Robot in the Garden*;
- 3) James Hugunin, "Alt.Art.Soc.Tech.Pro.Con," from *U-Turn E-zine #1* www.uturn.org