

# Syllabus

## Assignments

Turing

Homepage

Divide

## Schedule

Aug 30 to Sept 29

Oct 1 to Oct 29

Nov 1 to Dec 8

### COURSE OVERVIEW:

University of California at Berkeley

Departments of Art Practice, of Rhetoric, and of Women's Studies

Course Number: Art 23AC, Rhetoric 42AC, and Women's Studies 23AC

Course Title: Foundations of American Cyber-Cultures

Control Number: 04945

Location: 120 LATIMER

Schedule: MW 12-1 PM Lecture; MW 1-2 PM Tutorial; F 12-1 or 1-2  
Discussion Section

Website: <http://art.berkeley.edu/coursework/niemeyer/courses/23ac/>

Instructors: Prof. Greg Niemeyer, Art/Film Studies  
Prof. Charis Thompson, Women's Studies and Rhetoric  
GSI Dan Perkel, Information Management Systems  
GSI Megan Finn, Information Management Systems

Office hours: Prof. Niemeyer, Friday 10-12, Kroeber  
Prof. Thompson, Wednesday 3-5, 3412 Dwinelle  
Dan Perkel, Garron Reading Room, Kroeber  
Megan Finn, Garron Reading Room, Kroeber

### Foundations of American Cyber-Cultures

How do new media reinforce pre-existing social hierarchies and also offer possibilities for the transcendence of those very categories? Our course offers students an opportunity to think critically about, and engage in practical experiments in, the complex interactions between new media and perceptions and performances of embodiment, agency, citizenship, collective action, individual identity, time and spatiality. We pay particular attention to the categories of personhood that make up the UC Berkeley American Cultures requirements of race and ethnicity, as well as to gender, nationality, and disability.

New media—and we leave the precise definition of the new media as something to be argued about over the course of the semester—can be yet another means for dividing and disenfranchising and can be the conduit of violence and transnational dominance. At the same time, new media have already begun to offer exciting

creative, subversive, informational and organizational forms that liberate in beautiful and unexpected ways. We aim to explore both these strands as well as the surprising links between them.

Co-taught by a theorist and a practitioner, the course capitalizes on the rapid deployment potential of new media, especially online media. Rapid deployment of new media content allows students to engage in mediated self-representation. Studying their peer's mediated performances as well as source texts, students analyze their own experiences as both content providers and consumers. Social networks emerging from these mediated performances serve as proving grounds for theories of mind and machine, embodiment, multiplicity of personal and collective identities, morphing among stereotypes, hybridization, privacy issues, and finally the digital divide.

We contextualize these media experiments with weekly assignments that address non-mediated, direct, concrete human experiences. These direct experiences connect the perceived fluidity of online identities with the troubling interactions between technology, race, and gender and allow students to investigate their own ethical and political multiplicity.

#### Syllabus Overview

Date	Topic	Reading / Video	Project
Monday, August 30 to Monday, September 27	<p><u>The Cybercultural Imaginary: History, Philosophy, and Politics</u></p> <p>History of Computing</p> <p>The Turing Test</p> <p>The Philosophical and Humanistic Imaginaries of "Machine" versus "Man"</p> <p>Where and What are the Politics?</p>	<p><i>The New Media Reader.</i></p> <p>Video: <i>The Matrix Revolutions</i></p> <p>"Screening the Machine" film compilaton</p>	Turing Test Assignment
Wednesday, September 29 to Wednesday, October 27	<p><u>Embodiment and Identity On-line</u></p> <p>The Internet in American Life: Demographics</p> <p>Passing, Performance, Trying On: Race, Gender,</p>	<p>Pew Internet and American Life Project</p> <p><i>Technicolor: Race, Technology, and Everyday Life.</i></p> <p><i>The War of Desire and Technology.</i></p>	Performing Identity Assignment

	<p>Sexuality</p> <p>Disability and Disembodiment</p> <p>Cybersociality: Community Building; Political Organizing; Hate Groups.</p>	<p>When the Americans with Disabilities Act Goes Online.</p> <p>Video: <i>Digital Divide, Hate.com</i></p>	
<p>Monday, November 1 to Monday, December 6</p>	<p><u>Life in and with Cybercultures</u></p> <p>Life and Love: Email, IM-ing, Online Dating, Religion</p> <p>Consumption: Pornography, Shopping, Healthcare, Education</p> <p>Violence, Security, Surveillance, Privacy</p> <p>Labor, Oppression, and Social Change</p>	<p><i>The New Media Reader.</i></p> <p><i>The War of Desire and Technology.</i></p> <p><i>Cyborg Citizen.</i></p> <p><i>Technicolor: Race, Technology, and Everyday Life.</i></p> <p>Video: <i>Synthetic Pleasures</i></p>	<p>Digital Divide Assignment</p>
<p>December 8: Wrap-up lecture, Final review</p>	<p>Re-conceptualizing Digital Divides</p>		

**Reading:**

The following books are required. You can purchase them online, at the Cal Student Store, or at Ned's on Bancroft. The exact pages to be read for each class can be found below on the schedule of classes:

1. Wardrip-Fruin, Noah, and Nick Montfort, eds., 2003. *The New Media Reader*. MIT Press.
2. Nelson, Alondra et al, eds., 2001. *Technicolor: Race, Technology, and Everyday Life*. NYU Press.
3. Stone, Allucquere Rosanne, (1995) 1998. *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age*. Third Printing. MIT Press.
4. Gray, Chris Hables, 2002. *Cyborg Citizen*. Routledge.

## **Mechanics and Expectations:**

### Class format:

M/W 12:10 PM-1:00 PM.: Lectures. Lectures will be held in 120 Latimer Hall. Lectures will be delivered by Prof. Charis Thompson, Prof. Greg Niemeyer, or a guest lecturer on topics as listed on the schedule of classes below. Lectures will start promptly at 12:10. There are no announcements before the beginning of the lecture. At the end of the lecture, we reserve a few minutes for questions (questions and comments are also welcome during lecture). Attendance is mandatory.

M/W 1:10 PM to 2:00 PM: Tutorials. The second hour of class time, immediately following lecture, is a tutorial for course-related skill acquisition as noted on the schedule of classes. Tutorials take place in 120 Latimer, or in task-specific locations such as the library. Students will be divided into four study groups for tutorials and sections, the 00 Group, the 01 Group, the 10 Group, and the 11 Group. Students will be assigned to one of the sections at the beginning of the semester. Every student attends ONE tutorial per week; attendance is mandatory. Monday tutorials are for study groups 00 and 01; Wednesday tutorials are for study groups 10 and 11.

F 12:00-1:00 or 1:00-2:00 PM: Discussion sections with your GSI. Discussion sessions are given by Mr. Dan Perkel and Ms. Megan Finn. Sections provide small group discussion, review of skills, and help with completing assignments. Each student attends one small group section per week; attendance is mandatory. Group 00 meets in Barrows Room 74, 12-1:00 PM; Group 01 meets in Barrows Room 74, 1:00-2:00 PM; Group 10 meets in Kroeber Room 295, 12:00-1:00 PM; Group 11 meets in Kroeber Room 295, 1:00-2:00. You cannot switch sections.

Reading / movies: Reading should be completed by the lecture on the date for which it is assigned. All readings can be found in one of the four required texts or online (url and / or links to online readings will be available on the class web site). In addition to movie excerpts to be shown in class, you are encouraged to use the Media Resources Center in Moffitt Library. Dr. Gary Handman will tell you about that in class on Monday September 13.

Accessing the CourseWeb and Main Class Website: You can access CourseWeb through the Online Schedule of Classes (<http://schedule.berkeley.edu>). The main class web site, on which you will find all the class information and post your completed assignments is <http://art.berkeley.edu/coursework/niemeyer/courses/23ac>

Syllabus: This syllabus is posted on the class website and it contains the four kinds of information that will be essential for the smooth running of this class. These are: 1) the list of lecture topics; 2) the locations and purpose of tutorial and discussion sections; 3) the required readings; and 4) the assignments and their due dates.

Assignment mechanics: There are three assignments in this course, described below. Each one has five steps and each step is worth 5% of the final grade. The date that each step is due is listed on the schedule of classes below. Late assignments will not be considered and will result in your forfeiting that portion of the grade. The skills needed for the assignments will be taught in lab section or

lecture. The format and other parameters of the assignments will be explained in class.

Course norms: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. As this is an American Cultures class, and issues of identity are central to the intellectual content of the course, respect and civility toward one another will be especially important.

**Assignments and Evaluation:**

Assignments: There are three assignments in this class. Each one ties closely to the content of the corresponding lecture part of the course. Each involves the acquisition and implementation of certain skills that will be taught in tutorial sections. Each also involves you producing critical and creative interventions in the area of inquiry in question. We designed the assignments in several weekly steps. It is important to keep up with the weekly steps, as completing each step successfully constitutes 5% of your final grade. All assignments need to be turned in electronically via email to your GSI. Deliverables are either a narrative, an analysis or a creative product. A narrative is a free-form account of your personal experience with a process. An analysis is a referenced research paper in which you present a hypothesis supported by verifiable facts. A creative product is original electronic content that you create from your imagination, independently and without replicating existing words or images. There are no further tests or exams for this course.

Evaluation and Due Dates:

Assignment 1 "Turing": Five steps, 1.1-1.5, worth 5% each	25%
1.1 due 9/13	
1.2 due 9/20	
1.3 due 9/22	
1.4 due 9/24 to be carried out in discussion section	
1.5 due 9/29	
Assignment 2 "Homepage": Five steps, 2.1-2.5, worth 5% each	25%
2.1 due 10/11	
2.2 due 10/13	
2.3 due 10/20	
2.4 due 10/22 to be carried out in discussion section	
2.5 due 10/27	
Assignment 3 "Digital Divide": Five steps, 3.1-3.5, worth 5% each	25%
3.1 due 11/8	
3.2 due 11/22	
3.3 due 11/29	
3.4 due 12/6	
3.5 due 12/8	

Reading/attendance/participation 25%

There will be no final exam.