CONVERSATIONS ON MEDIA TECHNOLOGY AND PRACTICE/ IIMC 500 ATEK 520
FALL 2020

FACULTY: TOM LEESER
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https://centerforintegratedmedia.org
https://art.calarts.edu/programs/art-and-technology

Class time: 2-3 hours (depending on the flow of the class)
Room: Center for Integrated Media's Zoom
Meetings: Monday 7p--9pm
Office Hours: Thursdays 5-6pm (by appointment) Zoom

Owing to the condition of rapid change and exchange within our globalized network, the words technology and media can be considered an over-statement; generalized labels adhered to ambiguous and at times, unintelligible fragments. They are terms that have achieved an exaggerated status through the late twentieth century and have continued to expand into hyper-objects within our present precarious moment.

This class will investigate media and technology within a critical discourse. We will apply a pragmatic analysis of digital culture leading to a better understanding of our cross-disciplinary practices.

Our investigation will establish a common sense of urgency and agency, as we engage a selection of contemporary artists that are currently working within the juncture of contingency and the ubiquitous mesh of digital information.

"To say, as many traditional modernists do, that art's meanings reside exclusively in its strict formal qualities and stated conventions begs many questions. Among them are how those conventions came into being and how they have evolved, why a material has been chosen and what its history was and its future might be, where the work is encountered and by whom, what social, political, and economic contexts impinge on our experience, and whether the work is permanent or intentionally mutable, ephemeral, or even perishable...significance is not fixed but contingent by design."

-Rob Storr
Artist, Critic, Former Dean, Yale School of Art

Methodology
The course will include visiting artist presentations, lectures, readings and discussion.

Participation in the discussions are required.

In this class you will:

• Actualize and analyze the complex intersections between technology, media and culture within a process of creative research;

• Present the results of your research through an interactive dialogue with your peers and the visiting artists;

• Think critically and communicate persuasively about the larger social, political and aesthetic possibilities inherent in contemporary technology, media and culture.

• Create a collaborative "Commonplace Book" that incorporates your creative research as a working method and a component for actualization.

The "Commonplace Book" will be in the form of a shared Google doc. It will remain online for the duration of the semester. Each week you will enter a response to the lectures and readings. Initial each response. Responses should range from 100-300 words.

Grading will be based on three course requirements:

1) Participation in the class discussions and visiting artist presentations
2) The quality of your responses to the visiting artist lectures
3) Your selected responses and research from the "Commonplace Book."

CalArts does not grade on the A-F scale. We grade using:
High Pass (HP): Passing with Excellence Pass (P): Passing with Quality
Low Pass (LP) No Credit (NC) NC grades must appear on external records to ensure accurate reporting to peer institutions and for financial aid reporting.

The longer withdrawal period (through the 10th week of the semester) will provide an option for students to exit a course without receiving a failing grade. To drop a course during the extended withdrawal period, a student will obtain the Course Withdrawal form from the Registrar's Office, consult with his or her mentor, obtain the course instructor's signature verifying the last date of attendance, and return the form to the Registrar's Office. The course will remain on the student's record with a "W" grade, but the grade of "W" will have no effect on the grade point average.

If any student needs extra assistance or clarification of our class material, discussions and/or presentations, for whatever reason, please don't hesitate to make an appointment with me for an individual meeting.

Attendance: limit is 3 absences

I will send out the Zoom ID on the day of the class at 6:45pm pdt.

2020 Fall Schedule of Lectures and Visiting Artists:
Initial Lectures and Discussions: 9/14, 9/21,9/28 and 10/5

10/19: CARLIN WING
10/26: NANCY BAKER CAHILL
11/02: CARLA GANNIS
11/09: CHARLOTTE KENT
11/16: YOLANDE HARRIS
11/23: JUAN RIVAS AND CARMINA ESCOBAR
11/30: KENSAKU SHINOHARA
12/07: HEDI NEILSON

Required Reading:

The New Dark Age, James Bridle

The Commonplace Book
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonplace_book

Additional Supplemental Readings/Viewings:

These are self-directed readings. Scan this list and see what peaks your interest. The goal is to expand your creative research practice and to provide background material for our Q&A sessions.

Tom Leeser, Lea Rekow
https://viralnet-v4.net/category/selections-from-the-archive/

Tom Leeser, Interview with Montez Radio
https://viralnet-v4.net/2019/08/15/an-interview-with-tom-leeser-by-montez-radio/

Tom Leeser and Laurie Anderson, A Conversation at ISEA 2012
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMy__rjTf1I

A Compilation of Tangents on Surveillance, Anonymity and Deception Tactics.
Dan Bustillo
http://viralnet.net/essays/bustillo.html

Man a Machine
Julien Offray De la Mettrie
https://www.gutenberg.org/files/52090/52090-h/52090-h.htm

The Machine Stops
E.M. Foster
https://www.ele.uri.edu/faculty/vetter/Other-stuff/The-Machine-Stops.pdf

Garden of Evil: Trevor Paglen's Sinister Digital Paradise
Jonathan Jones
https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/sep/11/garden-of-evil-trevor-paglen-pace-gallery-london

Jack Burnham
Systems Aesthetics
https://monoskop.org/images/0/03/Burnham_Jack_1968_Systems_Esthetics_Artforum.pdf

Dick Higgins
Statement on Intermedia
http://www.artpool.hu/Fluxus/Higgins/intermedia2.html

Eshun, Kodwo.
Further Considerations on Afrofuturism
https://www.kit.ntnu.no/sites/www.kit.ntnu.no/files/KodwoEshun_Afrofuturism_0.pdf