

ART312 CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES IN NEW MEDIA: systems, mechanisms, and the instruments of power



Trevor Paglen. "Detachment 3, Air Force Flight Test Center, Groom Lake, NV: Distance ~26 miles" (2008)

Seminar Leader: Heba Y. Amin

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Office Hours: Tues 13.00 – 14.00, or appointment by email

Course Description

This course will examine the domain of critical social practice and the broad range of art and artists who scrutinize systems of power and data-gathering methods utilized by current industries and governments. Who has control over information? What role do artists play in maintaining sovereignty of information? How can they contribute to the protection of data and privacy? Students will explore works of art that utilize forms of hacking, intervention, cloning, surveillance, and parody to critique and challenge pre-existing systems, mechanisms, and instruments of power. They will address "new media" as a medium that critically questions the influences of contemporary technology and explore ownership of identity within the context of contemporary technological constructs.

This course will help students nurture their skills in social analysis and criticism through their art and design practice. Lectures and regular exercises will introduce students to conceptual works of art that relay new meanings through the manipulation and social re-engineering of techno-semiotic structures. Students may work with graphics, computer hardware, software, video, the body, and public space among other things.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course students will:

- Acquire a broad survey of contemporary, new media artists
- Analyze the relationship between society and its art and cultural production, especially as it relates to new media studies
- Identify important arguments in the field of media studies
- Utilize interdisciplinary methods for creative thinking
- Demonstrate their ability in visualizing abstract ideas
- Understand the importance of concept in creative expression
- Have a greater knowledge and experience of a variety of art/design media and their use
- Use their technical skills in new ways
- Improve skills for articulating criticisms and defenses of creative ideas

Course Format

Class periods will be made up of lecture/demonstration time, class exercises, studio work time, discussions, student presentations and group reviews of work. Assignments will include readings, analyses of your own and others' work, and specified projects.

Requirements

Students are expected to:

- Turn off phones during class time.
- Initiate appointments with Professor or Arts Staff outside of class time.
- Always allocate extra time for work preparation and clean-up for independent production.
- Respond to emails from Professor in a timely manner.
- Inform Professor at the beginning of the semester if photos of student's identity, artwork, works in progress are NOT to be taken and / or used for Bard College Berlin.
- Remove all artworks, art materials, and / or any personal belongings before the end of the semester. Failure to remove works or return spaces clean and empty may result in final grade penalization. Donating unrequested artworks and / or art materials is not permitted and will still be considered student property, expected to be removed by your inspection deadline. Please contact Studio Arts Manager Joon Park for more information: j.park@berlin.bard.edu

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

- Attendance of all classes is expected.
- More than one absence (that is, absence from one three-hour session per week) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course.
- Students are expected to attend all off-campus classes punctually, from start to finish. If there is a scheduling / travel conflict, Professor must be informed in advance.
- Tardiness after five minutes will be considered an absence.

Policy on late submissions of assignments

Assignments (artworks, essays, performances, oral presentations) that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (Example: B+ becomes C+). Professor is not obliged to accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late. Where Professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Please Consult the Student Handbook for Regulations.

Course Work

Course work consists of four main components:

1. **Projects:** projects make up the bulk of your work for the class. You will have **2 PROJECTS** for the duration of the semester. They will be introduced in class and you will be given time in class to develop, discuss, and work on them. You are expected to work outside of class to complete your projects. A typical expectation for a project-based class is minimum 6 hours a week.
=50% of final course grade (25% for each project)
2. **Class Sketches**
=30% of final course grade
3. **Written response:** one page paper response to a public talk or exhibition relevant to the course
=5% of final course grade
4. **Contribution to the class:** active class participation in class discussions, group critique, open-studios clean-up (* If your work is not removed by the open studios inspection, your grade will be deducted 5% points)
=10% of final course grade
5. **Sketchbook:** weekly progress in Sketchbook
=5% of final course grade

Grade Breakdown

Projects are graded according to the following criteria:

- Concept: ideas behind the work, creativity, creative problem solving
- Technique and Presentation: neatness, care in the making and execution of work. Was it presented effectively?
- Objectives: how successfully the criteria of the project goals have been fulfilled, is there understanding in the course material?
- Writing and research component: how well ideas are expressed in writing, sufficient research to support idea

Each criterion accounts for roughly a quarter of the grade for each project.

GRADE	CHARACTERISTICS
A	Exceptional. Student coherently integrates examples with explanations or analysis in both written and creative work. The work reflects in-depth engagement with the semester topic.
B	Satisfactory. Student is reasonably focused, and explanations or analysis in written and creative work are mostly based on examples or other evidence. Work reflects moderate engagement with the semester topic.
C	Underdeveloped. Student shows little consideration of alternative perspectives, and few connections are made between ideas. The work reflects passing engagement with the semester topic.
D	Limited. Student is unfocused, or simply rehashes previous ideas, and displays no evidence of engagement with the semester topic.
F	No Credit. Student is missing and shows no understanding or engagement with the course.

Course Materials

laptop/camera, other materials as determined by your project proposals
sketchbook required

Course Readings

Gevers, Ine, Iris Van Der Tuin, Petran Kockelkoren, Dennis Kerckhoffs, and Friso Wiersum. *Hacking Habitat: Art of Control: Art, Technology and Social Change*. Utrecht: Niet Normaal Foundation, 2016. Print.

Monahan, Torin. *Counter-surveillance as Political Intervention?*

Papadopoulos, Dimitris, Niamh Stephenson, and Vassilis Tsianos. *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the Twenty-first Century*. London: Pluto, 2008. Print.

Senova, Basak. 2018. "Flipping the History: A Collection of Notes and Quote Responses on Heba Amin's Project Operation Sunken Sea". *di'van | A Journal of Accounts. Art | Culture | Theory*. No 4, p. 54-62. ISSN 2207-1563

Shanken, Edward A. *Art in the Information Age: Cybernetics, Software, Telematics, and the Conceptual Contributions of Art and Technology to Art History and Theory*. N.p.: n.p., 2001. Print.

Weller, Toni. *The Information State: A Historical Perspective on Surveillance*. N.p.: Routledge, n.d. Print.

Schedule

Jan 28	<p>INTRODUCTION TO CLASS AND SYLLABUS</p> <p>*Attend one lecture at The Transmediale Conference*: (Jan 31- Feb 1) - Write a one-page response</p>
Feb 4	<p>WILL TECHNOLOGY SAVE US? TECHNO-UTOPIAN VISIONS</p> <p>In-class reading: JG Ballard in-class facility orientation</p>
Feb 8	<p>ARTISTIC RESEARCH</p> <p>Joined class with FA284 Research-Creation: Artistic Approaches to German History, Memory of Forced Migration and the War (Dorothea von Hantelmann, Marion Detjen)</p> <p>*Required reading*: Mark Godfrey: <i>The Artist as Historian</i> (2007), October No. 120, pp. 140-172.</p> <p>Senova, Basak. 2018. "Flipping the History: A Collection of Notes and Quote Responses on Heba Amin's Project Operation Sunken Sea". <i>di'van A Journal of Accounts. Art Culture Theory</i>. No 4, p. 54-62. ISSN 2207-1563</p>
Feb 11	<p>*****NO CLASS*****</p>
Feb 18	<p>HACKING AND SPACE: POLITICAL BOUNDARIES</p> <p>Class Activity: Boundaries</p> <p>*Required reading*: "Breaking the Border: Surveillance, Digital Counter-Movements and the Politics of (In-)Visibility" Huub Dijstelbloem</p> <p>HW: Project 1 Sketches</p>

Feb 25	HACKING IDENTITY AND THE BODY Class Activity: Prosthetics Project 1 Sketches - Feedback
March 3	BIG BROTHER AND BIG DATA Visiting Lecturer: Data Security Workshop HW: Project 1 Development
March 10	Studio: Project 1 in-progress - Feedback
March 17	*****PROJECT 1 DUE*****
March 24	SURVEILLANCE: PRIVACY AND RESISTANCE Class Activity: Covert Operations/presentations: successes and failures *Required reading*: “The information state: An Historical perspective on surveillance” Weller, Toni, pp. 57-63 “Art in the Information Age: Technology and Conceptual Art” Edward Shanken
March 31	*****NO CLASS*****
April 1	Guest speaker Jamila Adeli – Lecture Hall 4pm
April 7	*****NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK*****
April 14	COUNTER-SURVEILLANCE AS POLITICAL INTERVENTION? *Required reading*: “Counter-surveillance as Political Intervention?” Torin Monahan Project 2 Sketches – Feedback
April 16	HKW BOOK LAUNCH Time: TBD (evening)
April 21	CLONING AND PLAGIARISM Ethics in cloning and plagiarism, Image and information ownership, Privacy laws, Manifesto for CCTV Filmmakers Studio time
April 28	*****SITE VISIT TBD*****
May 5	*****PROJECT 2 DUE***** OPEN STUDIOS
May 12	*****COMPLETION WEEK*****

Facility Guidelines

“The Factory” – Eichenstrasse 43

- The BCB “Factory” (main arts building) has space and facilities available to BCB students with an academic purpose for using the building. Any space in the building, private or shared, cannot be used unless permission has been granted. Any questions relating to this must be addressed to the Director of Studios Arts.
- Chip access to the building will only be granted to those students currently registered for classes using the factory (after add-drop), and that have been offered orientation.
- No smoking is allowed anywhere inside the building. There are to be no projects using open flames (such as candles, torches, lanterns, fireworks, etc.) inside any part of the building.
- Fire exits and lanes (black-taped areas) must be kept clear of any obstructions.
- No spray-painting inside of the building. This also includes any strong, odorous materials (with or without spray). All production involving odorous material is to be done outside the building.
- All work surfaces (table and floor) must always be protected with thick plastic or cardboard. If production is to happen outside, ground / concrete is also to be protected.
- Food must be always cleaned up and removed immediately. Any food used for an art project requiring refrigeration must be labeled with one’s name, and disposed of after presentation. All food must be disposed of in lidded trash cans.
- All students are to always be respectful of other student artworks and personal property.
- No art projects may function as weapons, or potentially cause bodily harm.
- No sandals, flip-flops, or bare feet will be allowed inside or around the workshop areas, which includes walking through the workshop. This includes dance and theater students as well.
- Students should always wear adequate protection (goggles, gloves, dust masks, etc.) when needed. BCB will always try to provide these items.
- If you are uncertain how to use a tool or piece of equipment or require assistance, please ask for assistance (by appointment, if necessary).
- Students must be aware of who else is working in the building after dark. Any curfews established by Bard College Berlin must be respected. Finishing production and cleaning up must happen before the curfew time.
- Students must make sure all lights are turned off and doors are closed

when leaving the building. No windows or doors are to be left opened or cracked. All electrical items must be unplugged when not in use.

- Any unidentified property left in any common space is subject to either be taken or thrown out, without restitution. All private property **MUST** be labeled and stored in its proper location.
- All workshop items must be returned to the workshop when not in use.
- Any items leaving the building without permission will be considered stolen, and access to the factory may be suspended for the rest of the semester. If an item must be borrowed for a purpose outside of the building, contact the arts staff, and be prepared to leave your Student ID as a deposit. Fines may be charged for late return.
- All students must respect signage posted in the factory that may involve rules that are not mentioned in this document. This includes signage indicating reserved spaces where communal use is restricted.
- There are to be no architectural changes to studios or any areas inside or outside of the building without first speaking with your Professor, Studio Arts Manager, or Director of Studio Arts. When repainting any walls that need restoration, please consult with arts staff beforehand.
- During completion week, any space used by a student must be returned empty with clean walls and floors. All garbage must be bagged (or boxed) and properly disposed of. All students must accept the penalty of grades being affected and / or fines imposed if items are left (or renovations unfinished) by the inspection deadline.
- Contact Studio Arts Manager (Joon Park) with any questions:
j.park@berlin.bard.edu

AV Facilities – Eichenstrasse 43 (upstairs)

- BCB's AV (Audio / Visual) facilities provide a limited quantity of AV equipment to support Admin, Faculty as well as those students enrolled in arts classes that require specific items. AV facilities do not include any black and white or color printing services for students.
- The opening times may change every semester to adapt to specific course times. Once these times are established they will stay consistent throughout the semester, with possible exceptions. AV facilities are **ONLY** available during days when classes are held (closed during official BCB holidays).
- All items checked out are due back during AV hours the following day, unless other arrangements have been made in advance directly with AV staff.
- Items to be reserved on a specific date should be requested at least one week in advance. Without reservation, availability is limited to a first-come, first-serve basis.
- The AV staff may exclude students from borrowing items at any time, if

the student:

- failed to return items in time
- failed to return items in person (pick up and/ or return by friends is not allowed)
- returned items with missing pieces
- returned items damaged or in poor shape
- AV equipment will be given out only to those students responsible in organizing, picking up as well as returning their items IN PERSON. No exceptions.
- All items returned late, regardless of patron's position at BCB, will be subject to a 1 Euro fine, per day.
- Any item returned without accessories (such as cables, SD card, batteries, tripod head, lens cap, etc) will be subject to a 1 Euro fine, per day (the same as late returns).
- Any items missing will be subject to patron reimbursement for its value (or under special circumstances, replacement, at the discretion of AV staff).
- Any items damaged or malfunctioning are expected to be reported to staff upon check-in.
- Please use the AV email to inquire about equipment or policy, as well as to reserve (av@berlin.bard.edu). Do not contact AV staff through their personal emails.
- We strongly suggest personally visiting the facilities to inquire and reserve before borrowing equipment!
- AV equipment is limited at BCB. Whenever possible students are encouraged to use their own devices (computers, cameras) for production purposes.
- Contact AV staff with any questions: av@berlin.bard.edu

MacLab and Photo Darkroom Facilities – Platanenstrasse 98 (downstairs)

** Guidelines to be offered during orientation.