Media Arts and Design

Department Website: https://cms.uchicago.edu/undergraduate/why-study-media-arts-and-design/ (https://cms.uchicago.edu/undergraduate/why-study-media-arts-and-design/)

Program of Study

As new media continue to permeate every aspect of our existence, there is now little debate about the extent digital technologies intervene in our lives. Culture is exponentially evolving within an ecosystem defined by screens, networks, interfaces, databases, and algorithms. The impacts of digital and networked media design extend beyond individual products, giving form to our politics, social organization, and cognitive patterns. Criticality and self-reflexivity with the media we consume and the processes by which they are designed is essential to understanding and navigating our realities.

The Media Art and Design (MAAD) program at the University of Chicago has positioned itself to advance this reflexivity, decipher emergent technologies and cultures, and foster design strategies that blend artistic experimentation with ethical engagement and analytical rigor to creatively address real-world problems.

The MAAD program focuses on the rapid developments in media and design that have fundamentally transformed contemporary life, opening these phenomena up to historical study, theoretical critique, and hands-on experimentation. Specialized clusters are central to the program, offering students focal points within this expansive discipline—spanning creative computing, digital sound and music, expanded cinema, games, and media performance. These clusters not only embody the program’s commitment to a comprehensive and interdisciplinary education but also showcase the diverse expertise of the artists, designers, and practitioners leading MAAD classes.

The Media Arts and Design curriculum fosters discussion, presentation, and writing skills, as well as creativity and design, enabling students to approach today’s media environment and design-driven industries with critical, historical, and cultural perspectives. The program aims to cultivate graduates who are not only adept at navigating the ambiguity and complexities of the current media environment, but are also prepared to be nimble innovators, critical makers, and bold creatives capable of reshaping it.

Media Arts and Design Practice - General Education in the Arts

MAAD 26210 Media Art and Design Practice allows students to explore the MAAD program as a part of their general education in the arts requirement. Affiliated with the humanities general education sequence Media Aesthetics, this course introduces students to design fundamentals, iterative making, and critical engagement with technology.

This studio-based course explores the practice, conventions, and boundaries of contemporary media art and design. This can encompass areas as diverse as interactive installation, app design, and the Internet meme. Through projects and critical discussion, students engage with the problems and opportunities of digitally driven content creation. Fundamental elements of digital production are introduced, including basic properties of image, video, and the global network. Further topics as varied as—though not limited to—web production, digital fabrication, interfaces, the glitch, and gaming may be considered. Sections will vary based on the instructor’s fields of expertise.

This course meets the general education requirement in the arts. This course may not double count for general education requirements and the Media Arts and Design minor. However, it is a great way for students to explore a potential interest in these areas.

Major Program in Media Arts and Design

The Media Arts and Design major nurtures nimble makers and critical thinkers, blending theory with playful experimentation. MAAD graduates excel in diverse fields, ranging from indie game design and creative technology to arts education and entrepreneurship. Their contributions across industries underscore the adaptability of the MAAD curriculum and the wide-ranging potential of their expertise, bridging art and technology.

Major Distribution Requirements

The Media Arts and Design major is an in-depth program requiring 12 courses in total. This includes: two Media Theory courses, two Media History courses, two Media Practice and Design courses, four electives, and two Capstone sequence courses.

Students may choose their electives from any category, enabling them to customize their educational experience in alignment with their personal interests and academic trajectory. The only stipulation is that elective courses must originate from MAAD or hold a MAAD crosslist.
The program culminates with the two-quarter Capstone Sequence, emphasizing design methodologies, project realization, and portfolio development. Students publicly showcase their creative work at a Spring Quarter exposition, highlighting their aptitude in Media Arts and Design.

Major program courses cannot fulfill general education requirements. They must be taken for quality grades, with more than half bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

**SENIOR CAPSTONE SEQUENCE**

As part of the Capstone Colloquium, students will work on creating a culminating capstone project and a portfolio. This comprehensive two-part sequence spans the Autumn and Winter Quarters of their fourth year, encompassing Methodologies and Production.

Students declaring their MAAD major as of Autumn Quarter 2024 will be required to take both capstone courses. For students who declared in Spring Quarter 2024 or prior, it is strongly recommended that they take the full sequence. However, if scheduling constraints arise, they can arrange a meeting with the Director of Undergraduate Studies to explore alternative options.

**Capstone I: Methodologies**
The Methodologies course is a cornerstone of the Media Arts and Design program, designed to equip students with essential skills and strategies for creative project development. This course explores the intricacies of ideation, effective research, goal setting, design, and project scoping. Students learn to adapt and adjust their approaches, tackle challenges, and embrace diverse methods, fostering an environment of nimble experimentation. Methodologies serves as the foundation for students to conceptualize and iteratively evolve their ideas, setting the stage for successful project execution and portfolio development.

**Capstone II: Production**
The Production course is the culmination of the Media Arts and Design program, offering students hands-on experience in bringing their creative concepts to life. In this course, students delve into practical project execution, guided by experienced instructors and equipped with state-of-the-art tools and technologies. From video game design to Internet art, this studio course provides the opportunity for students to apply their skills, refine their projects, and focus on craftsmanship and articulation, preparing students for the Capstone exhibition and beyond.

**Capstone Projects**
The major capstone project must include one substantive work or a constellation of smaller related pieces designed for public presentation. These works can take the form of a developed video game or software art, an interactive, generative, or networked object, a media performance, a series of video essays, or other hypertext or hypermedia works. It can be a revision of a project initiated in a previous Media Arts and Design course or a new endeavor. Given the collaborative nature of Media Arts and Design, students have the option to work collaboratively. In addition to the practice-driven project, students are also required to theoretically and historically contextualize their work through documentation and portfolio development.

**Exhibition**
Capstone projects will be shared at an exhibition that takes place at the Media Arts, Data, and Design Center. This dynamic event happens in the Spring Quarter of students’ final year and will include both a showcase and presentations, which will give students experience displaying and discussing their work.

**Portfolio**
To complete the major, students must prepare a portfolio of digital media artworks and/or historical and theoretical writing that includes an artist statement, a project statement, and any supportive media documentation of their work. This portfolio requirement applies even if a student collaborates with others on certain projects, as it should showcase their individual contributions and creative growth.

**CLUSTERS**

Students majoring in Media Arts and Design have the ability to specialize in a specific area while still exploring the broader field. They will join “clusters” that reflect their main interest, and these clusters will help them achieve depth in a specific area.

Students are free to take courses within their interests, but should be prepared to align their Capstone project with a particular concentration by their fourth year. They are welcome and encouraged to discuss their course planning and possible concentrations with a MAAD advisor, especially during the major declaration process in their third year. Students should aim to take at least three courses pertaining to their cluster across their studies in preparation for the Capstone sequence. Sample study paths are available here (https://humanities-web.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/cms/prod/2024-02/MAAD%20Cluster%20Worksheet.pdf).

The Media Arts and Design program (MAAD) is an interdisciplinary program and currently offers the following clusters:

#### Creative Computing
Do you want to expand your creativity to an infinite canvas? In this cluster students will explore the expansive possibilities of the “meta-media” of computing, learning to harness its capacity to merge text, images, sound,

##### Digital Sound and Music
Are you driven to discover new dimensions in sound and music? In the Digital Sound and Music cluster, students delve into the world of digital sound production, learning techniques to compose and score for nonlinear media such as video games. This cluster goes beyond traditional music-making, inviting students to redefine its boundaries, creating sound installations, algorithmic instruments, and other innovative auditory experiences that challenge and expand our understanding of sound. Courses in this cluster are often cross-listed with the Music Department which has an Electronic Music Studio that students can take advantage of for their projects. Key faculty to note include David Bird (http://davidbird.tv/), Nick Briz (https://nickbriz.com/), Paula Harper (https://paulaclareharper.com/), Jennifer Iverson (https://music.uchicago.edu/people/jennifer-iverson/), and Takashi Shallow (https://takashishallow.com/).

##### Expanded Cinema
Are you eager to take moving images beyond the traditional theater screen and narrative forms? In this cluster, students push moving images outside their typical frames exploring an assemblage of contexts including mixed reality (VR/AR), transmedia storytelling, video installation, and AV performance. This cluster is a creative playground for filmmakers interested in experimental, participatory, hypermedia and other non-linear modes of storytelling that engage audiences in unprecedented ways. Key faculty in this area include Marc Downie (http://openendedgroup.com/), Ian Jones (https://intermittentmechanism.blog/), Tom LaMarre (https://ealc.uchicago.edu/people/thomas-lamarre/), Daniel Morgan (https://cms.uchicago.edu/people/daniel-morgan/), AE Stevenson (https://cms.uchicago.edu/people/ae-stevenson/), and Scott Wolniak (https://scottwolniak.com).

##### Games
Are you passionate about creating worlds, puzzles, and experiences that captivate and engage? In the Games cluster, students explore the vast universe of game design and development. Beyond video games, the cluster also explores the intricate design of card games, the imaginative realms of role-playing games, and the innovative landscapes of alternate reality games. Here, students learn to craft not just games, but compelling experiences, mastering the art of storytelling, strategy, and design to create interactive adventures that resonate with a diverse set of audiences and themes. Key faculty for this cluster include Katherine Buse (https://www.katherinebuse.com), Chris Carloy (https://cms.uchicago.edu/people/chris-carloy/), Patrick Jagoda (http://www.patrickjagoda.com/), Ian Jones (https://intermittentmechanism.blog/), and Ashlyn Sparrow (https://aslynsparrow.com/).

##### Media Performance
Are you intrigued by the fusion of theater, play, and cutting-edge media technologies? The Media Performance cluster offers a unique blend of traditional performance arts with the dynamic realms of digital media. In this cluster, students dive into the world of experimental audio-visual real-time performances, exploring how technology can augment and transform the theatrical experience. Key faculty for this cluster include Heidi Coleman (https://taps.uchicago.edu/people/heidi-coleman/), Patrick Jagoda (http://www.patrickjagoda.com/), Rasean Davonté Johnson (http://www.raseandavontejohnson.com/), John Muse (https://english.uchicago.edu/people/john-muse/), Jon Satrom (https://jonsatrom.com/), and Sandor Weisz (https://www.mysteryleague.com).

### Summary of Requirements: Major

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two Media Theory Courses</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Media History Courses</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Media Practice and Design Courses</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four Electives</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capstone Sequence: Methodologies and Production</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio and Capstone Exhibition</td>
<td>000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Units</strong></td>
<td><strong>1200</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Declaring a MAAD Major

In their second year, students interested in majoring in Media Arts and Design should schedule a meeting with either the Director of Undergraduate Studies or the Associate Director to collaboratively plan their future coursework. By the Spring Quarter of their third year, all students are expected to submit a major program worksheet (https://humantities-web.s3-us-east-2.amazonaws.com/cms/prod/2024-02/MAAD%20Major%20Approval%20Form.pdf) to the department. This worksheet is designed to outline their proposed course of study and is not a binding contract. It will be reviewed and adjusted as needed.

Participation in the major must be declared to the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the subsequent approved paperwork should be sent to the student’s College adviser for official registration.
DOUBLE MAJORS WITH MEDIA ARTS AND DESIGN

Students double majoring in Media Arts and Design and another major can count a maximum of four courses towards both majors, pending approval from both departments. However, no part of the Capstone Colloquium Sequence may be replaced by an analogous course in the other major, given the uniqueness of the MAAD Colloquium and its importance to community building. Thus, double majors may have to take multiple capstone courses to fulfill both program requirements.

MINOR IN MEDIA ARTS AND DESIGN

The Media Arts and Design minor complements any major by infusing it with critical digital literacy and creative skills. It equips students to blend their primary field of study with innovative media practices, enhancing their ability to navigate and contribute to the digital landscape. Through hands-on exploration and interdisciplinary coursework, students in the MAAD minor learn to articulate complex ideas creatively, bridging art and technology. This approach not only diversifies their academic experience but also amplifies their professional value in a rapidly evolving world.

Distribution Requirement

The minor requires six courses in total. Students must complete one course each in Media Theory and Media History. Additionally, two courses are required in Media Practice and Design. The remaining two elective courses can be chosen from any category, enabling students to customize their educational experience in alignment with their personal interests and academic trajectory. The only stipulation is that elective courses must originate from MAAD or hold a MAAD crosslist.

Minor program courses cannot be double counted with other majors or minors and cannot fulfill general education requirements. They must be taken for quality grades, with over half bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

Portfolio

To complete the minor, students must prepare a portfolio of digital media artworks and/or historical and theoretical writing that they submit by the end of Winter Quarter of their final year.

Alternative Capstone Colloquium Sequence

MAAD minors can selectively participate in the Media Arts and Design Capstone Sequence. The sequence begins with the Methodologies course, which delves into the technical aspects of creative project development. Students may choose to take this course on its own as an elective. Alternatively, those who complete Methodologies have the option to progress to MAAD Production, a practice-focused course that builds upon the foundations laid in Methodologies. Upon completion of this sequence, students will have the option to exhibit in the Spring Quarter exposition.

The Capstone sequence can replace the following minor requirements: Methodologies will count as an elective, and Production will fulfill one of the practice requirements. Students not interested in doing the Capstone sequence will take the minor requirements as normal.

SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS: MINOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Media Theory Course</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Media History Course</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Media Practice and Design Courses</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Electives</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Units</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DECLARING A MAAD MINOR

Students interested in declaring a minor in Media Arts and Design should fill out the Consent to Complete a Minor Program form ([https://humanities-web.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/college-prod/s3fs-public/documents/Consent_Minor_Program.pdf](https://humanities-web.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/college-prod/s3fs-public/documents/Consent_Minor_Program.pdf)) and email it to the Director of Undergraduate Studies or Associate Director. This form must then be returned to the student’s College adviser by the end of Spring Quarter of the student’s third year.

MINOR TO MAJOR AND MAJOR TO MINOR

Student circumstances change, and a transfer between the major and minor programs may be desirable to students who begin a course of study in either program. Students should consult with their College adviser if considering such a transfer and must update their planned program of study with the Director of Undergraduate Studies or Associate Director in Media Arts and Design.

ADVISING AND GRADING

In this choose-your-own-path program, academic advising plays a crucial role in helping students navigate the diverse clusters and combinations of practices. The Director of Undergraduate Studies, Associate Director,
and Program Manager support students in making informed choices that align with their individual interests, career aspirations, and creative goals. Advising sessions are an opportunity for students to explore the multitude of paths within the program and chart a course that is uniquely tailored.

All courses within the program must be taken for quality grades, reflecting a commitment to academic rigor and fostering the highest level of achievement.

**Course Petitions**

Students may find themselves in a situation where a non-MAAD listed course aligns closely with MAAD approaches or subject matter and they wish to include it in their course plan. To address such situations, students have the option to petition for the inclusion of non-MAAD courses. To initiate this process, students are required to complete a course petition form (https://airtable.com/app544DfQ5UXnomll/shrLfMb4xfy64j7iy/). Within the form, students should provide relevant course materials or coursework that demonstrates the alignment of the non-MAAD course with MAAD approaches. Each petition will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine its suitability for inclusion in the student's program of study.

**Honors**

Program honors are awarded by the faculty in Media Arts and Design on the basis of a GPA of 3.5 or above and assessment of their Capstone project. Program honors are awarded only to the most exceptional projects from a given cohort, meaning that the majority of students may not receive this designation.

**Course Numbering Guide**

Each MAAD course is given a unique number that corresponds to the requirement it fulfills.

- 10000–14999: Media Theory
- 15000–19999: Media History
- 20000–24999: Media Practice and Design
- 25000–28999: Electives or One-Off Courses

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**Media Arts and Design Courses**

**MAAD 10006. Contemporary Art. 100 Units.**

This course will consider the practice and theory of visual art in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Among the subjects that will drive our narrative will be the rise of postmodernism, pop art, the aesthetics of the social movements of the 1960s, institutional critique, the relationship between reproductive media and Feminism, the concept of spectacle, conceptual art, the appearance of a global art industry after 1989, the connections between art school and art-making, "relational aesthetics," the fate of art in the age of the Internet, the art of the post-studio moment, and what happens to art when it engages with "everything".

Instructor(s): M. Jackson Terms Offered: Spring

Note(s): Students must attend first class to confirm enrollment. This course meets the general education requirement in the arts.

Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 20006, ARTH 15800

**MAAD 10507. Gender, Race, and Horror. 100 Units.**

This course will contend with the ways that horror as a film genre constructs and deconstructs notions of gender and race in society. We will attend to texts across decades and subgenres that will illustrate how gender and race are made and regulated through notions of confusion, fear, and repulsion. By attending to these universal human feelings, students will learn how emotions are evoked through the construction of the text, its portrayal of the disruption of gender norms and its construction of racial boundaries. Students will learn the necessary vocabulary and methodologies to be able to critically analyze (audio)visual texts. In order to do this, students will be guided through how to construct argumentative critical papers through proper utilization of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. By the end of the course, students will be well versed in cinematographic terms such that they will be able to critically analyze texts to understand the impact of perspective, interpretation, and judgment. This course is meant to help students navigate and make sense of an increasingly scary world by learning to appreciate fear as a necessary human expression. Finally, and most importantly, students will be able to engage with the age-old notion of terror to be able lead a more ethical and intellectually richer life.

Instructor(s): AE Stevenson Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): CMST 25507, GNSE 20132, CMST 35507

**MAAD 10513. Beyond Hashtags: Social Movements in Digital Society. 100 Units.**

In today's global network society, the Internet permeates our lives, whether it be our jobs, politics, or relationships. You’re probably reading this course description online, and perhaps next you’ll check your email or social media accounts. Social movements, powerful drivers of social change, are no exception. Digital activism has transformed political and social protest over the past two decades, changing how events, protests, and movements are organized and generating alternative ways to build social movements. Students will receive an introduction to sociological perspectives on social movements and the Internet, and consider the influence of networked communication technologies on the mobilization of social movements throughout the globe, with particular emphasis on feminist, queer/trans, human rights, and racial equity movements.

Instructor(s): L. Janson Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): SOCI 20513, CRES 20513, GNSE 20513

MAAD 10603. What Is Animation? 100 Units.
This course will provide students with an introduction to the objects and theories of animation.
Instructor(s): Cassandra Guan Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 35603, CMST 25603

MAAD 10906. Contemporary Cinematic Special Effects. 100 Units.
The highest-grossing films of the twenty-first century are, without exception, showcases for special effects. How did special effects become so central to mass-audience movies? What are the consequences of this shift? In this course, we will track the historical and stylistic development of contemporary effects-driven filmmaking, bridging practitioner discourse by effects industry workers with the theories of cinema and media scholars. While our screenings will primarily comprise narrative feature films, we will also explore how special effects draw upon diverse media forms and practices, including experimental cinema, installation art, amusement parks, television advertising, and, above all, digital technologies. Screenings will include Hollywood blockbusters (e.g., The Matrix [1999]), “failed” blockbusters (e.g., Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within [2001]), and effects-driven films from other national/regional cinemas (e.g., The Mermaid [China, 2016]).
Instructor(s): Cooper Long Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 28906

MAAD 12043. The Aesthetics of Artificial Intelligence. 100 Units.
With the emergence of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, and Midjourney, the production of computer-generated content has become accessible to a wide range of users and use cases. Knowledge institutions are particularly challenged to find adequate responses to changing notions of authorship as the mainstreaming of “artificial” texts, audio-visual artifacts, and code is transforming our paradigms of communication in real-time. This course offers a survey of scholarship from the nascent field of critical AI studies to investigate the impact of AI, machine learning, and big data on knowledge production, representation, and consumption. In addition to theoretical discussions, we will conduct research-creation experiments aimed at documenting and evaluating emerging methods of AI-augmented content creation across text, image, and sound. Prospective students should demonstrate a substantial interest in media art and design and its connections to digital humanities, critical theory, and pedagogy. Experience with artistic and/or engineering practice is a plus.
Please submit a 300 word max statement of interest to uhl@uchicago.edu by 12/22 in order to be considered for enrollment.
Instructor(s): Andre Uhl Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 36043, ANTH 26043, MACS 36043, KNOW 26043, CMST 26043, KNOW 36043, ANTH 36043, CHSS 36043, HIPS 26043

MAAD 12208. Posthuman Becoming. 100 Units.
This course introduces recent developments and advanced approaches in critical posthumanist thought. We will explore emerging theories and practices that renegotiate the human condition through critical inquiry into posthuman desires and the complicated relationship between human and non-human ‘others,’ including animals, plants and micro-organisms, waste and toxins, artificial life, and hyperobjects. By engaging diverse viewpoints that map the stakes of a non-anthropocentric politics of culture, such as new materialism, object-oriented ontology, and speculative realism, but also eco-feminism, queer performativity, and Indigenous epistemology, we will explore emerging techniques of mediation, communication, and representation that surrender to the relational identities of a posthuman becoming. A central premise of this exploration are post-disciplinary ways of knowing that make such imaginaries visible: in addition to discussing a substantial body of contemporary scholarship from the arts, humanities, and humanistic social sciences, the course includes a studio module that introduces a variety of research-creation methodologies for experimentation with curatorial, artistic, and activist practices.
Instructor(s): Andre Uhl Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): KNOW 32208, ENST 22207, ANTH 32208, ARTV 30702

MAAD 12320. Critical Videogame Studies. 100 Units.
Since the 1960s, games have arguably blossomed into the world’s most profitable and experimental medium. This course attends specifically to video games, including popular arcade and console games, experimental art games, and educational serious games. Students will analyze both the formal properties and sociopolitical dynamics of video games. Readings by theorists such as Ian Bogost, Roger Caillois, Alenda Chang, Nick Dyer-Witheford, Mary Flanagan, Jane McGonigal, Soraya Murray, Lisa Nakamura, Amanda Phillips, and Trea Andrea Russell will help us think about the growing field of video game studies. Students will have opportunities to learn about game analysis and apply these lessons to a collaborative game design project. Students need not be technologically gifted or savvy, but a wide-ranging imagination and interest in digital media or game cultures will make for a more exciting quarter. This is a 2021-22 Signature Course in the College. (Literary/Critical Theory)
Instructor(s): Patrick Jagoda Terms Offered: Autumn Summer
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 27916, SIGN 26038, ENGL 12320, GNSE 22320

MAAD 12422. Hearing Popular Music. 100 Units.
For decades, popular music has been the soundtrack to many Americans’ lives. This class explores the structure, function, and impact of a range of vernacular musics from the 20th and 21st centuries. Our approach to popular music will be by turns historical, analytical, and sociological. Students will learn about formal designs of pop
songs, from verse-chorus to much more elaborate structures, along with antecedents in the Great American Songbook tradition. Students will learn to analyze the harmonic and melodic conventions in various genres, and also spend significant time with groove analysis and design. Finally, the class will interrogate the sociological relevance of vernacular musics, weaving in discussions of relevant social issues from radio play to popularity, and from subcultural appeal to racial identity. This class is open to anyone who listens carefully and with passion, and who wants to grow their ability to write about music. Experience as a practitioner of any type of music and/or a passing knowledge of music theory will be helpful, but it is not necessary to read notated music for this course.

Instructor(s): Jennifer Iverson
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): SIGN 26090, MUSI 25422

MAAD 12830. Indigenous Media and the Politics of Representation. 100 Units.
This undergraduate seminar explores popular representations of Indigenous nations and issues across various modes of media such as film, photography, digital platforms, and museum installations. With a particular focus on media forms produced by Indigenous artists, filmmakers, and curators we will analyze these narratives through frameworks of self-determination, resistance, visual sovereignty, and relational futures. Throughout the course, we will consider Indigenous media production(s) in relation to the broader social, historical, and cultural contexts in which they circulate in North America and beyond. The material covered in this course will acquaint students with an introduction to the contemporary debates surrounding Indigenous media and representation as they intersect with the larger fields of visual anthropology and Indigenous Studies.

Instructor(s): Andrei Pop
Terms Offered: TBD. Will not be offered 21-22 or 22-23

Note(s): Enrollment limit: 25
 Equivalent Course(s): SCTH 35012, ARTH 35012

MAAD 12910. Virtual Ethnography: Encounters in Mediation. 100 Units.
From everyday social media platforms like Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and WeChat, to more complex real-time immersive social and gaming sites, virtual realms are propagating at a fantastic rate while transforming what it means to live and interact in the physical world. As such virtual world, communities, and spaces increasingly command our attention, time, and money, scholars from various fields have begun to tackle questions concerning the ethics, logics, patterns, and social specificity of the virtual through experimental forms of virtual ethnography. This advanced undergraduate course introduces students to some these recent ethnographies and corresponding theoretical interventions into the nature of collective techno-life within virtual realms. Students will build on this material in order to develop an ethnographic inquiry into a virtual world of their choosing. In so doing, they will work individually and as a class through the processes of pre-field planning, fieldwork, and post-field analysis and writing.

Instructor(s): Thomas Lamarre and Michael Fisch
Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Consent of instructor required; email Professors Fisch and Lamarre a paragraph long description about what you bring and what you hope to get out of this seminar.

Note(s): Enrollment limit: 25
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 27910, CMST 27910, ANTH 27910, CDIN 27910

MAAD 13012. Caricature. 100 Units.
Though usually traced to Renaissance experiments with drawing deformed heads, caricature as a mode of parody, humor and invective has various roots, in ancient comedy, ancient modern physiognomy and psychology, the literature and (pseudo)science of social types, and above all in the rise of a public sphere of newspaper readers and broadsheet buyers avid for the ridiculing of public figures, beloved or otherwise. We approach caricature broadly, considering its inverse relation with a neoclassical aesthetics of the ideal body, its theorization around historically significant moments like 1848 and 1939, its relation to technological developments like the newspaper comic and the animated cartoon, and most recently, the viral meme.

Instructor(s): Andrei Pop
Terms Offered: TBD. Will not be offered 21-22 or 22-23
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 27910, CMST 27910, ANTH 27910, CDIN 27910

MAAD 13020. Opera Across Media. 100 Units.
Open to all undergraduates. Over the course of the last hundred and twenty years, opera and cinema have been sounded and seen together again and again. Where opera is commonly associated with extravagant performance and production, cinema is popularly associated realism. Yet their encounter not only proves these assumptions wrong but produces some extraordinary third kinds-media hybrids. It also produces some extraordinary love affairs. Thomas Edison wanted a film of his to be “a grand opera,” and Federico Fellini and Woody Allen wanted opera to saturate their films. Thinking about these mutual attractions, "Opera across Media" explores different operatic and cinematic repertories as well as other media forms. Among films to be studied are Pabst’s Threepenny Opera (1931), Visconti’s Senso (1954), Powell and Pressburger’s Tales of Hoffmann (1951), Zeffirelli’s La traviata (1981), De Mille’s Carmen (1915), Losey’s Don Giovanni (1979), Bergman’s The Magic Flute (1975), and Fellini’s E la nave va (1983). No prior background in music performance, theory, or notation is needed. Students may write papers based on their own skills and interests relevant to the course. Required work includes attendance at all screenings and classes; weekly postings on Canvas about readings and viewings; attendances at a Met HD broadcast and a Lyric Opera live opera; a short “think piece” midway through the course; and a final term paper of 8-10 pages.

Instructor(s): Martha Feldman
Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Open to all undergraduates
MAAD 13303. Chris Marker. 100 Units.
Chris Marker (1921-2012) is one of the most influential and important filmmakers to emerge in the post-war era in France, yet he remains relatively unknown to a wider audience. Marker’s multifaceted work encompasses writing, photography, filmmaking, videography, gallery installation, television, and digital multimedia. He directed over 60 films and is known foremost for his “essay films,” a hybrid of documentary and personal reflection, which he invigorated if not invented with films like Lettre de Sibérie (Letter from Siberia, 1958) or Sans Soleil (Sunless, 1983). His most famous film, La Jetée (1962), his only (science) fiction film made up almost entirely of black-and-white still photographs, was the inspiration for Terry Gilliam’s 12 Monkeys (1995). In 1990, he created his first multi-media installation, Zapping Zone, and in 1997 he experimented with the format of the CD-Rom to create a multi-layered, multimedia memoir (Immemory). In 2008, he continued his venture into digital spaces with Ouvroir, realized on the platform of Second Life. Marker was a passionate traveler who documented the journeys he took, the people he met, and revolutionary upheavals at home and afar. We will follow Marker’s travels through time, space, and media, during which we will also encounter artists with whom he crossed paths, with whom he collaborated, or who were inspired by his work.
Instructor(s): Dominique Bluher Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 30136, EALC 33044, GNSE 20136, EALC 23044

MAAD 14109. Machine Learning at the Archive. 100 Units.
In “An Archival Impulse,” Hal Foster describes the archive as “found yet constructed, factual yet fictive, public yet private.” This is a hybrid seminar / workshop course that brings together making, researching and collecting with the goal of expanding the discourse around archives to address machine learning. Foster’s set of tangled binaries provide a foundation on which to build a formal and critical inquiry into the procedural, technological and institutional pressures involved in working with machine learning, particularly as an individual researcher or artist. Topics include: How do the datasets used for machine learning correspond to or differ from traditional physical archives? How does the speculative discourse around the potential for artificial intelligence inform data collection and usage? How has the archive’s problematic history of informing and feeding on various “-isms” translated to the digital age and how do we respond to that situation? How can art be used to investigate or interfere with all of the above?
Instructor(s): Cameron Mankin Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 20032, CMST 26303, CMST 36303, FNDL 26102

MAAD 14207. Mindfulness: Experience and Media. 100 Units.
How do we experience media? (of all kinds) with (or without) awareness? Methods of mindfulness offer principles and practices of awareness focusing on mind, body, and embodied mind. Mindfulness (a flexible, moment-to-moment, non-judging awareness) is an individual experience and at the same time, practices of mindfulness can be a mode of public health intervention. Mindfulness involves social epistemologies of how we know (or don’t know) collectively, as we interact with immediate sensory experience as well as with mediated communication technologies generating various sorts of virtual realities (from books to VR). In addition to readings and discussions, this course teaches embodied practices of attention and awareness through the curriculum of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction.
Instructor(s): M. Browning Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): HILTH 25207, HIPS 25207, HUMA 25207, TAPS 20507

MAAD 14350. Videogame Level Design. 100 Units.
Level design is the process of creating interactive virtual environments and scenarios. Through the deliberate placement of game assets, a level designer can evoke emotions and a sense of flow for the player. Similarly, in architecture, considerations are made into how aesthetics and form impact the experience of built environments. In this course, we will explore the level design of 3D games through an architectural lens and investigate how these conditions incentivize gameplay. With a focus on theories and techniques, we will develop a language to examine and analyze virtual worlds and the purpose behind their design. Course materials include foundational architecture texts, writings on games, talks by practicing designers, and gameplay.
Instructor(s): William Chyr Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 14350
MAAD 14510. Kawaii (cuteness) culture in Japan and the world. 100 Units.
The Japanese word kawaii (commonly translated as "cute" or "adorable") has long been a part of Japanese culture, but, originating from schoolgirl subculture of the 1970s, today’s conception of kawaii has become ubiquitous as a cultural keyword of contemporary Japanese life. We now find kawaii in clothing, food, toys, engineering, films, music, personal appearance, behavior and mannerisms, and even in government. With the popularity of Japanese entertainment, fashion and other consumer products abroad, kawaii has also become a global cultural idiom in a process Christine Yano has called “Pink Globalization”. With the key figures of Hello Kitty and Rilakkuma as our guides, this course explores the many dimensions of kawaii culture, in Japan and globally, from beauty and aesthetics, affect and psychological dimensions, consumerism and marketing, gender, sexuality and queerness, to racism, orientalism and robot design.
Instructor(s): Nisha Kommattam Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): MUSI 27423, GNSE 20135

MAAD 14723. Divas, Idols, Material Girls: Gender and Sexuality in Music Videos. 100 Units.
The stark black and white of Madonna’s "Vogue" and the pinks and sparkles of "Material Girl's" The explosive surprise releases of Beyoncé’s BEYONCÉ and Lemonade visual albums. The lavish cinematic spectacle of Taylor Swift’s "Bad Blood" and the fanbait intertextuality of SM Entertainment’s Aespa. Since MTV’s advent in 1981, hit music videos have made a number of pop songs inextricable from iconic imagery and choreography; ubiquitous digital devices and the rise of platforms like YouTube and TikTok have only increased pop music’s audiovisuality. Looking at and listening to female pop icons raises fraught questions of agency, representation, race, sexuality/sexualization, bodies, commodification, and capital. In this course, students will gain a vocabulary for talking about both the audio and visual parameters of music video, and they will use this vocabulary to engage with critical frameworks for examining meaning, circulation, and reception in contemporary music videos. Assignments across the course will allow students to experiment with a range of writing and media genres, including critical close readings, micro-reception histories, thinkpieces, podcast episodes, and video essays.
Instructor(s): Paula Harper Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 28405, CMLT 28405, RLST 28405

MAAD 14805. Religion in Anime and Japanese Pop Culture. 100 Units.
How does Spirited Away reflect teachings of Japanese Buddhism and Shinto? Or what about Neon Genesis Evangelion? What can pop culture tell us about religion? In this course, we will consider what Japanese religions are (and are not) by looking at their representations in popular cultural forms of past and present. Sources are drawn from a range of popular cultural forms including anime and manga, but also literature, artistic performances, visual arts, and live-action movies. The course covers foundational aspects of Japanese religious life through non-traditional sources like Bleach, The Tale of Genji, and Your Name. At the end of the course, students will be able to speak to the great diversity of religious practices and viewpoints in Japan, not only its centers but also its peripheries and minorities. Meanwhile, we will consider broader questions about the complex connections between religion and popular culture. No prior knowledge of Buddhism, Shinto, or Japanese history is expected.
Instructor(s): Bruce Winkelmann Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 28405, CMLT 28405, RLST 28405

MAAD 14822. Video Game Music and Sound. 100 Units.
From 8-bit audio tracks to orchestral concerts of video game music, from the percussive clicks of keyboards and controllers to menu noises, sound is tightly tied to the experience of playing video games. In this course, we’ll explore how game music and sound interact with narrative, the embodiment of play, and musical environments outside of the games themselves. Our engagement with game music and sound will be mostly analytical, but there will be an opportunity for a creative final project for those students who might be interested. No prior music courses are required, although some familiarity with musical terminology and experience playing video games may prove useful.
Instructor(s): Will Myers Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): MUSI 24822

MAAD 14920. Comparative Media Poetics: Horror. 100 Units.
Cinema, videogames, and VR: all moving-image media, which have at times exerted multi-directional aesthetic influences on each other. This course will investigate the raw materials and basic forms at the disposal of artists working in and across these media, with a special focus on horror as a genre. Along with fundamental questions regarding the social, psychological, and political uses (and abuses) of horror as a genre, this course will also look at how horror works across a variety of media. In what way do the possibilities available to game developers differ from those available to filmmakers, and vice versa? How are space, time, and action presented and segmented differently across moving images (cinema), interactive moving images (games), and fully-immersive virtual environments (VR)? How do techniques ranging from psychological identification to jump scares work in each medium, and what aesthetic effects are open to one that are not open to the other? Course materials will include horror cinema, horror games (video and otherwise), VR experiences, and written horror literature.
Instructor(s): Ian Bryce Jones Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 14920, CMST 14920
MAAD 14945. Digital Storytelling. 100 Units.
New media have changed the way that we tell and process stories. Over the last few decades, writers and designers have experimented with text, video, audio, design, animation, and interactivity in unprecedented ways, producing new types of narratives about a world transformed by computers and communications networks. These artists have explored the cultural dimensions of information culture, the creative possibilities of digital media technologies, and the parameters of human identity in the network era. This course investigates the ways that new media have changed contemporary society and the cultural narratives that shape it. We will explore narrative theory through a number of digital or digitally-inflected forms, including cyberpunk fictions, text adventure games, interactive dramas, videogames, virtual worlds, transmedia novels, location-based fictions, and alternate reality games. Our critical study will concern issues such as nonlinear narrative, network aesthetics, and videogame mechanics. Throughout the quarter, our analysis of computational fictions will be haunted by gender, class, race, and other ghosts in the machine.
Instructor(s): Ian Bryce Jones Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 25945, CMST 25945

MAAD 15300. The Loop as Form. 100 Units.
This media historical course examines the loop as a narrative and non-narrative form throughout the the 20th and early 21st centuries, with examples drawn from science fiction literature, cinema, animation, electronic music, video art, and video games. Part of the course’s focus will be technological, examining the development and impact of walk cycles in cel animation, magnetic tape in analog music and analog video, and go to statements in computer programming. Another part will be sociological, examining the reverberations Einsteinian relativity in physics, Taylorist scientific management in labor, and behaviorism in psychology had within media development, industry practices, and/or the popular imagination. Taken together, the class will be a thorough investigation both into the aesthetic possibilities of the loop, and into the cultural, technological, psychological, and economic reasons it appears as a form in media construction again, and again, and again, and again.
Instructor(s): Ian Bryce Jones Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 15301

MAAD 15416. 1990s Videogame History. 100 Units.
This course will trace developments in the videogame medium and videogame cultures in the final decade of the 20th century, discuss the unique possibilities and difficulties arising from the study of recent history, and put these discussions into practice through research-based assignments. Questions that will guide our study include: what was the relationship between technological innovations and stylistic changes in the videogame medium? How did the entry of new corporate and creative players into the business affect industrial structures and strategies? What do we make of “freedom,” “realism,” and other concepts that dominated videogame press coverage - and how were they connected to broader cultural discourses? How did understandings of what it meant to play videogames, and the types of experiences that videogames could offer, change over the course of the decade? What was the relationship between developments in the videogame medium and other media - from film and fiction to virtual reality and the Internet? How has this decade been remembered, conceptualized, preserved, and repackaged in subsequent decades?
Instructor(s): Chris Carloy Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 37867, MAPH 34516, CMST 27867

MAAD 15502. Mediating Korean History. 100 Units.
This course explores Korea’s modern history through a variety of media, such as short stories, comics, magazines, films, and webtoons. Covering events ranging from colonization by Japan, mobilization during the second world war, the Korean War, to dictatorships, development, democratization, and the tensions on the peninsula today, our focus will be on examining selected media produced from the period under discussion paired with retrospective portrayals. By mixing past and present media together, the course tackles both historical events and the ways that new media have changed the way that we tell and process stories. Over the last few decades, writers and designers have experimented with text, video, audio, design, animation, and interactivity in unprecedented ways, producing new types of narratives about a world transformed by computers and communications networks. These artists have explored the cultural dimensions of information culture, the creative possibilities of digital media technologies, and the parameters of human identity in the network era. This course investigates the ways that new media have changed contemporary society and the cultural narratives that shape it. We will explore narrative theory through a number of digital or digitally-inflected forms, including cyberpunk fictions, text adventure games, interactive dramas, videogames, virtual worlds, transmedia novels, location-based fictions, and alternate reality games. Our critical study will concern issues such as nonlinear narrative, network aesthetics, and videogame mechanics. Throughout the quarter, our analysis of computational fictions will be haunted by gender, class, race, and other ghosts in the machine.
Instructor(s): Ian Bryce Jones Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 15301

MAAD 15620. Japanese Animation: The Making of a Global Media. 100 Units.
This course offers an introduction to Japanese animation, from its origins in the 1910s to its emergence as global culture in the 1990s. The goal is not only to provide insight into Japanese animation within the context of Japan but also to consider those factors that have transformed it into a global cultural form with a diverse, worldwide fanbase. As such, the course approaches Japanese animation from three distinct perspectives on Japanese animation, which are designed to introduce students to three important methodological approaches to contemporary media - film studies, media studies, and fan studies or cultural studies. As we look at Japanese animation in light of these different conceptual frameworks, we will also consider how its transnational dissemination and ‘Asianization’ challenge some of our basic assumptions about global culture, which have been shaped primarily through the lens of Americanization.
Instructor(s): Thomas Lamarre Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): Not offered in 2024-25.
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 25620, CMST 35620, SIGN 26070, EALC 35620, CMST 25620
MAAD 15630. Television in an Age of Change. 100 Units.
As streaming options proliferate, we think of television today as a medium in a moment of upheaval; but, since its beginnings, television has always been in flux. This course will provide an introductory overview of television theory and U.S. television history. We will watch and analyze a range of programming and explore ongoing shifts in television’s relationship to audiences, technology, and other media forms in an effort to answer and complicate the question, “What is television?”
Instructor(s): Ilana Emmett Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 28730

MAAD 16001. Censorship in East Asia: The Case of Colonial Korea. 100 Units.
Looking into the intricate workings and profound impact of state publication control in the Japanese Empire during the first half of the twentieth century, this seminar examines how censorship influenced literary and other forms of publication within the Korean colony. Students analyze the manipulation of information and representation by engaging with a diverse array of primary sources, including literature, periodicals, police reports, censors’ documents, posters, and postcards, among others. Not only do they seek a nuanced understanding of censorship and its impact on cultural production engaging themselves with the original materials from colonial Korea, but also do they gain a broad historical knowledge of modern Korea under Japanese rule and further East Asia under Japan’s dominance and hegemony. Throughout the course, focus is placed upon manuscript (“pre-publication”) censorship. [Consent Required; Proficiency in Korean or Japanese is not required.]
Instructor(s): K. Choi Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 23001, EALC 43000, CRES 23001, RDIN 23001

MAAD 16718. Electronic Music: Approaches to Electronic Music. 100 Units.
Hand-built circuits, tape loops, feedback, filters, ring modulators, turntables, live-processing software environments, microphones, and human-machine interface designs. In this course, we will study current and historical approaches to the performative use of hardware and software environments in music, and will follow the practice as it continues to redefine music composition and improvisation in the 21st century. Study will be repertoire-based, drawing from the work of artists ranging from David Tudor to Herbie Hancock to Grandmaster Flash to Kaija Saariaho.
Instructor(s): TBD
Equivalent Course(s): MUSI 36718, MUSI 26718

MAAD 17212. Sonic Cultures of Japan. 100 Units.
This course engages with the various techniques and practices associated with sound in Japanese culture, ranging from the 18th century through the contemporary era. The media covered will include literature, language reform movements, theater, cinema (both silent and sound), recorded music, radio broadcasting, manga, video games and anime. We will also read recent sound-oriented approaches to literary and cultural studies from scholars from both Japan and elsewhere. All readings will be in English.
Instructor(s): Michael Bourdaigs Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 17212, SIGN 26085

MAAD 17817. Sonic the Hedgehog. 100 Units.
In this course, we will use a single franchise - Sonic the Hedgehog - as an access point to study media history, aesthetics, social and cultural practice, and the relationships between games, film, and other artforms. Originally released in 1991 for Sega’s Genesis console, the Sonic series has spanned over three decades of games, cartoons, manga, novels, films, music, board games, action figures, fan art, cosplay, and merchandizing. Both the volume and the variety of these texts allow the Sonic corpus to be a focal point for questions with broader stakes for the study of games and media in general. Some of the questions we will be considering in this course include: What has been the relationship between particular videogame characters and franchises and the business practices and strategies of entertainment industries? What form does stardom take in the world of digital games, and is it an appropriate concept to apply to a mascot like Sonic? How have established game franchises responded to major technological and aesthetic shifts in the medium? How might we understand the concept and practice of adaptation as applied to the digital games, and what does it reveal about the medium specificity of and the relationship between games, film, comics, novels, and other forms? What can a game franchise that has taken a wide variety of generic forms (platforming, racing, fighting, and pinball, to name just a few) tell us about how genre works as concept and system in digital games?
Instructor(s): Chris Carley Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 37817, CMST 27817, MAPH 37817

MAAD 17880. Videogame Consoles: A Platform Studies Approach. 100 Units.
While videogames’ mix of art, play, and advanced technology gives game studies much of its vitality, the technological and computational aspects of the medium can be daunting for many would-be students and designers. And yet no approach to the study of videogames can be exhaustive without some consideration of the material and technological grounds that make games possible. With this in mind, this course will introduce approaches to videogame studies that emphasize the platforms - the hardware, operating systems, etc. - on which games are played, and is intended for students with all levels of familiarity with the technological side of videogames. How do the various components of game platforms, from computer architecture to controllers to the underlying code, affect how games look, sound, and feel, how they are played, who designs them and how,
how they are marketed and to whom, and how they are preserved? How do platforms emerge from particular technological, industrial, social, and cultural contexts, and how do they in turn affect the course of game history and culture? Classroom lectures and discussions of readings will be accompanied by weekly gameplay sessions at the MADD Center, which will provide close, hands-on engagement with game platforms. Possible objects of study include the Atari 2600 (1977), ColecoVision (1982), Sega Game Gear (1990) and Genesis/CD/32X (1988-94), Panasonic 3DO (1993), Nintendo 64 (1996) and Wii (2006), and PlayStation 4/VR (2013-16).

Instructor(s): Christopher Carloy Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required.
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 27880, MAPH 37880, CMST 37880

MAAD 17887. The Platformer: History and Theory of a Videogame Genre. 100 Units.

This course will provide an introduction to genre history and theory in videogame studies through a focus on the "platformer." Though not a common name outside of videogame culture, the platformer has introduced or popularized some of the medium’s most recognizable figures (Mario, Sonic the Hedgehog, Donkey Kong) and gameplay mechanics (running, jumping, avoiding enemies, and collecting items). The genre has also been instrumental in and reflective of changes across the videogame medium. This course will cover two decades (roughly 1990 - 2010), emphasizing both historical details and theoretical questions, such as: How have game genres been defined? How do distinct genres emerge and change over time? How do broader trends (technological, formal, industrial, discursive, experiential, etc.) influence individual genres, and what roles do individual genres play in these broader trends? What resources and methodologies exist for studying videogame genres? Throughout the course we’ll see the platformer alternate between an emphasis on linear, acrobatic movement across two-dimensional spaces and the free exploration of three-dimensional virtual worlds; between providing mascots for the biggest game companies and becoming a marker of independent, small-team production; and between being hailed as "revolutionary" and epitomizing the retro-nostalgic. Classroom lecture and discussion of readings will be accompanied by weekly gameplay sessions on original hardware at the MADD Center.

Instructor(s): Christopher Carloy Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 37887, MAPH 37887, CMST 37887

MAAD 18205. Feminist Documentary Filmmaking. 100 Units.

This course examines the ways that women-identifying documentary makers have given cinematic form to feminist thought. Drawing from film and media theory and history, we will focus on the formal and narrative techniques that have been employed by filmmakers to reflect on questions pertaining to gender and sexuality, with an emphasis on the specific ways that non-fiction filmmaking expanded feminist theoretical frameworks and research methodologies. Considering topics such as cinematic realism, film spectatorship, viewing pleasure, counter-cinema, and theories of intersectionality and diaspora, we will ask questions such as: What are the stylistic devices that feminist documentary films have mobilized, and for what purposes and ends? What is documentary’s relation to the history of fiction film, particularly of Hollywood cinema? How have women documentary makers understood cinema’s role in social processes of transformation? What are the possibilities and limitations of collaborative methods, appropriation strategies, and oppositional techniques? We will watch films with a critical eye and engage closely with academic and popular writings to survey the aesthetic, social, and political genealogies operating in the history of feminist documentary production. In this discussion-based course, we will cover a variety of non-fiction film and media forms: film diaries, docu-fictions, home-movies, video essays, auto-ethnographies, ethnography, collage, and found-footage films.

Instructor(s): Cinta Pelea Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 28205, CNSE 23164


This sequence is required of students majoring in Cinema and Media Studies. Taking these courses in sequence is strongly recommended but not required.

MAAD 18500. History of International Cinema I: Silent Era. 100 Units.

This course provides a survey of the history of cinema from its emergence in the mid-1890s to the transition to sound in the late 1920s. We will examine the cinema as a set of aesthetic, social, technological, national, cultural, and industrial practices as they were exercised and developed during this 30-year span. Especially important for our examination will be the exchange of film techniques, practices, and cultures in an international context. We will also pursue questions related to the historiography of the cinema, and examine early attempts to theorize and account for the cinema as an artistic and social phenomenon.

Instructor(s): Daniel Morgan Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Prior or concurrent registration in CMST 10100 is required. Course is required for students majoring or minoring in Cinema and Media Studies.
Note(s): For students majoring in Cinema and Media Studies, the entire History of International Cinema three-course sequence must be taken.
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 32400, CMST 28500, CMLT 22400, ENGL 48700, MAPH 33600, ENGL 29300, CMST 48500, ARTV 20002, ARTH 38500, ARTH 28500
MAAD 18600. History of International Cinema II: Sound Era to 1960. 100 Units.
The center of this course is film style, from the classical scene breakdown to the introduction of deep focus, stylistic experimentation, and technical innovation (sound, wide screen, location shooting). The development of a film culture is also discussed. Texts include Thompson and Bordwell’s Film History: An Introduction; and works by Bazin, Belton, Sitney, and Godard. Screenings include films by Hitchcock, Welles, Rossellini, Bresson, Ozu, Antonioni, and Renoir.
Instructor(s): James Lastra Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Prior or concurrent registration in CMST 10100 required. Required of students majoring or minoring in Cinema and Media Studies.
Note(s): CMST 28500/48500 strongly recommended Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 38600, CMLT 22500, MAPH 33700, REES 45005, ARTV 20003, CMST 28600, ARTH 28600, ENGL 48900, REES 25005, ENGL 29600, CMLT 32500, CMST 48600

MAAD 18700. History of International Cinema, Part III: 1960 to Present. 100 Units.
This course will continue the study of cinema around the world from the 1960s to the 2000s. The continued development of film style and form over this period - one of seismic changes in audio-visual aesthetics - will be one of the primary themes of the course. Additionally, lectures and discussions will wrestle with the rise of global film cultures, technological innovations and their effects on style (such as post-magnetic sound, and visual effects techniques), major international directors and the solidification of auteurism as both a commercial and aesthetic imperative, the increasing internationalization of Hollywood, and post-1970s genre reorientation elevating horror, science-fiction, and other genres to the highest levels of mainstream respectability, critical appraisal, and/or commercial success. Screenings are mandatory and include work by filmmakers including Pedro Almodovar, Michael Bay, Kathryn Bigelow, Claire Denis, Federico Fellini, Hollis Frampton, Kiyoshi Kurosawa, Djibril Diop Mambety, Cristian Mungiu, and more, in addition to a selection of music videos.
Instructor(s): Clint Froehlich Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course follows the subject matter taught in CMST 28500/48500 and CMST 28600/48600, but these are not prerequisites. Equivalent Course(s): CMST 28700, CMST 38700

MAAD 18814. Theme Park America. 100 Units.
Since the colonial era, Americans have obsessively created recreational themed spaces that manifested historical myths and memories in the built environment. This course considers the evolution, functions, and ethics of the American desire to visit the past as a form of leisure. Starting with early themed spaces such as world’s fairs, amusement parks, and cityscapes, we examine how scholars have read cultural phenomena for their radical contemporary significance. We then apply these tools to examine how Disneyland combined, redefined, and heightened its themed space antecedents and to what ends. We will learn how to decode Disneyland’s messages about race, gender, capitalism, and the American experience that are embedded within the park’s design, architecture, attractions, shows, sounds, and smells. How did such views of the past, present, and future speak to the social, political, and economic needs and wants of Cold War Americans, and why do they continue to resonate today? How should we understand themed spaces as a lens for U.S. history as experienced by contemporary Americans? By interrogating the themed space form, we will explore the nature of historical memory, the responsibilities of public history, and the ethics of constructing a recreational past. In doing so, we will learn how to take the seemingly frivolous matters of history seriously-and the dire stakes for doing so.
Instructor(s): Clint Froehlich Terms Offered: Spring Equivalent Course(s): CHST 28814, HIST 28814, HIST 38814, MAPS 33550

MAAD 20023. Composing for Intermedia. 100 Units.
MUSI 45023: Composing for Intermedia highlights a range of practices in contemporary multimedia/intermedia composition. This course is designed for those who want to expand their creative toolset and covers various topics, including the implementation and synchronization of media such as sound, lighting, video, interactive devices, etc. It should be of interest to composers, performers, visual artists, and choreographers who want to develop a critical approach to integrating multimedia technologies into their practice.
Instructor(s): David Bird Terms Offered: Winter Equivalent Course(s): MUSI 45023

MAAD 20041. Digital Media I: Game Design with Unity. 100 Units.
Part one of a two-course sequence, this making-oriented course provides an introduction to the principles, practices, and techniques of game design. Students will develop several small games, gaining hands-on experience with C# and the Unity development platform. The course takes a “ground up” approach: starting with the fundamentals of object- and component-oriented programming, then using those fundamentals to build complex, interactive experiences. While the course focuses on Unity, an introduction to software design patterns and an emphasis on a rapid feedback/iteration cycle will provide tools that translate to other game engines and creative computing projects. Through critique and the close examination of case studies from prior art, students will cultivate their critical eye and articulation, equipping them to discuss, assess, and refine games at various stages of development.
Instructor(s): Cameron Mankin Terms Offered: Winter Prerequisite(s): DIGS 20001/30001, “Introduction to Computer Programming with Python” (or an equivalent course in computer programming).
Note(s): Undergraduate MAAD students attempting to join the course should fill out this form to join a shortlist: https://airtable.com/appF7rAlnH3zoRdB4/shruBuB9vWwZC1b5hc. ONLY undergraduates who fill out the form will be considered for the course. Please do NOT send consent requests before filling out the form. Equivalent Course(s): DIGS 30041

MAAD 20042. Digital Media II: Extended Reality with Unity. 100 Units.
Part-two of a two-course sequence, this course teaches students how to develop extended reality (XR) environments using the Unity platform. The course emphasizes the creation of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) environments, allowing students to gain hands-on experience. Additionally, students will discuss development with their instructor and peers, assisting them in refining their skills and ideas while creating. By the end of the quarter, students will clearly understand the process of transforming ideas into final products, equipping them with the necessary tools for future XR endeavors.
Instructor(s): Crystal Beiersdorfer Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): DIGS 30041/MAAD 20041, “Digital Media I: Game Design with Unity” (or an equivalent Unity course approved by the instructor).
Note(s): Undergraduate MAAD students attempting to join the course should fill out this form to join a shortlist: https://airtable.com/appF7rAlnH3zoRdB4/shruBuB9vWwZC1b5hc. ONLY undergraduates who fill out the form will be considered for the course. Please do NOT send consent requests before filling out the form. Equivalent Course(s): DIGS 30042

MAAD 20230. From Theater Games to Gaming Theater. 100 Units.
Uniting methodologies and readings from media and performance studies, this interdisciplinary course explores the historical and contemporary proximities between games and theater as interactive media. Each unit of this course interrogates the generic boundary of “games,” seeing games as the content of, source of, medium for, and engine behind compelling performances. Our course will make a study of “immersive” and game-like theatrical works that provoke meaningful questions about audience agency, interactivity, and the role of technology in our contemporary understanding of what it means to attend or take part in “play.” Students in this course can expect to read theatrical scripts, attend and participate in performances, and perform game exercises in class. Part of taking this class is “being game” - open to participating in the various forms of play we will explore together. Students will watch contemporary works of gaming theater and participate in a hands-on gaming theater workshop, in addition to attending live improv comedy and an escape room. In the midterm assignment students will compose a performance game of their own, designing and testing the piece over three weeks. The final assignment emphasizes the process of producing scholarly writing and asks students to apply performance and game studies approaches to texts from our class.
Instructor(s): A. Gass Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 20230

MAAD 20302. Bodies at Work: Art & Civic Responsibility. 100 Units.
Contemporary artists are quickly adapting their practices to be more inclusive, diverse, accessible and physically safe. In particular, the rise of intimacy design and anti-racist work in theatre, film and television has opened up a dialogue about how artists do their work responsibly. Through practice and investigation, this class will dive into the responsibility of artists in contemporary artistic processes. We will explore both how the tools and capacities of artists can transform civic practice and, conversely, how artists are grappling with the civic issues of body safety, anti-racism and accessibility in arts practice. We will explore how centering the body can create respectful engagement in the arts. We will look at the work of Enrich Chicago, Nicole Brewer, Sonya Renee Taylor, Not in Our House and Intimacy Directors & Coordinators among others.
Instructor(s): D. Serna Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): RDIN 26302, CHST 26302, GNSE 26303, TAPS 26302

MAAD 20370. Inclusive Design: Designing for Underserved and Marginalized Populations. 100 Units.
Creating technologies that are inclusive of people in marginalized communities involves more than having technically sophisticated algorithms, systems, and infrastructure. It involves deeply understanding various community needs and using this understanding coupled with our knowledge of how people think and behave to design user-facing interfaces that can enhance and augment human capabilities. When dealing with underserved and marginalized communities, achieving these goals requires us to think through how different constraints such as costs, access to resources, and various cognitive and physical capabilities shape what socio-technical systems can best address a particular issue. This course leverages human-computer interaction and the tools, techniques, and principles that guide research on people to introduce you to the concepts of inclusive technology design. You will learn about different underserved and marginalized communities such as children, the elderly, those needing assistive technology, and users in developing countries, and their particular needs. In addition, you will learn how to be mindful of working with populations that can easily be exploited and how to think creatively of inclusive technology solutions. You will also put your skills into practice in a semester long group project involving the creation of an interactive system for one of the user populations we study.
Prerequisite(s): CMSC 14400 or CMSC 15400 or CMSC 12300 or CMSC 22000 or CMSC 20300
Equivalent Course(s): CMSC 30370, CMSC 20370

MAAD 20380. Actuated User Interfaces and Technology. 100 Units.
The recent advancement in interactive technologies allows computer scientists, designers, and researchers to prototype and experiment with future user interfaces that can dynamically move and shape-change. This class
offers hands-on experience in learning and employing actuated and shape-changing user interface technologies to build interactive user experiences. The class provides a range of basic engineering techniques to allow students to develop their own actuated user interface systems, including 3D mechanical design, digital fabrication (e.g., 3D Printing), electronics (Arduino microcontroller), and actuator control (utilizing different kinds of motors). Through multiple project-based assignments, students practice the acquired techniques to build interactive tangible experiences of their own.

Prerequisite(s): CMSC 20300
Equivalent Course(s): CMSC 20380, CMSC 30380

MAAD 20404. From Failure to Filter: S3#versions & E/olutions in Glitch Art. 100 Units.
This course critically examines how the raw, unpredictable elements of Glitch Art—once symbols of digital rebellion—have evolved and assimilated into the mainstream. Charting vectors between avant-garde artistic movements and the commodification of cultural phenomena, we will delve into the lifecycles of radical subgenres, digital aesthetics, and their journeys from fringe to familiarity. Create projects through hands-on experimentation, leveraging artware tools, hacks, kludges, and quirky techniques developed by digital artists. Engage with the concept of ‘failure’ not just as a technical glitch but as a pivotal point of artistic and sociopolitical discourse. Is a glitch a glitch if it’s anticipated and expected? This course provides a space for both creating and critically analyzing digital art, challenging us to navigate and contribute to our ever-shifting and perpetually unstable digital landscape.
Instructor(s): J. Satrom Terms Offered: Spring

MAAD 20420. Painting with Light in Space. 100 Units.
This course explores projected imagery as a medium to paint ephemeral ideas in the real world through installation and theatrical design. Utilizing visual iconography, architectural forms, objects, and cinema, this course will explore the practical and theoretical applications of video on unorthodox objects and spaces. Using software as an instrument, students will investigate the visceral extents of images both historical and generative to create living light. The course will culminate in student presentations that illustrate and illuminate the ideas and techniques presented throughout the course.
Instructor(s): R. Davonté Johnson Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 30944, ARTV 20944, TAPS 27420

MAAD 20455. Transmedia Theater, Live Experience Design, and Networked Performance: A Maker’s Lab. 100 Units.
The recent pandemic has challenged live performance to consider alternatives in the creation of online spaces and the “pivot to digital,” has frequently resulted in innovative approaches of adaptation of texts originally designed for the stage, yet as a result, remain rooted in a “broadcast” modality. Live Experience Design benefits from the exploration of pre-COVID forms including netprov, ARGs, online LARPs, interactive theater, and NFT games as well as popular social media forms including Instagram and Snapchat filters. This course invites directors, designers, and writers to innovate under the influence of networked media with an emerging genre at the nexus between theater, film, and video games to create short-form interactive original work through Zoom, Twitch, Twine, and Discord. Through a series of workshop assignments, lectures, and cross-disciplinary guest artist demonstrations, this immersive course will consider how we can use and build upon existing technologies to make impactful theater in a networked setting that not only creates a story that elicits an emotional but narrative that is dependent on audience interaction. Projects will draw from game mechanics and work across multiple platforms and will require no prior experience with coding or video production.
Instructor(s): H. Coleman Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 28455

MAAD 20500. ARTGAMES. 100 Units.
This studio course playfully explores the methods, tools, and poetics of video games as art. Develop interactive new media art, machinima, and experimental 3D environments by using (and misusing) contemporary game engines. Projects will include hypertext adventures, walking simulators, abstract platformers, and metagames. By hacking, modding, and recontextualizing existing game assets, we will challenge the rules, mechanics, and interfaces of video games. This course counts towards the Media Practice and Design requirement for the MAAD program.
Instructor(s): Chris Collins Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 25403

MAAD 20505. Adaptation for the Screen. 100 Units.
This course introduces students to the rewards and difficulties of adapting literary material to the big screen. In addition to reading short stories and viewing the films that were made from these stories, all students will be given the same short story to adapt into a 30-60 minute film. Progress on these scripts will be addressed through in-class readings, leading to final meetings with the instructor about your completed first drafts. Screenwriting experience is helpful, but not essential. Class size is limited to 10 students.
Instructor(s): J. Petrakis Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): Attendance at first class is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 25505
MAAD 20600. AI + Art: artificial.horse. 100 Units.
Saddle up and ride into the untamed territories of human-AI co-creation. Much like how horses have been our trusty companions in transportation and labor, AI has become a powerful tool for us to navigate the computational era. This course presents a studio environment for performative and avant garde approaches to experimenting with the newest interfaces and advancements in generative AI, like ChatGPT and Stable Diffusion, while examining predecessors like chatbots and early forms of automation. Technology is not simply an external tool that we use, it shapes our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Giddy up, as we playfully experiment with the creative, quirky, and unquantifiable human elements in AI-making media art projects as AI, for AI, and with AI. A diversity of artistic and technical backgrounds are welcome.
Instructor(s): Jon Satrom Terms Offered: Spring

MAAD 20602. Animation: Practices & Principles. 100 Units.
Interpreting what we mean by animation broadly, this course will investigate computational moving-image making through the lens of experimental animation. We will take as our point of departure the films of Rettinger, Ruttman, Fischinger, McLaren, and Breer, but will also draw upon artifacts and 'animated lines' taken from further afield: found footage films and algorithmic editing, dance drawings of Trisha Brown, kinetic sculptures of Bit International, early plotter art, avant-garde music notation, and contemporary techniques of motion and performance capture. This course will develop theoretical lines of inquiry that run in two directions: an excavation of a 'pre-history' of contemporary new media and a reinterpretation / re-invigoration of our understanding of early animation. Any film production, hand-animation or computer programming experiences are welcome - but none are prequisites for the course. Students will be expected to complete regular short creative "sketches" of techniques culminating in a final short animated project.
Instructor(s): Marc Downie Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Not offered in 2024-25.
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 20035, CMST 25602, CMST 35602

MAAD 20610. Line, Trace, Motion: Computation and Experiment in Animation. 100 Units.
Sitting at the intersection of fine arts and filmmaking, animation has held a unique place in visual culture since its inception and has more recently become a ubiquitous presence in our society. Through a combination of workshops, screenings, and discussions, this course will examine the advantages and particularities that come with the art form as well as the diverse range of technologies and techniques that it can include. Students learn both analog and digital animation methods-including cut-out, hand-drawn, and stop motion, among others-to explore their own artistic voice through moving image, culminating with a final project in the medium of their choice. Works screened for discussion will range from the traditional and studio-based to the experimental and alternative. No previous drawing experience required.
Instructor(s): Elizabeth Rogers Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 20035, CMST 25602, CMST 35602

MAAD 20620. Pivot to Digital: Adapting Performance Practices To Online Spaces. 100 Units.
How are performance-makers adapting their practices to online spaces? Many theater and live art makers are discovering new dimensions of their work as they 'pivot to digital', experimenting broadly with expressive form and audience engagement. In this course we will examine a set of case studies drawn from the current pandemic-inspired movement towards online performance, gamification, live/recorded hybrid models of performance, and socially distanced performance practices. We will look at the translation of theater design techniques such as scenery and sound design to digital platforms, audio-play forms, and at-home experience design, plus ask questions about the democratization of content available much more widely online than in conventional performance spaces. Students will be asked to adapt a theatrical work (play or devised project) to digital form as part of their work in class.
Instructor(s): S. Bockley Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 20620

MAAD 20623. Theories and Aesthetics of Remix. 100 Units.
Remix, mashup, bricolage, borrowing, sampling, collage - transformative creative techniques pervade 20th- and 21st-century musical and artistic practice. The spectrum of remixing spans virtuosically across hip hop and DJ culture, through classical and avant-garde composition, to the crudest deep-fried internet memory. Taking a topical approach, this course will use readings, texts, and practices of remix-in many guises-to explore questions of aesthetics, agency, economics, and politics. Topics under consideration include: intertextuality, aesthetics and form, technology and hardware/software affordances, genre and identity, AI, politics, appropriation and copyright, humor and value, memes and shitposts. Assessments will include hands-on creative projects using a spectrum of techniques, media, and software.
Instructor(s): Paula Harper Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): MUSI 27623

MAAD 20624. New Forms in DJing. 100 Units.
This course will briefly explore the history of the medium of DJing, then to invent a new form in the lineage through practice. Conventional history including disco, broadcasting, and Youtube, to name a few, and more experimental history including underground hip-hop, musique concrete, and contemporary performance art. The course will begin with student research and presentation on such topics followed by predictions about what may come next or brainstorming ways to deconstruct existing forms, then attempting to enact those ideas.
Instructor(s): Takashi Shallow Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): To be taken in sequence with MUSI 27623: Theories and Aesthetics of Remix
Equivalent Course(s): MUSI 27624

MAAD 20700. Alternate Reality Games: Theory and Production. 100 Units.
Games are one of the most prominent and influential media of our time. This experimental course explores the emerging genre of “alternate reality” or “transmedia” gaming. Throughout the quarter, we will approach new media theory through the history, aesthetics, and design of transmedia games. These games build on the narrative strategies of novels, the performative role-playing of theater, the branching techniques of electronic literature, the procedural qualities of video games, and the team dynamics of sports. Beyond the subject matter, students will design modules of an Alternate Reality Game in small groups. Students need not have a background in media or technology, but a wide-ranging imagination, interest in new media culture, or arts practice will make for a more exciting quarter.

Instructor(s): Patrick Jagoda, Heidi Coleman Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing. Instructor consent required. To apply, submit writing through online form: https://forms.gle/QvRCKN6MjBtcteWy5; see course description. Once given consent, attendance on the first day is mandatory. Questions: mb31@uchicago.edu
Note(s): Note(s): English majors: this course fulfills the Theory (H) distribution requirement.
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 28466, BPRO 28700, ENGL 25970, ARTV 20700, ARTV 30700, ENGL 32314, CMST 25954, CMST 35954

MAAD 20721. Performance Captured. 100 Units.
Technologies that turn human action, appearance and performance into data for storage, transformation and redisplay have a long history inside and outside of moving image arts. This class will look at the opportunities, aesthetics and politics of these approaches running through contemporary special effects, traditional and experimental animation, dance on camera and live performance at a moment when boundaries between these categories have become especially porous.

Instructor(s): Marc Downie Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Not offered in 2024-25.
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 67021, CMST 27021

MAAD 21111. Creative Coding. 100 Units.
This course is an introduction to programming, using exercises in graphic design and digital art to motivate and employ basic tools of computation (such as variables, conditional logic, and procedural abstraction). We will write code in JavaScript and related languages, and we will work with a variety of digital media, including vector graphics, raster images, animations, and web applications.
Note(s): Students who have taken CMSC 11800, STAT 11800, CMSC 12100, CMSC 15100, or CMSC 16100 are not allowed to register for CMSC 11111.
Equivalent Course(s): CMSC 11111

MAAD 21500. Metamedia. 100 Units.
Computers dynamically simulate the details of any other medium. This course looks past traditional media to engage with the computer as a ‘metamedium’; an environment with infinite degrees of representation. Relationships between form and content will be explored and exploited through deconstructing, augmenting, and experimenting with the data that makes up digital media. Studio time will be spent digitally improvising with expanded approaches to creating new media art. Topics surveyed will include: algorithms as art, metadata as content, and our digital shadows. In addition to making new media art, we will consider our relationship to contemporary media and the politics of digital agency in our connected world. This course counts towards the Media Practice and Design requirement for the MAAD program.

Instructor(s): J. Satrom
 Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 25402

MAAD 22141. Intro to Genres: Drawing on Graphic Novels. 100 Units.
Like film, comics are a language, and there’s much to be learned from studying them, even if we have no intention of ‘writing’ them. Comics tell two or more stories simultaneously, one via image, the other via text, and these parallel stories can not only complement but also contradict one another, creating subtexts and effects that words alone can’t. Or can they? Our goal will be to draw, both literally and metaphorically, on the structures and techniques of the form. While it’s aimed at the aspiring graphic novelist (or graphic essayist, or poet), it’s equally appropriate for those of us who work strictly with words (or images). What comics techniques can any artist emulate, approximate, or otherwise aspire to, and how can these lead us to a deeper understanding of the possibilities of point of view, tone, structure and style? We’ll learn the basics of the medium via Ivan Brunetti’s book Cartooning: Philosophy and Practice, as well as Syllabus, by Lynda Barry. Readings include the scholar David Kunzle on the origins of the form, the first avant-garde of George Herriman, Frank King, and Lyonel Feininger, finishing with contemporaries like Chris Ware, Emil Ferris and Alison Bechdel. Assignments include weekly creative and critical assignments, culminating in a final portfolio and paper.

Instructor(s): Dan Raeburn Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Open bid through my.uchicago.edu. Attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CRWR 12141
MAAD 22322. Introduction to Game Design. 100 Units.
This course introduces students to the theories and processes underlying game design through the creation of analog projects. We will be designing for forms that include board games, tabletop games, and live-action games. No prior design experience is absolutely required though some background with game studies will enable more innovative work. This course will be project-based and collaborative in nature.
Instructor(s): Ashlyn Sparrow Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Students must have taken “Critical Videogame Studies” or another comparable game studies or design course. To apply, submit writing through the online form at https://forms.gle/k8SVidC9hsvHxyHA. Once given consent, attendance on the first day is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 22322

MAAD 22506. Online Algorithmic Music. 100 Units.
In this course, students will learn how to use JavaScript and web-based technologies to create algorithmic musical compositions and experimental web-based instruments. Through the use of the Web Audio API and JavaScript libraries like tone.js, students will learn how to programmatically generate and manipulate sound, creating interactive and generative audio works that can be shared online. Along the way, the class will also survey works by artists working in this field and will feature a visiting artist who will walk students through their own practice. Themes of generative art, randomness and chance, originality and machine creativity, and the cultural implications of influential musical algorithms will also be explored. This class is an intermediate level programming course. A beginner to intermediate level understanding of core programming concepts (ideally in JavaScript) is required. While a background in music can certainly be beneficial, it is not required for success in this course.
Instructor(s): Nick Briz Terms Offered: Autumn

MAAD 22800. 3D Modeling and Sculpting for Video Games. 100 Units.
Digital Sculpting, 3D modeling and digital painting skills are essential components of 3D production. New software programs have unleashed advancements in the gaming industry because they are no longer subject to traditional polygonal modeling limitations. Now, artists have more freedom to create unique sculpts and textures that are then used for base polygon models. In this class, students will learn how to create high resolution 3D model concepts for the production of video games. High resolution sculpting is an integral part of today’s 3D production pipelines. This course aims to focus on this stage of the production pipeline, and its role in creating high quality games. While this class will focus on creating assets for video games, digital sculpting skills can be applied to a variety of other industries, such as architecture, fashion and jewelry, to name a few.
Instructor(s): Tim Nicholson Terms Offered: Winter

MAAD 22900. Color Theory and Practice. 100 Units.
This course will introduce students to practical aspects of color mixing and the visual impacts of specific color combinations through a series of studio exercises and projects. Conceptual and theoretical investigations into optics, the science of color, and psychological and symbolic effects will contribute to an overall understanding of color in relation to visual culture and perception.
Instructor(s): S. Wolniak Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): ARTV 10100, 10200, or 10300
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 31900, ARTV 21900

MAAD 22911. Augmented Reality Production. 100 Units.
Focusing on experimental moving-image approaches at a crucial moment in the emerging medium of augmented reality, this class will explore and interrogate each stage of production of AR works. Students in this production-based class will examine the techniques and opportunities of this new kind of moving image. During this class we’ll study the construction of examples across a gamut from locative media, journalism, and gameplay-based works to museum installations. Students will complete a series of critical essays and sketches towards a final augmented reality project using a custom set of software tools developed in and for the class.
Instructor(s): Marc Downie Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Not offered in 2024-25.
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 27921, CMST 37911, CMST 27911, ARTV 37921

MAAD 22920. Art and Digital Fabrication. 100 Units.
Digital fabrication practices are transforming the design and manufacture of the world of objects we interact with daily. Naturally, as those tools become more available to the public, artists have co-opted and repurposed them to respond and intervene in that world. In this workshop course, students will develop individual creative projects as a means of developing technical familiarity with digital fabrication techniques (particularly laser cutting and 3d printing) and exploring the ways these processes have impacted the material, social, and economic spaces in which we live. The course is primarily intended as an introduction to these techniques, software, and tools, so no prior experience is required.
Instructor(s): Cameron Mankin Terms Offered: Winter

MAAD 23218. Surveillance Aesthetics: Provocations About Privacy and Security in the Digital Age. 100 Units.
In the modern world, individuals' activities are tracked, surveilled, and computationally modeled to both beneficial and problematic ends. Jointly with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), this course will examine privacy and security issues at the intersection of the physical and digital worlds. Through both computer science and studio art, students will design algorithms, implement systems, and create interactive
artworks that communicate, provoke, and reframe pervasive issues in modern privacy and security. The course will unpack and re-entangle computational connections and data-driven interactions between people, built space, sensors, structures, devices, and data. Synthesizing technology and aesthetics, we will communicate our findings to the broader public not only through academic avenues, but also via public art and media. The first phase of the course will involve prompts in which students design and program small-scale artworks in various contexts, including (1) data collected from web browsing; (2) mobility data; (3) data collected about consumers by major companies; and (4) raw sensor data. Students will receive detailed feedback on their work from computer scientists, artists, and curators at the Museum of Science & Industry (MSI). The course culminates in the production and presentation of a capstone interactive artwork by teams of computer scientists and artists; successful products may be considered for prototyping at the MSI.

Prerequisite(s): One of CMSC 23200, CMSC 23210, CMSC 25900, CMSC 28400, CMSC 33210, CMSC 33250, or CMSC 33251 recommended, but not required.

Note(s): Students interested in this class should complete this form to request permission to enroll: https://uchicago.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5jPT8gRDXDKQ26a

Equivalent Course(s): CMSC 33218, CMSC 23218

MAAD 23220. Inventing, Engineering and Understanding Interactive Devices. 100 Units.
A physical computing class, dedicated to micro-controllers, sensors, actuators and fabrication techniques. The objective is that everyone creates their own, custom-made, functional I/O device.

Prerequisite(s): None

Equivalent Course(s): CMSC 23220

MAAD 23620. Internet Censorship and Online Speech. 100 Units.
Information dissemination and online discourse on the Internet are subject to the algorithms and filters that operate on Internet infrastructure, from network firewalls to search engines. This course will explore the technologies that are used to control access to online speech and information, and cutting-edge technologies that can empower citizens in the face of these information controls. Students will learn about and experiment with technologies to control online discourse, ranging from firewalls that perform network traffic filtering to algorithms for content personalization and content moderation. We will also explore underlying technical trends, such as the increasing consolidation of Internet infrastructure and protocols, and the implications of consolidation for control over online discourse. Each course meeting will include a technical overview, reading discussion, and a hands-on laboratory activity.

Prerequisite(s): None

Equivalent Course(s): CMSC 33260, PARR 33260

MAAD 23631. Internet Art I. 100 Units.
This studio course examines the Internet as an artistic medium (computers, networks, and code), as an environment (media ecology), and as “the masterpiece of human civilization” (à la Virginia Heffernan). Our focus will be on producing creative contributions to this collaborative space by learning the core coding languages of the web, HTML, and CSS. While we will occasionally be discussing the contributions of self-identified artists (from the net.art movement of the 1990s, for example), we will generally be taking a broader cultural view, exploring the histories, philosophies, and practices of various online cultural niches. We will learn how hackers use the command line to break into networks and how the open source community uses special tools that facilitate large-scale collaborations. We’ll learn about AI praised by singularity evangelists in the “age of spiritual machines,” as well as the digital rights activists who protest against the algorithms of surveillance capitalism. Throughout this journey, we will be learning the craft of the Internet, and in particular browsers and the web. We will be borrowing techniques from demoscenesters, meme-makers, cyberpunks, and web designers as we learn to produce work with the web’s generalized media format (HTML and CSS), as well as how to distribute that work online (deploying web sites). This course counts towards the Media Practice and Design requirement for the MAAD program.

Instructor(s): Nick Briz Terms Offered: Autumn

MAAD 23632. Internet Art II. 100 Units.
Though the web was originally conceived as an online space for sharing hyperlinked documents, the modern Web browser has evolved into a creative coding playground capable of producing all manner of networked art and algorithmic compositions. In this course we’ll learn JavaScript, the Web’s defacto programming language. Throughout the quarter we’ll experiment with various different Web APIs for creating generative and interactive Internet art, including HTML5 video, Canvas (2D/3D animations) and Web Audio. We’ll learn how to produce work that responds to various input sources (trackpad/mouse, touchscreen, keyboard, cameras, microphones) and how to fetch and incorporate data from external APIs elsewhere on the Internet. This course counts towards the Media Practice and Design requirement for the MAAD program.

Instructor(s): Nick Briz Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): pre-reqs: MAAD 23631 or CMSC 10100. Students who have taken other CMSC programming courses (10500, 10600, 10200, 11500, 15100) are also welcome to enroll.

MAAD 23645. Body and the Digital. 100 Units.
As digital technology advances, the separation between IRL and URL blurs. Participants enrolled in this course will explore techniques that will help them create thought-provoking work, strengthen their ability to give critique, and build an understanding of how the corporeal interacts with the digital. Throughout this course,
students will offer and receive constructive feedback during instructor-led critiques on peers’ works. By the end of this course, students will feel comfortable utilizing different processes of development to create digital artwork.

Instructor(s): Crystal Beiersdofer Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 23645, ARTV 20701

MAAD 23650. Culture Jamming in the Digital Age. 100 Units.
From the détourment images of the Situationist International to the plundered sampled tracks of sonic outlaws, activist media artists in the later half of the 20th century deployed a medley of piratical practices in their quest to challenge and subvert our mainstream media culture. While the institutional critiques posed by these “culture jammers” remain as salient as ever, the creative techniques themselves no longer have the same effect in the age of social media and surveillance capitalism. As new media theorist Curt Cloninger asked in 2009, “How do you hack/resist a platform that already allows (indeed, invites) you to customize it?” This is the question we will set out to answer in this course. We’ll look at works and study the practices of new media artists who have adapted these culture jamming techniques for the present moment. We’ll learn how glitch artists exploit bugs in software to databend and datamosh media files. We’ll learn how hacktivist use information security tools for creative political ends. We’ll explore radical networks that exist outside the mainstream Internet and learn to tactically misuse our apps to circumvent restrictions imposed by popular platforms. At the end of this journey we’ll respond to Cloninger’s challenge by reframing these techniques as new modes of culture jamming for the digital age. This course can count towards the Media Practice and Design or Media Theory requirement for the MAAD program.
Instructor(s): Nick Briz Terms Offered: Winter

MAAD 23655. Collaborative Artware. 100 Units.
In this course we’ll be working together as an open source arts collective. We’ll produce an online app which explores the expressive space between software as a tool and software as art. We’ll learn the processes (Agile, Scrum, etc) and tools (git, GitHub, etc) that professional creative technologists use when working together to produce “software art” projects. This is an intermediate level coding course with work being predominantly written in JavaScript (server side and client side). While proficiency in JavaScript is not required, it’s recommended that students have a background in basic programming concepts (data types, variables, functions, conditions, loops, etc) as this course will build on those to introduce more intermediate level concepts and programming paradigms. This course counts towards the Media Practice and Design requirement for the MAAD program.
Instructor(s): Nick Briz Terms Offered: Winter

MAAD 23808. Introduction to 16mm Filmmaking. 100 Units.
The goal of this intensive laboratory course is to give its students a working knowledge of film production using the 16mm gauge. The course will emphasize how students can use 16mm technology towards successful cinematography and image design (for use in both analog and digital postproduction scenarios) and how to develop their ideas towards constructing meaning through moving pictures. Through a series of group exercises, students will put their hands on equipment and solve technical and aesthetic problems, learning to operate and care for the 16mm Bolex film camera; prime lenses; Sekonic light meter; Sachtler tripod; and Arri light kit and accessories. For a final project, students will plan and produce footage for an individual or small group short film. The first half the course will be highly structured, with demonstrations, in-class shoots, and lectures. As the semester continues, class time will open up to more of a workshop format to address the specific concerns and issues that arise in the production of the final projects. This course is made possible by the Charles Roven Fund for Cinema and Media Studies. Students will need written permission to enroll in the course. To bid for entry into the class, please email the instructor with your name, major and year -- and please list any other media production or photography experience.
Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 28921, ARTV 33808, CMST 38921, ARTV 23808

MAAD 23833. Oral History & Podcasting. 100 Units.
This class explores the potential of the podcast as a form of ethical artistic and social practice. Through the lens of oral history and its associated values - including prioritizing voices that are not often heard, reciprocity, complicating narratives, and the archive- we will explore ways to tell stories of people and communities in sound. Students will develop a grounding in oral history practices and ethics, as well as the skills to produce compelling oral narratives, including audio editing, recording scenes and ambient sound, and using music. During the quarter, students will have several opportunities to practice interviewing and will design their own oral history project. This class is appropriate for students with no audio experience, as well as students who have taken TAPS 28320 The Mind as Stage: Podcasting.
Instructor(s): S. Geis Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 28330, TAPS 38330, CHST 28330
MAAD 23860. Screendance: Movement and New Media. 100 Units.
This course will explore the evolving relationship between moving bodies and video technologies. From early filmmakers using dancers as test subjects, to movie musicals and contemporary dance for the camera festivals, mediated of the body continues to challenge the ephemerality of live dance performance. This course focuses on the growing field of screendance, videodance, or dance-on-camera, working to define this hybrid genre and to understand the collaborative roles of choreographer, director, dancer, cameraman, and video editor. This course is both a practical and scholarly approach to the genre of screendance, each component essential to a full understanding and mastery of the other. Course work will be divided between the studio and the classroom. For the studio component, students will be asked to watch screendance and read a cross-section of criticism. Assignments will be both technological and choreographic (making screendance) and scholarly (written reflections and a seminar paper).
Instructor(s): L. Leopold Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Attendance at first class is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 23930, TAPS 23930, TAPS 38360

MAAD 23930. Documentary Production I. 100 Units.
Documentary Video Production focuses on the making of independent documentary video. Examples of various modes of documentary production will be screened and discussed. Issues embedded in the genre, such as the ethics, the politics of representation, and the shifting lines between "the real" and "fiction" will be explored. Story development, pre-production strategies, and production techniques will be our focus, in particular-research, relationships, the camera, interviews and sound recording, shooting in available light, working in crews, and post-production editing. Students will work in crews and be expected to purchase a portable hard drive. A five-minute string-out/rough-cut will be screened at the end of the quarter. Students are strongly encouraged to take CMST 23931 Documentary Production II to complete their work. Consent of instructor is required to enroll.
Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Prior or concurrent enrollment in CMST 10100 recommended for undergraduate students.
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 23930, ARTV 33930, HMRT 25106, CHST 23931

MAAD 23931. Documentary Production II. 100 Units.
Documentary Production II focuses on the shaping and crafting of a non-fiction video. Enrollment will be limited to those students who have taken CMST 23930 Documentary Production I. The class will discuss issues of ethics, power, and representation in this most philosophical and problematic of genres. Students will be expected to write a treatment outline detailing their project and learn about granting agencies and budgeting. Production techniques will concentrate on the language of handheld camera versus tripod, interview methodologies, microphone placement including working with wireless systems and mixers, and lighting for the interview. Post-production will cover editing techniques including color correction and audio sweetening, how to prepare for exhibition, and distribution strategies. Consent of instructor is required to enroll.
Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): CMST 23930, HMRT 25106, or ARTV 23930
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 33930, HMRT 35106, CHST 23931

MAAD 24007. Thinking About and Making Pictures. 100 Units.
With the advent of the digital smart phone, we are all photographers. Just as we all use words, photography, like language, carries meaning that has and gives rise to a myriad of purposes, possibilities, and limitations. The goal of this course is to develop students’ investigations and explorations in photography, building on beginning level techniques and ideas to explore technical and conceptual image-making strategies to refine students’ visual eloquence. Students will make photographs in response to prompts that interrogate various photographic processes, readings and artists' work (gallery visits, books and image presentations). Critiques and discussions will hone students’ critical and evaluative capabilities. Processes will range from silver gelatin black-and-white or color printing, small, medium and/or large format cameras usage, as well as experimenting with alternative light-sensitive materials and digital negatives and printing.
Instructor(s): L. Letinsky Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): ARTV 24000 or ARTV 24004
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 24007, ARTV 34007

MAAD 24270. Children & Architecture. 100 Units.
Many who pursue architecture do so initially out of a childlike fascination with buildings, places and worlds. Curiosity and limited understanding naturally provide children with an exploratory relationship to the built environments they traverse, and children also often show a heightened sense of wonder -- heightened emotions of all kinds -- as that relationship plays out. (This can be positive and formative, or scary and traumatic.) And yet, many of the adults who make choices about the worlds we inhabit think mostly of adults, and as adults, in doing so. This architecture studio course investigates the built world through a child’s eyes, across different moments in history, including our own. Readings and seminar discussions will range from playgrounds to blocks, preschools to family relations, swimming pools and sandcastles to the very construction of childhood as an idea. We will explore Chicago, and meet with builders of all ages, likely culminating in designing (and potentially building) a
real playground space. While previous experience with architectural skills is not necessary to excel in this course, childlike curiosity is required.

Instructor(s): L. Joyner Terms Offered: Spring

Prerequisite(s): While this class does not require prior experience, all ARCH studio courses require consent. Starting February 12, please visit arthistory.uchicago.edu/archconsent to request instructor consent for this class or other ARCH studios. (Please do not send consent requests by email.)

Note(s): The course is visiting the City Museum in St. Louis (a multi-story, artist-built playground for children and adults that defies description) for one day in advance of the course.

Equivalent Course(s): ENST 24270, ARTV 20029, ARTH 24270, CHST 24270, ARCH 24270

MAAD 24540. Multimedia Fashion Design. 100 Units.

Multimedia Fashion Design sets out to uncover new notions of fashion and style through collaborative, interdisciplinary, and experimental approaches. Historically, garment designers sketch or illustrate their ideas with either theatrical costuming or the runway in mind as an end goal. This course embraces these traditions while also imagining a broader array of historical and contemporary media that involves fashion, like video games, animations, comics, novels, and more. We will spend time exploring the epistemology of fashion before working on our own designs, challenging each other conceptually along the way. Some students may follow the traditional path of sewing their ideas. Others may find themselves creating their work using software. Those who are brand new to art or design are also welcome—we can always sketch our ideas. Multimedia Fashion Design welcomes artists and designers who work in any medium to come together and think about how people and characters express style—the broader the array of mediums, the more dynamic our class will be.

Instructor(s): Takashi Shallow Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 27540

MAAD 24618. Electronic Music: Composing with Sound. 100 Units.

Electronic Music I presents an open environment for creativity and expression through composition in the electronic music studio. The course provides students with a background in the fundamentals of sound and acoustics, covers the theory and practice of digital signal processing for audio, and introduces the recording studio as a powerful compositional tool. The course culminates in a concert of original student works presented in multi-channel surround sound. Enrollment gives students access to the Electronic Music Studio in the Department of Music. No prior knowledge of electronic music is necessary.

Instructor(s): TBD

Equivalent Course(s): MUSI 36618, MUSI 26618

MAAD 24820. Video Game Music Production and Sound Design. 100 Units.

The advent of video game soundtrack releases and live game music concerts substantiate the importance of music and sound in games, not just as accompaniments but as essential aspects of the gaming experience. This production course surveys the history of sound effects, music, and design in games beginning with the bleeps and bloops of the 1970s and concluding with the ambient, nonlinear soundscape of many contemporary games. Following the timeline media theorist Karen Collins presents in her documentary Beep, this course will explore electronic sound technologies including virtual analog synthesis, frequency modulation, bit reduction, General MIDI, and sample-based production. Each student will compose a game soundtrack demo for their final project. This course welcomes students who are both new to and experienced in sound production; the complexity of each assignment can be adjusted based on experience.

Instructor(s): Takashi Shallow Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): MUSI 24820

MAAD 24920. Virtual Reality Production. 100 Units.

Focusing on experimental moving-image approaches at a crucial moment in the emerging medium of virtual reality, this class will explore and interrogate each stage of production for VR. By hacking their way around the barriers and conventions of current software and hardware to create new optical experiences, students will design, construct and deploy new ways of capturing the world with cameras and develop new strategies and interactive logics for placing images into virtual spaces. Underpinning these explorations will be a careful discussion, dissection and reconstruction of techniques found in the emerging VR “canon” that spans new modes of journalism and documentary, computer games, and narrative “VR cinema.” Film production and computer programming experience is welcome but not a prerequisite for the course. Students will be expected to complete short “sketches” of approaches in VR towards a final short VR experience.

Instructor(s): Marc Downie Terms Offered: Winter

Note(s): Film production and computer programming experience is welcome but not a prerequisite for the course. Students will be expected to complete short “sketches” of approaches in VR towards a final short VR experience.

Equivalent Course(s): CMST 37920, CMST 27920, ARTV 27920, ARTV 37920

MAAD 24935. Introduction to Immersive Environments. 100 Units.

Virtual reality is expanding from just being utilized for games into an exploration of extended realities. Introduction to Immersive Environments will explore the theory and applications of virtual reality environments. Students will learn how to construct their VR environments using Blender and Unity. Students will offer and receive constructive feedback during instructor-led critiques of their works throughout this course. Students will
also explore the genre with readings and discussions. By the end of this course, students will feel comfortable utilizing different developmental processes to create.
Instructor(s): Crystal Beiersdorfer Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 24935

MAAD 25022. Composing for Spatial Audio. 100 Units.
TBA
Instructor(s): David Byrd Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): MUSI 45022

MAAD 25080. Spectacle in Miniature. 100 Units.
This course explores how the grand theatrical event can be ‘miniaturized’. Students will investigate forms of spectacle and contemporary puppetry, toy theater, performance installation, and designed environments, along with artists who work in intimate and miniature scale. Students will create works experimenting with how large dramatic scenes can be told with detailed and intimate sets, puppets, transforming objects, mechanical contraptions, and text. Sources for narrative will include but not be limited to dream and myth.
Instructor(s): F. Maugeri Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 27080, ARTV 20216

MAAD 25171. Robots, animals, technologies: Science fiction and the more-than-human. 100 Units.
Science fiction allows encounters with other beings that variously encourage or strain the bonds of kinship, and many of those beings are related to entities with whom we already share a world. From companion animals and modified humans to starfish and androids, estrangement from familiar categories allows us to trouble assumptions about the certainty of species, the superiority of consciousness, and what care looks like in relation with those who may not respond to, recognize, or return care in familiar ways. In this class, we’ll look at relations with the more-than-human in the context of urgent and emergent lived experience, in which social, political, and environmental realities require a response that thinks beyond entrenched approaches and takes wild and revolutionary imagination as a reparative possibility. We’ll explore these and other questions through science fiction novels, poetry, graphic novels, music, and video (by Octavia Butler, Ursula Le Guin, Vonda McIntyre, Janelle Monae, Grant Morrison, Margaret Rhee, and others). We’ll engage with theoretical work on topics including multispecies kinship, race and technology, and non-conscious/non-biological life (by Karen Barad, Beth Coleman, Wendy Chun, Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, Shannon Mattern, Sophia Roosth, Alan Turing, and others). [Note: this class pairs well with "Rocks, plants, ecologies: science fiction and the more-than-human" offered in Spring, and may also be taken as a stand-alone course.]
Instructor(s): William Hutchison Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 40171, MAPH 40171, ENGL 20171

MAAD 25300. Introduction to Human-Computer Interaction. 100 Units.
An introduction to the field of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), with an emphasis in understanding, designing and programming user-facing software and hardware systems. This class covers the core concepts of HCI: affordances, mental models, selection techniques (pointing, touch, menus, text entry, widgets, etc), conducting user studies (psychophysics, basic statistics, etc), rapid prototyping (3D printing, etc), and the fundamentals of 3D interfaces (optics for VR, AR, etc). We compliment the lectures with weekly programming assignments and two larger projects, in which we build/program/test user-facing interactive systems.
Prerequisite(s): CMSC 14200 or CMSC 15400 or CMSC 22000
Equivalent Course(s): CMSC 20300

MAAD 25450. Writing the Feature Film. 100 Units.
This course is designed to help the emerging writer focus their creativity into a viable feature film project and screenplay. This includes structure, format, exposition, characterization, dialogue, voice-over, and other aspects of visual storytelling for the screen. Weekly meetings include a brief lecture period, screenings of scenes from selected films, extended discussion, assorted readings and writing assignments. Because this is primarily a writing class, students should expect to deliver four to five pages of written material-including story development materials or screenplay pages-each week.
Instructor(s): P. Wimp Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 25450

MAAD 25604. How to Draw Things on the Computer. 100 Units.
TBD
Instructor(s): Marc Downie Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 25604

MAAD 25722. The Musical Interface: Constraint and Creativity. 100 Units.
Music-making involves constraint; the layout of a keyboard or guitar, the poetic systems of an epic storyteller, the practice techniques of a singer who cultivates a certain sound, or even the lines of code that an algorithmic musician strings together. New technologies bring new rules, as well as new ways to break the rules: autotuned vocals are no longer derided, and tools like Melodyne are now a standard part of music production. Constraint, then, produces creativity—but how does this look with particular instruments and traditions? How do artists make the most of their tools? In this hands-on class, we will explore the interface through the concepts of affordance, interval systems, algorithms, and generalizable schemas. You won’t just analyze art: you will also
produce it and discuss your experiences with each type of interface. Our topics will include electronic music constructed on digital audio workstations and through code, the piano keyboard, the harmonica, Korean p’ansori sung storytelling, streaming platforms and recommendation algorithms, and the Italian solfeggio tradition. This class includes a creative final project in the sonic medium of your choice.

Instructor(s): Andrew White
Terms Offered: Spring

Equivalent Course(s): MUSI 25722

MAAD 25900. Digitizing Human Rights. 100 Units.
In an era in which disruptive technologies have hijacked our consciousness and computer code has woven itself into the fabric of our existence, the lines between the virtual and the physical are increasingly blurred, and the nature of human existence itself increasingly uncertain. Digitizing Human Rights invites you to ponder, question, and even reshape the future of the species. We’ll consider digital surveillance, data consent, access to tech, online agency, algorithmic bias and the future of artificial intelligence, among other topics. Drawing on cross-disciplinary perspectives, the course aims to illuminate the often misunderstood aspects of the digital age with the goal of creating an annotated digital document to serve as a blueprint for steering humanity towards a more equitable and just -- and perhaps a more secure -- future. Annotations will draw on a broad array of philosophical traditions and contextualize current issues and debates. We will also problematize the document itself to build into our work a consideration of the digital form through which we are thinking and representing claims about humanity, morality, truth, and justice, for example, that are entailed in the project of "human rights."

The class will meet both in small groups and the larger seminar to refine the provisions and annotations, review progress, and shape the document as a whole.

Instructor(s): J. Spruill, N. Briz
Terms Offered: May be offered 2024-25

Prerequisite(s): PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.

Equivalent Course(s): BPRO 25900, HMRT 25900

MAAD 26059. Media, Environment, and Risk. 100 Units.
In 1991, Ulrich Beck wrote that “society is made into a laboratory.” Following the Chernobyl disaster, Beck articulated how modern technology and its potential side-effects—such as radiation or chemical poisoning—had created the novel epistemological category of environmental risk defined by threats that escape human perception and transcend borders. Institutions monitoring ecological conditions gained responsibility for communicating public health. Political conflicts emerged between formations of expert and lay environmental knowledge. The technological application of modern science, and its associated environmental risks, pushed research beyond the laboratory and into the governmental fabric of social order; nuclear reactors had to be constructed and chemicals distributed to populations before their properties and safety could be understood. This seminar reads the debates on risk in environmental sociology alongside the emergence of risk criticism in media studies to interrogate the probabilistic thinking inherent to the communication of ecological threat. Two common traits characteristic of recent environmental catastrophes ranging from Bhopal, Fukushima Daiishi, Deepwater Horizon, Exxon Valdez, Hurricane Katrina, and the varied crises of global climate change, are that each disaster involves the failure or side-effect of an implemented technological project and that the corresponding risks—whether imperceptible or probable—are necessarily communicated to publics by media.

Instructor(s): Thomas Pringle
Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): CMST 42802, HIPS 26059, CHSS 36059, KNOW 36059, SOCI 30329

MAAD 26200. Hands-On Multimedia Design. 100 Units.
The Media Arts, Data, and Design (MADD) Center at the University of Chicago is a 20,000-square-foot collaborative space for inquiry and experimentation where computer science and the arts intersect. In this course, students will take advantage of the MADD Center’s resources as they experiment with the fundamentals of design hands-on, working up to large-scale independent projects that will be featured in a group exhibition. Students will explore the history of design through lectures, readings, and “design walks” at special sites throughout the campus and city at large. The course will accommodate students who are beginners as well as those who have experience studying design. Students may find themselves elaborating on an existing skill set, like drawing or fashion, or engaging with a brand new medium, like building a game. This course encourages students with a broad range of aesthetic backgrounds and skills to collaborate, deliberating what exactly constitutes contemporary design along the way.

Terms Offered: Summer

MAAD 26210. Media Art and Design Practice. 100 Units.
This studio-based course explores the practice, conventions, and boundaries of contemporary media art and design. This can encompass areas as diverse as interactive installation, app design, and the Internet meme. Through projects and critical discussion, students engage with the problems and opportunities of digitally driven content creation. Fundamental elements of digital production are introduced, including basic properties of image, video, and the global network. Further topics as varied as—though not limited to—web production, digital fabrication, interfaces, the glitch, and gaming may be considered. Sections will vary based on the instructor’s fields of expertise. This course meets the general education requirement in the arts. This course may not double count for general education requirements and the Media Arts and Design minor. However, it is a great way for students to explore a potential interest in these areas.

Instructor(s): N. Briz, C. Beiersdorfer, C. Mankin, T. Shallow
Terms Offered: Spring
MAAD 26300. Art and Design in the Age of the Internet. 100 Units.
This course combines the subject matter of an array of courses offering pre-college students a glimpse into the design and art departments at the University of Chicago. In this course, students will experiment with the fundamentals of art and design hands-on, creating independent projects and exhibiting them along the way. Students will explore history through lectures, readings, and “design walks” at special sites throughout the campus and, optionally, the city at large. The course will accommodate students who are beginners as well as those who have experience in these fields. Students may find themselves elaborating on an existing skill set, like drawing or fashion, or engaging with a brand-new medium, like building a game. This course encourages students with a broad range of aesthetic backgrounds and skills to collaborate.

Terms Offered: Summer

MAAD 26501. Straight-line sensibilities. A hidden history of 20th Century Art. 100 Units.
The proliferation of straight lines in 20th Century art and architecture is generally associated with rational and universalist procedures and perspectives, and closely associated with the rise of industrial society. This course will look at straight lines in modern art from a very different perspective. We will study a hidden genealogy of straight lines that all seem to evoke the vagaries of sensory realities and capacities and that are aesthetic through and through. These type of straight lines are all, in their various ways, related to the close interaction between bodies and media technologies - one of the major themes in modern art. The question, of course, is how and why straight lines come to express this relationship. To look at this question, we will study artworks and ideas that extend from the mid 19th-century to 21st century art and that includes a wide range of media and expressions, including architecture, painting, drawing, film, video and computer art.

Instructor(s): I. Bloom
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 16210

MAAD 27410. Scenography: Static and Kinetic Forms. 100 Units.
This course is an exploration of various forms and processes of designing sets and projections for theatrical performance. We pay particular attention to a cohesive reading of a text, contextual and historical exploration, and visual and thematic research, as well as the documentation needed to complete a show including storyboards, models, drafting, and paint elevations. Conversations with guest artists will illuminate personal and cultural aesthetics of an individual artist and assigned readings will expose students to major trends in modern stage design.

Instructor(s): R. Davonté Johnson
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 27410

MAAD 27522. Experimental Futures: Re-figurations of Human/Environment Relationships. 100 Units.
The naming of the current era after the human-Anthropocene-is widely criticized. Scholars such as Donna Haraway bemoan the emphasis on the human being and its control over earthly matters at a moment when non-human entanglements with the world are simultaneously overlooked. Other thinkers point out that the planetary changes of the Anthropocene have occurred mainly due to capitalism and industrialization. In the course of these debates, the role of the human and the understanding of the human as part of the Earth’s ecosystem is discussed again and again. Especially in the arts and design, new figurations of the human and a future outside anthropocentrism are being developed. This course follows fundamental questions around the emergence of this discourse: Which tropes, materials, and concepts do we collectively use to imagine our future? Who gets to participate in these imaginaries and who is thereby excluded? What role do the arts and design play in this process? In this class, students will gain understanding of an emerging area of interdisciplinary research that reframes the category of the “human” in face of contemporary environmental challenges such as climate change and resource scarcity. Students will become familiar with concepts and theories associated with post-humanism, new materialisms, and environmental humanities and use them to reflect on examples from architecture, design, and the arts.

Instructor(s): Desiree Foerster
Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): ARCH 27522, CMST 27522

MAAD 28250. Audience, Algorithms, and Ingenuity: Unexpected Encounters in Media Arts and Live Performance. 100 Units.
This course explores live theatrical and digital performance, centering on surprise as a key element. We will examine performance instigators and media activists who use experimental tactics to stage, document, and amplify their work. Through studying examples, exploring theoretical underpinnings, and creating art in this mode, we will investigate how performance can surprise, provoke, and delight-without relying on traditional resources such as space, time, money, or institutional support. What makes these forms resonate? What are their cultural and social reverberations?

Instructor(s): D. de Mayo, J. Satrom
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 28250

**MAAD 29401. Capstone I: Methodologies. 100 Units.**
The Methodologies course is a cornerstone of the Media Arts and Design program, specifically designed to equip students with essential skills and strategies for creative project development. This foundational course marks the beginning of their capstone project, exploring the intricacies of ideation, effective research, goal setting, design, and project scoping. Students will receive ongoing feedback and guidance from the professor and their peers as they continually refine their projects, an approach that mirrors real-world iterative design practices. Throughout the course, students learn to adapt and adjust their approaches, tackle challenges, and embrace diverse methods, fostering an environment of nimble experimentation. This prepares them for successful project execution and portfolio development, setting the stage for the subsequent Capstone II: Production course.

Instructor(s): Nick Briz Terms Offered: Autumn

**MAAD 29402. Capstone II: Production. 100 Units.**
TBD
Instructor(s): Jon Satrom Terms Offered: Winter

**MAAD 29700. MAAD Reading and Research. 100 Units.**
This course is primarily intended for students who are in Media Arts and Design and who can best meet program requirements by studying under a faculty member’s individual supervision. The subject matter, course of study, and requirements are arranged with the instructor prior to registration.

Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Consent of faculty adviser and MAAD Program Director
Note(s): Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Form. This course may be counted toward distribution requirements for the minor.