



UNSW | Arts and
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES | Social Sciences

Electronic and Digital Aesthetics 2008

MEFT3102 - Electronic and Digital Aesthetics - Session 2, 2008

6 units of credit

Full Course Outline

'electronic images will have to be based on still another will to art' (Gilles Deleuze, Cinema 2:266)

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Course Staff

Ass Prof. Andrew Murphie

Room 311H, Webster Building, 9385 5548, a.murphie@unsw.edu.au
(I seldom check my phone; I often check my email, so ***email is best***).

Consultation Time: Thursdays 11-30 - 12-30; during session (not during the mid-session break)

About the Course

Aesthetics is about:

1. ***our sensory experience of the world***
2. ***art***

This course is therefore about ***the sense of the world that arises along with our sensing of the world***. If, as more and more theorists think today, ***our abstract thoughts emerge from our sensory experience of the world***, aesthetics takes on more importance. This is doubly so when ***the way that we sense the world is changing with electronic and digital technology***.

Electronic and Digital Aesthetics is therefore about ***the difference electronics (for example guitar amplifiers or synthesisers, video) and computers make to creative expression, the arts and our sensory experience*** in general. However, we will not only discuss "high art". We will also discuss such important issues as digital design, enhancing human-computer interaction, and the political and social challenges electronics and computers bring about within the sensations/sense of everyday life.

The course will be asking the following questions: How do our sensations and cultural expression connect us with the world? Are these connections changing in the increasingly networked world? How is art adapting to these changes? What impact do new aesthetics have upon the world at large? Upon everyday life?

The course will look at ideas as well as many examples. We will look at new art forms and new media (and sometimes their relations to older art forms and media). We will also study many forms of design, from new media interfaces to clothes, electronic media, logos and e-commerce web sites. Most weeks will be a combination of readings, discussion and cultural observation (much of this via the Net).

About this Print Version of the Course Outline

There is a course web site!

Please note that although the necessary readings won't change, ***the resources available online will be essential for your work***. These will change over time - both from my input and your own. This print outline will not change (as you will already have printed it!). It is therefore necessary for you to check out the relevant areas of the site for yourself each week. You will be given the web address in the first lecture.

About Readings

Some readings are required for each week. Everyone will need to read these each week, as part of their preparation for class. This will give us all something in common - some ideas to bounce off in our own self-directed learning. ***Please note that some of the readings are in the books, and many must be found online.***

At the same time, more work is required for each tutorial. Part of this is following your own interests through self-directed research each week.

Books you will need to buy (2 - available from the UNSW bookshop)

- * Darren Tofts (2005) *Interzone: Media Arts in Australia* Craftsman House: Sydney
- * Andy Clark (2003) *Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies and the Future of Human Intelligence* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Resources - Some Recommended books

[note: when I first started teaching this course there were very few books in the area. Now there are quite a few, so this is only a sample, and I'm afraid only some of these are in the library. However, you might also find that many books on aesthetics are in the library on UNSW's COFA campus. You are allowed to borrow books from there. ***Please also note that I will provide many links both below and on the course web site to much reading material online, where for us there is a great wealth of material***]

- * Cubitt, Sean (2005) *EcoMedia* Rodopi
- * Fuller, Matthew (2007) *Media Ecologies: Materialist Energies in Art and Technoculture* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press
- * Kac, Eduardo (2005) *Telepresence and Bio Art: Networking Humans, Rabbits and Robots* Michigan: University of Michigan Press

- * Kac, Eduardo (2006) *Signs of Life: Bio Art and Beyond* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press
- * Marchessault, Janine (2007) *Fluid Screens, Expanded Cinema* Toronto: University of Toronto Press
- * Miller, Paul D. (2008) *Sound Unbound: Sampling Digital Music and Culture* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press
- * Manovich, Lev (2001) *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA:MIT)
- * Munster, Anna (2006) *Materializing New Media, embodiment in information aesthetics* Dartmouth: Dartmouth College Press
- * Murphie, Andrew and Potts, John (2003) *Culture and Technology* (London:Palgrave) [what can I say!]
- * Paul, Christiane (2003) *Digital Art* London: Thames and Hudson
- * Reas, Casey, and Ben Fry (2007) *Processing: A Programming Handbook for Visual Designers and Artists* Cambridge, MA:The MIT Press [“Processing” is the open source coding language used by many artists today .. if you’re interested it’s worth learning]
- * Reiser, Martin and Zapp, Andrea (2002) *New Screen Media: Cinema/Art/Narrative* London:BFI
- * Rush, Michael (1999) *New Media in Late Twentieth Century Art* Thames and Hudson: London
- * Scharff, Robert C. and Dusek, Val (2003) *Philosophy of Technology:The Technological Condition* London:Blackwell
- * Spinrad, Paul (2005) *The VJ Book: Inspirations and Practical Advice for Live Visuals Performance* Feral House
- * Tofts, Darren, Jonson, Annemarie and Cavallero, Alessio (2002) *Prefiguring Cyberculture: An Intellectual History* (Sydney:Power, Cambridge, MA:MIT)
- * Wardrup-Fruin, Noah and Montfort, Nick (2003) *The New Media Reader* (Cambridge, MA:MIT)
- * Whitelaw, Mitchell (2006) *Metacreation: Art and Artificial Life* Cambridge, MA: The MIT press.
- * Wilson, Stephen (2002) *Information Arts* (Cambridge, MA:MIT)

Experiencing Electronic and Digital Aesthetics

As it concerns sensation, this course is very much about exploring *experience*. As important as reading is, it is not enough. ***You should engage with electronic/digital media/culture experience as much as possible*** - and not only via your normal means of experiencing the digital. You should make an effort to engage forms of digital experience you may be less familiar with. That will mean, for one thing, you will need to be online a fair bit for this course, and I recommend you get the latest browser with as many of the main plug-ins as you can muster. If you can connect through a better connection, do so. Artists and the more interesting digital culture sites tend to push the limits of the technology. You might also consider visiting art galleries, or making field observations about the difference that digital technologies make in culture. I will provide links and so on the course web site, and I will notify you if I hear of any interesting exhibitions.

I am in favour of you using Wikipedia as long as you use it as a launch pad - a basis for further research in much more depth.

Please Note: Although it's extremely unlikely, as this course is based on linking to a lot of art sites on the Net you may find something offensive that I have missed. If so, that is not at all my intention. It should also perhaps be noted that I don't agree with all the statements made in these sites.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

Self-Directed Learning

Some of the course will involve self-directed learning. Simply put, this is learning that you direct yourself (although, somewhat paradoxically, we will give you help in this regard). The course will provide you with many resources, and set you structures tasks for self-directed learning. However, you will have many opportunities to follow your own interests, singly and in small groups.

I hope this will be both rewarding and fun for us all!

Summary of Teaching and Learning in this course:

1. **Lectures are compulsory in this course - you'll be lost if you don't come to them, in part because it is here that I will show a lot of vital examples** (so I'm afraid if you're thinking of missing a lot of lectures, you might be better finding another course for this session). Lectures will perform two functions. They will provide lots of theoretical background and examples, as usual, although I hope they might be a little more participatory than usual. They will also, however, provide a forum in which to clarify and discuss the processes of self-directed learning and collaboration and contemporary media technologies as you engage with all of these.

2. ***You will essentially be in control of a large part of the tutorials*** - although with some specific guidance and structures that I will set up. I will be there - participating and dealing with any problems that come up.

3. ***You will have more control over your own learning than you might sometimes.*** This gives you a lot of freedom to follow up the things that interest you. It also means, however, that you have to take responsibility for participating in the course, and for following up your interests. There will also be structured opportunities in class for you to seek feedback on your research from myself and from your colleagues.

4. ***The course will involve a lot of collaboration or group work.*** Each tutorial will have groups of 3-4 people. These groups will run a tutorial for an hour and organise the learning processes.

5. ***You can work collaboratively on your final assignments if you wish, but you need to have this approved by me, so discuss this with me well ahead of time.*** The groups can also provide your support based for your individual research.

6. ***There will also be a lot of resources provided/guided towards online.*** I will add to these resources as we go along, so it's important to keep up with the web site.

7. ***You will need to keep up with the readings and other activities, and you will need to organise yourself in order to do so.*** At the same time, there is absolutely no requirement that you agree with all the approaches to digital art and culture you will find in the readings. In fact, I hope the case will be quite the opposite - that you will be able to discuss all the ideas critically, whether you agree with them or not. As you read, ask yourself how useful these ideas are. In what way are they useful? In what way might they not be? Or in what way might things have changed since some of these ideas were written down? How might you qualify them?

8. ***You will need to carry out your own research from the beginning of the course.***

Final note: I am not a “cognitivist”. This need not concern you, except that it means I have a slightly different philosophy of learning. Most basic teaching philosophy in universities these days is “cognitivist”. Put simply, this is the idea that the mind works by “inputting the right stuff”, “processing symbols”, then “outputting” the results, all at a fairly abstract level. Crucially, the assumption is that by getting the inputs and the processing right, you will end with consistent and predicable outputs. So you will notice that all courses, including this one, now have a compulsory series of descriptions that are essentially a program for defined “inputs and outputs” (aims, outcomes, etc). For me, the unfortunate aspects of this are three, all of them interesting in terms of our discussion in this course of the senses and experience:

1. it is based on a fairly outmoded model of mind (one that can be traced back to a meeting of cognitivist educationalists as long ago as 1948¹). It ignores many contemporary understandings of the mind drawn from neuroscience or cognitive science that we will discuss in this course.
2. it tends to ignore the complexity of sensory experience and following this, the unpredictability of both what affects us, and how we react to this. Rather it tends to tie everything into predetermined results (and, worse, make everyone anxious when things appear to deviate from these results)
3. it is not terribly good at dealing with exploratory learning, in more than fairly vague terms.

Put simply, this means that although I am not comfortable as a teacher if you don't prepare properly for classes, I am very comfortable with you following your own interests, working towards your own "outcomes". The main general criteria for work in this course will be:

- * the dedication with which you research ideas and examples
- * the degree of thoughtful exploration in your research and class contributions
- * the consistency with which you can develop your own approaches to ideas and examples

More specific criteria concerning learning and assessment tasks are given throughout, but especially in the section on Assessment.

¹ Interestingly, the problem for these educationalists was neither teaching or learning. It was the standardization of examination results across states in the US. The motive for the early "learning objectives" then was not necessarily to enhance learning and teaching. It was to enable examiners to be able to talk to each other, quite separately from students or teachers, about things (examination results) that were of only limited relevance to learning. Again interestingly for us in this course, the question was one of clear communications at an abstract level, not so much the more complex and unpredictable contexts of actual experience (this focus on abstract information also reflects much media theory coming from this time). The contemporary questions we shall be asking in this course concern rethinking such approaches: to minds, to experience, to learning, to media. The original book from which a cognitivist approach to education came is *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*; by Benjamin Bloom et al. Susan Fauer Company, Inc. 1956.

Week by week

Note: ***Tutorials and lectures begin in week 1.*** We only have 11 weeks in this course, because of the public holiday. You will be asked to make quite a few decisions in the first tutorial! Please note that there is reading to be done for week two.

Please note once again that you will find more information, and more links, on the course web site.

Week One - Better Living Through Circuitry?

Lecture: Introduction to the course, to digital aesthetics, to self-directed learning, to finding the readings and other materials ... and examples drawn from DVDs, CDs, the web, etc.

We will be discussing these examples in the tutorials so it is crucial you attend. As you watch these you will need to note (mentally, or even better on paper or palm pilot or whatever) the answers to the following questions:

1. Is there a particular electronic or digital aesthetic? Is there something special about electronics and computers and the forms of expression they give us? [think, for example, of the different between an acoustic guitar, and electric guitar, a synthesizer and a sampler, or the different musics made with these]
2. What is the impact of “electronic and digital sensations” on culture? In general? In the examples in the lecture?
3. What are the ideas, practices and ways of talking about electronic and digital culture in these examples?
4. What do *you* think about these ideas, practices and ways of talking about electronic and digital culture? How do you feel when you see/hear them?

Big question for this week and the next: What is the relation between a medium as a way of directly affecting the world/people and a medium as a conduit of abstract information? In short, how are information (e.g. the way we usually think about the news) and affect (e.g. the way we usually think about music or movies) related?

Necessary Readings

None - but familiarise yourself with the course guide and web site.

Tutorials

First hour: Introduction, discussion of the above question.

Second hour: Collaboration as Circuitry

What is collaboration? How might you do it? Problem-based Learning, Self-Directed Learning and tasks - limits and scope. Formation of groups (by voluntary association - that is, you can choose your own groups). You will be in two groups during the course. You will work with both these groups for tutorials. You will need to develop your own brief set of ethics which a member of your group will need to email to your tutor. This should cover the kind of behaviour you expect from group members (what they should do, how they might do it, etc) and what happens if the requirements aren't met.

Discussion of how groups will work. ***See Week Three for a description of what you'll be doing.*** You may have to sometimes meet outside of class to plan your collaborative work. You will definitely have to communicate online with your colleagues (so swap emails or mobile numbers).

What Else You Might Do

Begin to explore examples of the electronic and digital aesthetics. The web is a good place as any to start. See what you can find. You can also think about the electronic and digital technologies you already engage with and the sensations they bring you (it's worth making a list).

And of course there are many more links on the course web site.

Week Two - Circuits in Bodies and Machines

Lecture: Circuitry, Aesthetics and Sensation - Some History and Definitions

So what exactly is an aesthetic? And what exactly is sensation? What is a circuit anyway? Do we have them as well as machines? So what's the difference between us and machines? Did we build the circuits in machines in the image of our own bodies and brains? What is a medium - affect, information or both? What is culture? What is art? What is technology? What is an affect? A percept? How does perception work? What is sensation? What is its relation to thought? To reason? What about Representation? Cybernetics? How do these come together?

We're going to try to cover all these questions in (hopefully a fair bit) less than two hours. This means that I will try and keep it simple and show lots of examples. And we'll be 'doing' some perception (of images, sounds and so on) and some phenomenological experimenting (that is, reflecting upon how we perceive things as we do it)...

Necessary Readings

* Tofts, Darren (2005) *Interzone: Media Arts in Australia* Craftsman House: Sydney: 7-11

* Clark, Andy (2003) *Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies and the Future of Human Intelligence* Oxford: Oxford University Press: 3-34

Tutorials: Working with Circuitry

Discussion in smaller groups, including “conceptual speed dating”, and larger tutorial, following from readings.

In sum, the first question is, how are we 'in' the world, connected up 'within' the world? The second question is, how are our sensory-motor circuits and electronic and digital circuits related? Related questions might be: How do different aesthetics affect us? What exactly is the relationship between your mind, body and world? How does it work? How, for example, do you get an idea of *feel* the present? The past? The future?

What Else You Might Do

Do some “phenomenological” experiments! That is, observe how you sense things, are affected by and affect other things as you...

- * Play some computer games
- * Look at a painting
- * “Surf the Net”
- * Make choices within an interface
- * Watch TV
- * Watch films
- * Watch Videos
- * Look at the waves, the sunset, the mountains
- * Meditate
- * etc...

Week Three - Art, Technology and Everyday Life - Some History

Lecture: Art and Technology - Some History

As part of our whirlwind tour through art we're by-passing the first few thousand years and heading straight to the twentieth century (and mostly in the West I'm afraid). This week I'm taking a hop and a skip through a hundred years of art and technology. We'll look at precursors to contemporary attitudes to media technologies and art and everyday life.

Necessary Readings (mostly online)

* at least Marinetti's *The Founding and Manifesto for Futurism*, and two other manifestos, found at <<http://www.unknown.nu/futurism/>>

* read the material on the history of the Bauhaus, found at <<http://www.bauhaus.de/english/bauhaus1919/index.htm>>

* Tofts, Darren (2005) *Interzone: Media Arts in Australia* Craftsman House: Sydney: 32-50

* Barnett, Belinda and Eldredge, Niles (2004) 'Material Cultural Evolution: An Interview with Niles Eldredge' at <http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue3/issue3_barnet.html>

Necessary Explorations (Spend some time exploring these sites)

http://wiki.media-culture.org.au/index.php/New_Media_Art_-_History
<http://art.colorado.edu/>

Tutorials - Old cultures, new cultures...

How do older ideas influence the development and uptake of new media technologies? What is 'new' about new media technologies? Are they just new machines produced by the same old ideas or do they also reflect the emergence of new cultures? At what point do new technologies cause the mutation of old cultures? What do you think the world will be like in 5 years time? 20 years? 100 years? What would your manifesto be in the increasingly networked world?

In tutorials, most weeks will now take this form.

First hour: Groups run tutorial - this week it's Group 1's turn to run this hour

Take the theme for this week, the readings, do some research. Take a particular set of issues/example relevant to the general themes of the week, that your group has decided it is interested in. Decide these well in advance - although you really should head in the direction in which you are interested. Suggested issues/examples might be: electronic and digital aesthetics (senses and sense) with regard the themes of the week (this week it would be key ideas concerning art and technologies) and to more focussed issues. These might be, just to take some random examples: war and peace; emotions and culture (love, fear, hate, anger, disgust, etc); culture and new modes of production (digital); specific kinds of electronic and digital art (biotechnological, robotic, virtual reality, web art, electronic and digital imaging); democracy; community; specific artists or electronic or digital technologies; modes of living; relationships.

This is not a matter of a series of tutorial papers! You need to have prepared for the week, be in control of the required readings and so on, of course. **Yet, from the beginning of the tutorial, you need to be stimulating discussion** - with questions, examples, raising of important issues, activities - and yes, when it arises, clarification of points from the readings.

Plan what you are going to do in the tutorials, come along, and let learning take place!

Second Hour - general discussion of art and technology in culture

What Else You Might Do

The best thing you could do would be to look at some pictures (look for books or sites to do with Futurism, the Bauhaus, Constructivism, Surrealism, Dada, Fluxus, art in general). Pictures really are worth a thousand words here. Or you could try the galleries around town (including of course the Art Gallery of New South Wales or the Museum of Contemporary Art) and ask yourself about techniques and attitudes to technology in the art you see. Compare this to some net art. How much has the increased importance of the machine in art contributed to the way in which machines have come into everyday life?

Think about your own relations to machines and techniques. How much of your life is to do with them? How much is your way of coping with this a question of style?

You could also watch some animation on TV. What is the aesthetic here? A good film to watch would be Mamoru Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell*. Or you could compare Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* with Taro Rin's *Metropolis*. Among the many films that you could think about are -

The Hunt for Red October
2001: A Space Odyssey
The Matrix
Final Fantasy
Starship Troopers
Ghost in the Shell
Modulations
Better Living Through Circuitry
Galaxy Quest
Until the End of the World

You might also visit the sites:

<http://www.scholiast.org/futurism/>
<http://www.freeradio.co.uk/>

By now you should be looking around everywhere and asking, what is the aesthetic? What is it doing? What are the technologies and techniques involved in producing sensation?

Week Four- Art, Technology and Everyday Life Now

Lecture: Art and Technology and Everyday Life - Some Key Ideas

Necessary Reading

* Tofts, Darren (2005) *Interzone: Media Arts in Australia* Craftsman House: Sydney: 12-31

* Clark, Andy (2003) *Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies and the Future of Human Intelligence* Oxford: Oxford University Press: 35-58

* 'Parasite visions: alternate, intimate and involuntary experiences' and 'The involuntary, the alien and the automated: choreographing bodies, robots and phantoms', both found at <http://www.stelarc.va.com.au/articles/index.html> [you should also look generally at the Stelarc site]

Tutorials

Compare the relations of technology, art and everyday life in the past to those in the present (for example Stelarc's relation to the ideas and practices of Futurism and Bauhaus). You don't have to know about the avant-garde to do this. You could discuss film, television, clothing, etc. And you can take 'the past' as a relative term, especially as things are changing pretty quickly at the moment.

First hour - Groups run tutorial - this week it's Group 2's turn to run this hour

Second hour: General discussion

Further Readings (these are very challenging but rewarding)

* De Landa, Manuel 'Meshworks, Hierarchies, and Interfaces', <<http://www.netbase.org/delanda/meshwork.htm>>

* Massumi, Brian (1998) 'The Evolutionary Alchemy of Reason' (the best essay on Stelarc) <<http://www.fundacion.telefonica.com/at/emassumi.html>>

* Murphie, Andrew (2000) 'The Dusk of the Digital is the Dawn of the Virtual' in *Enculturation* (Post-Digital issue) (on Stelarc and Rebecca Horn), <http://enculturation.gmu.edu/3_1/murphie.html>

* Bush, Vannevar (1945) 'As We May Think', <<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/194507/bush>>

* Turkle, Sherry (1995) 'Artificial Life as the New Frontier' in *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* New York:Simon and Schuster:149-174

Week Five - Copies and Copies of Copies?

[Case Study due this week - Monday August 31, 4pm]

Lecture: Copies, Reproduction and Simulation

Theorists on the effects of technological change on culture. In particular we're concerned with reproduction and simulation this week. I will begin with Plato, famous for disliking art because it corrupted the pursuit of the ideal...and maybe even say a little about Freud, memory and the mystic writing-pad...

Necessary Readings (three of these are very short)

* Tofts, Darren (2005) *Interzone: Media Arts in Australia* Craftsman House: Sydney: 51-103

* 'Simulation, Simulacrum', University of Chicago *Theories of Media* Site <<http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/simulationsimulacrum.htm>>

* Wilson, Louise (1994) 'Cyberwar, God And Television: Interview with Paul Virilio', *Ctheory*, 20, <<http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=62>>

* 'The Mystic Writing-Pad' at the Electronic Labyrinth site, <<http://elab.eserver.org/hfl0257.html>>

Please note that ***I am assuming you have read the following in the past.*** I will be summing it up in the lecture but you can find it online.

* Benjamin, Walter (1973) 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' you can find it online here <<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm>> (or in *Illuminations* London:Fontana:219-253) (this is one of the great essays on media of the twentieth century - in fact, it's just one of the great essays of the twentieth century, full stop)

Further Reading

Massumi, Brian (1987) 'Realer than the Real: The Simulacrum according to Deleuze and Guattari' <http://www.anu.edu.au/HRC/first_and_last/works/realer.htm>

Baudrillard, Jean (2004) 'The Matrix Decoded: Le Nouvel Observateur Interview With Jean Baudrillard', *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies*, 1(2) <http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol1_2/genosko.htm>

Tutorial

What is simulation? What is it's relation to art? To culture? To reproduction? To cultural change? To eternal values? Is culture disintegrating or disappearing as the result of the electronic and digital? Are the electronic and digital aesthetics a cause or symptom of this? Are Virilio and Baudrillard right, or is it just that they did not grow up

with computers? How do new media both repeat and differ from the past? What is the relation between repetition and difference within media events?

General discussion of issues (no group led presentations this week or next as the case study is due today).

What Else You Might Do

You'll hopefully be doing a bit of thinking about Walter Benjamin and his influence on people who work with the digital. One of the great things about Benjamin is that he could really write so maybe you should take his book *Illuminations* to a park and read it there. It's Spring in any case!

Week Six - Electronic and Digital Aesthetics

Lecture: The Story So Far - Thinking about New Media Art and Electronic and Digital Aesthetics

Art demo and summaries of current state of electronic and digital aesthetics, theories and so on. Is digital the right word? Is everything electronic?

Necessary Readings

* Tofts, Darren (2005) *Interzone: Media Arts in Australia* Craftsman House: Sydney: 104-137

* Armstrong, Keith (2005) 'Intimate Transactions: The Evolution of an Ecosophical Networked Practice', the *Fibreculture Journal*, 7 ,http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue7/issue7_armstrong.html [it is worth going to Keith's site here - <http://www.embodiedmedia.com/>]

* Clark, Andy (2003) *Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies and the Future of Human Intelligence* Oxford: Oxford University Press: 143-165

Tutorial

How is art changing with changes in technology? What would virtual, interactive or digital art be? Is the function of art changing? What has the history of art and technology been? What is the relation between the old and the new in contemporary digital art? Is digital the right word? What does the difficulty of establishing the right terms for this area tell you? What is fundamental to digital art? Bits? The database? New sensations in bodies?

First hour - Groups run tutorial - this week it's Group 3's turn to run this hour

Second hour: General discussion

Week Seven - Sampling and Mixing, Selecting and Combining

Lecture: Electronics, Digitality, Sampling and Combining

Digital sampling and digital/electronic mixing in music and in other areas, such as online publishing (e.g. Indymedia) and political life, or the media in general. The aesthetics and politics of sampling and mixing, selecting and combining across a range of media. The lecture also discusses the importance of the culture of electronica and music cultures in general to the digital aesthetic (and even to the generation of new media technologies and techniques).

Necessary Readings

* Paul D. Miller (2003) 'Loops of Perception: Sampling, Memory and the Semantic Web', *Horizons*, 8, <<http://www.horizonzero.ca/textsite/remix.php?is=8&art=0&file=3&tlang=0>>

* Paul D, Miller (n.d.) 'Notes for Paul D. Miller's "Rebirth of a Nation" - remix of D.W. Griffith's 1915 film "Birth of a Nation"', at <<http://www.djspooky.com/articles/rebirth.php>> [and watch the video excerpt]

* Boisvert, Anne-Marie (2003) 'On Bricolage: assembling culture with whatever comes to hand' *Horizons*, 8 <<http://www.horizonzero.ca/textsite/remix.php?is=8&file=4&tlang=0>>

* Barnett, Belinda (1999) 'Machinic Heterogenesis and Evolution: Collected Notes on Sound, Machines and Sonicform' *M/C: A Journal of Media and Culture* 2.6 (1999). [accessed 5th June, 2002] <<http://journal.media-culture.org.au/9909/sonic.php>>.

Tutorials

The nature of sampling and mixing, selecting combining - both where we might expect it (in electronic music, for example) and where we might not (in politics, in educational programs).

First hour - Groups run tutorial - this week it's Group 4's turn to run this hour

Second hour: General discussion

What Else You Might Do

Listen to some music. Try something you might not usually listen to. In what sense is it "samples" and "remixes".

Week Eight - The History of Design and Interface Culture

'as life grows more complex, it requires a greater and greater extension of language. Graphic representation is that extension, that synthesis of art and science now urgently demanded by contemporary life' - Will Burtin, 1960, quoted in Richard Hollis *Graphic Design: A Concise History*: 115

Lecture: the politics of the interface

Now that we know what we're talking about - how much do electronic and digital aesthetics affect everyday life? We'll be looking at the function and politics of design in general. In the computer interface but also in the logo, in the contemporary world but also in the past (we'll be comparing the Bauhaus movement in Germany for example with the Nazis' use of the Swastika). We'll be comparing interfaces and attitudes to interfaces and perhaps considering the relations between space and interface as they lead us into the next few weeks discussions of interactivity and of the virtual. We'll also be discussing some political interventions in the area, such as those by Adbusters and RTMark. I'll also show some design sites, interesting site designs and web art and perhaps even discuss what Michael Heim calls the 'Feng Shui of Virtual Reality'.

Necessary Readings

* Clark, Andy (2003) *Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies and the Future of Human Intelligence* Oxford: Oxford University Press: 89-144

* Heim, Michael (2001) 'The Feng Shui of Virtual Reality', *Crossings*, 1(1) <<http://crossings.tcd.ie/issues/1.1/Heim/>>

* Ednie-Brown, Pia (2008) 'Plastic Super Models: aesthetics, architecture and the model of emergence', the *FibreCulture Journal*, 12 <http://journal.fibreCulture.org/issue12/issue12_ednie-brown.html>

Tutorials

Design in culture - design and our sensing/sense of the world

Anyone who works in design might tell you that design is culture. Again this week is largely a question of approaching everyday life through eyes guided by particular questions. How do design/interface issues direct the way you think and act? When do they help? When not? Take some notes (mental or otherwise) and bring them to the tutorial.

To what extent do electronic and digital technologies raise unique design issues that are yet to be resolved?

Examples of digital design and discuss the principles involved. What functions does the design serve? You also need to bring in some examples of digital rhetoric, digital

hype and digital moralisms. What agendas are they trying to affirm/oppose? What are they trying to resist?

You could also consider whether digital design is really embracing its full potential. How might you push digital design beyond its current limitations? Think of specific examples (games and the limits of realism, for example).

First hour - Groups run tutorial - this week it's Group 5's turn to run this hour

Second hour: Discussion of Final Assignment/ General discussion - here you will get to briefly talk about your research for your final assignment and get some feedback from other students. *Everyone should come prepared for this!* This is also a way of developing some of the more general discussion in more specific directions.

Further Readings/Sites

* Eno, Brian (1996) 'Generative Music' *In Motion Magazine*, <<http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/eno1.html>>

* Roemer van Toorn (1997) Architecture Against Architecture (on Rem Koolhaas, the Dutch architect) *Ctheory*, 51 <<http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=94>>

* Thacker, Eugene (1998). '.../visible_human.html/digital anatomy and the hyper-texted body' *Ctheory*, 60, <<http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=103>>

* Massumi, Brian (1995) 'Interface and Active Space', <http://www.anu.edu.au/HRC/first_and_last/works/interface.htm>

What Else You Might Do

Look at some magazines (magazines in general, and magazines to do with digital design/computing). How has the digital impacted upon design aesthetics in this area? What is the design rhetoric like in the magazines you study.

Look at some design sites. What are their design assumptions/cultural assumptions - how does design relate to culture in them?

Week Nine - *Images* - Still and Moving; Analog, Electronic and Digital

Lecture: Images, still and moving, Analog, Electronic and Digital VJing as a special contemporary case. New relations to screens. New use for images such as brain scanning.

Necessary Readings

* Manovich, Lev (1999) 'What is Digital Cinema?' <<http://www.manovich.net/TEXT/digital-cinema.html>> (Lev surprises us with how much of new media interventions in the cinema might be a continuity of older, pre-cinematic optical invention)

* Makhmalbaf, Samira (2000)'The Cinema of Tomorrow' <<http://www.makhmalbaf.com/articles.php?a=242>>

* 'the fMRI smackdown cometh', blog entry, <http://www.mindhacks.com/blog/2008/06/the_fmri_smackdown_c.html>

* you also need to visit the following sites: <<http://www.din.umontreal.ca/courchesne/>> and <<http://www.jeffrey-shaw.net/>< and <<http://vj.tv/>>

Tutorial - From digital to analog and back?

Do we have a new relation to electronic and digital images? Digital or analog - what is the technical difference? Digital or analog - what is the cultural difference? Are there new cultural forms purely because of the digital? Is it just that the interchange between the digital and the analog has recently become more intense (in genetic engineering, in digital film editing and post-production, on the dance floor)?

First hour - Groups run tutorial - this week it's the new Group 6's turn to run this hour

Second hour: Discussion of Final Assignment/ General discussion - here you will get to briefly talk about your research for your final assignment and get some feedback from other students. Everyone should come prepared for this! This is also a way of developing some of the more general discussion in more specific directions.

Mid-Session Break!

Week Ten - no classes - public holiday

Week Eleven - Artificial or Transitional?

Lecture: Artificial Art, Artificial Life, Brains and Art, Artificial Sensations

This week we will be dealing with contemporary art involving newer technological developments. We shall be particularly interested in art to do with new concepts of augmented/artificial intelligence and redefinitions of life. We will think about how we think through sensation - how those who design Human-Computer Interaction think about this issue, and how philosophers think about this issue. We will consider new "ecologies" and some examples of these ecologies.

Necessary Readings

* Clark, Andy (2003) Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies and the Future of Human Intelligence Oxford: Oxford University Press: 59-87

* Mackenzie, Adrian (2008) 'Wirelessness as experience of transition' the *Fibreculture Journal*, 13, <http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue13/issue13_mackenzie.html>

* Rinaldo, Kenneth E. (2002) 'Technology Recapitulates Phylogeny: Artificial Life Art', *Artnode*, <<http://www.artnode.org/art/rinaldo/artificial/index.html>> [and go to Rinaldo's site at <<http://www.ylem.org/artists/krinaldo/emergent1.html>>

Tutorials

What kind of life is artificial life? Does life have to be organic? To what extent is life autopoietic (self-creating) or allopoietic (created from outside of its borders)? What is the relation between the creation of life and the creation of art? How are digital culture and biotechnology connected? How much of this kind of thought has come into science and art from science fiction? What are the politics involved here? To what extent is a digital aesthetic a part of these politics?

You could begin your thinking of this via science fiction, as well as art.

First hour - Groups run tutorial - this week it's Group 7's turn to run this hour

Second hour: Discussion of Final Assignment/ General discussion - here you will get to briefly talk about your research for your final assignment and get some feedback from other students. Everyone should come prepared for this! This is also a way of developing some of the more general discussion in more specific directions.

Further Readings

* Sutton, John (2002) 'Porous Memory and the Cognitive Life of Things' at <<http://www.phil.mq.edu.au/staff/jsutton/CognitiveLifeOfThings.htm>> (accessed June 16, 2003) (a lovely essay - both historical and contemporary - linking media and thinking in some surprising ways)

* Whitelaw, Mitchell (2008) 'Art Against Information: Case Studies in Data Practice' <http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue11/issue11_whitelaw.html>

Week Twelve - *Virtual*: Immersion, Ambience, Architecture

Lecture: The Virtual is as real as the actual

The Virtual, the Immersive and the Ambient, the Design of Space in the light of the Virtual

Necessary Readings

* 'Virtual Reality', Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual_reality> (one of the better entries)

* Murphie, Andrew (2004) 'The World's Clock: The Network Society and Experimental ecologies', *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, 11, Spring, special issue on

technology and culture: 117-139 (download here - <<https://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/topia/article/view/2682/1887>>

* Coghlan, Andy (2007) "Out of Body Experiences are "all in the mind"" *New Scientist* <http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn12531&feedId=online-news_rss20> [watch the video as well]

* You should also read the following page (and follow the links that interest you) - Koolhaas, Rem (2003) 'The New World: 30 Spaces for the 21st Century' in *Wired* June, 11.06 at <<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/11.06/newworld.html>> (accessed June 16, 2003) (short and stimulating essays on the fate of space in the 21st century)

if you wish you can also visit my delicious links at <http://del.icio.us/ibbertelsen/vr>

Tutorial: Operating through the virtual

What is the virtual? In what manner is it real? Is Virtual Reality already with us? What are we going to do with it? What new aesthetics does it require? What is the future of cinema? Of our engagement with space? What is the difference between the immersive, the ambient and the interactive?

Group discussion.

Assessment

Emphasis in assessment is on the following:

- * the dedication with which you research ideas and examples
- * the degree of thoughtful exploration in your research and class contributions
- * the consistency with which you can develop your own approaches to ideas and examples
- * your participation and collaboration with your colleagues.

Assessment Components

10% Participation and Preparation for Classes

20% Organisation and Delivery of Tutorial Activities with Groups (one group mark for all)

30% First Assignment - Case Study

40% Second Assignment - Individual or Group Research Report

Participation

Attendance, Participation and Preparation (10% for Participation and Preparation)

Please note that Tutorial and Lecture Attendance is compulsory and you can fail the course if your tutorial and lecture attendance is not satisfactory. In general, attendance at less than 80% of tutorials or lectures without documentary evidence of illness or misadventure may result in failure in the course. At the same time, university policy is that you cannot be given a mark for attendance. This participation mark is therefore a mark regarding your participation in the course beyond attendance.

First, this will include preparation for lectures and tutorials.

Second, it will include work in groups, and in contributions to class as an individual. Again this will be assessed on the degree to which you have prepared for classes, and on your cooperation and collaboration with your colleagues.

It might be useful for me to generally define participation here. Obviously a large part of this involves your collaborative work with your colleagues as described above. Beyond this, participation includes reading and viewing material, doing some of your own research for classes, and discussing material and ideas in classes with an open, questioning mind, strong opinions and preferably both. It does not necessarily include understanding all the readings immediately. For your participation you will not be assessed on your brilliance, such as it may be, but upon the basis of your involvement. This includes saying things like 'I didn't understand the bit where that obscure writer wrote....'. Such engagement is the lifeblood of conversation.

So don't be shy, and don't feel you have to understand everything in the world before you comment. For a start, no one understands everything about the electronic or the digital. Secondly, if you understood everything immediately how would you ever learn anything? There may be some parts of the course that, despite the fact that others seem to get it, you just don't. I hope that this doesn't happen too often but it will happen occasionally. If you've done the reading and you can at least articulate what it is that you don't understand, that's fine. If you still don't get it after discussion, move on to something else!

All that said, we are serious about participation in the course.

Organisation of Tutorial Activities with Groups (20% - same marks for the entire groups)

Each tutorial will form 7 groups of around 3-4 people in week 1. Each group will lead discussion for around an hour in a tutorial for one week of the course (one of weeks 3-4; 6-9; 11). As a group, you should have done all the readings for the week, and done any extra reading and research you need to do. Then you should, as a group, plan how you are going to stimulate discussion on the topics/issues for the week. *This is not a matter of presenting 3 or 4 "tutorial papers"*. Obviously you will have to lead things off, but the important thing is to **stimulate discussion** by:

1. knowing what you are talking about
2. knowing what the interesting issues, complexities and questions involved are, and how to lead other students into discussion about them
3. perhaps bringing in examples (providing these are legal as concerns copyright - discuss this ahead of time with your tutor) or trying out other activities that might stimulate discussion.

The entire group will receive the same mark, which will be based upon both preparation and research, and the thought put into stimulating discussion.

The only exception to the group mark will be where a member of the group has not pulled their weight. We will discuss this in class, but *the first task of every group is to make what is expected of everyone clear, write this down, sign it, and submit it to the tutor.*

Case Study (30%)

This assignment should help you develop key skills for your research project. Please note that you are welcome, indeed encouraged to develop aspects of your case study into your final research project.

For this assignment you are required to produce a short piece of writing (1000-1500 words).

Write a review of 1000-1500 words (no more, no less!) on an art/cultural piece/event relevant to the course. This review should deal with the art practice in detail and with the concepts involved, as well as any concepts you bring to the piece from your own thought/reading. This review should be handed in to the School Office by the due date.

How to Proceed with this Assignment

Here is an extended guide to the kinds of things you might do in order to complete this assignment. It is a guide, not a "step-by-step", and there are other ways of approaching this assignment. In short, these are not rules - and you do not have to print this out, and tick each activity as you go!

Avoid, at first, simply looking for what is "right" and what is "wrong", until you have developed a good understanding of the art/cultural piece/event.

This is how you should proceed.

Ask questions about the art/cultural piece/event, such as: what is it (this often has a complex answer - what are its most important attributes?)? what

technologies are involved and what difference do they make? how does it produce certain sensations? what is the effect of these sensations? what are the social aspects of it? what are the assumptions and logics here? where do they come from? what are their bases? what ecologies is it involved in? what contexts does it need to work, and what is its role in these contexts?

Next you work on writing up your research. Here the crucial thing is to focus as narrowly as you can. You don't need to write down everything you've thought. That is the background. Don't try and analyse everything, or report all the ideas you've had in your own writing. Ask yourself what the most crucial 2 or 3 issues are here, and base your own piece of writing on those.

For this assignment, you also need to think about how best to structure your own writing.

Due Date for the first assignment - Monday, August 25, 2008 (week 5), 4pm (normal penalties for late submission will apply; see below)

Second Assignment - Research Report (40%)

You should begin research for this assignment early in the course.

Based on your own research during the course, you should write a research report of 2500-3000 words per member of the group (if this is a "group of one", then the limit is 2500-3000 words). We will discuss this more during the classes but you will be individually or collectively responsible for the aims, themes and structure of this piece of writing. Of course, I will be more than happy to advise you along the way.

It is possible for you submit your final assignment in another media form (images, a web site, music, and so on), accompanied by a text explaining your research and your choices in preparing your final assignment as submitted. If you wish to do so, you should talk to me early in the course.

Both your topic and approach should obviously be relevant to the general field of Electronic and Digital Aesthetics. You should discuss your choice of topic and approach with me as soon as possible. There are also several weeks (weeks 8, 9 & 11) in which you will - with your tutor and other students - spend considerable time in tutorials reviewing each others' research topics and approaches. *In one of these weeks you will give a 5-10 minute presentation on your research progress to the tutorial group.* The first assignment is also meant to give you a way into the kind of work you might do for this assignment, and many of the questions we suggest you ask yourselves for the first assignment might help you in this assignment. That does not mean, however, that the example you choose in the second assignment has to be the same as the example you chose for the first assignment.

This assignment can be done individually, or, for those who choose to, in groups (and these will be groups that you have organized yourselves). It is based on self-directed learning, and we will discuss it in the tutorials.

Those forming groups for this exercise will have to decide on proper processes and ethics for group work, and the consequences for not following these. Again, this will be explained in tutorials.

The research report will be assessed both as:

1. a piece of research (the amount of research that appears to have been done, how well this appears to have been organised, what links or other material are provided, and so on) and as
2. a piece of writing (its expression and organization).
3. if submission includes a form other than writing, this will be assessed on the coherence of research involved, and the “attempt” to explore this research through the particular media form involved.

This means that, if you are working in a group, you need to plan tasks, both in your research and writing up (that is, the report should not just be a series of reports from however many students are in your group - it should read as a coherent piece of writing).

Due Date for the second assignment - Thursday, October 30, 2008, 4pm (normal penalties for late submission will apply).

Submission of Work, Lateness, Plagiarism, Pre-marking, Advice and Other General Issues to do with Assessment and its Preparation

In order to pass a course you must seriously attempt and submit all of its assessment tasks.

Submission of Work:

Students must submit their work into the locked assignment boxes outside the School Office, Room 311U, Level 3, Robert Webster Building by 4 pm on the due date. A School Assignment Coversheet must be securely attached, with your details clearly marked. If you are submitting your work on a CD or DVD use the CD/DVD labels supplied. Please ensure you also label the disk. **Do not** enclose your disk in a piece of paper and staple or tape around the edges. **Late work will attract penalties.**

Late work:

If your assignment is submitted after the due date, a penalty of 2% per day (including Saturday, Sunday and public holidays) will be imposed for up to 3 weeks. For example, if you are given a mark of 72 out of 100 for an essay, and your essay were handed in two days late, it would attract a penalty of 4% and the mark would be reduced to 68. If the same essay were handed in seven days late (i.e. a penalty of 14%) it would receive a mark of 58. If your assignment were not submitted within 3 weeks of its due date, it would receive 0 marks.

Extension Procedure:

In the case of illness and misadventure you may apply to the Course Convenor for an extension of the due date. The extension procedure is as follows:

1. collect a yellow extension form from notice board outside the School Office and present it, together with relevant documentation (e.g. medical certificate, special consideration form, letter etc.) to your Course Convenor
2. the course convenor will submit this request to a late essay committee who will assess the application and decide on a new submission date and sign the yellow extension form.
3. A copy of the application will be return to you to submit with your completed assignment by the new submission date. (The original will be keep by the essay committee)

Pre-Marking:

Sometimes you will want your tutor or the course convenor to pre-read your essay and advise you before you make your final submission. This is sometimes called pre-marking. Unfortunately we cannot do this for you in this course. To be fair to all students, we have to do this for all students or for none. At the same time, there are some activities structured into the course to help you with your assessment preparation. Of course, we are also happy to talk to you about your work (see "Advice" below). We hope you will take advantage of this.

Submitting Assignments Via Email

We are unable to accept assignments submitted via email (it just means we have to print it our ourselves in most cases).

Advice on Research and Preparation for Assessment Tasks

We are very happy to talk to you about your assignments in some detail, either in tutorials, or in regular consultation hours, or, in the case of full-time staff, by

appointment. The earlier you plan to do this before your assignment, the better. We will also endeavour to respond to your emails, although this may take up to 3 working days.

A major aspect of a university education is for you to be able to develop your skills in independent learning and research. This will serve you very well in whatever path in life you choose after university - especially if that involves working in the media industries (which are always about independent research). So the only thing you might find us unwilling to do is to perform your research for you. That is, it is not very helpful - for yourself or anyone else - to ask us questions such as - "I was thinking of looking at contemporary commercial television in Peru for my assignment - do you know any good readings on this?". You will usually find that the reply will be - "What research have you done on this already?". If the answer is "none", then you need to get going yourself and come to us again when you have at least:

1. Been to the library and researched its physical contents (that is, books and journals on the shelves - maybe there's a recent book on "the history of commercial television in Peru", or some relevant journal articles).
2. Done some thorough research online (discriminating between gossip and solid research in the material you find - although some of the "gossip" could be useful, taken as gossip).
3. Used the library databases (especially via SIRIUS) to search your topic (for example, with keywords "television" and "Peru") - and used your electronic access to journals to which the library subscribes to read important research in your area. If you don't know how to use the library either physically or electronically, then this is one of the most useful things you can ever learn. The library runs excellent courses in such things, and the librarians are very helpful if you ask them how to use library resources.
4. Read the material you have gathered.

What are the best issues to come to academic staff with? Perhaps there are three types of issue.

1. It is as good idea to talk to your tutor, or the course convenor, with questions about your choice of topic in the first place - that is, what you are thinking of researching and how you are framing this research. This is probably not so much a question of asking what the best things to read might be. It is more a matter of whether the questions you are asking are useful, and whether you are approaching things in the most productive way. Again, you should have thought about this a bit in the first place, so we have something to talk about.

2. If you need to, it is also a good idea, after you have done a fair bit of research, to talk about the specific issues coming up for you regarding the research you have done. Of course, it is also useful to talk to your colleagues (other students) about your research.

3. Of course, if you have any other issues - personal issues or difficulties regarding your participation in the course, or understanding exactly what is required, for example - you should see the course convenor as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

You should note that the issue of academic honesty is taken very seriously in this course. Cheating, including plagiarism, can have very serious consequences. The following guide to plagiarism is taken from the UNSW Learning Centre's template for Course Guides.

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the presentation of the thoughts or work of another as one's own.*

Examples include:

- direct duplication of the thoughts or work of another, including by copying work, or knowingly permitting it to be copied. This includes copying material, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document (whether published or unpublished), composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, web site, Internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement;
- paraphrasing another person's work with very minor changes keeping the meaning, form and/or progression of ideas of the original;
- piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole;
- presenting an assessment item as independent work when it has been produced in whole or part in collusion with other people, for example, another student or a tutor; and,
- claiming credit for a proportion a work contributed to a group assessment item that is greater than that actually contributed.†

For the purposes of this policy, submitting an assessment item that has already been submitted for academic credit elsewhere may be considered plagiarism.

Knowingly permitting your work to be copied by another student may also be considered to be plagiarism.

Note that an assessment item produced in oral, not written, form, or involving live presentation, may similarly contain plagiarised material.

The inclusion of the thoughts or work of another with attribution appropriate to the academic discipline does not amount to plagiarism.

The Learning Centre website is the central University online resource for staff and student information on plagiarism and academic honesty. It can be located at:

www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism

The Learning Centre also provides substantial educational written materials, workshops, and tutorials to aid students, for example, in:

- correct referencing practices;
- paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing, and time management;
- appropriate use of, and attribution for, a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre.

Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting, and the proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

* Based on that proposed to the University of Newcastle by the St James Ethics Centre. Used with kind permission from the University of Newcastle.

† Adapted with kind permission from the University of Melbourne.

Course Aims

MEFT3102 - Electronic and Digital Aesthetics - aims to allow you to:

1. develop your thinking, reading, talking and writing about the impact of recent technologies on sensory experience, and on the arts.
2. via 1. to be able to think differently about contemporary modes of thinking and living as a whole.
3. enable you to consider these issues in the context of collaborative work with your colleagues.
4. perform genuine research concerning contemporary media events
5. develop your ability to report on your research in writing.
6. develop your abilities to direct your own research and learning.

The course builds on your previous engagements with ideas about media within the B.A./B. Sc. (Media) core programme, or with the B.A. within the Faculty of Arts and

Social Sciences. It supplements approaches to media issues from other parts of the program, with a “sensory-system-centred” close examination of the actual experience of contemporary media technologies and events. It also focus on the arts in much more detail than other courses in the faculty. It provides resources for you to develop your critical research and writing practices in relation to recent technological changes, aesthetics experience, and their social contexts. The course meets with the general media program in providing a more complex context for you to think differently about audio-visual video, networked media and other media forms and processes.

Course Outcomes

1. You will have developed a wide range of approaches to contemporary media developments, in the form of both relevant traditions of ideas and prominent contemporary theories.
2. You will be better able to engage thoughtfully with the manner in which sensation and feeling are worked through electronic and digital technology, and to engage with the cultural changes this implies.
3. You will have deepened the understanding within which they can situate new media practices.
4. You will be better able to engage with specific examples of new media practice, both in everyday life and in the realm of new media art.
5. You will have gained a clear overview of key ideas concerning art and aesthetics.
6. You will have gained some basic knowledge of the role of sensation in culture, in the use of technology, and in human thought.
7. You will also encounter various social, historical and theoretical explanations for these developments.
8. You should also be able to give clear expression to your ideas about these media developments - in oral discussion and in writing.
9. You should feel more confident about following your own intellectual interests in a thorough and rewarding way.

As a course, MEFT3102 is tied into the development of the following UNSW graduate attributes:

1. the skills involved in scholarly enquiry

2. an in-depth engagement with the relevant disciplinary knowledge in its interdisciplinary context
3. the capacity for analytical and critical thinking and for creative problem solving
4. the ability to engage in independent and reflective learning
5. Information Literacy – the skills to locate, evaluate and use relevant information
6. the capacity for enterprise, initiative and creativity
7. an appreciation of, and respect for, diversity
8. a capacity to contribute to, and work within, the international community
9. the skills required for collaborative and multidisciplinary work
10. an appreciation of, and a responsiveness to, change
11. a respect for ethical practice and social responsibility
12. the skills of effective communication.

Periodically, student evaluative feedback on the course is gathered, using among other means, UNSW's Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) Process. Student feedback is taken seriously, and continual improvements are made to the course based in part on such feedback. Significant changes to the course will be communicated to subsequent cohorts of students taking the course.