

USC School of Cinema Television | Interactive Media Division

CTIN 542 Interactive Design and Production

Professor: Perry Hoberman (*phoberman@cinema.usc.edu*)

Units: 4

Location: Robert Zemekis Center for Digital Arts, Room 201 (RZC201)

Requirements: Open to (and required of) Interactive Media MFA students only. Prerequisite: CTIN 532; corequisite: CTIN 544

Note: CTIN 542 students are required to attend CTIN 511 Interactive Media Seminar.

Course Objectives

This course continues and builds on last semester's course, Interactive Experience Design [CTIN 532]. As before, the purpose of the course is to develop a conceptual framework for the design of interactive experiences, with the express goal of using this framework to facilitate each student's ability to conceive, prototype and produce works in various interactive media.

The focus this semester will be on the production of two major projects, with the overall objective of developing the skills needed to produce a final (third year) thesis project. Students will begin both of these projects at the beginning of the semester, completing the first by midterm and the second by the finals week. Specific assignments will be given each week, providing a framework for the production and presentation of each project. Students will be expected to regularly post this ongoing work on their IM division blogs.

Class time will be divided between discussion, brainstorming and critique. Collaboration between students on projects and proposals will be encouraged. Guest critics will be brought in for midterm and final presentations.

Through readings, discussions and presentations, we will continue to focus on critical and conceptual issues, examining the ideas, histories and pre-histories of various aspects of the field of interactive media, including concepts of immersion, interface, narrative, navigation, simulation, telepresence, virtuality, as well as the wide variety of conceptions of interactivity itself. There will be an special emphasis on writings by, and interviews with, artists working in the field.

Students will be expected to pursue, and report on, a certain amount of independent research, including attending museum and gallery exhibitions and performances, watching cinema and television, looking at games and online projects, reading fiction and non-fiction, etc.

Grading Structure

Grades will be based on class participation and project work. Criteria for grading will include conceptual clarity, creativity, and the application of concepts discussed in class to assigned projects. Grades will be allocated as follows:

Final project: 50%

Midterm project 30%

Class participation: 10%

Blog postings: 10%

Schedule

Week 1

- Introduction to the course. Discuss initial goals and ideas for projects. Review last semester's work.
- Assignment: write (at least) three one-paragraph proposals for possible midterm and final projects.
- Reading: *There Is No Software* by Friedrich Kittler
http://www.ctheory.net/text_file.asp?pick=74

Week 2

- Present project proposals. Based on discussion and feedback, choose project proposal for midterm project. Discuss ways to improve and elaborate final project proposals.
- Assignment: draw storyboards, sketches, flow charts, diagrams for midterm project. Revise proposals for final projects.
- Reading: *Transforming Mirrors: Subjectivity and Control in Interactive Media* by David Rokeby
<http://homepage.mac.com/davidrokeby/mirrors.html>

Week 3

- Present and discuss midterm project design material. Discuss revised proposals for final projects, choose proposals.
- Assignment: begin gathering components for midterm project. Draw storyboards, sketches, flow charts, diagrams for final project.
- Reading: *The History of the Interface in Interactive Art* by Söke Dinkla
<http://home.snafu.de/mediainmotion/1994/dinkla.html>

Week 4

- Present first components of midterm project. Present and discuss final project design material.
- Assignment: Write up a detailed design specification for midterm project. Mock up a rough prototype of project.
- Reading: *Interview with Paul De Marinis* by Shun-ichi Shiba
<http://www.well.com/~demarini/shiba.html>

Week 5

- Present midterm project prototypes. Discuss design specs, technical and conceptual issues.
- Assignment: procure all components (software, hardware, media) for midterm project.

- Reading: *The Poetics of Interactivity* by Margaret Morse
http://switch.sjsu.edu/nextswitch/switch_engine/front/front.php?artc=267

Week 6

- Progress reports on midterm and final projects. Further presentation of prototypes.
- Assignment: Assemble and test midterm project.
- Reading: *The Body Without Memory: An Interview with Stelarc* by Mark Fernandes
http://www.ctheory.net/text_file.asp?pick=354

Week 7

- Preliminary presentations of midterm projects. User testing and feedback. Discuss final revisions and improvements.
- Assignment: make final revisions and changes to midterm projects. Create documentation of work.
- Reading: *Media Archaeology* by Siegfried Zielinski
http://www.ctheory.net/text_file.asp?pick=42

Week 8

- Presentations of midterm projects, with guest critic/s.
- Assignment: write post-mortem of midterm project (what went right, what went wrong).
- Reading: *Interview with Jim Campbell* by Richard Whittaker
<http://www.jimcampbell.tv/articles/whittaker/index.html>

Week 9

- Discuss midterm project presentations, documentation and post-mortems. Progress report on final project.
- Assignment: write up detailed design specification for final project. Gather components for project.
- Reading: *Toward an Aesthetics of Synnoetic Interactivity* by Gregory Little
http://www.intelligentagent.com/archive/Vol3_No1_bio_little.html

Week 10

- Present design specs for final project. Discuss technical and conceptual issues.
- Assignment: mock up a rough first prototype of the project.
- Reading: *The Virtualisation of Art Practice: Body Knowledge and the Engineering World View* by Simon Penny
<http://www.ace.uci.edu/penny/texts/Virtualisation.html>

Week 11

- Present final project prototypes. Evaluate project in terms of hopes and expectations. Discuss possible revisions given remaining time.
- Assignment: Procure remaining components (software, hardware, media) for project.
- Reading: *Digitality: Approximate Aesthetics* by Anna Munster
http://www.ctheory.net/text_file.asp?pick=290#bio

Week 12

- Work on final projects in class. Tackle any technical hurdles (software, hardware, electronics, programming).

- Assignment: Assemble and test final project.
- Reading: *Discovering CyberAntarctic: A Conversation with Knowbotics Research* by Paolo Atzori
http://www.ctheory.net/text_file.asp?pick=80

Week 13

- Preliminary presentations of final projects. User testing and feedback.
- Assignment: create documentation of final project.
- Reading: Contestational Robotics: Chapter 6 of *Digital Resistance* by Critical Art Ensemble
<http://www.critical-art.net/books/digital/tact6.pdf>

Week 14

- Presentations of final projects, with guest critic/s.
- Assignment: write post-mortem of final project
- Reading: *Fakeshop: Science Fiction, Future Memory & The Technoscientific Imaginary* by Eugene Thacker
http://www.ctheory.net/text_file.asp?pick=220

Week 15

- Final discussions and wrapup. Present documentation and final project post-mortems. Evaluate class, discuss goals and further work.

Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure that the letter is delivered to the Professor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30am – 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Missing an Exam, Incompletes

The final exam in this seminar is a project rather than a written exam. However, USC standards still hold: The only acceptable excuses for missing an exam or taking an incomplete in the course are personal illnesses or a family emergency. Students must inform the professor before the exam and present verifiable evidence in order for a make-up to be scheduled. Students who wish to take incompletes must also present documentation of the problem to the instructor before final grades are due.

Academic Integrity

The School of Cinema-Television expects the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical performance from USC students. It is particularly important that you are aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, submitting a paper to more than one instructor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade and be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. If you have any doubts or questions about these policies, consult “SCAMPUS” and/or confer with the Professor or Department Chair.