

**MEDIA ARTS 210
DIGITAL MEDIA ARTS FUNDAMENTALS**

BULLETIN INFORMATION

MART 210 - Digital Media Arts Fundamentals (3 credit hours)

Course Description:

Introduction to theory and practice of origination, sequencing, and processing of screen-based and related media art.

SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW

Software is irrelevant. Learning to make a mark on paper with pencil is not the same as writing or drawing, though it is a necessary first step. This course introduces many techniques that will be new to you. *Do not mistake these for the act of making art itself.* Art is first and foremost a process of mind over material.

The Media Arts are art forms of a particular flavor that use digital technologies to arrive at the end result, which includes (but is not limited to) filmmaking, interactive art, animation, video performance, documentary, games, graphics, robotics, simulation, bio-art, net art, and far more than can actually be named...

As a foundational class, there are several objectives that must be met to be able to continue in this discipline. You will refine your sense of aesthetics across varied digital media forms (including still graphics, motion, and net art) and apply that ability to several projects. You will demonstrate proficiency in several key digital art approaches. Finally, you will build an active digital presence to showcase your ideas and to readily communicate with the larger art community.

ITEMIZED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of Media Arts 210, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate proficiency in digital art software in the areas of graphics, web design, and digital video. You will demonstrate this proficiency through a series of practical exams that will test the specific processes and workflows for these skill areas.
2. Apply your proficiencies in professional, collaborative settings. You will do this by designing and executing several media art projects in teams that mirror the professional processes of production and design firms.
3. Interpret and apply principles of digital art production and the historical, cultural, and economic exigencies that led to the state of the art. You will demonstrate your understanding of these concepts through written exams.

SAMPLE REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED READINGS/MATERIALS

1. *Making Media*, 2nd ed. (Roberts-Breslin, ISBN [978-0240809076](#)). Other readings will be provided.
2. You must have a USB 2.0 key drive (It must be at least 4 GB. Larger is better.). I strongly recommend a portable external hard drive (FireWire and/or USB 2.0) of 60GB or larger.
3. The labs in Media Arts Commons lab (3rd floor McMaster) and Arts Computing Lab (1st floor McMaster, as well as Labs 001 and 003 in Gambrell are available to you for any media creation needs. All the programs you need are there.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAM

1. Pre-Viz Project

- a. Governments throw around terms like "revitalization" all the time, and these projects are often complicated and politically loaded. When urban planners need to present a design to a city council or other governing body, they turn to media artists to bring those concepts to life, to make the vision clear.
- b. Teams will be assigned an area in the City of Columbia. Visualize and simulate that part of the city twenty years into the future, after a hypothetical urban redesign, using photomontage compositing.
- c. Each team will present their work to the entire class. There will be at least one before-and-after image for each team member, and each team member will explain the thought process behind the graphic manipulation.
- d. Successful projects will: 1.) exhibit an integrated design across all team members' work, 2.) justify the visuals according to the assigned urban design for that area, and 3.) show technical precision and effective use of the appropriate media tools.

2. Channel Surfing Project

- a. The hypothetical urban design from the last project is now moving forward, but the planners need help communicating the details of the plan to the public and all the stakeholders.
- b. Make a 2-4 minute high definition video that portrays and explains the project, using all the images you created from Project 1, and new video you shoot specifically for this project. There must be two concurrent and different audio tracks to accompany the image (not just voice or just music, for example). Teams will upload the video to YouTube or Vimeo, made publicly accessible, with comments turned on.
- c. Successful projects will: 1.) depict the new design with strong composition, 2.) use appropriate pacing and montage structure, and 3.) show technical precision and effective use of the appropriate media tools.

3. Shingle Project

- a. Your design team has done significant work in graphics and video, it's important to have an online presence as well. For this project, you will build a coherent web site for your team. It will contain all the material you have made (both individually and as a team) in this course. You may use Dreamweaver, a web-based Content Management Service (like Drupal or Joomla), or another approved web development app (check first—some are not acceptable).
- b. The site must be live on a server with an appropriate domain. It must be a multi-page design that includes information about each team member (this may be fictional). The site and all its component media must be viewable in a standard web browser without the use of plug-ins.
- c. Successful projects will: 1.) have a strong, consistent design across the site, 2.) use appropriate standards and practices in its deployment, and 3.) show technical precision and effective use of the appropriate media tools

4. Graphics Practical Exam, Web Practical Exam, Motion Practical Exam

5. Midterm and Final Exam

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE WITH TIMELINE OF TOPICS, READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS/PROJECTS

This is the general schedule for the arc of the semester. It will likely change. The exact dates for elements will be announced in class and posted on the class web site.

Week 1: Introduction to the course.

Week 2: Graphics and Conditions of digitality
Banner Homework

Week 3: Continuing graphics. Assign projects.
Banner homework due.
Read Breslin, ch. 1 “Content and Preproduction”

Week 4: Groups dynamics and team building.
Read Breslin, ch. 2 “The Frame”

Week 5: Thinking Small. Compression and codecs.
Project Management, Axioms of Software
Give Practical Exam 1
Read Breslin, ch. 3 “Depth and Movement”

Week 6: Composition and aesthetics, design and typography
Read Breslin, ch. 4 “Light”

Week 7: Internet and infrastructure.
Read Breslin, ch. 5 “Sound”

- Week 8:** Digital Audio strategies and aesthetics.
Practical Exam 1 due.
Read Breslin, ch. 6 “Sound and Image”
- Week 9:** Present Pre-Viz projects
Midterm Exam
Give Practical Exam 2
- Week 10:** Present, discuss, and critique Pre-Viz projects
- Week 11:** Rudiments of Digital Video. High definition and political economy from the New Deal to Reaganomics.
Practical Exam 2 due.
Give Practical Exam 3
Read Breslin, ch. 7 “Time”
- Week 12:** HD and the Boogeyman
Read Breslin, ch. 8 “Theory of Linear Structure”
- Week 13:** Software architectures and platforms.
“You’re gonna need a montage.”
Read Breslin, ch. 9 “Practice of Linear Structure”
- Week 14:** Present, discuss, and critique Channel Surfing Projects
Read Breslin, ch. 10 “Non-linear Structure”
- Week 15:** Intellectual property.
Practical Exam 3 due.
Read Breslin, ch. 11 “Approaches to Production, Exhibition, Distribution”
- Week 16:** Present, discuss, and critique Shingle Projects

Final exam according to university exam schedule