

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CURRICULAR AFFAIRS
COURSE PROPOSAL FORM

Principal Faculty Member Proposing Course: Dr. Sarah K. Rich

College: Arts & Architecture

Department or Instructional Area: Art

Type of proposal: Add Change Drop

Type of review requested: Full Expedited (See Guide to Curricular Procedure for definitions of a full or expedited review.)

Current Course Designation: Abbreviation _____ (max. 5 spaces) Number _____

Current Course Title _____

Proposed Course Designation: Abbreviation **ART H** _____ (max. 5 spaces) Number 476

Proposed Course Title _____ History and Theory of Digital Art

Complete for special categories of UNDERGRADUATE (001-499) course proposals (check, if appropriate):

General Education:

Writing/Speaking (GWS)

Quantification (GQ)

Health and Physical Activity (GHA)

Natural Sciences (GN)

Arts (GA)

Humanities (GH)

Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS)

Bachelor of Arts Course: Arts Humanities Soc/Behavioral Sci. Other Cultures

Honors (H) or Honors/Writing (M) or Honors/US;IL (U) or Honors/1st-Year Seminar (T)

United States Cultures (US) Permanent International Cultures (IL) Permanent or both US and IL

Writing-Intensive (W) Permanent or One-semester (W)

SUBMITTED BY _____ Date _____

Head of Department (or person in charge of instructional area)

REVIEWED BY _____ Date _____

College Representative (Senate Committee on Curricular Affairs or Graduate Council Subcommittee on New and Revised Programs and Courses)

APPROVED BY _____ Date _____

Dean of the College (or appropriate administrative officer)

After securing signatures, submit the following to the Curriculum Coordinator, University Faculty Senate, 101 Kern Graduate Building: (1) FULL REVIEW UNDERGRADUATE proposals, 1 copy of this form and 25 copies of supporting documentation; (2) FULL REVIEW GRADUATE proposals, 1 copy of this form and 15 copies of supporting documentation; (3) EXPEDITED REVIEW PROPOSALS, 1 copy of this form and 4 copies of supporting documentation.

Graduate School office use only:

REVIEWED BY _____ Date _____

Dean of the Graduate School

RECOMMENDED BY _____ Date _____

Graduate School Subcommittee

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR *NEW COURSES*

A. Heading as it would appear in the appropriate University *Bulletin*:

1. Art/Art H
2. 476
3. History and Theory of Digital Art
4. Hist Digital Art
5. 3 credits
6. History and theories of contemporary digital art emphasizing humanistic approaches to technology.
7. Art H 100 or Art H 112 or Art H 307 or Art H 325 or Art H 326 or Art 211

B. Course Outline:

1. & 2. Brief outline and major topics of fifteen sample weeks:

Each week will be split up into two parts. In the first session of each week, students will present and discuss the assigned readings. The second session of each week will be devoted to finding and discussing works of art that engage and/or problematize that week's readings. In some weeks, willing members of the SVA faculty and other departments will be invited to discuss the pertinence of digital media to their own work.

Major topics will include: The effects of reproduction on works of art; the long tradition of "the digital" and "the analog" in the history of art; the development of more collaborative models of artistic practice in a digital age; the intersection of artistic and economic paradigms in digital spaces; and the presence of the body in digital art, particularly in respect to racial, sexual, gendered and classed identities.

The following outline is just an example of the ways in which the class may be organized. The specific readings, art works, and the order in which themes are discussed will change as technologies change. A class such as this one, of course, must maintain tremendous flexibility to remain current with changing trends in scholarship and art dealing with digital issues.

In the first two weeks of class students will read sources on the history of the digital. Important readings may include those written by figures such as Marshall McLuhan and Nelson Goodman—both writers in the sixties who took radically different approaches to defining the digital. McLuhan's texts offer an early discussion of the cultural impact and moral implications of digital phenomena. Goodman's *Languages of Art: "Analogues and Digits"* will offer a semiotic analysis of digital texts. During these weeks we will look at more traditional forms of art, from mosaic tesserae to the paintings of Claude Monet, Roy Lichtenstein and Bridgit Riley, to construct a longer history of digital forms in art. Students will also look at recent web projects by David Halley and others that interrogate the idea of the pixelation.

The third week will introduce students to "The Rhizome"—a concept of decentralized social/psychological interaction described by Deleuze and Guattari in 1976. This theory has become fundamental in discussions of cyberspace.

The fourth week will be devoted to critiques of digital spaces by advocates of materiality. Theorists like Johanna Drucker and Mira Schor, for example, have argued that digital art can be dangerous because it reduces the number of senses (touch and smell) involved in making and looking at art. Students will be invited to provide arguments for or against such critiques.

In the fifth and sixth weeks the class will look at writings by figures such as Simon Penny, Mark Amerika, Michel Foucault, Walter Benjamin and Roland Barthes to examine the ways in which the very notion of the artist (and the artist's studio) demands new consideration when placed in a digital environment. The course will also present and examine collaborative art projects on the web.

In the seventh and eighth weeks students will theorize the changing nature of the work of art in digital contexts. This week will offer readings by Walter Benjamin and Timothy Druckery. Students will read discussions of avant-garde works, such as Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* that have challenged traditional definitions of art. Students will then relate digital works to such a history of avant-garde art. Also, by reading texts such as those authored by Richard Dawkins, students can examine the ways in which "viral replication" engages with Benjamin's notion of "mechanical reproduction."

In week number nine the class can explore the concept of "interface"—the bodily interaction between human beings and machines in digital art. Important readings will include those written by Anne Balsamo and Peter Weibel.

In the tenth and eleventh weeks the class will look at works of digital art that interrogate the function of racial identities in cyberspaces. Essays by Maria Fernandez and Cameron Bailey, as well artworks by Guillermo Gomez-Pena and Roberto Sifuentes will be of particular importance.

In the twelfth week students will examine "cyberfeminism" and the workings of gender in digital spaces. The main readings will be by Faith Wilding, Sadie Plant, Sue-Ellen Case and N. Katherine Hayles. The class will look at the Guerilla Girls Web site, as well as sites by Sadie Plant and others.

In the thirteenth week students will relate previous readings to post-modern theories of the simulacrum by reading the work of Frederic Jameson and Jean Baudrillard. By looking at Web sites such as those composed by Vuc Cosic, students will be invited to discuss the ways in which digital technology participates in the production (or critique) of simulacral culture.

For the fourteenth week students will look at digital works of art that engage and critique surveillance systems. We'll read essays such as Brook Night's article on Webcams, as well as more general sources on surveillance and resistance such as those authored by Michel Foucault and Michel de Certeau.

In the final weeks the class will introduce students to digital architecture through essays by William Mitchell and Roy Ascott. Students will also take a "field trip" to digital architecture such as the Digital Guggenheim and the "Inflat-o-Scape" by Janet Irish. Students will also imagine future functions of museums and gallery spaces in a digital art world. We'll read general sources on museums such as those authored by Carol Duncan and Douglas Crimp, but we will also read reviews of recent digital exhibitions such as the San Francisco MoMA's "010101" show.

As I have already taught this course twice as a 497 class, there is currently a Web site for the course as I have already presented it. Please see:

<http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/s/k/skr10/frameexperiment.htm>

3. Course Description: Approaches to Digital Art is a survey class that will offer the web designer, cyberspace architect, MUD traffic controller or enthusiastic surfer an opportunity to examine the humanistic aspects of contemporary digital art. Through readings and direct interaction with digital media and digital artists, the class will develop an appreciation of the ways in which the interface between human beings and technology has been historically constructed and is subject to critical investigation. The goal of the class is to prepare each student so that she or he may engage with digital media in a way that is ever more historically and socially self aware.

Students will address the ways in which digital technologies transform artistic practices such as museum display, the writing of art criticism, the definition of works of art, changing role of the artist and the changing space of the art studio. More important, however, by engaging with digital works of art students will learn to think critically about technology and its engagement with culture at large. They will be encouraged to think about the political, economic and social impact of digital technologies. This humanistic approach to technology would make this course particularly useful to students of art history, philosophy, comparative literature, art education, and the visual/plastic arts. A significant portion of the course will be devoted to the ways in which art on the internet and digital art in general challenge the integrity of categories such as race and national identity. For example, students will have an opportunity to engage with African American artists such as Keith Obadike, whose on-line performances include an attempt to put his “blackness” up for sale on ebay.com in August of 2001. Students may also look at the ways in which net.art (art made to be viewed on the internet) can critique commercial cooptation of global culture: etoy.com, for example, is an international and collaborative artist’s group that satirizes global capital by camouflaging itself as a multinational corporation.

This class will depend largely upon written responses and class discussion, rather than upon tests. Thus, students will learn how to approach difficult theoretical sources that have been assigned to them, and they will learn how to ask the kinds of questions that will help them understand such sources. This course will emphasize critical thinking rather than memorization, so students will develop analytical skills that will be useful in many other contexts. Because students will be given weekly writing assignments, they will be able to improve their skills in composition.

4. Dr. Sarah K. Rich, Assistant Professor of Art History, is chiefly responsible for this course.

C. Justification Statement:

1. Instructional, Educational, and Course Objectives: In this course students will be expected to learn about the ways in which artists and critics have attempted to theorize digital visual culture. It will offer a rigorous study on an increasingly important area of contemporary art. The course will also allow students in majors with digital components (Information Sciences and Technology [IST], Graphic Design, as well as departments in the humanities) to engage in a humanistic interrogation of digital media.
2. Evaluation Methods: Half of every student’s grade will derive from ten 200-word essays in which s/he discusses assigned readings or specific works of art. Students will post their essays on a class web site that will be open to all students in the class, so students will be able to respond to each other’s work. Class discussion will constitute a major

- portion of their grade as well, as students look at different works of art in class and discuss them. As part of their participation, each student will be asked to present at least one of the weekly readings. In future courses, there may also be scheduled chat rooms in which students will be able to interact with visiting “lecturers”—digital artists who have agreed to converse from a remote location with students in the class.
3. Relationship/Linkage of Course to Other Courses: This course will dovetail nicely with other courses offered presently at Penn State. First, the course will complement “Art since 1940” (A new Gen. Ed. Course being proposed on the 300 level). Also, this course will fit alongside courses that have been already been offered in the School of Visual Arts (SVA). While some courses in the SVA (particularly in New Media) have focused on techniques and processes of digital art, other courses have focused upon special critical themes in technology and art (such as Charles Garoian’s course on technology and performance, or Yvonne Gaudelius’ “Cyberfeminism” course). The “History and Theory of Digital Art” will supplement those other courses by providing students with a more general survey of digital art. Students will thus be prepared for the more in depth and theoretically sophisticated studies offered by the special topic classes in the School of Visual Arts (SoVA). This course will also provide web designers and other digital practitioners, both from the SoVA and also from the IST College, a more general introduction to philosophical and political issues that surround their media of choice.
 4. Relationship of course to major or minor: This course would satisfy the Modern requirement for undergraduate majors in Art History and can be used to satisfy 3 credits of the 400-level requirement of the Minor in Art History. For the B.A. and B.F.A. in Art, this course will satisfy 3 credits of the art history requirement.
 5. Consultation with Appropriate Departments and Academic Support Units: Preliminary review of this course proposal was sought from the School of Visual Arts and the Department of Integrative Arts (see attached letters). This proposal will also be circulated for input to all faculty in the College of Arts and Architecture at University Park and faculty teaching Art History at other campuses.
 6. N/A
 7. Special technology requirements: This course is going to require a computer lab. Every student should have access to a computer on which they can engage with works of art during class. Also, there should be a digital projector in the classroom so that the professor can demonstrate the works of art. This course will also have to have a well-developed Web site with a bulletin board feature as well as a chat feature.
 8. The Technology Needs for Course Proposals form: new courses or changes in courses that have technology needs, i.e., computer projection equipment, etc. The information on the completed form will NOT be used as a criterion for accepting or rejecting a proposed course, but would provide information on the seemingly ever-expanding computer needs of the University. {see attached}
 9. Frequency of Offering and Enrollment: This course will be offered about once every two years, with about 30 students per semester.

D. Effective Date: The first semester following approval on the Senate Curriculum Report.

Procedures for Submitting United States Cultures (US)
and International Cultures (IL) Course Proposals

A. Course proposals must follow the appropriate course proposal form format for new or changed courses. A US and/or IL course proposal must be consistent with the objectives of the United States Cultures and/or International Cultures requirements. Specifically, each proposal must:

1. State whether the course meets the definition of 1) a United States cultures course, 2) an international cultures course, or 3) both a United States cultures and international cultures course. **This course fulfills both the US and IL requirements.**
2. Include a complete course outline including a statement of course objectives that reflect the US and/or IL content, and a listing of major topics with an approximate length of time for their discussion. **[already in proposal]**
3. Include pertinent information on the US/IL aspects of the course in the long course description (Item B.3. on Course Add proposal form). **[see B.3]**
4. Describe how the course encourages students to develop understanding of the historical backgrounds, cultural and scientific contributions, economic, social, psychological, and political circumstances of the group being studied. While no one course or section is expected to achieve every criterion, each course proposal must clearly specify which criteria it proposes to meet. Thus the proposal should explain how students, within the context of the course, will be encouraged to do or achieve three or more of the following:
 - a. see nations, cultures, and/or social identities not in isolation, but in relation to each other. **Students will view net.art and digital artworks that intentionally use internet spaces and porous internet boundaries as a means of critiquing national identity.**
 - b. cultivate awareness of the pluralism and diversity within the United States and international cultures; **Students will visit net.art and view digital works of art that critique notions of racial identity in the United States.**
 - c. increase knowledge of different cultural values, traditions, beliefs and customs; **Students will engage with works of art by contemporary net.artists from many different countries and world regions.**
 - d. appreciate the diversity that exists among persons who share a particular social identity;
 - e. increase knowledge about the range of cultural achievements and human conditions through time;
 - f. recognize and be sensitive to the different ways social identities have been valued;
 - g. re-examine beliefs and behaviors about social identities (ethnicity, race, class, religion, gender, physical/mental disability, or sexual orientation);
 - h. increase understanding of the nature of stereotypes and biases of other cultures and other nations;
 - i. interact successfully with representatives of other nations and with persons of different social groups;
 - j. increase ability to locate and evaluate information and gain knowledge about other peoples of the world.
5. Include a statement that explains how the achievement of the US/IL educational student objectives will be assessed (e.g. grading procedures). **Students respond to the artworks and to their respective international/multicultural components through class discussion, papers and weekly submissions to on-line bulletin boards.**

