

Course Number: DIG 5930 Section Number 8813

Course Title: Interdisciplinary Research Seminar

Credits: 3

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This graduate level course explores the use of emergent real-time virtual environments and Digital Social Networks, ubiquitous computing, augmented reality and viral communications. This is a hands-on, project-based class where participants will have opportunities to design and conduct research studies in an interdisciplinary manner by integrating a variety of knowledge bases and points of view. Resident and Visiting interdisciplinary researchers (from UF and other institutions worldwide) work with students to design novel research projects and configurations.

The IRS explores the use of Interactive Digital Media (IDM) and Virtual World Environments (VWEs) as venues for the rapid-prototyping of ideas, inventions and interactions. Students will investigate the history of virtual worlds, from their roots in cinema and television and their relationship with the military industrial-entertainment complex to their current state, including massively multi-user spaces on the Internet and their implications for human interaction, ethics and public policy in the near and long term.

A significant part of this course for graduate students will be the completion of an in-depth research project with the approval of faculty from their own college. This project will give students the opportunity to identify, discover, and determine the answers to critical research questions within their field of study.

Register for DIG 5930 section 8813 at <http://www.isis.ufl.edu>.

It is recommended that participants have at least 10-20 hours of prior participation in [Second Life](#) before the course begins.

Recommended basic skills include:

- a. Create avatar
- b. Completion of Orientation and Help Island tutorials
- c. Use of camera controls
- d. Ability to fly, walk, and teleport
- e. Knowledge of communication tools (IM and chat)
- f. Basic building skills (create prims, add textures and content)
- g. Basic inventory management (can find items, wear clothing, make a notecard)

Course Structure:

WEEK	Topic	In Class	Readings/ homework
1 Aug 24 to Aug 30	1. Project Methodology and Presentations from last semester 2. Introduce Blog	Office hours (Varies by semester) Digital Worlds introduction Course intro and syllabus	Read The Prelude to the Millennium: The Backstory of Digital Aesthetics by Sherry Mayo Sign up for Blog at http://www.filmword.blogspot.com/ Post to Blog a minimum of once a week.
2 Aug 31 to Sep 6	1. Initial exploration of SL 2. Technical Tutorials 3. Form research groups 4. Introduction of research proposals	Tour of GatorNation Island and The Swamp in Second Life (SL) Register with SL Tweeter and follow blog	Read All but War Is Simulation: The Military-Entertainment Complex by Tim Lenoir Meet as a group to brainstorm research ideas. Post to Blog a minimum of once a week.
3 Sep 7 to Sep 13	1. Technical bandwidth and voice check 2. Proposal work in groups	Explore SL tools Twitter into SL, PING Intro to CAE	Read Planetary Technoetics: Art, Technology and Consciousness by Roy Ascott SL Bootcamp 102: The Swamp Brainstorm/develop research ideas. Post to Blog a minimum of once a week. Proposal Due at beginning of next class.
09/07/09	Labor Day Holiday		
4 Sep 14 to Sep 20	1. Antecedents of Virtual and Augmented Reality 2. Group work	Proposals Due Review Proposals Blog Assingment Augmented reality	Read: Virtual Worlds: A First Hand Account of Market and Society On The Cyberian Frontier by Edward Castronova* Post to Blog a minimum of once a week.
5 Sep 21 to Sep 27	1. Discuss proposal 2. Feedback with instructors by group	View examples of Augmented reality Blog assignment The Virtual and the Real	Read: Flesh and Metal: Reconfiguring the Mindbody in Virtual Environments By Katherine Hayles Post to Blog a minimum of once a week.
6 Sep 28 to Oct 4	1. Group work 2. Discuss Projects 3. Instructor feedback on proposals	Project Milestones Due	Read: Of Writing Machines and Scholar Gipsies by Christopher Keep Post to Blog a minimum of once a week.
7 Oct 5 to Oct 11	Guest Speaker 1. Discuss Cyborgs and Avatars 2. Group work	FilmingPath tutorial Blog Assignment Use of robots for war and peace	Readings on Machinima Purchase one FilmingPath tool per group in Second Life and familiarize yourselves with how to use it. Post to Blog a minimum of once a week.

WEEK	Topic	In Class	Readings/ homework
8 Oct 12 to Oct 18	Crit session	Midterm Presentations	Read: Chick, T. (2003) Massively multiplayer on-line games . Week 1 and Week 5 in Gamespy's series of articles about virtual environments. 1. Post to Blog a minimum of once a week.
10/16/09	Homecoming		
9 Oct 19 to Oct 25	1. Group work 2. Discussion on Virtual Worlds and Augmented Reality	Examples of Smart Objects and Aware Environments	1. Short paper: Use of Virtual World Environments in research and education in the 21st Century. Due at beginning of next class. 2. Post to Blog a minimum of once a week.
10 Oct 26 to Nov 1	1. Discuss papers 2. Group work	Short Paper Due REVISE: Short paper	1. Read: The Psychology of MMORPGs: Emotional Investment, Motivations, Relationship Formation, and Problematic Usage by Nick Yee. 2. Post to Blog a minimum of once a week.
11 Nov 2 to Nov 8	1. Group work 2. Multiuser environments and Social Networks	Blog Assingment Use of SN as a form of Activism	Read Tele-Agency: Telematics, Telerobotics, and the Art of Meaning by Edward A. Shanken Post to Blog (at least) weekly. Machinima Storyboard due at beginning of next class.
11/11/09	Veteran's Day		
12 Nov 9 to Nov 15	1. Group Work Instructor feedback on storyboards	2ND Draft of Short Paper and Machinima Storyboard Due	1. READ: The Cyborg's Dilemma: Progressive Embodiment in Virtual Environments by Frank Biocca 2. Post to Blog a minimum of once a week.
13 Nov 16 to Nov 22	1. Guest Speaker: 2. The business of VR 3. Group Work	Fluid and digitally enhanced Architecture	1. READ: Virtual worlds: A first-hand account of market and society on the Cyberian frontier by Ed Castronova 2. Post to Blog a minimum of once a week.
14 Nov 23 to Nov 29	1. Group work		1. Final Project, Presentations, and Machinima video at beginning of next class. 2. Post to Blog a minimum of once a week.
11/26-7/09	Thanksgiving		
15 Nov 30 to Dec 6	Rehearsals Week		1. Post to Blog a minimum of once a week.
16 Dec 6 to Dec 8	1. Guest Speaker 2. Dress Rehearsal	Final Projects presentation and Machinima video due.	1. Final Postings to Blog
Final Presentations December 8, 2009 4:30 PM – 6.00 PM			

Due to the nature of this course and changing date/times for guest lectures, the course schedule will be posted online and updated on a regular basis. Please check it weekly to make sure you are up to date.

Recommended Readings/viewings

1. Lev Manovich, The language of new media, <http://www.manovich.net/>
2. Collected Documents of E.A.T. <http://www.fondatio-langlois.org/html/e/page.php?NumPage=237>
3. Video Presentation: "The Last Lecture" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5_MqicxSo

Assignments & Grades : Grades will be based on total number of points earned on the following:

1. **Weekly Class Activities, Assignments & Participation** - Your online participation is critical to your own learning. Each week, you participate in weekly discussions, group work, activities, or mini-assignments. These activities are designed to enhance your understanding of the weekly topic. We are interested in the quality of your critical thinking, your reflections, your ability to find connections between materials, between theory and practice, your ability to contribute new understandings to the course, to assist your peers in their own learning and problem solving. If we feel you aren't reaching this standard, we will communicate with you. We will indicate minimum requirements. You are always welcome to add more.
2. **Weekly blog posting**
Blog Posting Guidelines: Your postings should reflect the following characteristics:
 - a. Contribute to an ongoing discussion/story
 - b. Contribute to own thread after initial post
 - c. Rich in technological, pedagogical, or academic content
 - d. Quote relevant part of previous posting when responding
 - e. Use examples, quotes, and citations and references in your postings.
 - f. **Intertextuality** is the shaping of texts' meanings by other texts. It can refer to an author's borrowing and transformation of a prior text or to a reader's referencing of one text in reading another.
 - g. **High level of engagement** in your postings will cause others to be interested and respond.
3. **Short paper** – Each group will collaborate on a paper sharing their perspectives and recommendations on how the use of Virtual World Environments can advance research and education in the 21st Century. A separate section in the paper should include specific insights into how your group's project could help

institutions like UF to advance research and education in the 21st Century. This will be at least 5 pages, single spaced, 12 point font document.

4. **Research and Design Paper**- Pursue your own research interests within your academic area in the context of virtual environments. By utilizing qualitative and/or quantitative research methods, you will have the opportunity to identify, discover, or determine the answers to critical research questions within your field of study. Criteria for this project will be made available in class. The result will be a well-designed self-published paper through online free services like Lulu or Blurb.
5. **Machinima Video** – Based on their research project, each student will have the opportunity to design and create a machinima video of their project for a specified audience. Options will be provided for design, and might include the use of several different authoring programs. Short classes and tutorials in these programs will be made available.
6. **Final Project Presentation** – Each student is required to complete a final project demonstrating application and synthesis of the course topics. Projects may vary according to student interest or need, but must incorporate the design, use and/or implementation of your research or design project. Project guidelines are handed out in class. Rubrics for assessing the project are designed specifically for each project, and are negotiated between instructors and students.
7. **Group Work:** Due to the nature of collaborative/team work, group participation for each student will be gauged by periodic peer evaluations, and instructor evaluations. These evaluations will occur three times in the semester. Each time students will receive a private letter stating the results of their evaluation and recommendations to improve performance.

Grade Breakdown

a. In-class participation	10
b. Individual Blog participation	10
c. Group participation	10
d. In Class Objectives	10
e. Project Storyboard	20
f. Research Project	20
g. Final Project Presentation	<u>20</u>
Total	100

GRADING SCALE

A = 95-100 points

A- = 90-94 points

B+ = 87-89 points

B = 84-86 points

B- = 80-83 points

C+ = 77-79 points

C = 74-76 points

C- = 70-73 points

D+ = 67-69 points

D = 64-66 points

D- = 60-63 points

E = 59 points or below

Class Etiquette

1. The following are expectations for classroom etiquette during lab sessions:
2. Turn cell phones off or put on silent mode. Do not answer unless it is an emergency.
3. Do not read materials during class, unless assigned.
4. There is no eating or drinking in the lab area.
5. Demonstrate respect to not only instructors but, also fellow students. This means paying attention to lecturers and not checking emails or working on other projects during a presentation.

University of Florida Policies

1. **Academic Honesty:** As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: "I understand the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty, and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the University."
2. **Acceptable Use Policy:** Please read the University of Florida Acceptable Use Policy. It is expected that you abide by this policy.
3. **Software Use:** All faculty, staff, and students of the University of Florida are required and expected to obey laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.
4. **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities, who need reasonable modifications to complete assignments successfully and otherwise satisfy course criteria, are encouraged to meet with the instructor as early in the course as possible to identify and plan specific accommodations.
 - a. Students will be asked to supply a letter from the Office for Students with Disabilities to assist in planning accommodations. Please see me outside of class time to discuss any accommodations you might need.
5. **University of Florida Counseling Services:** Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals which interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:

- a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 3921575, personal and career counseling.
 - b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 3921171, for personal counseling.
 - c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 3921161, for sexual assault counseling.
 - d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 3921601, career development assistance and counseling.
6. UF Computer Policy
- a. In keeping with the University of Florida's student computer policy all assignments completed for this class must be typed using a word processing program. Use of spellchecking and grammar checking programs is strongly encouraged. Excessive spelling/grammar errors detract from quality of scholarship, and will be appropriately assessed. Use of desktop publishing software and computer generated graphics for course product that may eventually be included in student's portfolios is also strongly encouraged.
7. Technology Assistance
- a. The course instructors will hold weekly office hours and be available for assistance.
 - b. Students are encouraged to attempt to complete assignments early enough such that instructors can provide assistance during regular work days and during regularly scheduled hours.
 - c. In extreme emergencies, students may attempt to make appointments with course instructors or mentors.
 - d. Late work will be penalized according to the late policy.
8. Late policy
- a. Any assignment turned in past the due date will lose 10% of the total point value of the assignment for each day it is late.
9. Response times
- a. Allow 24 hours for replies to email. This may be extended to 48 hours if email is left over a weekend or holiday.
 - b. Student Concerns
 - c. If you have any concerns or questions about any situation in the course please contact the instructors ASAP.