

AHST 2331-001 (21626)

## **Understanding Art: Virtual Reality, Infrastructure, and Prosthetics**

Dr. Charissa N. Terranova  
Spring 2020  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30-12:45  
ATC 1.102

Office Hours: By appointment  
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### **DESCRIPTION:**

This course offers a general investigation into the hybrid realm of **art-science-technology**. The class focuses on the nature of the visual arts and architecture and the role of science and technology therein. It emphasizes the influence of scientific and technological invention on the issues and ideas that artists explore through their work and how these ideas translate into the artwork. Attention is given to the interpretation of the role of science and technology within art and architecture and how the forces together relate to and constitute society over the last two millennia.

### **THEMES:**

There are three primary themes in this class, which are often interwoven each week. This means, most lectures have elements of each theme.

- 1.) **Virtual Reality:** In the most basic sense, “virtual reality” or VR refers to an experience that is not exactly real, but near real. Humans have been creating near real experiences in VR for several millennia. This class will study the human penchant to recreate reality virtually in drawing, painting, architecture, and through digital technology.
- 2.) **Infrastructure:** The term infrastructure refers to the basic, underlying framework or features of a system or organization. Often, these basic frameworks serve a country, city, or defined area. Examples include sewer and light systems, transportation and communication systems, power plants, and schools.
- 3.) **Extensions of the Senses and/or Prosthetic Extensions:** The great Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan used the word “extension” to describe various technological media, ranging from writing and moveable print-type to film and the automobile to photography and the computer. This class explores how such technological extensions function as prosthetics which enhance the capabilities of the basic human body.

### **ORGANIZATION:**

The class is organized around theme-driven modules that include short reading assignments, lectures, in-class note-taking, films, quizzes, and discussion.

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

Students are required to attend every class, complete all assignments, and participate with candor and verve in class. Students are allowed two unexcused absences after which each absence will result in the lowering of the final grade by a half a letter grade. Students with illnesses that require extended periods of absence are encouraged to officially withdraw from class.

### **ASSIGNMENTS – QUIZZES and EXAMS:**

- 1.) Quizzes: Each sub-module culminates with a quiz, which is then followed by discussion. The quizzes consist of one very general question derived from the week’s reading assignment(s). There are ten quizzes in the class. Percentage of grade: 40%.
- 2.) Exams: There are two exams in the course, a mid-term on **Thursday March 12, 2019** and **a final exam, tba**. The tests consist of slide identification and short answer questions. The test material is taken from the lectures and reading. The professor distributes a review sheet prior to each test. Percentage of grade: 60%.

### **READING ASSIGNMENTS:**

The reading assignments are available in your textbook listed below and on reserve at e-learning through Leganto. Instructions for accessing Leganto are on pp. 5-7 below.

- Textbook: Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003.

### **CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:**

- **No food or drink in the auditorium.**
- **No laptops or smart devices are allowed once the lecture has begun.**

- **Discussion is encouraged.** Please raise your hand to ask questions or make comments.

#### **SLIDE PRESENTATIONS:**

All slide presentations are available at [www.charissaterranova.com](http://www.charissaterranova.com).

#### **STANDARD UTD POLICIES:**

<http://www.utdallas.edu/deanofstudents/conductguidelines.html>

<http://provost.utdallas.edu/>

<http://www.charissaterranova.com/syllabi/utd-policies.htm>

#### **SCHEDULE:**

### **VIRTUAL REALITY: FROM PREHISTORIC CAVES TO ANCIENT ROME**

#### Tuesday January 14

Introduction and Lecture: *Techne* and Art; Virtual Reality and Prehistoric Cave Drawings

Reading Assignment

- a.) Chapter 1, "Introduction," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 2-22.
- b.) "Virtual Realities Then and Now: The Caves of Lascaux," <http://www.transparencynow.com/lascaux.htm>.

#### Thursday January 16

Film Screening: *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (2010) Directed by Werner Herzog

#### Tuesday January 21

Quiz #1 and Discussion

#### Thursday January 23

Lecture: Roman Urbanism, Architecture, and Infrastructure

Reading Assignment:

- a.) J. N. Hopkins, "The Cloaca Maxima and the Monumental Manipulation of Water in Archaic Rome," in K. Rinne, ed., *The Waters of Rome* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2007) 1-15.  
<http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/waters/Journal4Hopkins.pdf>

#### Tuesday January 28

Lecture: Roman Interiors and Paintings

Reading Assignment:

- a.) Chapter 2, "Historic Spaces of Illusion," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 24-89.

#### Thursday January 30

Quiz #2 and Discussion

### **VIRTUAL REALITY AND SACRED SPACES**

#### Tuesday February 4

Lecture: Hagia Sophia: Symbolisms and Strata of Structures and Time

Reading Assignment:

- a.) Emma Wegner. "Hagia Sophia, 532–37." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/haso/hd\\_haso.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/haso/hd_haso.htm) (October 2004)
- b.) Rowland J Mainstone. "Questioning Hagia Sophia." In *Hagia Sophia: From the Age of Justinian to the Present*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988. 158-176.

#### Thursday February 6

Quiz #3 and Discussion

#### Tuesday February 11

Lecture: Mosque of Cordoba: Spoilage and Repetition of Forms

Reading Assignment:

- a.) D. Fairchild Ruggles. "The Stratigraphy of Forgetting: The Great Mosque of Cordoba and Its Contested Legacy," in *Contested Cultural Heritage: Religion, Nationalism, Erasure, and Exclusion in a Global World*, ed. Helaine Silverman (New York: Springer, 2011) 51-67.

Thursday February 13

No Class Annual Meeting of the College Art Association

Tuesday February 18

Film Screening: *Cathedral* (2012) PBS Documentary narrated by David Macaulay

Reading Assignment:

- a.) Jean Sorabella. "Pilgrimage in Medieval Europe." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pilg/hd\\_pilg.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pilg/hd_pilg.htm) (April 2011).

Thursday February 20

Quiz #4 and Discussion

**Distribution of Mid-Term Exam Review**

**TECHNOLOGICAL EXTENSIONS AND PROSTHETICS OF VISION**

Tuesday February 25

Lecture: Lenses and Prosthetic Vision in Early Modernity: Italy and England

Reading Assignment:

- a.) Cullen Murphy, "Our Predictions about the Internet Are Probably Wrong," Jan./Feb. 2020.  
b.) "The Telescope," The Galileo Project, Rice University,  
<http://galileo.rice.edu/sci/instruments/telescope.html>  
c.) Samuel Pepys [Primary Source], "Samuel Pepys Describes the Fire of London" (1666)  
<http://media.bloomsbury.com/rep/files/Primary%20Source%209.5%20-%20Pepys.pdf>.

Thursday February 27

Quiz #5 and Discussion

Tuesday March 3

Lecture: Painting with Grids – From Vermeer to Photorealism

Reading Assignment:

- a.) Gerhard Gutruf and Hellmuth Stachel, "The Hidden Geometry in Vermeer's 'The Art of Painting'," <http://www.heldermann-verlag.de/jgg/jgg14/j14h2gutr.pdf>  
b.) "Vermeer and the Camera Obscura," [http://www.essentialvermeer.com/camera\\_obscura/co\\_one.html#.WFB1qJIuqVs](http://www.essentialvermeer.com/camera_obscura/co_one.html#.WFB1qJIuqVs)

Thursday March 5

Quiz #6 and Discussion

Tuesday March 10

Mid-Term Exam Review

Thursday March 12

Mid-Term Exam

Tuesday March 17 / Thursday March 19

Spring Break No Class

**ARCHITECTURE, MOBILITY, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND VIRTUAL REALITY**

Tuesday March 24

Lecture: Rolling Through the Landscape and Spatial Surrounds: Trains and Panoramas

Reading Assignment:

- a.) Chapter 3, "The Panoramas of the Battle of Sedan: Obedience through Presence," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 90-139.

Thursday March 26  
Quiz #7 and Discussion

Tuesday March 31  
Lecture: Mobile Prosthetics: Automobiles and Highways  
Reading Assignment:

- a.) Paul Mason Fotsch, "The Building of a Superhighway Future at the New York World's Fair," *Cultural Critique*, no. 48 (Spring 2001) 65-97.

Thursday April 2  
Quiz #8 and Discussion

Tuesday April 7  
Lecture: Virtual Realities in Painting and Photography  
a) Chapter 4, "Intermedia Stages of Virtual Reality in the Twentieth Century: Art as Inspiration for Evolving Media," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 140-191.

Thursday April 9  
Lecture: Virtual Realities Constructed, Edited, and Made: Film and Montage  
a.) Dziga Vertov, "WE: Variant of a Manifesto," 5-9; [Various writings on Kino-Eye], 40-49, In *Kino-eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

Tuesday April 14  
Film Screening *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) Directed by Dziga Vertov

Thursday April 16  
Quiz #9 and Discussion  
**Distribution of Final Exam Review**

<b>VIRTUAL REALITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE</b>
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Tuesday April 21  
Lecture: The Digital Image in Art  
Reading Assignment:  
a.) Chapter 5, "Virtual Art – Digital! The Natural Interface," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 192-211.  
b.) Chapter 6, "Spaces of Knowledge," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 212-269.

Thursday April 23  
Quiz #10 and Discussion

Tuesday April 28  
Lecture: Telecommunications and Biology in Art  
Reading Assignment:  
a.) Chapter 7, "Telepresence: Art and History of An Idea," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 270-295.  
b.) Chapter 8, "Evolution," Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, 296-337.

Thursday April 30  
Discussion and Final Exam Review

**FINAL EXAM TBA**

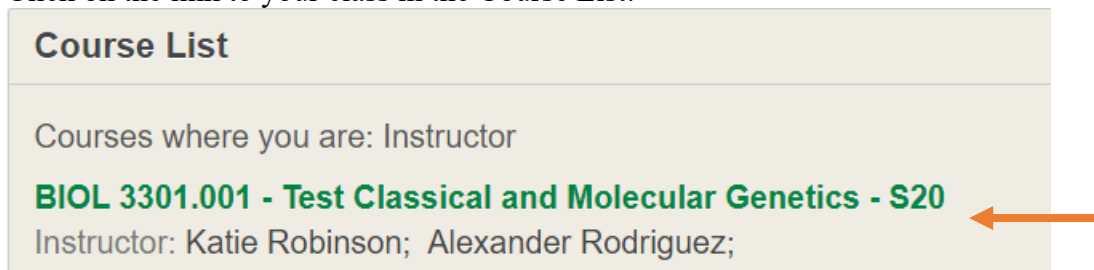
# How to use Leganto in Blackboard

STEP 1:

Log into eLearning

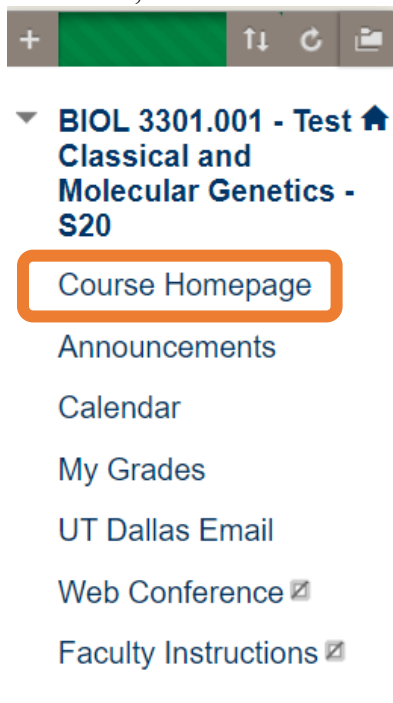
STEP 2:

Click on the link to your class in the Course List.



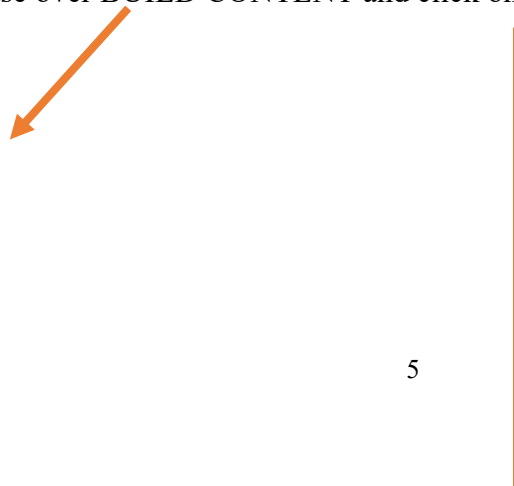
STEP 3:

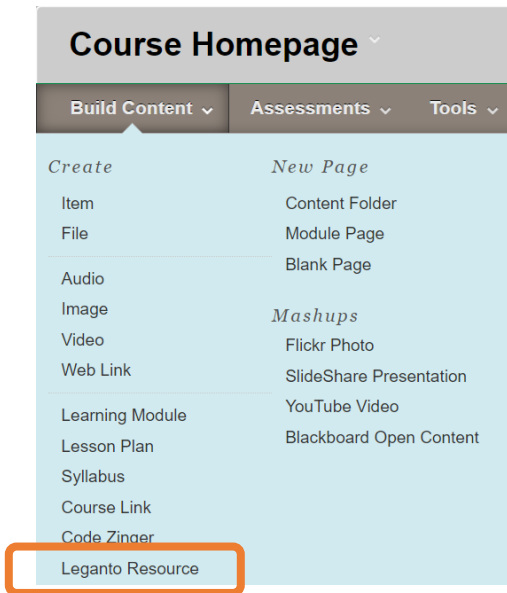
In the left toolbar, click on Course Homepage:



STEP 4:

Hover your mouse over BUILD CONTENT and click on the Leganto Resource link:





**STEP 5:**

Create Leganto Resource by adding a name (Course Reserves) and then click Submit

A screenshot of a web form titled "Create Leganto Resource". At the top left, there is a note: "\* Indicates a required field." Below this is the "INFORMATION" section. The "Name" field is required and contains the text "Course Reserves", which is highlighted with an orange box. Below the name field is a "Color of Name" dropdown menu set to "Black". Below that is a "Description" field with a rich text editor toolbar. At the bottom of the form, there is a grey bar with the text "Click **Submit** to proceed." and two buttons: "Cancel" and "Submit". An orange arrow points from the "Submit" button in this form to the "Submit" button in the previous screenshot.

**RESULT:** Go back to the Course Homepage and you will see a file link for your Course Reserves:



# Course Homepage ▼

Build Content ▼

Assessments ▼



Course Reserves