

Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
UT Dallas Spring 2010
HUAS 6315 Medium, Media, Mediation
JO 4.312 1:00-3:45
Office locations: JO 5.504
Centraltrak: The UT Dallas Artists Residency
800 Exposition Ave.
Dallas, TX 75226
Meetings by Appointment
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Description

The three related words “medium, media, and mediation” constitute the linchpin of this course. The word “medium” has a long and important standing within the history of art, in particular in the discourse of aesthetics where it became in the late 17th century a designator of the hierarchy of means, painting over sculpture over poetry over drama over architecture. Much later, artists practicing in the 1960s leveled this hierarchy, inaugurating a new general practice of art described by the art historian Rosalind Krauss as the “post-medium” condition. The advent of the post-medium condition coincided the ascendancy of a new set of broader social norms – everyday practices and knowledge transmission – coming out of and conditioned by the mass media, that is, the TV, cinema, print culture, and the emerging personal computer. These two forces acted reciprocally, one transforming and creating the other, with the mass media helping to cultivate the new post-medium condition in art. Art becomes information: it dematerializes into performance, act, language and, above else, idea as it mimics and becomes part of the new technological conditions of the time. This purity of artistic means catalyzes and embodies a form of mediation – a fundamental mode of critical questioning that occurs intellectually and often by technology, literally through the “mediation” of the mind and technological tools. Conceptual art past and present is itself a form of mediation, an act of critical filtration.

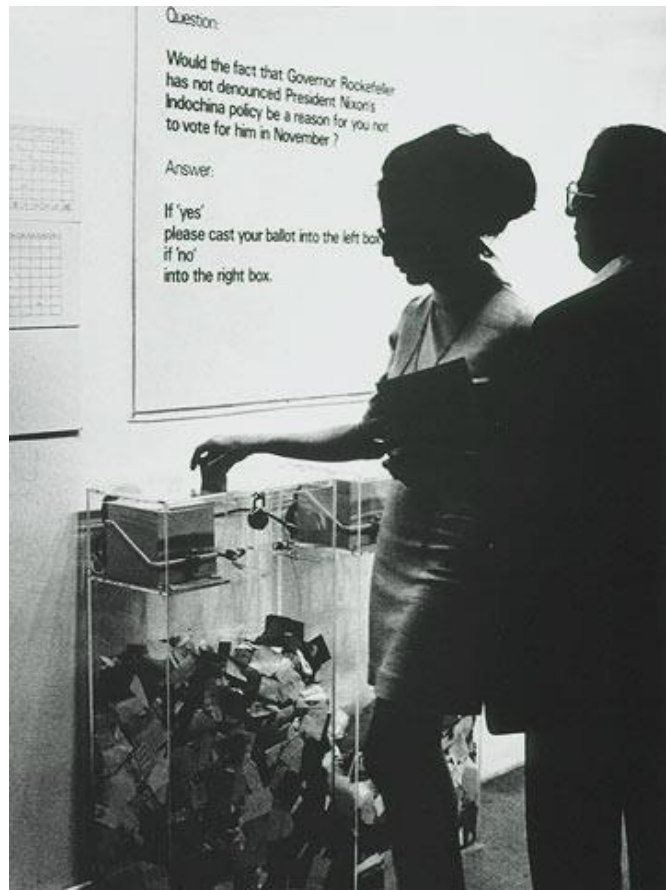
Today such mediation is grammatical in contemporary art: it is where most interesting and successful artists in the 21st century begin. That is to say, most artists pass through the “Conceptual turn,” a moment of critical questioning that first appeared with Marcel Duchamp’s Readymade, reoccurred in the years of Conceptual Art 1965-73, and has, over the years for various reasons, one of which is the increasing predominance of new media technology in everyday life, become the norm in contemporary art practices.

This course compares the logic of Duchamp’s readymade with new media practices in order to interrogate the critical values inherent to emergent technology. This statement begs the question of “criticality:” what does it mean to be “critical”? In this instance, from Duchamp to the iPod, criticality is a matter of interrogating the structure and composed nature of our shared reality and how we define “art.” The underlying assumption here is that technology creates our reality – our epistemologies and ontologies – materially speaking.

Goals

The primary goal of this course is to better understand the epistemological and ontological repercussions of the emergence and massification of new technology – both analogue and digital – in the post-World War II period, in particular as they affect the combined practices of art and technology. This course will not be a study of individual technological tools or modes – cars, TVs, computers, video cams, cell phones, iPods, the Internet – but their effects: how they have transformed our understanding of the self, society, space-time experiences and practices and representations of those space-time experiences.

Readings



Hans Haacke, *MoMA Poll*, in the exhibition *Information*, 1970

Course readings are available on reserve in hard copies at the library and digitally at DOCUTEK. The digital essays are available at the following website <http://utdallas.docutek.com/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=746> using the password "mmm6315."

The following books (on reserve) are also available for you on line for purchase at Amazon.com and at the campus bookstore.

- Gottfried Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1984).
- Thierry de Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2005).
- Rosalind E. Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000).
- Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).
- Marshall McLuhan, *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century* (London: Oxford Press, 1992).
- Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).
- Mark B. N. Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).
- Régis Debray, *Media Manifestos: On Technological Transmission of Cultural Forms* (New York: Verso, 1996).
- Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).
- Mark B. N. Hansen, *Bodies in Code: Interfaces with Digital Media* (London: Routledge Press, 2006).

Attendance and Preparation

Attendance is mandatory. Students must complete all reading prior to class. There are three primary assignments in the class: each student will lead a seminar in discussion of an assigned text, make a presentation based on a final essay, and write a research paper that engages the subject of the class. You may have one unexcused absence, after which your grade will be lowered by one letter grade with each subsequent absence. You are thus allowed one unexcused absence. Assignments must be turned in on time; for each 24-hour period an assignment is late, one full grade will be deducted (e.g., an "A" paper will become a "B" paper). Appropriate medical and family excuses will be accepted in order to establish new dates for assignments.

Leading a Seminar

Each of you will be required to lead discussion of one or more texts in a given seminar. For this, images are not necessary, though, you may choose to show a few. You must come to class with copies of an outline of discussion points that relate to the assigned textual and/or visual material.

Presentation

Each of you will be required to present your paper topic and thesis. For this, images are necessary. Your presentation should be roughly one hour in length, confront pertinent issues concerning contemporary issues of art, technology, and media theory and instigate lively discussion.

Essay

Each of you will be required to write an essay. The essay may focus on an artist, architect, a film and/or filmmaker, or theories of the medium, media and new media studies. Please meet with me to discuss your topic before you embark on research. It is due in my mailbox by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 6. The requirements for the essay are the following:

- title page
- 15-20 pages
- standard margins and 10 or 12 pt. font
- foot- or endnotes
- bibliography with at least 5 sources of which only two may be websites
- images where necessary

Grading

Your grade in the course will be calculated from the following percentages:

Leading Class Discussion/General Participation: 34%
Presentation: 33%

Essay:

33%

Field Trip Policies Off-Campus Instruction and Course Activities

Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website address http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm. Additional information is available from the office of the school dean. Below is a description of any travel and/or risk-related activity associated with this course.

Student Conduct & Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD printed publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year. The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Series 50000, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391) and online at <http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-HOPV.html>. A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. Scholastic Dishonesty, any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials, including music and software. Copying, displaying, reproducing, or distributing copyrighted works may infringe the copyright owner's rights and such infringement is subject to appropriate disciplinary action as well as criminal penalties provided by federal law. Usage of such material is only appropriate when that usage constitutes "fair use" under the Copyright Act. As a UT Dallas student, you are required to follow the institution's copyright policy (Policy Memorandum 84-1.3-46). For more information about the fair use exemption, see <http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/copypol2.htm>

Email Use

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

Incomplete Grade Policy

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of E.

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is: The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22, PO Box 830688, Richardson, Texas 75083-0688, (972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY), disabilityservice@utdallas.edu. If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services. The Coordinator is available to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Services to notify them of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. Disability Services can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Religious Holy Days

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated. The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment. If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

Course Schedule

Introduction

January 14

Medium

January 21

Gottfried Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1984). RESERVE

Clement Greenberg, "Towards a Newer Laocoon," *The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 1: Perceptions and Judgments, 1939-1944* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) 23-37. DOCUTEK

January 28

Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," *The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume IV* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 85-93. DOCUTEK

Jeff Wall, " 'Marks of Indifference': Aspects of Photography in, or as, Conceptual Art," Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer, *Reconsidering the Object of Art, 1965-75* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995) 247-67. DOCUTEK

February 4

Thierry de Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2005). RESERVE

February 11

Rosalind E. Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000). RESERVE

Raymond Williams, "From Medium to Social Practice," *Marxism and Literature* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978) 158-64. DOCUTEK

Media

February 18

Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press) 3-76. RESERVE

Marshall McLuhan, *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century* (London: Oxford Press, 1992). RESERVE

February 25

Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999). RESERVE

March 4

Jack Burnham, *Beyond Modern Sculpture: The Effects of Science and Technology on the Sculpture of This Century* (New York: George Braziller, 1968) 49-108; 185-378. RESERVE

Jack Burnham, "Systems Esthetics," *Artforum*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (September 1968) 30-35. DOCUTEK

Jack Burnham, "Real Time Systems," *Artforum*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (September 1969) 49-55. DOCUTEK

Jack Burnham, "Alice's Head: Reflections on Conceptual Art," *Artforum*, Vol. 8, No. 6 (February 1970) 37-43. DOCUTEK

March 11

Mark B. N. Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006). RESERVE

March 18

Spring Break

March 25

Rachofsky House Visit

Mediation

April 1

Regis Debray, *Media Manifestos: On Technological Transmission of Cultural Forms* (New York: Verso, 1996). RESERVE

Raymond Williams, "From Reflection to Mediation," *Marxism and Literature* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978) 95-101. DOCUTEK

April 8

Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000). RESERVE

Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort, eds., *The New Media Reader* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003) 73-82; 127-32. DOCUTEK

April 15

Mark B. N. Hansen, *Bodies in Code: Interfaces with Digital Media* (London: Routledge Press, 2006) 1-104. RESERVE

Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998) 1-28 DOCUTEK

Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 2: Disorientation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008) 97-244. RESERVE

Presentations

April 22

April 29

FINAL PAPER DUE

May 6