NET ART && CULTURES

FVNM 3235-001 (1371)

Simple Net Art Diagram

The art happens here

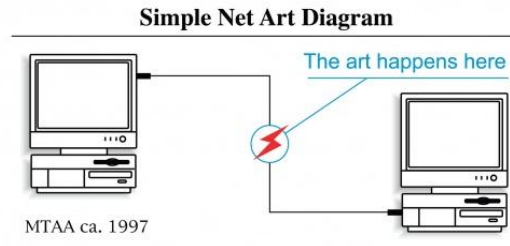MTAA ca. 1997

The Web represents a grand emotional, sensory, and intellectual adventure for anyone willing to explore it actively. [...] For artists, ignoring the imperative to grasp the cultural implications of the Internet means risking irrelevance. [...] As human discourse adapts to its new home, everything we do and think as human beings will be and is being shaped by new values. [...] If it's ever fair to say that anything has "changed everything," it's fair to say so about the Internet. — [Virginia Heffernan](#)

Course Description

We generally accept that computers and the Internet evolved outside of fine art contexts, in fields like science and mathematics. That said, the history of these technologies is a history of creative individuals collaboratively shaping one of the most important narratives of our time, "the Internet is the great masterpiece of human civilization" (Heffernan). In this studio course, we'll learn what the Internet is, how it works, how it got here and how to engage with it as an artistic medium. This means we'll be learning how to craft it from code, specifically HTML (hypertext markup language) and CSS (cascading style sheets), but also studying its aesthetics, conventions and practices. We'll be drawing inspiration from various Internet art movements, from the net.art scene of the 1990s, to the digital folk art of GeoCities at the turn of the century, to the Web design and CSS art scenes of today. The goal of this course will be to cultivate our own piece of Internet art, informed by the research, discussions, exercises and experiments we'll make along the way.

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         where:                                    MC 807 ;
          when:                        Thursdays, 9am - 4pm;
     professor:                                  Nick Briz ;
         email:                              nbriz@saic.edu ;
  office hours:                          by-appointment-only ;
 class website:              https://netart.rocks/saic/netart ;
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Learning Goals

- Foundational understanding of what the Internet is and how it works (specifically the Web)
- General background on various canonical and niche cultural figures, movements and ideas which have informed the development of Internet art
- Working knowledge of HTML and CSS, specifically how to hand craft works of Internet art as well as how to publish them on the Web

Class Topics, Workshops and Discussions

- WTF is the Internet?
- Internet Travelogue
- What is Code?
- The World Wide Web: the People's Platform
- net.art: when artists discovered HTML
- CSS art: Irrational Virtuosos
- CSS art: Still Lifes
- Digital Folklore: home pages vs profiles
- Web Design: tropes, trends, techniques
- Digital Gardens
- JavaScript Teaser
- *+many more (see class website for updates + notes)*

Class Structure

Synchronous Class Discussions and Individual Meetings

Our allotted synchronous class time this semester is scheduled for Thursdays (Sept 1 - Dec 15) from 9am to 4pm Central (Chicago) Time. This time will be used primarily for workshops (often reviewing the material covered in the homework), class discussions, synchronous studio time and one-on-one meetings. We will be meeting in clas (MC 807) mostly every week, with the exception of weeks when we schedule one-on-one meetings which will take place over zoom (links will be provided over email and posted on canvas)

Asynchronous Tutorials and Experiments

We'll be learning to code (HTML and CSS) through online tutorials. My goal is for these to be **interactive Web based tutorials**. These tutorials will take place on https://netnet.studio an online code editor and hypermedia tutorial system I produced with my collaborators at netizen.org. Many of these tutorials will be followed by coding assignments. These assignments aren't meant to be finished art pieces, but rather **creative coding experiments,** digital sketches. These interactive tutorials are very difficult and time consuming to make and so it may not be possible for me to make every tutorial interactive, I may occasionally fallback on more conventional video or text based tutorials.

Class Materials

In order to participate in this course you will need to have a decent computer (desktop or laptop with 8-16GB of ram or more) and a modern Web browser like Firefox, Brave, Chrome or others (**do not use** Internet Explorer or Safari, those are subpar browsers). You will not need to purchase any additional materials for this class. We will be using an online code editor and hypermedia tutorial environment I built called netnet.studio to produce our work this semester (although you will have the option to use your own code editors if you prefer). All videos and readings will be provided on the class website. You will, however, need to create a free GitHub profile, we will be discussing in class how to connect your GitHub profile to netnet

Evaluation

Receiving credit for this course will be determined according to the following:

- **Participation in one-on-one meetings as well as in class discussions** is very important, this will be the primary space for receiving feedback from your peers on your weekly creative coding sketches and other assignments.

- Throughout the semester you will be learning to code through asynchronous online tutorials assigned for homework as well as the in person workshops we do together as a class. Occasionally, these online interactive tutorials and class workshops will end with a prompt for a **code based sketch**. These are not meant to be finished artworks or perfect code, rather these are experiments designed to get you to practice what you've learned, respond to specific ideas and play with new coding concepts. These sketches will not be submitted online, instead these will be used as the basis for conversations:
  - During one-on-one meetings we will review these together, we'll discuss these sketches from an aesthetic, cultural, political and/or technical perspective. We will also address any challenges you might have had while working on the sketch as well as any ideas you might have wanted to explore but wasn't sure how.
  - Occasionally we will share some of these in class to discuss as a group.
  - You can also email me your sketches if/when you need some feedback between classes

- As is common at SAIC, our primary mode of evaluation will be **the class critique of your final project**. The final project will be a completed piece of internet art. This can take any of the forms explored in class, net art, CSS art, a homepage, a digital garden, a web app, an online game, etc, so long as it is a **hand crafted HTML/CSS project accessible on the Internet through a web browser**. This critique will take place in person on the last day of class (Dec 15th). It is essential you participate in this critique. We will discuss in more detail towards the end of the semester the specific expectations and format for this critique.

Attendance

SAIC policy states that students are expected to attend all classes regularly and on time. If a student arrives to class more than 15 minutes after or leaves more than 15 minutes early, it will be considered a half absence.

Students should miss class only with reasonable cause. **If a student needs to miss class with reasonable cause, it is the student's responsibility to contact the professor before the date of the class being missed to receive instruction for how to make up for the missed class**. A reasonable cause to miss a class might include:
- Illness or hospitalization (the student should contact Health Services, who will relay information to the faculty in whose class the student is enrolled)
- Family illness or death
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Professional opportunities

If the student misses a class for other than a reasonable cause (communicated prior to the absence) the student will fail the class. **If a student misses MORE than three (excused) classes, the student will fail the class.**
- Add/Drop deadline: Sept 14
- Deadline for withdrawal from class: Nov 02

Extended Absence and Notification Assistance

If a student believes they will miss multiple sessions of in-person activity in a class due to illness, and/or feel too ill to participate in out-of-class activity/requirements, the student should contact Health Services (312.499.4288) to discuss their situation and, if necessary, may ask Health Services to send an Extended Absence Notification to their faculty.

For an extended absence due to other circumstances, students should contact Academic Advising (312.629.6800). If appropriate, Academic Advising may, at the student's request, email an Extended Absence Notification to the student's instructors informing them of the student's absence.

Extended Absence Notifications can begin a conversation with faculty about a situation when the student is receiving support from Health Services or another staff member in the Office of Student Affairs, such as Academic Advising. Please note that this communication is for informing faculty of a situation only; it does not absolve students from their responsibility to make up work that they may miss while absent.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct includes both plagiarism and cheating, and may consist of: the submission of the work of another as one's own; unauthorized assistance on a test or assignment; submission of the same work for more than one class without the knowledge and consent of all instructors; or the failure to properly cite texts or ideas from other sources. Academic misconduct also includes the falsification of academic or student-related records, such as transcripts, evaluations and letters of recommendation. Academic misconduct extends to all spaces on campus, including satellite locations and online education.

Academic integrity is expected in all coursework, including online learning. It is assumed that the person receiving the credit for the course is the person completing the work. SAIC has processes in place, including LDAP authentication, to verify student identity.

Accomodations

SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) to schedule a virtual appointment. DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you and your instructors with a letter outlining the approved accommodations via email. You must request accommodations for each course before any accommodations will be implemented. You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible. The DLRC can be reached via phone at 312.499.4278 or email at dlrc@saic.edu.

Audit Policy

Per SAIC's policy on non-credit enrollment, auditing this course is possible, space permitting and provided the student proposes an acceptable audit arrangement. Interested students should review SAIC's policy on non-credit enrollment to review options and process, and then contact me to discuss specifics.

'Unofficial' auditing of this or any course i.e. 'sitting in' is prohibited. Participation in specific class activities by non-enrolled students is prohibited without advance, specific consent from the instructor.