

LMC 6650 Project Studio: Digital Craft

Fall 2016

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Where? TSRB 325/ Skiles 02

When? Mo 1-4

Outline

“It is not craft as 'handcraft' that defines contemporary craftsmanship: it is craft as knowledge that empowers a maker to take charge of technology.” (Dormer 1997)

Craft stands next to art and design, combining creativity in practice and theory. This course will look into its particular qualities that provide for a unique perspective toward digital media, their social context, knowledge and learning. The course explores this perspective and ultimately the ways we can apply it to Digital Media through sample projects. The goals are 1) understand the conditions of craft in the digital age in theory and practice 2) expand them through practical experimentation and with the help of digital interventions. We combine elements of critical making with craft practices and speculative objects.

Students will discuss readings and projects regarding craft in theory and practice, trace creative practices of individual crafters, and design and implement a sample response to the connections we have identified. To achieve this, the course breaks down in 3 stages, each one starts with an introductory lecture and in-class exercise, followed by a shared exploration and discussion of a variety of texts (student-led).

In addition to the readings and discussions in class, each student will directly engage with a craft practice and a practitioner before designing their digital media response to it. Students will meet and interview their crafter, shadow the craft practice, experience elements of that practice (where feasible!), and present an analysis of this exploration back to the class. Only then should they start thinking about a possible digital intervention in relation to that crafter and her/ his practice.

The course should speak to students interested in the material aspects of digital media. Students should expect in-class discussions of readings and projects, hands on encounter of craft practices, and a final project that exemplifies a specific connection we explored throughout the course.

Students should expect to use elements of physical computing (e.g. Arduino) but the course is not focused on a single technology and will have no specific technological intro session (unless identified as needed during the course).

Goals

The projected learning outcomes of this course are:

- To explore and experiment with Craft as a lens into Digital Media
- To learn how to use discussion as well as design sketches and practical prototypes as argumentative material
- To learn, apply, and reflect upon the necessary technology in the implementation of the final project

- To inform argumentation about digital media in the nexus of art, design, and craft

Textbooks

There will be no single textbook but related books include:

- Adamson, Glenn, ed. 2010. *The Craft Reader*. Oxford, UK, New York Berg.
- Alfoldy, Sandra, ed. *NeoCraft: Modernity and the Crafts*. Halifax, CAN: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.
- Dormer, Peter, ed. 1996. *The Culture of Craft: Status and future*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- McCullough, Malcolm. 1998. *Abstracting Craft: The Practiced Digital Hand*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Whenever possible, the readings will be online as .pdf.

Schedule

(adjustments are bound to happen)

	Stage I: Settling the Basics	
8/22	Basics: How did we get here? Assignment: find your crafter	
8/29	Vocabulary/ Exploration: Polanyi – What is “tacit knowledge”? Schön – What is the “reflective practitioner”? Ratto – What is “critical making”? Bannon – What is the “turn to practice”? Adamson – What is “Thinking Through Craft”? Nimkulrat – What is “experiential knowledge” in design? Karana – What is “materials experience”?	
9/5	Labor Day	
	Stage II: Performance and Making	
9/12	Basics: Bridging to Performance	Schechner; Fischer-Lichte; (Auslander)
9/19	Vocabulary/ Exploration Ingold/ Hallam – What is “cultural improvisation”? Richards – What do we “center”? Kellers – How to think “with iron”? Oliver – Is craft “performing”? Bødker – What is “activity theory” for HCI? Ingold – What is “knowing from the inside”?	
9/26	DUE: Own crafter presentations	
	Performance and HCI (TBC)	(Benford/ Giannachi)
	Stage III: Digital and Craft	
10/3	Basics: Where material practice meets the digital	Sennet; McCullough (Frayling)

10/10	Recess	
10/17	DUE: Own paper presentations: examples of digital craft	
10/24	TBD	
10/31	DUE: project idea presentation	
11/7	Work on projects	
11/14	DUE: prototypes presented in class	
11/21	Work on projects	
11/28	DUE: critical reflection (presentation) – in class with discussion	
12/5	Work on projects	
12/11	Exam week DUE: Final project + critical reflection (paper) + documentation (web site/ video)	

Grading and Main Deliverables

Assignment	Description	% of final grade
Assigned Paper presentations (2)	Students will be expected to present on a particular question. Those questions are closely related to specific texts/ authors that will be noted to the student. Those presentations should provide an answer to the question posted (or a different perspective to it) and provide the necessary academic background for us to understand that reply. The goal is to assemble a wide vocabulary for all students to use. If you use additional texts, please provide and share them as pdf on the T-Square resources folder. Each presentation should be about 15 minutes and end with some open discussion points to allow the rest of the class to connect and follow up.	15% (combined)
Own paper presentation	Presentation of self-selected research paper; covering background; field, method, logic of the paper; critical review with clear argumentation; clarity; quality presentation (slides, delivery); ability to answer questions	15%
Critical reflection (presentation)	Critically reflect on the project underway; use the terminology and means introduced in the first stage of the course; look out for: clarity of presentation and argument, use of terminology, and an effective reflection of the project;	10%
Critical reflection (paper)	Combining the presentation and the following discussion and feedback from your peers you will summarize your reflection in a paper; use the ACM template	10%

Final project	Crafter presentation, design presentation, final presentation; clarity and ambition of the concept; implementation; process (effective work over time); each project needs a short YouTube style video (~ 2 min) that explains its nature, evolution, and results	30%
Participation	active in discussions, active in example sessions; active in design meetings, teamwork, homework; activity and engagement in all meetings;	20%

No use of cell phones (including texting) in class.

100-90% = A
89-78% = B
77-64% = C
63- = D

Grading of individual pieces will be in percentage

Late submissions lead to automatic reductions of the grade unless a valid excuse is provided. Any 1 day delay, meaning anything after 5pm of the due day, will have 10% reduced from the grade; any 2 day delay will have 20% reduced, 3 day delays will not be accepted.

The Honor Code of Georgia Tech applies (see <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/>).

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