

The Computer as an Expressive Medium

Syllabus

COURSE NUMBER: LMC 6310

SKILES 346

TIMES:

MW – 9:05A – 9:55A

F (LAB) – 9:00P – 11:45P

INSTRUCTOR:

DR. ANNE SULLIVAN

INSTRUCTOR EMAIL:

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OFFICE HOURS:

[HTTPS://CALENDLY.COM/ANNESULLIVAN/](https://calendly.com/annesullivan/)
(LINKS TO AN EXTERNAL SITE.)

OFFICE LOCATION:

TSRB 319 & SKYPE/HANGOUTS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal of this course is to gain computational literacy in the context of programming as an art and design practice; that is, to understand computation as an expressive medium. We will juxtapose reading and discussion of seminal articles and works in computational media with interactive digital projects designed to exercise specific technical skills as well as encourage conceptual explorations in computational art and design and what it means to make with meaning.

Anyone working in new media will eventually be involved on interdisciplinary projects in which the ability to program will be a strong asset, if not a necessity. Even if in your future career as an artist or designer programming is not a large part of your practice, this course will empower you to communicate confidently with programmers, and thus deepen your interdisciplinary collaborations.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Gain familiarity with seminal readings and works in the fields of interactive narrative, generative art/coding, and interaction design.
- Demonstrate comprehension, application, and justifications of theoretical knowledge when creating digital media artifacts.
- Demonstrate the ability to design, create, and assess digital media artifacts and contextualize them within theoretical frameworks, combining humanities and computation to “make with meaning.”

ADDITIONAL PHD LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identify and analyze a domain within the field digital media and identify areas for original contribution as well as methods to pursue these contributions.
- Identify and define a suitable research problem in digital media design and apply appropriate disciplinary or interdisciplinary research methods to address it.

In addition, both M.S. and Ph.D. students should have three portfolio-worthy projects, one of which is a further refined project that demonstrate their skills in expressive computing.

MATERIALS

Students will be required to buy any needed materials, including a Makey Makey, Arduino, or raspberry pi for project #3.

REQUIED TEXTS & ARTEFACTS

All texts will be provided or available in pdf format.

Some of the artifacts we will be examining are not free, but my goal is to keep the costs as low as possible.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Class attendance and participation is mandatory. Participation in class discussion is imperative because it allows you to explore the readings, computing concepts, and projects collaboratively, and in the process, discover meanings and issues that you probably would not discover on your own. Participation in class also challenges you to continuously question, refine, and articulate your own ideas and interpretations.

In addition, much of this class is based in critiques, which require full participation and cannot be replicated outside of class. Extensive teaching and learning occur through critiques: it is through critiques that you will develop your skills for both making and discussion of the made. Thus, your attendance and participation in critiques is an important and required aspect of this class.

Absence from more than three classes will result in the loss of 1-letter grade for the course.

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

You must complete all of these requirements to receive a grade in the course. If you fail to hand in any one of these, regardless of your total points, you will receive a grade of Incomplete.

ASSIGNMENTS

All students are responsible for the assigned readings, attending critiques & presentations, and four team project assignments:

- P1: Interactive Narrative-based Design Experience
- P2: Interactive Generative Design Experience
- P3: Physical Interaction Design Experience
- P4: Iterate on a previous project

Ph.D. students will, in addition to the above, complete a workshop paper/book chapter/or some other written piece that is appropriate for their discipline about one of the projects or topics in the class.

The grading scale for M.S. students will be: P1 (20%), P2 (25%), P3 (25%), P4 (30%)

The grading scale for Ph.D. students will be: P1 (15%), P2 (20%), P3 (20%), P4 (25%), Term paper (20%)