

Module Title	Critical Theories of Digital Media
Programme(s)/Course	BA (Hons) Digital Design
Level	5
Semester	1
Ref No:	AME_5_CTD
Credit Value	20 CAT Points
Student Study Hours	Total hours: 200 Contact hours: 36 Student managed learning hours: 164
Pre-requisite Learning	None
Co-requisites	None
Excluded combinations	None
Module Coordinator	Daniel Rourke
Parent School	Arts and Creative Industries
Parent Course	BA (Hons) Digital Design
JACS Code	
Description	This module explores the critical and cultural contexts of practice in digital and new media art. Students will be introduced to a range of work by media arts practitioners, and encouraged to explore the relationship between theory and practice in their work. The module considers research as an ongoing component of the creative process, and will help students embed innovative approaches to research and writing into their routines as practitioners. We will examine uses of digital and new media across a diverse range of fields: including art, industry, politics, pop culture, in mediums including photography, film, videogames, the web and the internet.
Aims	The aims of the module are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable students to explore key concepts and themes underpinning media art practices. • Enable students to encounter and research a broad range of professional and artistic work.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to explore the relationship between theory and practice. • Develop independent research skills, which will inform the Research Paper at Level 6. • Encourage independent engagement with contemporary new media and digital arts outside the classroom.
Learning Outcomes	<p>At the end of this module students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Express insights into contemporary digital and new media culture, delivered through personal interest in the field. 2) Describe the historical and critical significance of digital media on the political, cultural, and professional landscape. 3) Implement critical theory in developing one’s own creative practice, and explain how this process takes place (e.g. exemplified in online research ‘notebook’, class presentation, workshop sessions etc.). 4) Employ practical skills to translate complex ideas into an evidenced argument in both clear and concise written English, and spoken presentation. 5) Formulate a range of resources in a critical analysis of chosen case studies across digital and new media culture.
Assessment Criteria linked to (LO)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ability to understand key concepts (LO1, LO2). 2) Demonstrate a knowledge of contemporary debates with personal insight, reflection through practice, and critical argument (LO1, LO3). 3) Clear writing and close attention to academic conventions (LO4). 4) Demonstrate research and presentation skills (LO1, LO2, LO5). 5) Close, critical, contextual analysis of media/digital artefacts (LO5).
Employability	<p>Media practitioners need a significant suite of transferable skills in addition to ‘transient and enduring specialist skills’ (Creative Skillset). These include general personal, communication and presentation skills, self-directed learning, research and study skills, and general ICT skills including a focus on the use of search engines. This module supports the development of such ‘soft skills’ through its structure of interactive seminars and specialist workshops on developing academic research and presentation skills. Through working on a research portfolio, students are encouraged to be self-directed in their learning and self-reflective about the process of doing research.</p>
Teaching & Learning Pattern	<p>The module will be delivered over 12 weeks, 3 hours per week and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 weeks of seminars exploring media art practice • 1 week of art ‘field trip’ • 2 weeks of student presentations (longer session) • 1 week of formative feedback tutorials

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 weeks of skills workshops (writing, 'glitch')
Indicative Content	<p>Seminars will explore key theories and concepts in relation to new media. These may broadly include: The Network; The Social; Interactivity; Information; Surveillance; Code; Appropriation and the Copy; The Interface; Play; Glitch. Each week the work of key practitioners will be examined whose work intersects, critiques or is informed by each critical area. Seminars will be supplemented by two weeks of skills workshops exploring academic research, writing and presentation skills, as well as a practical 'Glitch' workshop.</p>
Assessment Method	<p>Formative Assessment: Critical Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of an online research 'notebook' • Approx. 300-word write-up of a 'field trip' • 5-minute oral presentation of research in progress using online notebook <p>Coursework: Research Portfolio (100%)</p> <p>Summative Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3000-word written assignment documenting the research students have undertaken into a critical concept in digital media <p>In addition, the following supporting material needs to be submitted with your portfolio in order to pass the module:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • URL of the online research notebook • Oral presentation and presentation notes <p>All components of assessment need to be submitted in order to pass the module.</p>
Indicative Reading	<p>Core Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuller, Matthew (2008) (ed.) <i>Software studies: A Lexicon</i> MIT Press • Beer, N. and Beer, D. (2008) <i>New Media: The Key Concepts</i>, BERG. • Flanagan, Mary (2013) <i>Critical Play: Radical Game Design</i>, MIT Press. • Manovich, Lev (2001) <i>The Language of New Media</i>. Cambridge, MIT Press. • Steyerl, Hito (2008) <i>In Defence of The Poor Image</i> e-flux journal. • Nunes, M. ed. (2011) <i>Error: Glitch, Noise and Jam in New Media Cultures</i>, Continuum <p>Additional Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steyerl, Hito (2012) <i>The Wretched of the Screen</i> Sternberg Press • Lister, Martin, ed. (2009) <i>New Media: A Critical Introduction (2nd ed.)</i>

- Bolter, J and Grusin, R (ed) (2000) *Remediation: Understanding New Media* MIT Press.
- Corby, Tom (2006) *Network Art: Practices and Positions* Routledge.
- Grau, O (2007) *MediaArtHistories*, MIT Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (1994) *Simulacra and Simulation*, Uni of Michigan Press
- Benjamin, W. (1955) *The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproducibility*, Taurus
- Wands, B. (2007) *Art of the Digital Age New ed.*, Thames & Hudson.
- Gere, C. (2006) *Art, Time and Technology: v. 2 English Ed.*, Berg Publishers.
- Becker, L. and Van Emden, J. (2004) *Presentation Skills for Students*, London: Palgrave.
- Cottrell, S. (2005) *Critical Thinking Skills: Developing Effective Analysis and Argument* London: Palgrave.

Other Learning Resources

LSBU Resources:

PowerPoint slide presentations, the module guide and other relevant materials will be available on Moodle, along with links to relevant websites.

Online Resources (New Media / Digital Arts)

Rhizome: <http://www.rhizome.org>

We Make Money Not Art: <http://www.we-make-money-not-art.com>

Furtherfield: <http://www.furtherfield.org>

Art F City: <http://artfcity.com>

Dazed Digital: <http://www.dazeddigital.com>

Metamute: <http://www.metamute.org>

Hyperallergic: <http://hyperallergic.com>

The Creators Project: <http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com>

Wired: <http://www.wired.com>

Motherboard: <http://motherboard.vice.com>

Netartnet: <http://netartnet.net>

or-bits: <http://or-bits.com>

GLI.TC/H Wiki: http://gli.tc/h/wiki/index.php/Main_Page

Journals:

Arstechnica: <http://arstechnica.com>

e-flux: <http://e-flux.com>

Turbulence: <http://www.turbulence.org>

Media Art Net: <http://www.mediaartnet.org/themes/>

C|Theory: <http://www.ctheory.net/>

Fibreculture Journal: <http://journal.fibreculture.org/>

Convergence: The Journal of Research into New Media Technologies:
<http://www.luton.ac.uk/Convergence/volumethree/numberfour/>.

Stanza: <http://www.stanza.co.uk/>