Immersive Media Studies
Fall 2022 – CMS.340/865
Prof. Paul Roquet (he/him)
Class: --- Drop-in Hours: ---
Canvas: ---

Course Description
Critical examination of the history, aesthetics, and politics of virtual reality and related media. Focuses on virtual space and embodiment; cultural reception and industry hype; accessibility, surveillance, and data privacy; and debates surrounding the use of VR in social, work, art, and entertainment contexts. Project possibilities include experimentation with VR development tools and critical analysis of existing immersive works. No prerequisites. Enrollment limited to 15.

Materials
• All readings will be available via MIT library online or in pdf. You might consider purchasing some of the books in print if you prefer (except the Tavinor book, which is way too expensive).

Requirements
• Attendance and participation (20%)
• Introduce/lead discussion of chapters/readings in class across the semester (10%); help curate material selection in final weeks (5%)
• Fictional Intermission (5%) mid-semester presentation analyzing a fictional immersive media narrative of your choice
• Immersive Case Studies: in-class presentation/discussion on an immersive media project of your choice related to day’s theme (2x/semester, 10% each)
• Immersive Media Studies Project (proposal, draft, writeup/project + presentation). ≈ (proposal 5%, draft 15%, final + presentation 20%)

Schedule

Week 1. 9/9
A Prehistory of Immersion
In class: Genevieve Bell, “Before the Metaverse” (2022, 4p); assorted metaverse pitches

Suggestions for further reading:
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Week 3. 9/30

Egocentric Picturing (A VR Aesthetics)

- Grant Tavinor, The Aesthetics of Virtual Reality, Chs. 1, 3, and 6 (84p)
- Dooley Murphy, "VR Storytelling: A Tale of Two Strategies" (2019, 18:43)
- Dirk Eitzen, “Why VR is NOT an Empathy Machine” (2020, 20:14)

Suggestions for further reading:


Immersive Media Studies – Syllabus (Abridged) – Updated 9/1/2022 - p2

**Week 4. 10/7**
**Social VR**
- Watch: People Make Games, “Making Sense of VRChat: The ‘Metaverse’ People Actually Like” (2022, 37:35)

Suggestions for further reading/watching:
- Life 2.0 (Jason Spingarn-Koff, 2010)
- *We Met in Virtual Reality* (Joe Hunting, 2022)

**Week 5. 10/14**
**Augmented Space**
- Heemsbergen, Bowtell, and Vincent, “Conceptualizing Augmented Reality: From Virtual Divides to Mediated Dynamics” (2021, 17p)
- Bolter, Engberg, and MacIntyre, “The Myth of Total AR: Mirror Worlds and the AR Cloud” (2021, 14p)

Suggestions for further reading:


**Week 6. 10/21**

*Fictional Intermission*

- Choose one fictional narrative about immersive media to read/watch and share analysis in class

Suggestions for further watching/reading:


**Week 7. 10/28**

*Inclusion and Exclusion in VR Discourse*


- Daniel Harley, “Palmer Luckey and the Rise of Contemporary Virtual Reality” (2020, 14p)


- **Project Proposal due by class time**

- **Bring curation ideas to class**

Suggestions for further reading:

- boyd, danah. “Is the Oculus Rift Sexist?” *Apophenia* blog (2014)


This page appears to be a part of a document discussing project presentations for a class. It includes references to specific dates and holidays, as well as references to readings and assignments.

### Week 9. 11/18

**Class Curated 1**

- Project Rough Drafts due 11/23 end of day

### Week 10. 12/2

**Class Curated 2**

### Week 11. 12/9

**Project Presentations**

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**Week 8. 11/4**

**Labor, Surveillance, and Platform Infrastructure**

- Marcus Carter and Ben Egliston, “What are the Risks of Virtual Reality Data? Learning Analytics, Algorithmic Bias and a Fantasy of Perfect Data” (2021, 20p)

- Bolter, Engberg, and MacIntyre, “Privacy, Public Space, and Reality Media” (2021, 19p)


- Aleena Chia, “The Metaverse, but Not the Way You Think: Game Engines and Automation beyond Game Development” (2022, 10p)

- **Curation Plans due via e-mail 11/8 end of day**

Suggestions for further reading:


- Bar-Zeev, Ali. “For XR, the Eyes are the Prize.” *Medium* (2020).


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**<11/11 Veteran’s Day Holiday>**

**Week 9. 11/18**

**Class Curated 1**

- Project Rough Drafts due 11/23 end of day

**<11/25 Institute Holiday>**

**Week 10. 12/2**

**Class Curated 2**

**Week 11. 12/9**

**Project Presentations**
• Project Final Drafts due by class time