

New York University
Fall 2020

Animals and Technology
Thursdays, 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Online
ANST-GA 2500.002 / 3913 Online / 5:00pm-7:30pm R / Nissim

Instructor: Gal Nissim

Email: gn634@nyu.edu

Office Hours: M 3-5pm (sign up [here](#)).

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

While art and technology can remove us from nature, they can also bring us closer to nature, helping us to understand and interact with non-human animals. This course will explore the intersection of animals, art, and technology from a multidisciplinary perspective. What do we find so compelling about natural systems? How can we use art and technology to learn more about features of the world that ordinarily exist beyond human perception? We will explore different artworks that use technology to reveal, translate, and communicate the unseen world of non-human animals to humans. Through a series of creative experiments and assignments, students will work with augmented reality (AR), sound, sensors, projection mapping, video, and more, to create meaningful artistic interventions that explore these themes.

Important note:

There are no prerequisites for this course. The course and assignments are built to fit students from various technical backgrounds, including those without any technical background. This syllabus will be updated weekly with links and notes.

The course will examine the complex relationship between humans and non-human animals through the following technologies:

1. Sound
2. Video
3. Immersive Technologies
4. Code
5. BioArt/SciArt

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Develop new observation skills with the goal of seeing from a wider ecological point of view.
2. Develop the ability to use technology and art as tools to investigate the relations between humans and non-human animals.
3. Build familiarity with researchers, artists and artworks, who create at the intersection of technology, art and science.
4. Develop the analytical and critical skills to look at the visual arts from an environmental perspective.
5. Create and finish projects that combine art and tech and develop the ability to present and critically discuss the works.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, POLICIES and GRADE VALUES

Grading is based on successful completion of all assignments, class journals, class participation and attendance.

Attendance and participation	10%
Writing and Reading	10%
Sound Project	10%
Video Project	15%
Immersive Realities Project	15%
Code Project	20%
Final Project	20%

- **Attendance and Participation:** I expect regular attendance and thoughtful participation from all students.
- **Punctuality** is required. In general, please try to join at least five minutes before class time, and be ready to start work at the posted start time.
- **Collaboration v. Solo work:** I am happy to have you do either.
- **Late Work/Extensions/Incompletes:** Late weekly writing assignments will be accepted for half credit up until the start of class. Extensions and incompletes will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. If you want to request either, please do so in advance.

- **Academic Dishonesty:** Plagiarism results in failure in the class and referral to an academic dean. Plagiarism includes: copying sentences or fragments from any source without quotes or references; not citing every source used in your papers; citing internet information without proper citation; presenting someone else's work as your own; or copying verbatim from any source. You are subject to the CAS guidelines on plagiarism: cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity.
- **Academic Accommodations:** Please feel free to make suggestions to your instructor about ways in which this class could become more accessible to you. Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980. They are located at:

726 Broadway, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003-6675
Voice/TTY Fax: 212-995-4114
Web site: <http://www.nyu.edu/csd>

READINGS and ASSIGNMENTS

- **Readings:** All readings will be available on NYU Classes or online.
- **Weekly Assignments:** Weekly work goes toward 5 projects. You are expected to follow the course outline, regarding techniques and specific explorations in the development of these projects. You should be prepared to show/talk about these assignments in class.
- **Weekly Writing:** Please post writing assignments the day before class.
 - You are required to post weekly to document and share your process and progress.
 - Write a question or comment about each reading.
 - The weekly writing will be graded Pass/Fail.

BLOG/PDF LINKS

Please post your homework to the correct week.

Be mindful of which tab/sheet you are posting to so you are with your section!

CLASS BLOG URLS

COURSE SCHEDULE

(subject to change with plenty of notice based on in-class trajectories)

Week 1 - September 3

Topics: Introduction

Learning Objectives:

- Introductions:
 - to ourselves / to each other / to the work / to the course, expectations, all your questions answered, logistics, housekeeping
- Learner Survey
- Intro to Technology
 - How it effects on our relations with the natural world (animals in particular)
 - How did tech design the way we perceive nature/animals?
- Intro to Sound

Assignments for next week:

- Peruse [Listen to the World](#) by The New York Times (Make sure to listen to the New York Part)
- Write about your experience - submit it [here](#).
- Sound Niches/habitat assignment (part I)

Week 2 - September 10

Due:

- Sound assignment (part I)
- Your blog post / written response.

Topics: Sound

Learning Objectives:

- Audio works inspiration
- In class workshop: Audio editing
- Presentations guidelines

Assignments:

- Sound Habitat Assignment (+ blog post)
- **Watch:** [Explained | Music | FULL EPISODE | Netflix](#)

Week 3 - September 17

Due: Sound Assignment Presentations (In Class Critic)

Topics: Sound and Video

Learning Objectives:

- How pop culture affects our perception of animals

- Nature documentary & Foley
- Disney Princesses & Pocahontas: The Eco-Feminist Warrior

Assignments:

- **Video assignment (part I):**
Bring in video content and a finished idea to discuss.
- **Reading:** [A Global Cinematic Zone of Animal and Technology by Seung-hoon Jeong](#) (or [Link](#))
- **Additional Reading:**
Environmentalism in Popular Culture: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and the Politics of the Natural - [Link](#)
The Racial Bias Built Into Photography by Sarah Lewis - [Link](#)

Week 4 - September 24

Due: Video assignment (part I)

Topic: Video

Learning Objectives:

- Video works inspiration
- In class workshop: Video editing I

Assignments:

- Video assignment (part II)
- **Reading:** [Quicker, faster, darker: Changes in Hollywood film over 75 years](#)
- **Watch:** [Vertical Video Syndrome](#)

Week 5 - October 1

Guest speaker: TBD

Topic: Video

Learning Objectives:

- In class workshop: Video editing II
- Presentations guidelines

Assignments:

- Video Interaction Assignment (+ blog post)
- **Watch:** [How Does an Editor Think and Feel?](#)

Week 6 - October 8

Due: Submit Video Interaction Critique

Topic: Immersive Technologies

Learning Objectives:

- Intro to Immersive Technologies
- Immersive Technologies inspiration

Assignments:

- AR assignment (part I)

- **Reading:**
[Invasive Others: Toward a Contaminated World](#) by Miriam Ticktin
[Love the deer, fear the coyote?](#) by Jason Munshi-South
- **Listen:** [How to get started in Augmented Reality](#), by Zach Lieberman and Molmol Kuo

Week 7 - October 15

Guest speaker: LaGuardia Studio service portfolio

Topic: AR

Learning Objectives:

- In class discussion: Who are natives?
- AR workshop part I

Assignments:

- AR assignment (part II)
- **Reading:** A Cyborg Manifesto by Donna Haraway
- **Additional Reading:**
[Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin](#), by Donna Haraway
- [The Storyteller's Guide to the Virtual Reality Audience](#)

Week 8 - October 22

Guest speaker: In-depth 3D scanning review

Topics: Immersive Technologies

Learning Objectives:

- AR workshop part II

Assignments:

- Finish Immersive Technologies project

Week 9 - October 29

Due: Submit Immersive Technologies

Topics: Algorithms (Code)

Learning Objectives:

- What are algorithms
- Algorithms in-class exercise (Sol LeWitt)
- Natural Algorithms - part I (and research)

Assignments:

- **Reading:** Turtles, Termites, and Traffic Jams: Explorations in Massively Parallel Microworlds

Week 10 - November 5

Due: Written response on reading

Topics: Algorithms and Data

Learning Objectives:

- Natural Algorithms - part II

- What is data
- Data Visualization - part I
- Humans as animals

Assignments:

- Algorithm assignment
- **Reading:** [A Concise Taxonomy for Describing Data as an Art Material](#), Julie Freeman, Geraint Wiggins, Gavin Starks and Mark Sandler

Week 11 - November 12

Due: Code assignment (In Class Critic)

Topics: Final projects

Learning Objectives:

- Presenting final Project guidelines

Assignments:

- Final projects proposals (+ project planning)
- **Reading:** [Zoöpolis by Jennifer Wolch conceptualizes](#) (or [Link](#))

Week 12 - November 19

Due: Final projects proposals (+ project planning)

Topics: BioArt & SciArt

Learning Objectives:

Assignments:

- Presentation Outline
- **Reading:** [Sharing Suffering: Instrumental Relations between Laboratory Animals and Their People. In When Species Meet](#), by Donna Haraway

BREAK - November 26: Thanksgiving Recess. No class.

Week 13 - December 3

Due: Presentation Outline

Learning Objectives:

- Workshopping of final projects
- Individual progress report meetings: Meet with me to discuss your final project

Assignments:

- Finish Final Projects

Week 14 - December 10

Present: FINAL PROJECTS

Crit: FINAL PROJECTS CRIT (as time allows)