THD/HUM 295/TEC 295: Digital London: Technology in Performance

COURSE SYLLABUS

Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 9:15am-12:00pm

Professor: Justin Thomas
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Office Hours: By Appointment @various locations

Catalog Description:
This survey course will examine the growing integration of digital technology into a variety of genres, including art installations, film, performance art, site-specific performance, design, architecture, interactivity, video games, and the theatre. Students will look at the proliferation of digital technology over the past two decades, and by attending works in both traditional and non-traditional performance venues (theatres, online, art galleries, museums, etc.) will begin to evaluate the effect this proliferation has had on performance content and style. The course includes an exploration of the history and theories of digital performance, and provides opportunities for students to apply digital performance technology to their own critical and creative work.

Course Objectives:

- Develop and demonstrate an understanding of the history and evolution of media in performance art.
- Utilize multiple theories in the analysis of live performance.
- Establish a foundation in multiple media, which students will then use to create presentation projects.
- Enable students to critically analyze the use of technology in performance as a design element and as a tool for communicating thematic content

Modes of Learning:

Viewings of both recorded and live performance events will be accompanied by contextual and theoretical readings. Class discussion of these events and readings will be a primary method for teaching and learning the material in the course. The materials for discussion examine performance in both traditional theatrical venues as well as performance art/gallery exhibitions, site-specific performance, architecture, and museums. Short lectures and weekly field trips will provide insight to events, software, and techniques that demonstrate applications of technology in performance.

Students will keep a journal throughout the semester, in which they will make connections between their experiences with technology in performance and the in-class discussion of course materials.

Finally, there is a series of presentation projects that involve individual and group research, analytical writing, and creative/critical visual presentations utilizing digital media.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Class Participation and Engagement (15%):

- Preparation for class, engagement in discussion and course activities, engagement in out-of-class meetings including debate prep and individual research project planning sessions

Personal Journal (20%):

- Students will maintain a personal journal during their time in London. They will record and reflect on their experiences with technology in performance.
- Each week, students will select one of their entries for additional reflection, and utilize readings and class discussions as a lens for evaluating the original experience.

Personal Reflection Assignment (50%):

This project is a series of scaffolded projects that involve both analytical writing and visual and aural media production. Throughout the course, I will present short lectures on visual and aural concepts using freeware and open source software. Students will use a combination of these techniques, class materials, discussions, and personal experience to create a series of four, short presentations to the class. Each presentation will build upon the material discussed in the class from the prior week.

- ***Introductory Personal Essay (12.5%):*** Students will create a digital collage and a 3-minute personal essay to "introduce" themselves to the class.
- ***Revised Personal Essay – BODY (12.5%)*****:** Students will revise their introductory essay and presentation with a focus upon BODY in performance. Utilizing the theoretical readings, students will choose a particular focus (virtuality, reality, etc.) through which to revise their introductory project.
- ***Place Essay (12.5%)*****:** Student will create a three-minute personal essay examining London through a particular lens (diverse population, urban living, commuting/transportation, environmental sustainability, etc.). The essay will include moving images and/or video.
- ***Revised Place Essay - TIME (12.5%)*****:** Students will revise their place essay with a particular focus upon TIME in performance. Utilizing theoretical readings and material from class discussions, students will revise their essay to with an emphasis upon time and its effects upon their experiences of living in London.

Group Interactivity Project (15%):

- Students will be divided into small groups to design an interactive installation that encapsulates a virtual, thematic tour of London. The primary aspect of this project is to implement the course materials examining interactivity in a small, project. Examples of tour ideas might be a literary or cinematic tour of London, a tour of London football (soccer) clubs, site-specific art installations, etc., and the interactive components will be created through the internet, cell phones, mp3 players, or other devices available to the class.

Grading Breakdown - Total Available Points = 1000

- 921-1000 = A
- 900-920 = A-
- 880-899 = B+
- 821-879 = B
- 800-820 = B-
- 780-799 = C+
- 700-779 = C
- 600-699 = D
- 599- 0 = F

LATE COURSEWORK WILL BE ACCEPTED ONLY FOR A PENALTY OF 10% OFF THE PROJECT GRADE PER DAY. LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED BEYOND 1 WEEK AFTER THE ASSIGNED DUE DATE.

Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students need to provide documentation to the Coordinator of Disability Resources, Autumn Wilke, located on the 3rd floor of the Rosenfield Center (x3702) identifying any special needs. Students should then notify the instructor within the first few days of classes.

It is also the policy of the instructor that students who wish to observe religious holidays should do so. Students seeking accommodations for special religious observances should notify the instructor within the first few days of classes in an effort to create a reasonable schedule for the student to make-up missed class time and assignments. Accommodations for religious observance will not be granted if notification occurs after the first two weeks of classes.

The instructor also makes accommodations for documented illness and/or personal injury. Should a student incur and injury or illness, documentation must be submitted to the professor upon the student's return to class. Students will also make every effort to inform the instructor of illness or injury prior to missing class.

MOST IMPORTANTLY:
The professor's door is always open for extra help, thoughts, ideas, and support.