## NARRATIVE AND ART-MAKING THROUGH DIGITAL INTERFACES | FALL 2019

Course Number: 491-001 / 502-002
Meeting Time: M/W 8:30AM-9:45PM
Location: Leazar 310
Website: https://nadi.wordpress.ncsu.edu/  (log in with your Unity ID)

Instructor: Prof. Todd Berreth -  tmberret@ncsu.edu
Office Hours: M 1:00-2:00PM - Kamphoefner A204 (by appointment)

This is a project-based course for storytellers and artists.  Within this course we will gain a familiarity with the repertoire, history, theory and practice, of artists, designers and storytellers involved in the realms of interactive art-making, and computational and game design.  In the process, you will develop an understanding of the underlying concepts, techniques and technologies of computational and digital systems and their role in art and narrative practice.

We will develop skills to be able to conceptualize these complex systems, their interfaces and affordances, and diagrammatically describe existing computational projects, and speculatively propose new projects. We may have differing depths of knowledge of the various elements of these systems (we can't all be simultaneously skilled artists, programmers, engineers, game designers, content experts, animators etc., though we may try). In our respective futures, we may need to assemble teams of experts in diverse disciplines to work together to execute our projects. As designers, we are the synthesizers and visionaries of these teams, helping form and maintain the poetics and narratives, aesthetics and functionality of the project while accommodating the technical and engineered realities, building bridging languages between the disciplines, and helping everyone develop, visualize and achieve the common goal.

As makers of creative content, we are constantly presented with new technical platforms on which to develop our unique stories, experiences and visions.  We should look beyond merely accepting the platforms and mediums which are presented to us, but instead be willing and able to develop hybridized solutions, which combined and synthesize many diverse realms (technical, aesthetic, social, historic), which more closely accommodate our design goals.

It is our aspiration to be able to assemble a diverse toolbox of potential techniques and technologies at our disposal.  The contents of this toolbox changes rapidly, as technologies and fashions shift and evolve by the minute.  It is not our jobs to be the experts of a particular technology, software application, programming language, creative medium, etc., though we each may have our areas of intensive expertise. Instead, we need to broadly understand narrative and art-making practices, computational paradigms, and new media techniques and technologies, be able to design fluidly in and between these realms. Then we can conceptualize and plan projects which involve digital computational systems and interactive experiences; we

can break down these, seemingly insurmountable complex projects, into manageable and understandable structures which can be achieved in a systematized, step-by-step way.

The goal…we do not want to be overwhelmed and intimidated by technology and technical systems. Instead we want to understand their potential, break apart their components and affordances, and visualize them. As we begin to propose our own systems, the exact engineering of these systems can be worked out later, either by ourselves, or by helpful collaborator.  What is important is to understand the range and potential of the technologies, so that we can formulate design or artistic vision, tell a unique or compelling story, connect with others, and generally speak to the human condition.

Generally, the goals are as follows ---

+ understand the affordances of digital systems and interfaces
+ survey the major digital projects / interventions / typologies / movements which have been used for narrative and artmaking over the last 40-50 years
+ practice with diagrammatic representation of complex systems
+ learn to develop scenarios and storyboards, create low-fidelity prototypes, and iterate on those prototypes to create a final design project.
+ propose artworks / narrative projects and interventions using digital and computational systems and interactive interfaces, schematically represent these systems, using compelling, descriptive and evocative diagrams, as well as a well-crafted textual narrative, persuasive imagery and graphic presentation.

## Assignments –

The work in this course will involve four main components—1) you will have weekly readings and will be expected to participate in group discussions in an informed and engaged manner, 2) you will give a significant class presentation (partnered with a fellow student) on a topic of interest and lead a group discussion, 3) you will complete a series of four incremental assignments which utilize and build on the material presented by your instructor and colleagues the class, and 4) a final project completed the last five weeks of class.

## Communication –

This course requires students to use Slack, a team collaboration tool, for communication with their colleagues and the instructor. In the first week of classes, you will signup a the ADN NADI Slack network with your @ncsu.edu mail at adnnadi.slack.com. You can use Slack with a browser but you can also download desktop and mobile apps. Check slack.com/getting-started to learn how to use Slack effectively for team communication. You are also encouraged to meet me in person during office hours.

Calendar –

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WEEK #1

8/21 Wed – Course Introduction & Discussion

Readings –

       Janet Murray, *Inventing the Medium*, "Affordances of the Digital Medium", pp. 51-85
       Don Norman, *Fundamental Principles of Interactivity*, pp. 10-36

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WEEK #2

8/26 Mon – Lecture & Discussion, Assignment #0 Issued

8/28 Wed – Lecture & Discussion, Assignment #0 Due

Readings –
       Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*. "What is New Media", pp. 18-61
       Saul Greenberg, "The Narrative Storyboard: Telling a Story about Use and Context Over Time"

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WEEK #3

9/2 Mon – NO CLASS

9/4 Wed – Discussion / Assignment #1 Issued

Readings – TBA

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WEEK #4

9/9 Mon – Lecture & Discussion

9/11 Wed – Group Presentation #1 & Discussion / Working Session

Readings – TBA

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WEEK #5

9/16 Mon – Lecture & Discussion

9/18 Wed – Group Presentation #2 & Discussion / Working Session

Readings – TBA

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WEEK #6

9/23 Mon – Group Presentation #3 & Discussion / Working Session

9/25 Wed – Assignment #1 Due & Group Critique

Readings – TBA

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WEEK #7

9/30 Mon – Group Presentation #4 & Discussion / Assignment #2 Issued

10/2 Wed – Lecture & Discussion / Working Session

Readings – TBA

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WEEK #8

10/7 Mon – Group Presentation #5 & Discussion / Working Session

10/9 Wed – Lecture & Discussion / Working Session

Readings – TBA

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WEEK #9

10/14 Mon – Group Presentation #6 & Discussion / Working Session

10/16 Wed – Assignment #2 Due & Group Critique

Readings – TBA

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WEEK #10

10/21 Mon – Group Presentation #7 & Discussion / Assignment #3 Issued

10/23 Wed – Lecture & Discussion / Working Session

Readings – TBA

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WEEK #11

10/28 Mon – Group Presentation #8 & Discussion / Working Session

10/30 Wed – Lecture & Discussion / Working Session

Readings – TBA

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WEEK #12

11/4 Mon – Working Session

11/6 Wed – Assignment #3 Due & Group Critique

Readings – TBA

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WEEK #13

11/11 Mon – Field Trip / Final Project Assignment Issued & Discussion

11/13 Wed – Working Session

Readings – TBA

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WEEK #14

11/18 Mon – Working Session

11/20 Wed – Discussion / Working Session

Readings – TBA

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WEEK #15

11/25 Mon – Working Session

11/27 Wed – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Readings – TBA

WEEK #16

12/2 Mon – Working Session

12/4 Wed – Final Project Due & Group Critique

Readings – TBA

## Semester Grading Summary -

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| Participation / Engagement / Blog & Slack Postings / Discussion | 20% |
| Group Presentation & Discussion | 20% |
| Projects and other Deliverables | 60% |

      +Assignments #0-3 (assignment #0 – 5%, assignments #1-3 – 10% each)

      +Final Project (25%)

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| Total | 100% |

## Suggested Texts –

Purchasing these books is not required, but is recommended, especially as a reference for your design practice – they are available via Amazon.com, or a similar online book seller.  The readings assigned from these texts, and many others, will also be available via the course website.

Janet H. Murray, *Inventing the Medium: Principles of Interaction Design as a Cultural Process,* MIT Press 2012.

Don Norman, *The Design of Everyday Things*, Basic Books 2013.

## General Policies:

This class does not focus on technical skills, but does require you to use conceptual and design skills, visual representation and textual description; you should have or develop and/or hone your facility with Adobe Illustrator, InDesign, and Photoshop, which will be the main graphics generation environments in class.

Students are expected to always indicate the source and authorship of work, media and references that are not created by them.

If you need any special accommodations due to a disability of any sort, please let me know about it, and we will discuss strategies to accommodate your needs.

Participation in class discussion and in design crits is critical because it allows you to explore content and design process collaboratively.

## College and University Policies:

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory and not negotiable.  No allowance will be made for unexcused absences. The class structure is largely determined by the necessity for a continuing dialogue between the students and the professor, therefore attendance is required and each student is expected to be in class for the full duration. The roll will be taken at the beginning of class.  Please notify the professor if you come in late.  If you arrive 30 minutes late or later, it will count as an absence for the day.

If you miss class, it will be your responsibility to find out what you missed from one of your classmates. Any projects not available for critique will be considered late.  Late projects should be completed outside of class, and handed in as soon as possible. For failure to meet the specified deadline, all late projects will receive 10% lower than otherwise deserved for each class the project is late.

· 	Absent 1 day = no action
· 	2 days = no action
· 	3 days = 1 letter grade reduction
· 	4+ days = no credit for the course

Excused absences are defined by the University at:
http://www.ncsu.edu/provost academic_regulations/attend/reg.htm/

Requests for anticipated excused absences must be submitted, with appropriate documentation, as soon as you are aware of them and before the absence.

Requests for excused emergency absences must be made and appropriately certified as soon as possible and no later than one week after the return to classes. Out of courtesy, a phone call or email explaining your absence, would be greatly appreciated.

Excused absences are defined by the University at:
http://www.ncsu.edu/provost academic_regulations/attend/reg.htm/

HEALTH AND SAFETY
As part of your educational experience at the College of Design, you will be expected to participate in classes, field trips, and workshops in locations both on and off the campus. You will be expected to fulfill your class assignments using equipment, tools and machinery. It is expected that you will use proper care and caution and will assume
responsibility for your health and safety.

HONOR CODE
All students who enroll at NC State are required to adhere to the guidelines for academic integrity as outlined in the NCSU Code of Student Conduct. For more information contact the Office of Student Conduct at 515-2963 or access the Code at the following World Wide Web site:
http://www2.ncsu.edu/ncsu/stud affairs/policies/

CLASS EVALUATION
Online class evaluations will be available for students to complete during the last two weeks of class (November 26-December 9). Students will receive an email message directing them to a website where they can login using their Unity ID and complete evaluations. All evaluations are confidential; instructors will never know how any one student responded to any question, and students will never know the ratings for any particular instructors.
Evaluation website: https://classeval.ncsu.edu/
Student help desk: classeval@ncsu.edu
More information about ClassEval: http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/classeval/index.htm

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Statement for students with disabilities: Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653.
http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/affirm_action/dss/
For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see
http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/hat/current/appendix/appen_k.html