Objective / Topic

This seminar and lab will explore technologies, design approaches, and motivations for creating online, media-supported critical essays using “off-the-shelf” tools and internet standards.

Students will focus their work on a quarter-long project related to their ongoing research, which could be expanded after the class fulfill MIAS thesis requirements.

Required texts (available at the LuValle bookstore):


Articles or chapters (distributed in class):


Student-selected articles from:

* A List Apart – Design: http://www.alistapart.com/topics/design/
Platforms / software used

MediaWiki, Final Cut Pro, Photoshop, QuickTime.

**Week 1 (September 29, 30)**

*Seminar:* **Experiencing the Archive: The potential of the dynamic web.**
Basics of the internet and dynamic web publishing. Brief deconstruction of popular, data-driven websites (Flickr, IMDB, etc.) Concept of student’s research as building their own living, evolving and critically annotated archive, to be both stored and published using contemporary tools.
  - Bring to class: Verbal description of the project you expect to be working on.
  - Read: Tufte Ch. 1, “Mapped Pictures: Images as Evidence and Explanation” and Ch. 7, “The Cognitive Style of Powerpoint”

*Lab:* Introduction to MediaWiki platform. Setting up a working environment. Transferring content to the platform.
  - Handouts: Barrett.

**Week 2 (October 6, 7)**

*Seminar:* **Digital media production and presentation basics.**
Formats, compression, and other issues including their effects on color, grain, contrast, subtitles, etc. Streaming versus downloaded media. Industry players.
  - Due in class: Half-page description of research to be used a basis for class project, plus a sample bibliography of media including format information.
  - Read for class: FCPW Ch. 1, 2, 4, 5 (focus on formats and compression).

*Lab:* DVD clip capture, transcoding. Introduction to Final Cut.
  - Bring to lab: DVD with three sample clips, in/out points known.

**Week 3 (October 13, 14)**

*Seminar:* **Conceiving database-driven work.**
More depth on MediaWiki and review of the approach selected for MIAS online critical essays. Concept of “presentation layers” for a database / media archive using web technologies. Integration of critical analysis with excerpted and annotated media.
  - Read for class: Tufte Ch. 4, “Words, Numbers, Images – Together”; Barrett, tbd.;

*Lab:* Still image capture, sweetening, manipulation. Introduction to Photoshop.
  - Bring to lab: Digital photograph or scan.
  - Read for lab: FCPW pp. 101-105.
  - Handouts: Ang.

**Week 4 (October 20, 21)**

*Seminar:* **Web site design & usability basics.**
Discussion of basic web design concepts and strategies. User interface, user experience, navigation strategies. Informal vs. formal text; role of community contribution and comments. Contrasts between web design emphases and needs of long-format critical commentary.

- Due in class: Pick and present an article from A List Apart’s design section: (http://www.alistapart.com/topics/design/) with at least two examples of well-designed websites relevant to the article and the class.

Lab: Video capture, editing and compression. (Final Cut, continued.)
- Bring to lab: Short paragraph to narrate online.
- Read for lab: FCPW, Ch. 7, 8.

Week 5 (October 27, 28)

Seminar: Comparison and annotation strategies.
Comparing and annotating media in web presentation. (e.g., Annotating video with text or audio commentary at certain pre-determined points.)
- Read for class: Tufte Ch. 5-6, “The Fundamental Principles of Analytical Design” and “Corruption in Evidence Presentation...”

Lab: Work out example of media comparison / annotation. (Features of Quicktime.)
- Read for lab: FCPW Ch. 10.

Week 6 (November 3, 4)

Seminar: Guest Speaker on copyright and fair use (1 hr). Tracking media provenance (1 hr).
- Due in class: Midterm deadline – Design concept, architecture, navigation scheme, and work plan for portfolio project. (Will be redistributed for peer review.)

Lab: Audio capture, editing and compression.
- Bring to lab: Short paragraph to narrate online.

Week 7 (November 10, 11)

Seminar: Project discussion
- Due in class: Written peer review of a colleague’s project.
- Read to support assignment: Trimble, “Readability”.
- Read for class: Tufte Ch. 2, “Sparklines: Intense, Simple, Word-Size Graphics”.

Lab: MediaWiki workday.

Week 8 (November 17, 18)

Lecture: Integration of search and social media.
Increasing the chances that your material be found on the web; Web 2.0 style integration with social media and other websites.
Due in class: Written response to peer review. (ie, How did you adjust your plans to address the feedback?)
Read to support assignment: Prose, “Words” and “Sentences”.
Read for class: Oates. [Article on search engine optimization, tbd.]

Lab: Search engine optimization and integration with social media.

**Week 9 (November 24, 25)**

**Seminar:** Portability, replication, multi-platform publishing.
How to further disseminate and archive your project.
- Due in class: Projects must be complete and posted.

Lab: Guided, hands-on peer review of project ‘beta’ versions.

**Week 10 (December 1, 2)**

**Seminar:** Guest Speaker on the future of new media and globalization of information. (1 hr) Discussion of project status (1 hr).

Lab: Continued project work.

**Finals Week (December 8)**

Final presentation and discussion (December 8, 1:30-4:30)
- Due in class: Projects must be complete and posted online before class starts.