REMIX MEDIA & CULTURE JAMMING

ArtM250
Spring 2015

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Course Website: on Moodle

• Course Description •

Remix, Mash-up, Collage, Assemblage, Bricolage ... the reuse and repurposing of cultural objects, images, and sounds in works of art and propaganda has (at least) a century-old legacy that is realized most fully within the interchangeable world of binary code and digital technology. This theory/practice course takes a critical look at the history of culture jamming—from Dada to Machinima—along with the gamut of aesthetic, political, and social concerns addressed by culture jammers and the reception (and even appropriation) of their work by the corporate entertainment industry. Students will put theory into practice by producing their own culture jamming projects including a subadvertisement and remix video. We will also explore issues around copyright and fair use in the sampling of both commercial and independently-produced works.

• Course Structure •

This is a hybrid theory/practice course; many of our weeks will be divided between lecture/discussion/screenings and production work. Each should be given equal attention and inform the other; ideas raised by readings and class discussion should be reflected in the work you produce and class work should expand your understanding of Remix Culture. This course is also being run in conjunction with a Cinematheque Film Series on the theme of Remix Media and Culture Jamming. There will be four events over the course of the semester that feature guest filmmakers, scholars, and curators. Each event will be scheduled on a Thursday night from 7-9 pm in Choi Auditorium. Attendance is mandatory. Please see course schedule and let me know ASAP if you have a conflict.

• Course Goals •

• a socio-historical understanding of “culture jamming” and its relationship to the contemporary digital practice of Remix.
• exposure to a wide variety of strategies, techniques, and forms of Remix, along with their relevant discourses.
• familiarity with issues around copyright and fair use in the practice of digital sampling.
• hands-on experience in producing digital works with social and political relevance.

• Required Materials •

Electronic Reserve Readings (listed in week breakdowns and posted on Moodle).
• Kalle Lasn, *Culture Jam: How to Reverse America’s Suicidal Consumer Binge—And Why We Must* (New York: Harpercollins, 2000)


• Portable hard drive for storing work. You will need a MAC-compatible drive that has at least 100 GB. NOTE: Many drives, even if MAC-compatible, come formatted for the PC and need to be reformatted for the Macintosh. Make sure to check the specs and refer to the manual for details OR ask a cage worker to help you out when you first set up the drive.

• Grade Breakdown/Assignments •

• Attendance/Participation 10%

• Journal 30%
You will keep a weekly journal in this course in which you will reflect on readings, discussions, screenings, and projects. While the journal will provide me with an indication of your level of engagement with course materials, the larger goal is to provide you with a place to develop your ideas and to draw connections between our theoretical and practical work. You can use your journal to: comment on readings or screenings, express thoughts/opinions that come up in class that you didn’t articulate at the time, explore concepts for your projects, share examples of Remix Media or Culture Jamming that you’ve discovered (please also consider posting these to the Sharing Space on Moodle), etc. The journal can take one of a number of forms, from handwritten to a word file to an on-line blog. Choose whichever format feels most comfortable, inspires consistency, and enables you to draw in relevant materials. **Make your Journal a weekly practice.** Your entries don’t have to be long (300-500 words or an expression of ideas through images), but they should be pithy and demonstrate a progression of ideas over time. Your journal will be handed in at the mid-point and end of the semester.

• Project 1 (Subvertisement Series) 30%
For this project, you will produce three subvertisements using Photoshop.

• Project 2 (Video Remix) 30%
For this project, you will produce a 2-5 minute video remix using Premiere.

• Course Policies •

• Participation
“Interactivity” is an essential component of this course. You are expected to arrive to class on-time with all assignments completed and material read, prepared to participate fully in class discussions. You are also encouraged not only to contribute your own knowledge of culture and technology, but also to bring (or bring up) relevant media (i.e., websites, YouTube or other on-line videos, films, music, etc.) or issues of note.

• Attendance/Punctuality
Class attendance is mandatory AND you should arrive on time (chronic lateness will lower your final grade), prepared to engage fully in class discussions. If you are absent, it is your
responsibility to arrange with a classmate to get notes or any assignments/updates you miss. Excused absences require documentation and timely notification.

- Only documented medical and emergency absences will be excused (correspondence from the Dean of Students Office or the Student Health Center required for an excused absence).
- Three unexcused absences will result in a failing attendance grade.

• Laptop Policy
You are encouraged to use your laptop in any way that increases your engagement in this class, but non-course related activities such as online chatting or email checking are prohibited. Also, please turn off your cell-phone before coming into class. If your laptop proves to be a distraction, you will be asked to close it; if it is a repetitive issue, it will lower your participation grade and you may lose laptop privileges for the remainder of the semester.

• Email Policy
My emails to you: I will attempt to post most information about the class on Moodle, however there will likely be occasions when I need to email the class for the sake of expediency, in which case, I will use your oxy.edu email address. If you do not check your oxy email daily, then please email me with the address at which I’d be most likely to reach you.
Your emails to me: Use discretion when emailing me (or any other professor). Do not ask questions that can be answered by a fellow student or on your own with a little bit of legwork (i.e., what is the assignment again? What does ______ mean?). Do not expect answers to emails in the middle of the night or an hour or two before an assignment is due. If you have a question that will require more than a short paragraph response or want to have a discussion (and discussions, whether course related or not, are welcome), then you are encouraged to sign up for my office hours. Do not hesitate to email me, however, if you will miss class, your assignment will be late, or with information about any other issue that might impact your performance/participation.

• Academic Honesty
This class hinges upon your ability to formulate independent ideas based on course concepts, expressing them through your own speech, writing, and media production. Cheating and plagiarism are absolutely unacceptable. Evaluating sources of information and properly citing sources are essential skills sets and are your responsibility (though I am available for consultation). Please refer to the Student Handbook for official policies on how such matters will be addressed: http://www.oxy.edu/StudentHandbook.xml

• Disabilities
If you have a disability, hidden or visible, which may require consideration or reasonable accommodations, you must register with Disability Services and make an appointment with me before the third class to discuss your needs (you will need to present your accommodation verification card at this time). Students who experience significant physical or mental impairments can contact Disability Services at (323) 259-2969 to learn about available services and support.
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO CULTURE JAMMING

Week 1 (Jan. 20/22)
Course Introduction
Readings:
- Naomi Klein, “Introduction: A Web of Brands” (xv-xxiii), “New Branded World (pp. 3-12)
Screening: No Logo (Klein and Lewis, 2004)

Week 2 (Jan. 27/29)
Tuesday
Corporate Branding
Readings:
- Kalle Lasn, “The Unofficial History of America” [C] or link here

Thursday
The Power of the Sign: Semiological Guerilla Warfare
Readings:
- "Demarketing Loops" (pp. 165-183) in Kalle Lasn, Culture Jam

Week 3 (Feb. 3/5)
Tuesday
History of Culture Jamming
Readings:
- "Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing, Sniping at the Empire of Signs" (1984) by Mark Dery (Oxy alum, '82)
- (excerpt) Society of the Spectacle by Guy Debord (1967)

Thursday
Photoshop Workshop; Meet in Mac Lab (basement of Weingart)
P lease bring your external hard drive

Week 4 (Feb. 10/12)
Tuesday
Contemporary Culture Jamming
Screening: Culture Jam: Hijacking Commercial Culture (2002, Jill Sharpe)
Reading:
- "Culture Jamming: Ads Under Attack" pp. 279-309 in Naomi Klein, No Logo

Thursday
Photoshop Workshop, cont. Meet in MAC lab
Assignment: For the next lab (Thursday, Feb. 19), you should have at least one subadvertisement to share with the class (it does not have to be completely finished, but the concept should be apparent).

Week 5 (Feb. 17/19)
Tuesday
Cool-hunting/Corporate appropriation of teen rebellion
Readings:
- "Alt.Everything" in Naomi Klein, No Logo
• “The Cult You’re In” in Kalle Lasn, *Culture Jam*

**Thursday**
Meet in WEIN 210; present your first subvertisement for critique.

**Cinematheque, Choi Auditorium, 7-9 pm:**
Festival of (In)Appropriation with Guest Curators Jaimie Baron and Greg Cohen

**Week 6. February 24/26**
**Tuesday**
Subvertisement Critique, Part II
**Thursday**
Professor out of the country. Open Lab with Diana Keeler (work on your subvertisements).

**Week 7. March 3/5**
**Tuesday**
*Found Footage and Remixed History*
Discussion of readings
Readings:
**Thursday**
Presentation of Subvertisements. Please upload your final subvertisements to the Dropbox folder by 12 noon today.

**Cinematheque, Choi Auditorium, 7-9 pm:**
*Ruins* (1999) with Guest Filmmaker Jesse Lerner

**March 10/12 NO CLASS/Spring Break**

**SECTION II. DIGITAL REMIX CULTURE**

**Week 8: March 19/21**
*Remixing the Historical Archive*
**Tuesday**
Reading:
**Thursday**
Meet in the MAC lab to begin Project 2: Remix Video

**Week 9: March 24/26**
**Tuesday**
*Political Remix*
Readings:
• "Political Remix Video as a Vernacular Discourse” pp. 346-357 by Olivia Conti in *The Routledge
Thursday
Meet in MAC lab for Intro to Premiere workshop with Diana Keeler.

Week 10: March 31/April 2

Tuesday
Participatory/Fan Cultures and Copyright

Readings:
• "Recut, Reframe, Recycle: Quoting Copyrighted Material in User-Generated Video" pp. 1-18 Center for Social Media

Thursday
Meet in MAC lab for 2nd Premiere workshop with Diana Keeler.

Oxy Cinematheque, 7-9 pm in Choi Auditorium
RiP! A Remix Manifesto with Q&A by Brett Gaylor

Week 11: April 7/9

Tuesday
Film & Trailer Remix

Reading:

Homework: In addition to the reading for this week (which is a relatively short) please go to The Man With a Movie Camera Global Remake, read the description of the project to get a sense of how it works (i.e., people from around the world replacing scenes from the film with their own versions), and add one scene to the first 10 minutes of the film (scenes are only a few seconds, so you can shoot it on your phone or grab a public domain clip. Try Internet Archive). Try to do this before Tuesday. The on-line film gets recompiled every day. We'll watch each person's scene and then the first 10 minutes of the on-line film to see if your scene was included.

Thursday
Meet in MAC lab. Please bring your external hard drive and headphones. Prof. de Fren will be checking in on your project.

Week 12: April 14/16

Tuesday
Remixing Space

Readings:
• "Deviation/Red vs. Blue: The Blood Gulch Chronicles" by Irene Chien in Film Quarterly, Vol. 60, No. 4 (Summer 2007), pp. 24-29

Thursday
Open Lab

Week 13: April 21/23

Open Lab
On both Tuesday and Thursday this week, we will meet in the MAC Lab for open sessions/feedback during which you should be working on your Remix video.
Cinematheque, Choi Auditorium, 7-9 pm:
Remixing the Archive with Guest Scholar Steve Anderson

Week 14: April 28/30
Tuesday
Video Remix Peer Critique
Directions: Make sure to export your video as H.264 Vimeo format and upload to Vimeo (send me the link).
Thursday
Course Evals.
Video Remix Peer Critique

Thursday, May 7 Journals Due