



George Mason University · School of Art

INTRODUCTION TO NEW MEDIA ARTS

AVT-280-001

Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR**Brian Davis**

bdavis26@gmu.edu

MEETING**Thursday · 10:30 AM–1:10 PM**

Art and Design Building Room 1021

CREDITS**3**

Office hours by appointment

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WHAT WE'RE DOING

This class is an introduction to the use of digital media in fine art. During the semester, we will examine contemporary art practices ranging from still digital images to site-specific digital content. This course consists of a sequence of projects. Each project will introduce a new tool for making digital art and a new idea in contemporary art theory. This will allow students to gain a broad understanding of current ideas and methods in new media.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Analyze new-media artworks using appropriate vocabulary.
- Use digital tools to create thoughtful and technically resolved work.
- Connect technical choices to artistic concepts.
- Research, document, critique, and revise creative projects.

WORK & MATERIALS

TEXTS, MATERIALS & TECHNOLOGY

Students must have regular access either to a personal computer with sufficient processing power and storage for video editing, 3D modeling, and other new-media work, or to the School of Art computer labs, which provide computers with Adobe Creative Cloud and other supported creative software. Students will also need external storage, such as a flash drive or external hard drive; a camera capable of recording video—a modern smartphone is sufficient; and the ability to install and use project-specific software, including but not limited to Adobe Creative Cloud, DaVinci Resolve, and Blender. Students relying on campus labs should plan their work around posted lab hours and maintain reliable backups of all course files.

New Media Computer Requirements

Your computer should meet the following specifications to run the software used in this course.

Minimum Recommended

RAM / Memory 16 GB 32 GB

Storage SSD with 50 GB free SSD with 100+ GB free

Display 1920 × 1080 1920 × 1080 or higher

Mouse 2-button + scroll wheel 3-button mouse or 2-button + scroll wheel

Mac

Minimum: Apple Silicon M1 or newer, 16 GB unified memory, macOS 15 or newer.

Recommended: Apple Silicon M2 or newer, 24–32 GB unified memory, macOS 15 or newer.

Windows

Minimum: Windows 11, Intel Core i5/i7 or AMD Ryzen 5/7 from roughly the last 5–6 years, 16 GB RAM, dedicated NVIDIA or AMD GPU with 4 GB VRAM, SSD.

Recommended: Windows 11, recent Intel Core i7 or AMD Ryzen 7, 32 GB RAM, NVIDIA RTX or comparable AMD GPU with 8 GB+ VRAM, SSD.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Creative projects
- Research and process documentation
- Critiques and peer feedback
- Short readings and responses
- Final project

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

Adobe Creative Cloud is available in Mason computer labs. Students should create Adobe accounts with a personal email unless purchasing a student subscription. The Digital Design Studio, Room 1023, provides computers, scanners, printers, and open-studio resources.

ADOBE STUDENT PLANS ↗

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HOW THE COURSE WORKS

EXPECTATIONS & ATTENDANCE

One unexcused absence is permitted. Each additional unexcused absence lowers the final course grade by one letter. Missing 25% of class meetings, excused or unexcused, results in failure. Excused absences must be documented and unavoidable; routine appointments and personal travel do not qualify. Late work loses one letter grade for each scheduled class meeting that passes. Missing a fixed exhibition, installation, screening, or presentation deadline results in no credit for that time-dependent component.

EVALUATION

Projects: 60%

Exhibitions and Activities: 20%

Critique and participation: 15%

Short responses: 5%

Detailed assignment rubrics will be provided when each assignment is introduced.

GENERATIVE AI · MODERATE USE

Generative AI tools may be used when an assignment permits them. Students must disclose the tools used, explain their contribution, and cite generated material appropriately.

Assignment instructions take precedence. Students must follow Mason Academic Standards and explain how permitted AI use contributed to submitted work. See Mason's AI guidance.

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SAFETY & SUPPORT

REQUIRED RESOURCE

SCHOOL OF ART SAFETY MANUAL

Review the safety policies applicable to materials, equipment, installation, and display used in this course.

Open the 47-page manual



CAPS

Free crisis, counseling, and psychiatric services are available to enrolled students. Call 703-993-2380; after hours, select option 1.

COUNSELING & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES ↗

STUDENT SUPPORT

The Student Support and Advocacy Center helps students facing life crises or barriers to academic and personal success.

STUDENT SUPPORT & ADVOCACY CENTER ↗

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UNIVERSITY POLICIES

▼ OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS VIA MASON EMAIL

Students are responsible for university communications sent to their Mason email account and must activate and check it regularly. University, college, school, and program communications will be sent through that account.

▼ STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND LEARNING DIFFERENCES

Students seeking accommodations must first contact the George Mason University Office of Disability Services at <https://ds.gmu.edu/> and then provide the Memorandum of Accommodations to the instructor in writing.

▼ UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend registered class periods. Participation matters to the individual and the class. Absence, tardiness, or early departure may be used as evidence of non-participation according to the instructor's stated grading policy.

▼ ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work. See <https://academicstandards.gmu.edu/>.

▼ RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYEE DISCLOSURE

Faculty are Responsible Employees and must report disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator. Confidential support is available through <https://ssac.gmu.edu/> and <https://caps.gmu.edu/>. Title IX information is available at <https://titleix.gmu.edu/>.

▼ INCLEMENT WEATHER & CAMPUS STATUS

For current operating status, closures, delays, and emergency information, visit <https://www.gmu.edu/campus-status>.

COMMUNITY & BELONGING

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

At the place George Mason University occupies, we give greetings and thanksgivings to the recognized Virginia tribes who have lovingly stewarded these lands for millennia including the Rappahannock, Pamunkey, Upper Mattaponi, Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Nansemond, Monacan, Mattaponi, Patowomeck, and Nottaway, past, present, and future; and to the Piscataway tribes, who have lived on both sides of the river from time immemorial. The education offered here is a credit to the land that has received our students. The good they will do in this world is the harvest of the soil upon which they stand, sit, and live.

CULTURAL INCLUSION & BELONGING

The School of Art plays an integral role in building an educational environment that is committed to creating inclusion for all of our members in both our classrooms and communities. An inclusive approach to higher education acknowledges the ways that individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural manifestations of oppression contribute to inequality and injustice in our classrooms, on our campuses, and in our communities. It strives to provide our community members with resources to cultivate a more inclusive, and just environment for all of our students, staff, faculty, alumni, and friends, regardless of racial background. This approach is an active and ongoing, long-term process. In all our efforts, we uphold a commitment to creating honest, respectful, supportive, and healing spaces where members of our community can meaningfully dialogue and learn from each other's lived experiences for the betterment of our entire community.

SUPPORTING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran's status, or physical ability.

The School of Art is committed to fostering and supporting our diverse community of students, staff, and faculty. We are a community of diverse perspectives and experiences, which contribute to varied approaches to artistic and creative expression. We know that excellence in art education and creative practices is strengthened by the inclusion of varied cultural traditions, identities, and ways of knowing. As

such, students are encouraged to connect with university resources as they develop and deepen in their studies within our supportive and inclusive community.

DISABILITY SERVICES ➤

ACADEMIC ADVISING SERVICES ➤

SCHOOL OF ART · AVT@GMU.EDU

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ART SCHOOL RESOURCES

WRITING CENTER

The University Writing Center supports writers at George Mason University through one-to-one consultations at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to the final phases of polishing. Writers can meet a tutor online in real time or upload a draft for written feedback.

Writing Center ➤
wcenter@gmu.edu

PROVISIONS RESEARCH CENTER FOR ART & SOCIAL CHANGE

Located in Room LO01 of the Art & Design Building, Provisions assists students in exploring and engaging new models for artmaking that lead to a more inclusive and connected society. It is also a hub for developing art projects through Mason Exhibitions, the Mural Brigade, and art partners throughout the metropolitan area and beyond.

Contact Don Russell ➤

ART AND ART HISTORY LIBRARIAN

Stephanie Grimm is available for appointments and virtual office hours.

sgrimm@gmu.edu

SCHOOL OF ART SOCIAL MEDIA

Instagram · @gmusoa ➤

Facebook · gmu.soa ➤

FALL 2026

DATES TO KNOW

First day of classes	Mon. Aug 24
Last day to add	Mon. Aug 31
Labor Day — university closed	Mon. Sept 7
100% tuition refund deadline	Tue. Sept 8
50% tuition refund deadline	Tue. Sept 15
Unrestricted withdrawal	Sept 16–29
Midterm evaluation period (100–200 level)	Sept 21–Oct 16
Selective withdrawal	Sept 30–Oct 26
Fall Break — no classes	Mon. Oct 12
Election Day — no classes	Tue. Nov 3
Thanksgiving recess	Nov. 25–29
Last day of class	Mon. Dec 7
Reading Day	Tue. Dec 8
Examination period	Dec. 9–16

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COURSE SCHEDULE

Thu, Aug 27 Week 1 · First class	Introduction, Syllabus, Supplies, Intro to Project 1 Collect footage for Project 1, Install Software
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Thu, Sep 3 Week 2	Intro to video and Davinci Resolve Work on Project 1
Thu, Sep 10 Week 3	Project 1 workday
Thu, Sep 17 Week 4	Project 1 Critique, intro to project 2: AR Complete reading and short response, Sketches for project 2, Gallery/Museum Visit
Thu, Sep 24 Week 5	Project 2 work day Work on Project 2
Thu, Oct 1 Week 6	Project 2 work day Output and upload project files for project 2
Thu, Oct 8 Week 7	Project 2: AR Critique Review materials for project 3
Thu, Oct 15 Week 8	Intro to Project 3 - TBA Work on Project 3
Thu, Oct 22 Week 9	Project 3 work day Work on Project 3
Thu, Oct 29 Week 10	Project 3 work day Work on Project 3
Thu, Nov 5 Week 11	Intro to Project 4 - TBA Review materials for project 4
Thu, Nov 12 Week 12	Project 4 work day Work on Project 4
Thu, Nov 19 Week 13	Project 4 work day Work on Project 4
Thu, Nov 26 Week 14	Thanksgiving Recess · No class

Thu, Dec 3 Week 15 · Last class	Project 4 work day Work on Project 4
Thursday, December 10, 2026 Final exam / culminating session	Final Critique 10:30 AM–1:15 PM

Schedule subject to change. Updates will be announced through the course's official communication channels.

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FALL 2026 · BRIAN DAVIS