

IMD 570

Intermedia Studio I

Instructor: Nate Aldrich

nbaldrich@earthlink.net

office hours: Wednesday, 3:30 – 4:30 pm @ Lord 312

**Course materials are available for download at:
www.nbaldrich.com/imd570.html**

Course Sequence Overview

The goal of the Intermedia Studio Series (I, II and III) is to provide an environment for guided independent art/research/production in intermedia. Emphasis will be placed on the conceptual and interdisciplinary nature of this creative form, an awareness and manipulation of traditional arts boundaries, and the exploration of non-traditional art media. The course will involve critical investigations into the philosophical, social and critical foundations of intermedia, as well as investigations into new and emerging media and contemporary intermedia art practice. This course is part of an advanced graduate-level studio course sequence representing an increased emphasis on independent levels of work, theoretical engagement in the creative process and an ongoing commitment to individual studio praxis.

Most “work” for this course will take place in the individual student’s studio, outside of class time. The time commitment required for this course is substantial; at the very minimum expect to spend at least 10 hours a week on studio work.

A majority of class time will be used for showing work and critiques, including dates when each student will present her/his in-progress and finished work to the group for feedback. Through studio work and by engaging in critique and discussion with other emerging artists, you will develop critical thinking strategies and work habits, which will lay a solid foundation for work on your senior thesis project and beyond.

In addition to the critiques, some classes will be devoted to discussion of advanced level reading related to creative praxis, theoretical issues germane to contemporary intermedia work, and historical materials that form the foundation of Intermedial Art conceptualization and production.

The NMD 570 is not a technical instruction course. Therefore it is essential that you have *enough* prior experience with proposed materials, techniques and concepts to successfully complete the project. Your goal is to push skills and concepts practiced in earlier courses to new heights while integrating your own ideas, new directions and new skills. Growth, risk-taking and thinking big are what these courses are all about! Just keep in mind that you will need to learn new skills and concepts independently — and well — through your own research and practice.

In IMD 570, you will propose an area of self-directed investigation [studio project], for example, trends in contemporary art such as street art and the historical context within which they originated and produce a coherent body of artwork from your investigations.

What We Will Do

This course aims primarily to help students apply the “critique” as a strategy for discovery and understanding in the creative process. In doing so, we can situate critical thinking and research (as research is an essential part of the critical ethos) as central facets of intermedial art-making. This approach helps the artist create work progressively by incorporating critical valuations into future work to test the relative merit of both the original thought and its critique in sequence.

The critical process also allows us to think about our work in the larger context of similar or related creative practices that have come before us. We can (re)discover our influences, known and unknown. Specifically, we can examine those ideas and methodologies that distinguish Intermedial Art from other forms, for example multimedia or new media.

Finally, it is often extremely important to place Art in the broader spectrum of “making” and critique it as a cultural endeavor. In a culture where “all public discourse increasingly takes the form of entertainment” (Postman), how can/does Art as a creative practice transcend this...and should it?

How We Will Do It

This course requires students to regularly present original work for critical examination by the group. This will be done in part by considering the presentation process itself. It is important to conceptualize and compose “presentations” of work as carefully as one conceptualizes and composes the work itself. The clarity with which you think about and discuss your work may be as important to an audience as the work itself.

Part of this process is being able to focus our critical thinking on what we can observe and comprehend, not on what we “like”. Thus, being skillful at analyzing efficacy rather than intuiting aesthetic merit will be valued.

We must allow ourselves to be open to discourse and discovery while honing our understanding of what we do and the world we do it in.

What's Expected

Students will be expected to regularly show work to the class. A formal presentation format will be required after the initial presentation. This format should incorporate an historical and theoretical background for the work, appropriate support materials to clearly render the work intelligible, a firm command of the materials and ideas utilized, and some context for understanding why the artist is making the choices that make the work. Each presentation should demonstrate “progress” from previous critique sessions and how various ideas have influenced this progress. Each formal presentation should be approximately thirty (30) minutes in length and will be followed by a Q&A session.

Students will also be required to make a formal presentation to the class based on research about an artist or idea that is related to or informative of that student's individual artistic pursuits. The due date for this presentation is indicated on the syllabus. This research presentation should be approximately fifteen (15) minutes in

length and will be followed by a Q&A session.

Students are expected to participate with focus and care in the critiques of work presented by others. In this case, a critique consists of insightful and informed dialogue meant to illuminate the strengths and weaknesses of the work as posed to the group.

Grading

Grades will be assessed based on three (3) formal class presentations, class participation in the critique processes, participation in discussions and one (1) research presentation.

Attendance Policies

Attendance at every class is required. You may miss class twice for serious illness or legitimate emergencies if you notify me in advance of that class. For each additional class you miss, your semester grade will be lowered a full letter grade. If you miss class on a day you are presenting work for critique, it will be your responsibility to reschedule the critique.

If you expect to miss a class due to the observance of a religious holy day, University policy states that you must inform the instructor, in writing, by the sixteenth day of the semester in order to make accommodations for exams or assignments.

Use of Art and New Media Departmental Studios, Labs and Other Facilities

You are encouraged to use art and new media departments' art studios, darkrooms and computer labs to complete your work this semester. If requested we will also try to set up a "private" space for each of you somewhere on campus. Access to the departmental facilities at night and on weekends is a privilege. If there are problems - doors left unlocked, tools missing or damaged, trash everywhere, unsafe use of tools and materials - your access may be suspended.

In the event of an extended disruption of normal classroom activities, the format for this course may be modified to enable its completion within its programmed time frame. In that event, you will be provided an addendum to the syllabus that will supersede this version.

If you have a disability for which you may be requesting an accommodation, please contact Ann Smith, Director of Disability Services, 121 East Annex, 581-2319, as early as possible in the term.

Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, and all forms of misrepresentation in academic work, and is unacceptable at the University of Maine. As stated in the University of Maine's on-line undergraduate Student Handbook, plagiarism (the submission of another's work without appropriate attribution) and cheating are violations of the University of Maine Student Conduct Code. An instructor who has probable cause or reason to believe a student has cheated may act upon such evidence, including reporting this to the Department Chair for appropriate action.

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SYLLABUS:

1/11 Introduction – what's expected in this course; introduction of students and instructor; a trip to the museum!

1/18 Possible intermedia compositional strategies – Nate will present work, discuss the various methods employed and how they are important to the integrity of the work.

Please read: Information and Organization (download)

1/25 Initial presentation of work – students should be prepared to show significant work that is central to their current studies.

2/1 Initial presentation of work – students should be prepared to show significant work that is central to their current studies.

2/8 A pause to discuss the world we make stuff in – this class will be dedicated to a discussion of the book *Amusing Ourselves to Death* by Neil Postman.

Please read: Amusing Ourselves to Death (note: you will need to purchase this book!)

2/15 Research topics – this class will be dedicated to helping students discuss/discover possible works/ for his/her research presentation that are critically germane to each individual's current work.

Please bring a brief written description of a proposed topic for your research presentation for group scrutiny/discussion.

2/22 Individual meetings

3/14 Research Presentation Due – this class will be dedicated to student presentations on an artist or idea as chosen previously.

3/21 First formal presentation of work – students should be prepared to present work to the class in a formal presentation as outlined in class.

3/28 First formal presentation of work – students should be prepared to present work to the class in a formal presentation as outlined in class.

4/4 Individual meetings

4/11 Opportunity for group exploration – this class will provide students with an open class period to discuss issues surrounding their work to date that they feel is important.

4/18 Final formal presentation of work – This class period will be dedicated to the final formal presentations of student work.

4/25 Final formal presentation of work – This class period will be dedicated to the final formal presentations of student work.