City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus

offered by School of Creative Media
with effect from Semester A 2024/25

Part I Course Overview

Course Title:	**Technofutures: Critical Approaches to the Metaverse, AI, and Blockchain**
Course Code:	**SM5303**
Course Duration:	**One semester**
Credit Units:	**3**
Level:	**P5**
Medium of Instruction:	**English**
Medium of Assessment:	**English**
Prerequisites: *(Course Code and Title)*	**Nil**
Precursors: *(Course Code and Title)*	**Nil**
Equivalent Courses: *(Course Code and Title)*	**Nil**
Exclusive Courses: *(Course Code and Title)*	**Nil**

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

This course is designed to provide students with a solid foundation in the current technological advancements related to Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain converging in web3. The seminar is focused on modern humanities and offers a high-level intellectual foundation to better understand the ongoing changes associated with web3. Students will explore the implications of Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain for technological societies and creative cultures. They will develop their technological quotient through a critical examination of Cybernetics, Media Ecology, Philosophy of Technology, New Phenomenology, New Materialism, Hauntology, Technofuturism, Accelerationism, Digital Aesthetics, and other critical new media theories. This course is designed to develop critical thinking and analytical skills essential for leadership in the creative industry.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	*A2*	*A3*
1.	To differentiate between different practices in the recent history of Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain. To assess these technologies in relation with their cultural and technological contexts. To analyse these technologies and their cultural and social impacts in relation to relevant theoretical concepts.	30%		✓	✓
2.	To discuss the creative strategies attached to Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain technologies. To be able to collaborate with creative managers and artists.	40%		✓	✓
3.	To have a knowledge of the media resources dealing with Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchaintopics and to be able to write critical reports or analyses about Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain in media.	20%		✓	
4.	To be able to develop the ideation process/conceptual thinking in the current fields of Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain.	10%	✓		✓
		100%			

A1: Attitude
Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability
Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: *Accomplishments*
Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

(LTAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

LTA	Brief Description	CILO No.				Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	
Lectures, discussions, Theory/Practice Investigation	Understand key concepts such as theories, technologies, aesthetics related to Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain	✓		✓		3 hrs/wk
Lectures, discussions, Theory/Practice Investigation, class presentation	Synthesize and present orally the information and sources of information introduced in the lecture		✓	✓		1 hr/wk
Lectures, discussions, Theory/Practice Investigation	Explain key concepts related to Metaverse, AI, Crypto, and Blockchain			✓		3 hrs/wk
Lectures, discussions, class presentation	Synthesize and present orally the personal research done during the semester	✓	✓	✓	✓	1 hr/wk

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.				Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3	4		
Continuous Assessment: 100%						
Media survey	✓	✓	✓		20%	
Case study analysis		✓	✓	✓	50%	
Quiz	✓	✓	✓	✓	30%	
Examination 0% (duration: --)						
					100%	

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Essays, Summaries, Quiz and Exam	Students should demonstrate ability to use primary and secondary sources, and construct a well-organized argument and analysis. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories and concepts for her/his personal daily experience.	– Excellent grasp of research material, able to explain key concepts, assumptions and debates – Rigorous organization, coherent structure, distinct thesis, properly argued with strong narrative – Insightful interpretation of the subject matter with distinct themes and thesis – Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize – Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools – Strong bibliography suggesting	– Firm grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts and assumptions – Reasonable organization, balanced structure, adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand – Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret opinions independently – Organized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic	– Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts – Fair organization, weak structure, adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand – Relevant points to the subject matter, fair ability to interpret opinions – Unorganized bibliography that can be utilized in accordance with the topic	– Loose grasp of materials, cannot explain key concepts – Poor organization and structure, weak content, limited use of resources – Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions – Insufficient and/or unorganized bibliography	– Poor grasp of materials – No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources – Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions – Irrelevant bibliography

		breadth and depth of coverage and informed insights				
2. Presentation	This assessment is graded on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show co-operation in conducting a well-organized presentation with their own arguments and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in the student's self-initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal experience.	– Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter – Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative – Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management – Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize	– Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter – Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition – Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management	– Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter – Fair organization, weak structure and composition – Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management	– Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter – Poor organization, structure and composition – Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, poor time-management	– Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter – No organization, structure or/and composition – Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management

Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B)	Marginal (B-, C+, C)	Failure (F)
1. Essays, Summaries, Quiz and Exam	Students should demonstrate ability to use primary and secondary sources, and construct a well-organized argument and analysis. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories and concepts for her/his personal daily experience.	Excellent ability to use primary and secondary sources, and construct a well-organized argument and analysis.	Good ability to use primary and secondary sources, and construct a well-organized argument and analysis.	Average ability to use primary and secondary sources, and construct a well-organized argument and analysis.	Lack of ability to use primary and secondary sources, and construct a well-organized argument and analysis.
2. Presentation	This assessment is graded on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show co-operation in conducting a well-organized presentation with their own arguments and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in the student's self-initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal experience.	Students show excellent co-operation in conducting a well-organized presentation with their own arguments and evidence from readings and notes.	Students show good co-operation in conducting a well-organized presentation with their own arguments and evidence from readings and notes.	Students show average co-operation in conducting a well-organized presentation with their own arguments and evidence from readings and notes.	Students show a lack of co-operation in conducting a well-organized presentation with their own arguments and evidence from readings and notes.

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

Metaverse; AI; Crypto; Blockchain; Web3; Cybernetics; New Materialism; Digital Aesthetics; Technofuturism; Accelerationism.

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

	Metaverse:
1.	Stephenson, N. (1992). Snow Crash. Bantam Books.
2.	Cline, E. (2011). Ready Player One. Crown Publishing Group.
3.	Stephenson, N. (1995). The Diamond Age. Bantam Spectra.
	AI:
4.	Bostrom, N. (2014). Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies. Oxford University Press.
5.	Tegmark, M. (2017). Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence. Alfred A. Knopf.
6.	Russell, S. (2019). Human Compatible: Artificial Intelligence and the Problem of Control. Viking.
	Crypto:
7.	Vigna, P., & Casey, M. J. (2015). The Age of Cryptocurrency: How Bitcoin and Digital Money Are Challenging the Global Economic Order. St. Martin's Press.
8.	Popper, N. (2015). Digital Gold: Bitcoin and the Inside Story of the Misfits and Millionaires Trying to Reinvent Money. Harper.
9.	Antonopoulos, A. M. (2016). The Internet of Money. Merkle Bloom LLC.
	Blockchain:
10.	Lewis, A. (2018). The Basics of Bitcoins and Blockchains. Mango.
11.	Drescher, D. (2017). Blockchain Basics: A Non-Technical Introduction in 25 Steps. Apress.
12.	Tapscott, D., & Tapscott, A. (2016). Blockchain Revolution: How the Technology Behind Bitcoin and Other Cryptocurrencies Is Changing the World. Portfolio.
	Web3:
13.	De Filippi, P., & Wright, A. (. o. l. (2018). Blockchain and the law: the rule of code. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.
14.	Zittrain, J. (2008). The Future of the Internet--And How to Stop It. Yale University Press.

2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

1.	Berry, David M. Critical Theory and the Digital. Reprint edition. Place of publication not identified: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.
2.	Citton, Y. (2017). The Ecology of Attention. Cambridge: Polity Press.
3.	Citton, Y. (2020). The Imaginary Institution of Society. Cambridge: Polity Press.
4.	Crawford, K. (2020). Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
5.	Dijck, J. V., Poell, T., & De Waal, M. (2018). The Platform Society: Public Values in a Connective World. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
6.	Snowden, E. (2021). Permanent Record: The Edward Snowden Reader. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press.
7.	Galloway, Alexander R. The Interface Effect. Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity, 2012.
8.	Gillespie, T. (2018). Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, Content Moderation, and the Hidden Decisions That Shape Social Media. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
9.	Lister, Martin, Jon Dovey, Seth Giddings, Iain Grant, and Kieran Kelly. New Media: A Critical Introduction. 2nd ed. Routledge, 2009.
10.	Lovink, G. (2020). Sad by Design: On Platform Nihilism. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
11.	Mitchell, W. J. T., and Mark B. N. Hansen, eds. Critical Terms for Media Studies. University Of Chicago Press, 2010.
12.	Munster, Anna. Materializing New Media: Embodiment in Information Aesthetics. Annotated edition. Dartmouth, 2006.
13.	Munster, Anna. An Aesthesia of Networks: Conjunctive Experience in Art and Technology. Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2013.
14.	Noble, S. U. (2018). Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism. New York, NY: NYU Press.
15.	Parikka, J. (2019). A Geology of Media. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
16.	Raley, R. (2018). Tactical Media. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.