

**City University of Hong Kong  
Course Syllabus**

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

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**Part I Course Overview**

<b>Course Title:</b>	<b>Technology and Aesthetics</b>
<b>Course Code:</b>	<b>SM6344</b>
<b>Course Duration:</b>	<b>One semester</b>
<b>Credit Units:</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Level:</b>	<b>P6</b>
<b>Medium of Instruction:</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>Medium of Assessment:</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>Prerequisites:</b> <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Precursors:</b> <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Equivalent Courses:</b> <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Exclusive Courses:</b> <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	<b>Nil</b>

## Part II Course Details

### 1. Abstract

This course inquires into the fundamental relation between aesthetics and technology and the possible responses of art in our technological epoch dominated by discourses of artificial intelligence, transhumanism, eco-modernism, surveillance societies, etc. This technological epoch is also characterized by the Anthropocene, in which the humans become the dominating geological force, ecological mutations, and extinction of species. What would be the possibility of art, especially media art, in face of this metaphysical force, which is modern technology? This necessitates a re-opening of the concept of technology and aesthetics as well as their relations. The history of modern and contemporary art seems to have privileged a particular trajectory of aesthetics and a particular relation between art and technology, consequently creates an impasse for thinking. This course wants to reintroduce the varieties of experience of art, for example and not limited to, the East and the West, and ask how can it contribute to the reconceptualization of technology and aesthetics today.

### 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.	Understand the basic concepts of aesthetics and technology and their histories	30%	✓	✓	✓
2.	Able to grasp and analyse different traditions of aesthetic thinking, West and East, and further	20%	✓	✓	
3.	Able to present conceptually challenging material orally	10%		✓	
4.	Able to research on artistic and curatorial practices	10%			
5.	Develop a critical reflection on the relation between aesthetics and technology of the present	30%		✓	✓
		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	5	
Lectures and discussions	Lectures and discussions involving key concepts and key texts	✓	✓				
	Proposals for historical and theoretical research projects on media/technology-related topics			✓	✓		
	Presentation of final research project/paper			✓	✓	✓	
	Participation in and contribution to class projects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

### 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	5		
Continuous Assessment: 100%							
Analytical essay	✓				✓	50%	
Written reading summaries		✓				20%	
Oral Presentations			✓		✓	20%	
Discussions				✓	✓	10%	
Examination: 0% (duration: , if applicable)						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. Analytic Essay, written summary of readings	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent grasp of research material, able to explain key concepts, assumptions and debates</li> <li>Rigorous organization, coherent structure, distinct thesis, properly argued with strong narrative</li> <li>Insightful interpretation of the subject matter with distinct themes and thesis</li> <li>Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize</li> <li>Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Firm grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts and assumptions</li> <li>Reasonable organization, balanced structure, adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand</li> <li>Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret opinions independently</li> <li>Organized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts</li> <li>Fair organization, weak structure, adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand</li> <li>Relevant points to the subject matter, fair ability to interpret opinions</li> <li>Unorganized bibliography that can be utilized in accordance with the topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loose grasp of materials, cannot explain key concepts</li> <li>Poor organization and structure, weak content, limited use of resources</li> <li>Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions</li> <li>Insufficient and/or unorganized bibliography</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor grasp of materials</li> <li>No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/irrelevant use of resources</li> <li>Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions</li> <li>Irrelevant bibliography</li> </ul>

		<p>theories and analytical tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong bibliography suggesting breadth and depth of coverage and informed insights</li> </ul>				
2. Oral Presentation and Discussion	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter</li> <li>• Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative</li> <li>• Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter</li> <li>• Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition</li> <li>• Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter</li> <li>• Fair organization, weak structure and composition</li> <li>• Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter</li> <li>• Poor organization, structure and composition</li> <li>• Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, poor time-management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter</li> <li>• No organization, structure or/and composition</li> <li>• Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize</li> </ul>				
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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. Analytic Essay, written summary of readings	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent grasp of research material, able to explain key concepts, assumptions and debates</li> <li>• Rigorous organization, coherent structure, distinct thesis, properly argued with strong narrative</li> <li>• Insightful interpretation of the subject matter with distinct themes and thesis</li> <li>• Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize</li> <li>• Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools</li> <li>• Strong bibliography suggesting breadth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firm grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts and assumptions</li> <li>• Reasonable organization, balanced structure, adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand</li> <li>• Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret opinions independently</li> <li>• Organized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts</li> <li>• Fair organization, weak structure, adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand</li> <li>• Relevant points to the subject matter, fair ability to interpret opinions</li> <li>• Unorganized bibliography that can be utilized in accordance with the topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor grasp of materials</li> <li>• No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources</li> <li>• Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions</li> <li>• Irrelevant bibliography</li> </ul>

		and depth of coverage and informed insights			
2. Oral Presentation and Discussion	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter</li> <li>• Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative</li> <li>• Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management</li> <li>• Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter</li> <li>• Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition</li> <li>• Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter</li> <li>• Fair organization, weak structure and composition</li> <li>• Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter</li> <li>• No organization, structure or/and composition</li> <li>• Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management</li> </ul>

### 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.)

technology, aesthetics, digital media, anthropocene, posthumanism, history of thought, technodiversity. Philosophy East and West

#### 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.)

Martin Heidegger, "What are poets for?" in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2001)

Michel Henry, "The Essence of Art," in *Seeing the Invisible. On Kandinsky*, trans. Scott Davidson (London: Continuum, 2009)

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind" (1961), in *The Primacy of Perception*, trans. Carleton Dallery (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 159-190

Theodor Adorno, Universal and Particular, in *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Bloomsbury, 2012)

Francois Jullien, *The Strange Idea of the Beautiful*, (Seagull Books, 2015) Chapter I-VI.

Francois Jullien, *The Impossible Nude* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007)

Francois Jullien, *The Great Image Has no Form* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003)

Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Technical Reproducibility" *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008)

Bernard Stiegler, *Symbolic Misery Volume 2: The Catastrophe of the Sensible* (London: Polity, 2015) Chapter 3

Jean-François Lyotard, "After 6 Months of Work," In *30 Years after les immatériaux*, ed. Yuk Hui and A. Broeckmann (Lüneburg: Meson, 2015)

Peter Sloterdijk, "The Anthropocene: A Process-State at the Edge of Geohistory?," in *Art in the Anthropocene* (London: Open Humanities, 2015)

Kodwo Eshun, *More brilliant than the sun : adventures in sonic fiction* (Quartet Books, 1998)

Yuk Hui, *The Question Concerning Technology in China. An Essay in Cosmotechnics* (Falmouth: Urbanomics, 2016/2019)



## 2.2 Additional Readings

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

Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duhem: Duke, 2016)

Jacques Rancière, “The sublime from Lyotard to Schiller Two readings of Kant and their political significance,” *Radical Philosophy*

Martin Heidegger, The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking, in *Time and Being*

Bruno Latour, *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime* (London: Polity, 2019)

Yuk Hui, *Recursivity and Contingency* (London: Roman and Littlefield International, 2019)

Jean-François Lyotard, “Can Thought go on without a body?,” In *The Inhuman:*

*Reflections on Time* (London: Polity, 1991), 8-23

François Cheng, *Full and Empty. The Language of Chinese Painting*, trans. Michael H. Kohn (Boston: Shambhala, 1994),

Mou Zongsan, *Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy* (Create Space: 2015)

Kitaro Nishida, “Form of culture of the classical periods of East and West seen from a metaphysical perspective,” in *Sourcebook for modern Japanese philosophy*, trans. and ed.

D. A. Dilworth et al, (London: Greenwood Press, 1998), 21