

LMC 4730: Experimental Digital Art

On the Capabilities of Hip Hop-inspired Design Thinking (HHiD) in the Making of Experimental Digital Art Across Music and Media

Fall 2026

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2–3 EST in person or by appointment via Zoom

NOTE: The course is delivered through face-to-face instruction, with the integration of independent preparation and group assignment/design studio days. Elements of the syllabus and course schedule are subject to adjustment based on those made by the Institute due to any other extenuating circumstances. **Regular attendance and participation are expected, especially on design studio days, as peer critique and collaboration are integral to the learning process.**

Prerequisites: (Undergraduate Semester level CS 1322 Minimum Grade of C or Undergraduate Semester level CS 1331 Minimum Grade of C) and (Undergraduate Semester level LCC 2100 Minimum Grade of C or Undergraduate Semester level LCC 2700 Minimum Grade of C or Undergraduate Semester level LMC 2700 Minimum Grade of C or Undergraduate Semester level LMC 2000 Minimum Grade of C)

General Course Description

The course is listed under the general topic of “Experimental Digital Art”. Generally speaking, the course will examine ways in which forms and media of communication create and are created by other cultural constructs and impacted by digital technologies in order to create artifacts in areas ranging from augmented and mixed reality to scientific visualization. It will also examine significant movements, styles, and trends in digital art, emphasizing its key conceptual, formal, aesthetic and technical elements.

Topical Course Description

Christiane Paul explains the curation of digital art as an engagement with a variety of aspects of the production, presentation, and reception of the work of art as it has been created through the use of digital technologies. The work of art can range from a painting, to a sculpture, to an album collection of music; all of which can be curated in a variety of environments: an online exhibit, a music streaming service, a virtual archive, or a public museum's digital installation.

Using the music produced by an artist as the access point for exploration and project design, this course interrogates these three facets of curation. (**"Access points" here refer to entryways into critical study and creative production through an artist's body of work, cultural impact, and digital presence.**) In *On the Capabilities of Hip Hop-inspired Design Thinking (HHiD) in the Making of Experimental Digital Art Across Music and Medium*, we will interrogate the ways in which cultural artifacts—such as music, film, memes, gifs, video games, fan art, and interactive media—are produced and presented/advertised using digital technologies and modalities as tools of innovation and expression. We will also explore the idea of audience reception when digital technologies are applied.

The course is designed to interrogate relationships between popular culture and new media technologies, and to produce representational collections of art such as (but not limited to) album covers, music videos, films, photography, animation, concerts/festivals, and virtual reality experiences. We will investigate best practices as well as the challenges associated with ensuring authenticity and impact of an artist's work. The course also introduces students to hip hop-based design thinking as a pedagogical approach. Students will be expected to apply these approaches to projects analyzed and designed in the course.

Last, the course investigates the intersections of social justice, artistic representation, and the use of digital innovation as one of its outcomes, and assumes the creation of digital art as a cultural endeavor. Paired with assigned readings, screenings, and guest speakers, the course uses these artist “access points” as exemplary case studies. Students will investigate the digital and social media campaigns (and the art created to represent it) of group-selected artists or films. Students will interrogate design challenges and analyze best practices employed through digital technologies to present and promote their selected campaign. Aside from the necessary skills in the software and computational media methodologies, which many of the students already have based on the course prerequisites, students will become familiar with **the 7 universal elements of design known as the OUTKAST Imagination**. This will be done through an introduction to the cultural history of hip hop. In order to legitimately explore these campaigns, it is integral to include an interrogation of hip hop—its history, its innovations, challenges, sensibilities, elements, and norms, but more specifically its relationship to design, media art, popular culture, and "the digital."

Areas of Focus

1. The conceptual, technical, speculative, and aesthetic foundations of digital art.
2. The history and innovation of hip hop as a cultural approach to design thinking, popular music, and the production of works of art using new media technologies.
3. The relationship between hip hop, popular culture, and digital art.
4. The use of Hip Hop-inspired Design Thinking (HHiD) as a cultural approach to the ideation, problem-solving, design process, and production of digital art created to express themes and ideas generated from music lyrics (i.e., album covers, short and long-form videos, film and animation, photography, concerts, meme culture, social media).
5. Designing a fictitious digital art campaign for an existing artist or artifact.

Course Aims

These seven major aims shape the structure of the course:

- To explore the conceptual, speculative aesthetics, and technical elements of digital art.
- To exit the course with a fundamental understanding of digital art.
- To draw on a rich dataset of media artifacts for analysis and enhance students’ knowledge base of techniques for designing works of art that utilize digital technology as part of the creative process.
- To provide students with a set of skills and tools for creating media products that intersect media and culture with social impact. Particular attention is given to issues of representation and identity, and how works of art are curated through digital technologies to express these concepts.
- To use Hip Hop-inspired Design Thinking (HHiD) as a cultural approach for examining how music and music-centered artifacts serve as a medium for representing aspects of Black cultural expression and how they create and are created by other sociocultural constructs.
- To conceptualize experimental digital art as a facilitator of voice, collaboration, inclusion, and resilience.

- To understand digital art within the context of archiving and preservation, recognizing its role in shaping cultural memory and future access to creative works.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Through a series of modules, readings, and interactive activities students will have assignments that lead to opportunities to experiment with the design/manipulation of a variety of images and digital art products

The learning outcomes of the course are:

Historical Analysis: Students will study cultural texts, screen documentary film, and interrogate examples of visual art to form a working definition of what digital art is, its relationship to culture, and ground its affordances within principles of design and curation.

Enhancement of Graphic Design Literacies: The films, reading, and assignments are designed to enhance the technical capacities of the students. Students will build upon their knowledge base with opportunities to experiment with illustration techniques, manipulation of images, animation, web design, the use of photography, video, and film, and modeling of virtual environments within physical environments like concerts. Students will apply the fundamentals of design with software such as Adobe Creative Suite

Media Production and Team-Building: Students will examine the legacies of contemporary and historical graphic designers and their impact. Students will work as part of a production team to learn the conceptual and technical elements of producing a digital art campaign aimed at having social impact. These projects will enhance their technical skills while also teaching them about organization, project management, communication, and the ethics of teamwork.

Enhancement of Social Justice Literacies. Graphic designers play a key part in producing artifacts that have long-term impact on the ways in which the social world is represented through the media. Students will engage in projects that can help facilitate their civic engagement capacities and social justice literacies as they are youth influencers living in a technological world. Students will understand Hip Hop culture as a pedagogy of inclusion and resilience, but also as a community of practice inclusive of geographical social networks such as Atlanta, Georgia, nuanced by localized, environmental traditions, and how the politics of space and place impact works of art.

Critical Presentation & Reflection: Students will develop the ability to critically present their creative work, situating it within historical, cultural, and design contexts through both written and oral presentations.

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Preparation: The course is conducted as a traditional face-to-face seminar lecture course complemented by online meetings. This means there are days when I will provide information in the form of a presentation, followed by a discussion of the materials, and on other days we will meet online. When this is the case, the face-to-face meetings will take place on Thursday. Content preparation days are held on Tuesday.

The mode of instruction for the course is in-person, which will include the integration of preparation days and design studio time. The course resources are curated with a set of pedagogical experiences structured around a reading, writing, designing, viewing, and discussion schedule that you will be expected to ACTIVELY meet and participate in. You will also make presentations as they relate to discussion topics, posts, and the final production of your group's digital art project. Many of our topics will challenge your

comfort zone and force you to be critical of the material and your thoughts on the material. The number one rule is preparation. So, come on-time ready to participate.

Attendance: Attendance is absolutely vital to your success in my class; I take roll. Students who are absent because of participation in approved Institute activities (such as field trips, professional conferences, and athletic events) will be permitted to make up the work missed during their absences. Approval of such activities will be granted by the Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate, and statements of the approved absence may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar <https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/>. If you have more than three unexcused absences, chronic tardiness, failure to have read enough to engage in the discussions, and other disruptions such as texting, talking on the phone, falling asleep, I will consider this an absence and as apathy towards the class and the material. You will be marked absent for the day.

- **Reasons for absences.** The attendance policy does not make any distinction about the reasons for your absences. Only absences officially exempted by the Institute (e.g., due to participation in official GA Tech athletics, to religious observance, to personal or family crisis confirmed by documentation from the Dean of Students) will not be counted among your allotted absences.
- **Responsibility for missed work.** Students are responsible for contacting the instructor to find out what they may have missed while absent from class. Students are responsible for making up the work within a week. However, if you are not present to participate in a group presentation or the final group production, you will fail the course.
- **Absence penalties.** Each additional absence after two absences deducts one-third of a letter grade from your final grade. Missing six (6) classes results in automatic failure of the class.

Think ahead. If you know in advance that you must miss a certain class meeting be sure not to miss more than three others. If you need to leave a class session early, please inform me before the start of the session and sit near the front of the room so that your departure can be minimally disruptive.

Personal Electronics: If you are found to be using a device for any purpose unrelated to the immediate conduct of the course, you will be marked absent for the day. If I ask you to put your device away, I expect you to graciously do so. **You may not, without my written consent, audio or video record my lectures.**

All devices should remain on vibrate. If you are expecting an important call, remember to sit near the door so there is little to no interruption when you exit.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts

The required text for this course is [Christiane Paul's Digital Art, Third Edition \(2015\). Links to an external site.](#)

Required Materials

Supplementary chapters, journal articles, and commentaries will either be uploaded to Canvas, or you can find them online.

Required Platforms

The documentary films we screen in and out of class are available on YouTube, Netflix, and other on-demand streaming services. Access to a Netflix account is helpful to screen most of the assigned

documentaries. Please let me know if you do not have access. I will do my best to find a complementary assignment. You will also need to purchase a journal and/or sketchbook for in-class reflections, notetaking, and outlining of production notes. Completion of the software evaluation survey will help me understand the platforms and software you have at your fingertips.

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Individual Assignments

Participation & Engagement

- **Class Participation & Attendance → 60 points**
Includes active presence, in-class activities, and **3 self-evaluations** of engagement throughout the semester (20 points each).
- **Guest Speaker Reflections (4 × 10 points each) → 40 points**
Short written or video responses connecting guest insights to course themes and OI principles.

Design Challenges / Discussion Posts (7 @ 10 points each)

Students are required to post a written or video response to the course's discussion thread. These posts should be **one to two concise paragraphs** or, if in video form, **no more than 3 minutes**. The goal is to frame the assigned readings for the week by raising (but not necessarily answering) key questions, concerns, arguments, and positions taken by the author or producer.

Posts may:

- Serve as reflections to close out the week.
- Help guide discussions for the upcoming seminar.
- Respond to another student's post (adding to or challenging their ideas, but not attacking them).

Unless otherwise stated, please post by 11:59 a.m. the Monday before our following Tuesday class for credit. Late posts receive partial credit unless due to excused absence or emergency.

Group Assignments

Seminar Presentation (20 points)

Each group will make a 15-minute presentation to the class. These should be **value-added presentations**—bringing in information and ideas directly related to but going beyond the assigned topic and readings, not simply repeating them.

Recommended process:

1. Complete the reading for the session.
2. Identify a question, gap, or underexplored idea.
3. Conduct research to expand and connect that idea to course themes.

Requirements:

- Use visual or audio materials to support your ideas.

- You may assign the class a short reading/viewing/listening, provided it's shared in advance.
- You are not required to get topic approval from me, but you may if you wish.
- If you must miss your scheduled presentation date, notify me and your group in advance.

Midterm Media Project Case Study/Design Challenge (20 points)

Teams will select a **popular artist(s)** or product with cultural and/or industry impact (film, music, fashion, gaming, museums). Considering digital art both as a tool and a medium, design teams will curate a presentation analyzing the digital art used to market that artist's project.

The case study should:

- Examine original cover art: its **visual language**, historical context, and significance.
- Connect the cover art to related assets (music videos, long-form videos, thematic video content, fan art, photography, typography, animation, etc.).
- Evaluate how these assets align with the project's themes.
- Identify the graphic designers (where possible) and analyze their approach.
- Assess the role of virtual/augmented reality, concert production, and social media campaigns (including imagery, posting patterns, interactivity).

Final Campaign (100 points)

Teams will produce a **remixed digital art campaign** for a music/media artist—fictional or real.

Requirements:

- Begin with an analysis of the artist's lyrics or story.
- Apply the **OUTKAST Imagination** as a hermeneutic.
- Deliverables:
 1. New cover art (illustration and/or photography, typography).
 2. A community mural or digital billboard.
 3. Two promotional social media assets/approaches.
 4. Optional: Two-page website for hosting the artist's project (can replace PowerPoint/Google Slides).
- The final presentation (15–20 minutes) should integrate animation where possible and be **scalable** for VR or interactive experiences.
- Discuss decision-making, best practices, and challenges—emphasizing authenticity and cultural impact.

Tip: This is a strong setup for those continuing into *Interactive Narrative* in Spring.

Submission of Assignments Completed Using AI

This course is designed to improve and evaluate your writing, design, and analytical abilities. **Any use of AI technologies (e.g., ChatGPT, Midjourney, DALL·E) to produce or substantially compose an assignment without explicit instructor permission will be treated as plagiarism (i.e., a failing grade in the course).**

However: You may use AI tools for permitted creative tasks (e.g., mood boards, typography experiments, generating concept sketches) *only* when noted in the assignment guidelines, and you must credit the tool used in your submission.

GRADING SYSTEM

You will be expected to meet all of the set deadlines according to the assignments. You will be responsible and held accountable for the readings. You will be expected to submit your very best work **without typos**. That doesn't mean that you have to write like Ernest Hemingway, incorporate metaphors like Toni Morrison, or design like Basquiat. But you **WILL** be expected to follow the assignment rubrics, consider my suggestions for improvement, and submit exemplary work.

As listed below, I use a point-based grading system. These points are accumulated according to rubrics designated for each assignment. Your grade will be based on the following criteria.

Point Disbursements

Class Participation and Attendance: 60 points

Guest Speaker Reflections: 40 points

1 Design Presentations (presented virtually): 20 points

Design Discussion Posts: 70 points

Mid-term Media Case Study: 20 points

Final Project: 100 points

Total Possible Points: 310

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A 90-100%

B 80-89%

C 70-79%

D 60-69%

F 0-59%

COURSE SUPPORT AND SERVICES

The Communication Center

The Communication Center is located in Clough Commons, Suite 447. It is an excellent resource for any student (undergraduate or graduate) who wants help with a communication-related project. You can visit the center for help at any stage of the process for any project in any discipline. The tutors are available to help you develop and revise your projects. For information on making an appointment please visit this website: <http://communicationcenter.gatech.edu/content/make-appointment>. If you need assistance with the appointment system, you can call 404-385-3612 or stop by the center. All services are free and confidential.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/> [Links to an external site.](#) <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/> [Links to an external site.](#) [Links to an external site.](#) Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Attendance and/or Participation

Students are expected to come to class fully prepared to participate in class activities. At the same time, the GT' rules and regulations (<http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/> [Links to an external site.](#) [Links to an external site.](#)) will be honored, which allow the absences due to the participations in institute activities, attendance in funerals, participation in particular religious observation, jury duties, etc. Students who miss class due to illness or emergency should notify the instructor when they can and then should file an [IAA form](#) [Links to an external site.](#) [Links to an external site.](#) with the Registrar's Office. The instructor will be notified by e-mail if the absence is approved.

Learning Accommodations

Classroom accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. These accommodations must be arranged in advance and in accordance with the Office of Disability Services:

<http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/> [Links to an external site.](#) [Links to an external site.](#)

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement: At Georgia Tech we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/> [Links to an external site.](#) [Links to an external site.](#) for an articulation of some basic expectation that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek.

COVID Guidelines

We will do our absolute best to keep ourselves and those in our classroom community safe. While it is not a mandate that you wear a mask, I strongly encourage you do for your own benefit and for the safety of those around you. I will be wearing my mask in class and during our lectures. Social distancing is also a CDC recommendation that we will do our best to meet. There are thirty-five students enrolled in the course. Please adhere to social distancing during in-person meetings. If you must ask me a question or speak with me before or after class, please mask and maintain six feet from me. My suggestion is that you

also consider taking advantage of my office hours, which are held virtually on Tuesday from 2:00 - 3:00pm or by appointment.

While the CDC has dropped the requirement to quarantine if there's been exposure to the virus, please be mindful that the requirement is to wear a mask for the five days. As a safety measure for us, I strongly encourage you to **stay home if you are sick, feel sick, think you might be sick, or think you have been exposed to COVID, the flu, MPX, or any viral infection that is highly-transmissible. You will not be penalized. Let's all do our part to stay healthy and safe!**

Jackets Moving Forward!

INFORMATION RE: PARTICIPATION

General Rubric for Class Participation:

A= 100-90 B= 89-80 C= 79-70 D = 69-60 F = 59 and below

A: Student consistently makes significant contributions to class discussion and group work. They are always engaged in class, whether actively taking notes, listening to peers or the instructor, speaking in class, or participating in group work. This student exemplifies maturity and collegiality.

B: Student generally contributes to class discussion and group work, takes notes, and listens to peers and the instructor.

C: Student sometimes takes notes and participates in group work, but is not consistently an active participant in class discussion and is often otherwise distracted or unfocused.

D: Student sits in class, generally without required reading, without taking notes, and without making contributions to discussion and/or group work.

F: Student does not show up to class consistently.

Some things that can decrease your class participation grade:

- - Being unprepared
 - Being disruptive or rude
 - Not listening to peers who speak in class
 - Not taking notes or otherwise appearing engaged
 - Texting/checking e-mail, social media, doing other classwork etc. in class

What does class participation mean?

Strong participation can seriously affect a borderline grade. In order to earn a strong participation grade, you are expected to come to every class prepared to present your analysis of the readings and media. Be sure to arrive on time everyday. Lateness is disrespectful and disrupts the momentum of the class discussion. Repeated tardiness will negatively impact your participation grade. Three or more unexcused absences will result in a failing participation grade. In order to have active, productive class participation you must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Attend all classes whether they are in-person or held remotely
- Arrive to class ON TIME
- Complete the engagement with the assigned resources BEFORE class

- Contribute your thoughts and ideas during class as part of the discussion
- Turn assignments in on time
- Remain attentive and focused throughout the class. Cell phone use is prohibited. Remain respectful towards the professor and peers at all times, even when in disagreement.

Participation is verbal interaction in class and requires more than simply attending class. Everyone is expected to make an effort to speak during every class. However, you are not invited to dominate the discussion. You are required to respect the contributions of your peers (talking out of turn, whispering, and snickering will not be tolerated). Participation is strongly emphasized because learning is active. We learn as much, if not more, from speaking and writing as we do from listening and reading. Therefore, participation in class will improve your performance in every other area of this course.

How do I critique an article or chapter for class discussion?

Your first responsibility in a critique is to make the best case for the author. Learn to read and listen critically and empathetically. Be able to convey what the author means rather than nit picking at words or taking their argument out of context. Identify what is useful and meaningful about their work and how it can be applied to other contexts and circumstances.

Critical analysis is the second step. This is your view of how the author's argument may be flawed and how it could be improved. The key to critical thinking is calling into question the assumptions and inferences that are the basis of the arguments presented and assessing the reliability of the evidence presented in the reading. While reading the material, ask what assumptions the author made to make her/his point. Next, suggest more effective alternatives to the author's argument and propose additional examples that might have supported it. Finally, present your own views clearly and concisely. Remember to try to engage in conversation rather than debate; learn from the author by acknowledging strong elements of their argument and assessing how these elements relate to your own position.

MODULE SCHEDULE

The semester is divided into TRACKS, each with its own set of modules.

Each module includes lecture topics, readings, screenings, and assignments for the week. **The dates in red indicate no class meeting on that particular day or week. The dates in green indicate an online class meeting. Dates that are in purple indicate an out-of-class independent prep or design/studio day.**

Full Module Schedule for Fall 2026 is located in Pages