MA Digital Cultures

director of studies:
Karin Wenz 2018/19
Susan Schreibman 2019/20

General set up

- First semester:
  - Four 8-week modules introducing core questions and issues in media culture and one 4-week module

- Second semester: individual specialization
  One 4-week module, 5 workshops
  - Extensive individual thesis
  - Internship

1.   Transformations in Digital Cultures
(period 1)

coordinator: Karin Wenz

skills:
Ike Kamphof
John Harbord
Costas Papadopoulos
Karin Wenz

1. Transformations in Digital Cultures

- What are the major trends and dynamics in the present-day media landscape?
- What is the impact of these trends on culture and society?
- What is the effect on information politics?

Aims

- To introduce you to central concepts in the field of digital cultures and digital sociology

- To introduce you to discussions around digital technologies, their social aspects and information politics

- To introduce you to academic skills/methods: PBL, academic writing, social network analysis

- To introduce you to digital skills: blogging, introduction to NodeXL

Maastricht University

2. Real Virtualities
(period 1)

coordinator: Ike Kamphof

2. Real Virtualities

- How do new media affect our experience of reality?
- How about our sense of the 'here and now'?
- Can we still distinguish between reality and virtuality, or is everything taken up in the hyperreal media sphere?
- How can we analyze mixed realities?
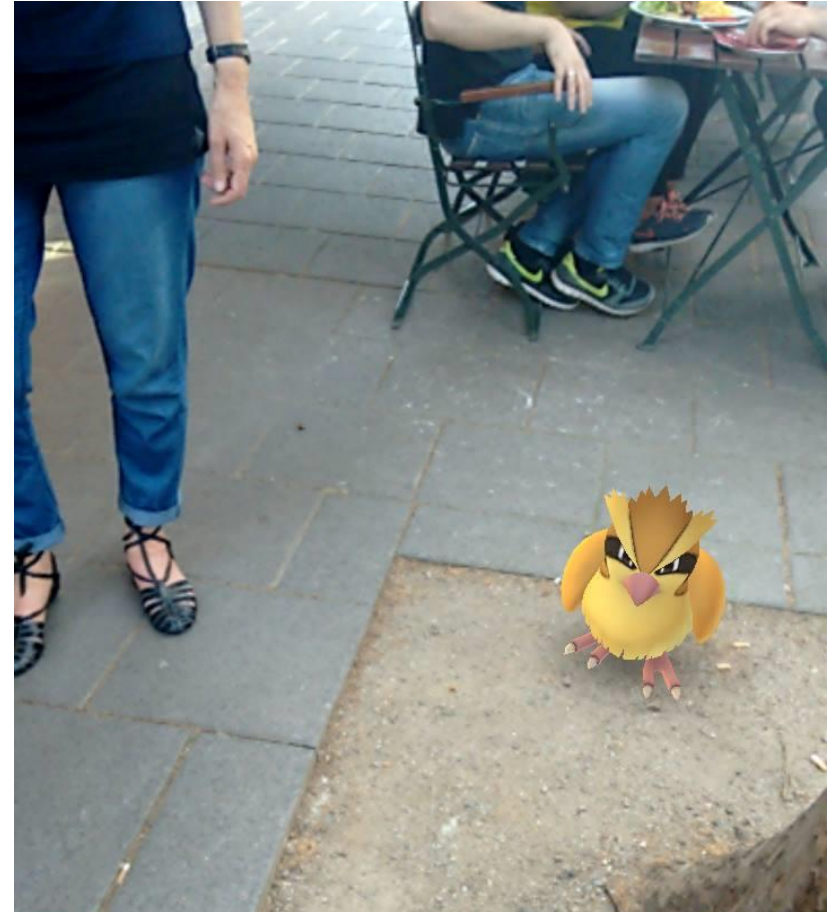
Aims

- To introduce you to helpful concepts and arguments from key philosophical texts, sounding out their role in contemporary cultural debates and practices.
- To train you in phenomenological description, and the analysis of your experience of selected media applications.
- To practice description and analysis in a blog post (analog lab) and an essay.
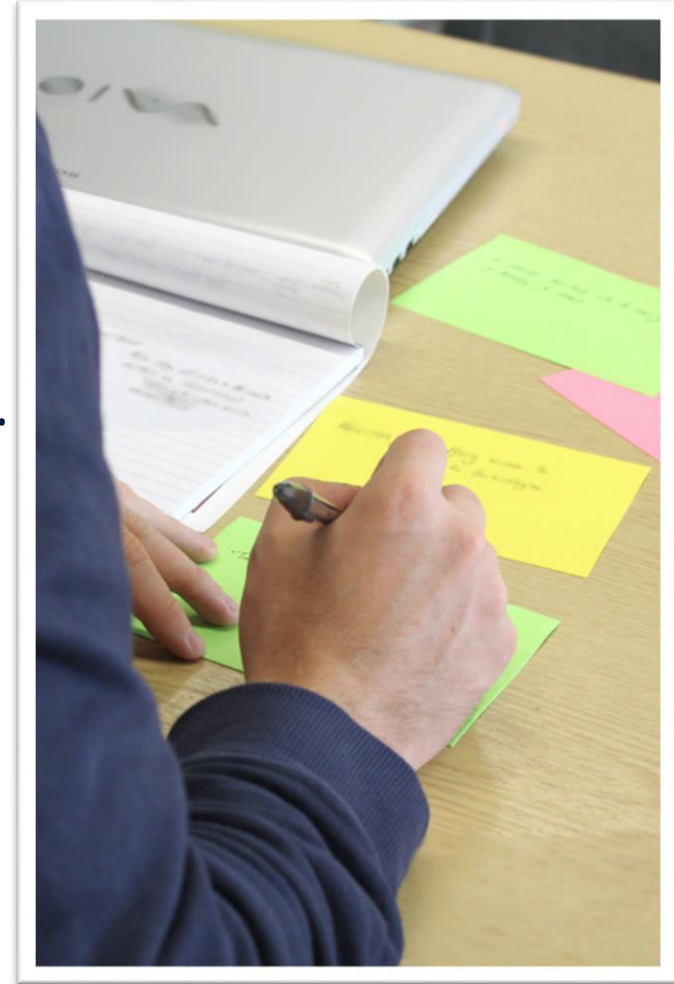
3. Design Thinking and Maker Culture
(period 2)

coordinator: Susan Schreibman

skills: Costas Papadopoulos

3. Design Thinking and Maker Culture

- Design Thinking is a powerful solution-based approach to problem solving. It frames problems through a user-centric lens, applying an iterative feedback loop for prototyping, testing, and development.

- This module combines with practices of Maker Culture, a technology-based extension of DIY, in which the ethos of tinkering, game design and hacking are explored to create digital products

Aims

- To understand how to employ design thinking and maker culture as a creative and critical practice

- To apply design-thinking and visual-thinking skills

- To employ narrative analysis of digital texts

- To apply best practice in multimodal blog design

4. Digital Archives: Creation, Curation, Preservation
(period 2)
coordinator: Costas Papadopoulos & Susan Schreibman
skills: Costas Papadopoulos

4. Digital Archives: Creation, Curation, Preservation

- How is traditional archival practice being transformed with the increasing digitalisation of our society?

- What are the ethics and challenges of creating, curating, and preserving digital archives?

- How can digital archives inspire new conversations and forms of practice?

- How do notions of value, representation, and power take new meaning in digital archives.

Method and Research Skills: Critical Archival Studies
Media Skills: 3D modelling

Aims

- Introducing students to the transformations that the Digital has brought to traditional archival practice.

- Emphasing digital approaches to the digitisation, curation, and preservation of three-dimensional material culture.

- Interrogating the role of digital archives and archival actions and practices in the production of knowledge.

- Exploring how digital archives can bring about social justice.

- Providing the skills to digitise material culture using computational imaging techniques.

- Providing the skills to create a digital archive using iterative and user-centred design.
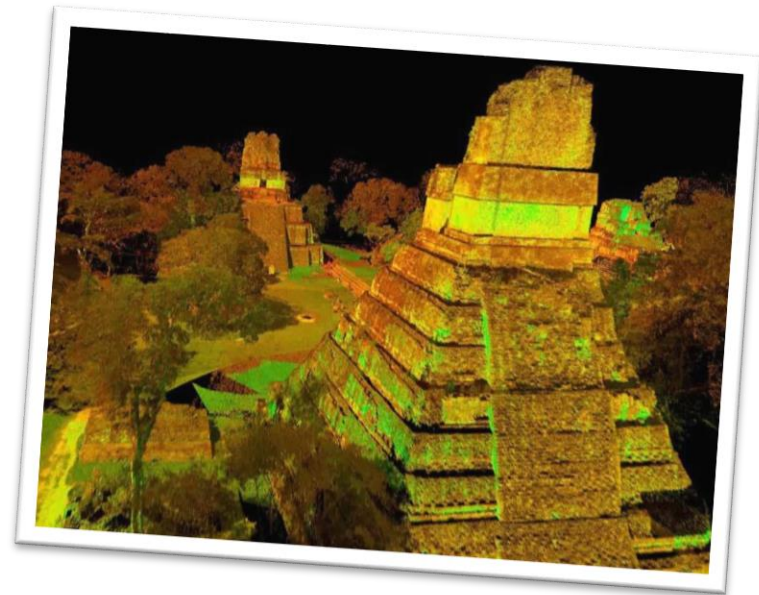
5. New Public Spheres
(period 3)

coordinator: Costas Papadopoulos
skills: Costas Papadopoulos

5. New Public Spheres

- How does technology intervene in cultural spaces, both as a means to create new narratives, and as a medium for public debate?

- What are the ethics and politics of reproducing heritage in the digital era?

- How does digital transformations alter the meaning and value of heritage?

- How can 'communicative action' in the public sphere reshape heritage interpretation?

Aims

- Understanding the 'public sphere' as key concept in critical theory
- Apprehending the role of heritage as a public sphere
- Examining how technological transformations alter the meaning and value of heritage
- Examining contemporary heritage cases illustrating new and changing public spheres and the redefinition of concepts, such as identity, memory, power, audience, and democracy
- Introduction to textual analysis and Voyant
- Writing a paper on a heritage controversy relevant to new public spheres

2nd semester

6. Research Design
(period 4)

coordinator: Jack Post

Aims

- Recapitulating concepts, theories and methods
- Preparing individual research
- Supporting the search for a topic and research question
- Writing a research plan

Specialization

- MA thesis: research plan + thesis

- Research internship: research plan + internship thesis + internship + internship report
  (April and May 2020)

Supporting thesis writing

March

- How to write your introduction
- How to write about methodology
- How to engage with the literature
- How to structure your paper and develop your argumentation

June

- Presentation day
- How to write your abstract and conclusion

Maastricht University

Admission

conditions:

- An <u>academic</u> Bachelor's degree with a certified list of grades and a CV indicating relevant working experience

- A letter of motivation indicating why you wish to study Digital Cultures at the Faculty of Arts and Culture and why you expect that you will be able to successfully complete the program.

- IELTS Language Test with a score of at least 6,5 (you need to reach 6,5 at least in writing)
  or internet-based TOEFL with a score of at least 92 (you need to reach 24 at least in writing)

- Academic paper + skype interview might be asked additionally

Maastricht University

Pre-master

1-year programme for students from vocational BAs
(e.g. HBO, Fachhochschule)

- passing all modules = automatic acceptance to the MADC
  programme

- Admission:
  - apply to the MADC programme
  - good grades needed to be accepted into the pre-master