

ATCM 6300: Interdisciplinary Approaches to ATEC

Fall 2021

A syllabus is nothing more than a plan. And, as the recent past has made abundantly clear, even the most well-developed plans change. Be sure to work from the version on Box for the most up-to-date information.

Course Information

Credit Hours: 3

Co-requisite: ATCM 6000 Dean's Colloquium

Degree Plan: Core Requirement on all ATEC graduate degree plans. You must earn a 3.0 (B) average in your pathway's core courses in order to graduate.

Instructor Information

I am Dr. Kim Brillante Knight and my pronouns are she/her or they/them. I ask that students address me as Dr. Knight or Professor Knight in our interactions. In addition to serving as the instructor of this course, I am the Area Head of Critical Media Studies in ATEC.

I am also the project director for Fashioning Circuits, a Public Humanities project that engages wearable tech, domestic technologies, and computational craft. We meet weekly on Fridays and you are welcome to join us.

Ways to reach me

- Email: kim.knight@utdallas.edu
- MS Teams (text chat, voice, video)
- Office location: ATC 2.911

Office Hours

- Drop in Tuesdays, 3pm – 4pm, via MS TEAMS
 - Quick questions or check-ins via one-on-one video/text chats.
 - I'll post when I'm "open" on our class TEAM and you can sign up by commenting.
- By appointment Thursdays, 5pm – 6:30pm, in my office or on MS Teams.
 - Individual meetings to discuss your progress in the class, the program, and so forth.
 - Book a 30-minute appointment at <https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/DrKnightOfficeHourBookings@utdallas.edu/bookings/>

- If these days & times do not work for you, please email me with a request for an appointment and a list of days and times you are available. This option generally requires a few weeks' notice.

Contact policies:

- I generally respond to email and other messages during working hours (8am – 5pm), Monday through Friday.
 - If I do not respond after 2-3 weekdays, check my email address and re-send it. If it was on Teams, make sure you sent me a direct chat, or if it was in a group chat or a channel, be sure to “@” me. Sometimes email falls through the cracks and I welcome the reminder.
 - For emailing me, or any faculty member, you might find the following useful: “How to Email Your Professor (without being annoying AF),” <https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087>
- Use official UTD email or MS Teams only. If you are asking me a question or telling me something on TEAMS, be sure to use the @ symbol and my name so that I receive a notification.

The Place Where We Meet

In-person discussion sessions are scheduled in Room ATC 2.101 of the Edith O’Donnell Arts and Technology Building at UT Dallas.

UT Dallas stands on land originally settled and occupied by the Caddo, Wichita and Comanche people. We recognize the history of UT Dallas begins with the forced removal of the indigenous people through the legacy of colonization.

The historic Caddo people were the leaders of the Caddo Nation, an organized confederacy of at least 25 smaller tribes. The Caddo Confederacy was active until the 1800s and numbered 250,000 at the height of their existence. The Hasinai were among the 25 tribes of the Caddo Confederacy. Tejas is the Spanish spelling of Tayshas, the Hasinai word for those who are friends. The Caddo Confederacy was commonly known to the Spanish as “The Tejas”. Texas is the English spelling of Tejas.

In 1855, the Caddo people were forcibly removed from the land they had originally settled and lived on for generations. They were relocated to the Brazos Indian Reservation, making room for the Peters colony. In 1859, they were again forcibly removed and relocated to the Washita River in Indian Territory in what is currently Caddo County, Oklahoma. The Caddo Nation of Oklahoma is a federally recognized tribe located in Binger, Oklahoma, which is made up of descendants of the historic Caddo tribes.

For more information about the indigenous peoples forced off this land by colonization, see <https://multicultural.utdallas.edu/about-us/>

Course Description

Welcome to ATCM 6300, Interdisciplinary Approaches to Arts, Technology, and Emerging Communication. Your peers in this class include MA students in the Emerging Media Studies pathway, MFA students in pathways in Animation or Creative Practice, and PhD students, who have no defined pathway. You come from a variety of institutions and disciplinary backgrounds. This course will start you on the multi-year journey of interdisciplinary inquiry that connects your various backgrounds, methods, and interests under the expansive umbrella of ATEC. We will use theory, close reading of media/art/technology, and interpretative analysis to help us develop these zones of engagement. This course also includes assignments that help you become acquainted with ATEC, transition into ATEC graduate study, and move into your next steps in the program.

After an introductory unit in which we practice the methods of critical reading and interpretation, this class has four units, one for each of the four pillars of ATEC as outlined in the ATEC 2020 strategic plan: <https://atec.utdallas.edu/StrategicPlan2020/FourPillars.html>

It's impossible to cover every topic that is crucial to understanding ATEC in one 14-week class. Instead, we'll aim to develop habits of exploration that will allow you to engage with any topic in ATEC throughout your time here. In addition to focusing on ATEC topics, we will spend a fair amount of time this semester identifying tools and resources that will help you succeed in graduate study in ATEC.

Course Goals

In this course, students will

- Explore theories of arts, technology, and emerging communication;
- Apply theory to developing “big questions” that bridge the areas of ATEC;
- Develop strategies for analyzing art, media, and technology;
- Participate in scholarly and creative professional communities using the appropriate discursive tools and professional genres.

Required Texts and Materials

(listed in the order in which we will use them in the semester)

- A *Netflix* account or free, 30-day trial. You will need this at the beginning of the semester.
- One assigned game or film which varies depending on your presentation date
- Additional readings found online, on Box, or on UTD Course Reserves
 - Course Reserves Password:

You will also need the following:

- an email account that you check daily (either your utdallas account, or an account to which you have forwarded your utdallas email)
- MS Teams on a desktop/laptop or a mobile device
- a Box account (<http://utdallas.app.box.com>)

Recommended Texts and Materials

- Haggerty, Kevin, and Aaron Doyle. *57 Ways to Screw Up in Graduate School: Perverse Professional Lessons for Graduate Students*. U of Chicago Press, 2015. 978-0226280905
- Shaw, Debra Benita. *TechnoCulture: The Key Concepts*. Berg Publishers, 2008. 978-1845202989
- A professional domain name and server space
 - see Reclaim Hosting's shared hosting for affordable plans for domain names and hosting (\$30 / year, including domain name). [Http://reclaimhosting.com](http://reclaimhosting.com)
- MA and PhD students: Booth, et al. *The Craft of Research*. 4th edition. U of Chicago Press, 2016.

Course Policies

Attendance

There are no required class meetings for this course. Instead, one of the course grades stems from “engagement,” including how you engage with course materials and class media, assignments, me, and one another. For more information, see the Engagement assignment sheet.

Accommodation

If you have a disability that requires accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act -2008(ADAAA), please present your letter of accommodations from the Office of Student AccessAbility and meet with me as soon as possible so that I can support your success in an informed manner. If you would like to know more about the University of Texas at Dallas, Office of Student AccessAbility, please contact the office at 972-883-6104 or email: studentaccessability@utdallas.edu. Their office is located in the Student Service Building (SSB), suite 3.200. All discussions with them are confidential.

If you learn a bit differently but do not qualify for, or have the resources to seek, an accommodation, there are still ways I can support your success. Be sure to let me know so we can creatively approach your experience in this class.

Online Due Dates

For the most part, graded work in the class is turned in online. Assignments should be turned in no later than 11:59pm on the date listed, unless otherwise noted. My preference is that you convert documents to .pdf before turning them in.

Late work

Due dates have been set to help scaffold your coursework in a manageable way, and so that I can plan time to give you feedback. You should make a concerted effort to turn in all work on-time, in the format outlined on the assignment sheets. If you need an extension on something, talk to me about it.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty, i.e. plagiarism and other forms of cheating, will be reported to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students office will investigate the claim, interview any students involved, and determine an outcome. Possible disciplinary action by the university may include failing the assignment, failing the course, expulsion, etc. If you have any questions regarding the proper use of outside sources or the distinction between plagiarism and sampling/remix/adaptation, I encourage you to meet with me.

Names and Pronouns

Many people might go by a name in daily life that is different from their legal name. In this class, we seek to refer to people by the names that they go by. Pronouns can be a way to affirm someone's gender identity, but they can also be unrelated to a person's identity. They are simply a public way in which people are referred to in place of their name (e.g. "he" or "she" or "they" or "ze" or something else). In this classroom, you are invited (if you want to) to share what pronouns you go by, and we seek to refer to people using the pronouns that they share. The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity.

Online Identity

This class may ask students to participate in various forms of public writing. Writing in public has several advantages for student learning. It creates a closer analogue to offline environments and allows for the creation of writing that is designed to be shared with an external audience, instead of only an instructor. It also allows students to learn from each other. However, some students may have legitimate privacy concerns about participating in publicly accessible assignments. These students may choose to participate in public assignments under a pseudonym, or assumed name. If you wish to request this accommodation for any reason, please contact me immediately.

The Classroom Community and Your Well-being

Our many discussions and online assignments will require vigilance to ensure that we are always preserving an atmosphere of mutual respect in which everyone is welcome to learn. Disagreements may arise and consensus may not be possible. We can, however, respect each person's right to express an opinion and right to have the opportunity to learn. However, one's "right to an opinion" does not include language or behavior that is harmful to others. Name calling, harassment, or menacing behavior will not be tolerated.

Classroom Conduct Requirements Related to Public Health Measures

UT Dallas will follow the public health and safety guidelines put forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and local public health agencies that are in effect at that time during the Fall 2021 semester to the extent allowed by state governance. Texas Governor Greg Abbott's Executive Order [GA-38](#) prohibits us from mandating vaccines and face coverings for UT Dallas employees, students, and members of the public on campus.

However, we strongly encourage all Comets to get vaccinated and wear face coverings as recommended by the CDC. Check the [Comets United: Latest Updates webpage](#) for the latest guidance on the University's public health measures. Comets are expected to carry out [Student Safety](#) protocols in adherence to the Comet Commitment. Unvaccinated Comets will be expected to complete the [Required Daily Health Screening](#). Those students who do not comply will be referred to the Office of Community Standards and Conduct for disciplinary action under the [Student Code of Conduct – UTSP5003](#).

A note from the instructor on masks: I will wear a mask for every single one of our class meetings. This is partly to protect myself (I am fully vaccinated, but have high risk factors; plus, I don't want long covid), to protect my loved ones (immunocompromised and too young to be vaccinated), and to protect you (heck, I may be asymptomatic and spreading it; which is why I've also scheduled weekly proactive tests). I am an award-winning instructor and you deserve my full attention in teaching this class. If I feel unsafe, or am worried about you infecting one-another, you will not get the best classroom experience that I can offer you.

So, I will wear a mask, every class meeting, for the entire time. As a courtesy to your fellow students and me, I would appreciate it if you do the same. The only way we will stay safe and get to have an entire semester of in-person classes is if everyone is doing their part to battle this public health emergency.

Course Recordings

I may record meetings, or partial meetings, of this course, typically when we are going over assignment instructions and the like. Our typical class meetings to discuss readings or viewings will not be recorded as there exists a comparable asynchronous option for engagement.

Any recordings will be captioned and made available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. You are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved a student to record the instruction, you are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. If the instructor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

University Policies

Please visit <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for the University's policies regarding all courses.

Course Requirements and Grading

Grading Scale

See the Assignments folder on Box for assignment-specific grading criteria.

EVALUATION	LETTER GRADE	DESCRIPTION
Excellent	A, A-	Work that is thought-provoking, novel, and well-crafted. The work extends our thinking into new territory. The form and content enhance one another.
Good	B+, B, B-	Work that is thought-provoking or novel, and well-crafted. The work extends our thinking, or wades into new territory. The form enhances the content.
Fair	C+, C	Work that is well-crafted. The form connects to the content.
Failing	F	Work that is never turned in, off-topic, or out of alignment with the minimal requirements for the assignment or course.

Assignments

See the Assignments folder on Box for more details.

Engagement - 20%

Preparation and presence, which include focus, asking questions, and specificity.

First Year Journal – 10%

Weekly prompts to help you acclimate to graduate study in ATEC. Reviewed at the middle and end of the semester.

Analyze Something – TBD

A presentation in which you analyze the format, aesthetic strategies, cultural functions and so forth of an assigned art object, piece of media, or cultural phenomenon.

Write Something – TBD

An thesis-driven paper, book review, or literature review on a topic from the class readings or discussion.

Create Something - TBD

Respond to an idea in one of our theoretical readings or class discussions with a creative project.¹

As you can see, only 30% of your course grade is currently fixed. For the remaining 70% you will assign the grading weights, with the caveat that no assignment can be worth less than 10% and none can be more than 40%.

¹ This is a bit of a false dichotomy. Of course, academic writing can be creative. But for this assignment I'm asking you to do something other than academic writing.

You can expect a middle-of-the-term progress report that includes preliminary grades in Engagement and the First Year Journal. Other assignments will be graded as soon as I can after they are initially turned in. Please note that my administrative responsibilities sometimes mean it can be several weeks before you receive feedback. Thank you in advance for your patience.

Schedule Outline

Unit 1: Intro and Methods for Success

Week One: Aug 23 – 28 Introduction

Week Two: Aug 29 – Sept 4 Visual Analysis (Art Installation)

Week Three: Sept 5 – 11 Time Based Media Analysis (Film / Animation)

Week Four: Sept 12 – 18 Time Based Media Analysis (Video Games)

Week Five: Sept 19 – 25 Critical Reading

Unit 2: Ethics, Technology, & Community Engagement

Week Six: Sept 26 – Oct 2 Situated Knowledge

Week Seven: Oct 3 – 9 The Darkside of Buzzwords

Week Eight: Oct 10 – 16 Recovering Technical Histories

Unit 3: Designs, Systems, Culture

Week Nine: Oct 17 – 23 Designing Culture

Week Ten: Oct 24 – 30 Design Publics

Unit 4: Science, Creativity, Platforms

Week Eleven: Oct 31 – Nov 6 How to Do Art + Science

Week Twelve: Nov 7 – 13 Data Science and Art

Unit 5: Media, Art, Practice

Week Thirteen: Nov 14 – 20 Quantizing Reality

Fall Break: Nov 21 – 27 – No classes

Week Fourteen: Nov 28 – Dec 4 Collaborative Systems

Review and Course Wrap-Up

Week Fifteen: Dec 5 – 11 Last Class & Finals