



AMD 311

Fall 2023

In-person Instruction: Arts Building 340
Wednesday 1:30 pm - 5:20 pm

Asst. Professor Leslie Foster (he/they)
Office: Arts Building 339

Office Hours: Wednesday 11:00 am - 12:00 pm / 5:30pm - 6:30pm
Thursday: 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm (Additional hours can be scheduled and held via zoom)
Email: lfoster@csusm.edu
Zoom: <https://csusm.zoom.us/my/lfoster84>

Required Materials: Camera (phone camera, DSLR, digital cinema cameras); digital or physical sketchbook

Recommended Materials: USB-3 external hard drive; cardboard or plasticine (for maquettes); access to laptop or desktop with NLE editing software (Premiere, Final Cut, DaVinci). Filmic Pro for Phones.

Commitment to Diversity and Safer Spaces

We understand the classroom as a space for practicing freedom; where one may challenge psychic, social, and cultural borders and create meaningful artistic expressions. To do so we must acknowledge and embrace the different identities and backgrounds we inhabit. This means that we will use preferred pronouns, respect self-identifications, and be mindful of special needs. Disagreement is encouraged and supported, however our differences affect our conceptualization and experience of reality, and it is extremely important to remember that certain gender, race, sex, and class identities are more privileged while others are undermined and marginalized. Consequently, this makes some people feel more protected or vulnerable during debates and discussions.

A collaborative effort between the students and instructor is needed to create a supportive learning environment. While everyone should feel free to experiment creatively and conceptually, if a class member points out that something you have said or shared with the group is offensive, avoid being defensive; instead approach the discussion as a valuable opportunity for us to grow and learn from one another. In this course we will be discussing current events and issues surrounding racism, equity, and inclusion, please be prepared to have a civil discussion around these subjects. Bigotry, including but not limited to racist, ableist, sexist, transphobic, queerphobic, fatphobic, and classist comments will not be tolerated. Alternatively if you feel that something said in discussion or included in a piece of work is harmful, I hope to create a space in which you feel comfortable asking to speak to me. (Borrowed and gently modified from [voidLab](#))

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Luiseño/ Payómkawichum people. Today, the meeting place of CSUSM and its surrounding areas is still home to the six federally recognized bands of the La Jolla, Pala, Pauma, Pechanga, Rincon, Soboba Luiseño/ Payómkawichum people. It is also important to acknowledge that this land remains the shared space among the Kuupangaxwicheh/ Cupeño and Kumeyaay and Ipai peoples. For more information, please go to <https://www.csusm.edu/cicsc>

Course Description

Introduction to video art practice and theory. All phases of videotape production from conception to finished product utilizing experimental, narrative and documentary techniques. Includes digital and electronic time-based video production, video installation art, field production, non-linear computer-based editing, lighting and sound design. Lectures, demonstrations, hands-on projects, video screenings, discussions, research and field trips. Public screening of work. Two hours of lecture. Three hours of laboratory.

May not be taken for credit by students who received credit for VSAR 303.

Detailed Description + Objectives

Video art and experimental film are mediums that hold the potential to pull our dreams into waking life and make tangible the surreal while upending and subverting dominant cultural and political perspectives, especially in the context of museum and gallery shows.

In the hands of marginalized artists, particularly queer, trans, femme-of-center, and POC artists, the art world is a fraught space, and video art has proven to be a powerful and dynamic tool to challenge its oppressive systems.

Students will work in groups to build a portfolio of video art intended to be displayed in a gallery/ museum context and will be encouraged to examine the ethics of the contemporary art world. In addition, they will get a chance to explore the ideologies that serve as the groundwork for experimental time-based media and gain practical installation and curatorial skills through practical exercises, field trips, and workshops.

The semester will be divided into four sections dedicated to video art technique and theory, video art in the institution, curation and gallery installation, and studio work respectively. Students will gain an understanding of production, material experimentation, and curatorial practices.



Learning Outcomes

After students have successfully completed this course, they should be able to:

- Develop a video art installation from concept to fully-realized completion while gaining technical and collaborative skills as they work with classmates
- Be conversant in the history and language of video art, video installation, and critically analyze art institutions
- Synthesize diverse works into well-balanced exhibit curation
- Produce a "user manual" for installation and archival purposes

Homework + Credit Hour Policy

In addition to written assignments, video art, object-making, and installation are time-intensive. While as much time as possible will be provided for studio time during class hours and screenings will all occur during class, it won't be possible to complete all the work for this class during our time together. This class requires significant time (at minimum, six hours per week, that is two hours for every course credit hour) outside of our time together for shooting, editing, installation-making, researching, and reading.

Writing Requirement

California State University San Marcos has established a 2500-word minimum writing requirement for each 3-unit course (10 pages). If you'd like additional guidance with your writing, I am happy to provide guidance during meeting hours and also highly recommend visiting our on-campus Writing Center (760-750-4168 / writing@csusm.edu).

The writing requirement will be fulfilled by the following writing assignments in this course:

1. Discussion Questions
2. Video Installation Packet (which includes your "user manual" and artist statement.
3. Artistic Lineage Project
4. Curation Project





Assignments

There will be no final exam for this course. The Final Project and the Final Critique will take place during finals week.

This course has a combination of individual and collaborative projects:

Individual Work

Discussion Questions - Each student will be responsible for creating 1 detailed discussion question based on required reading/viewing (examples will be provided) and leading a portion of the discussion during the week the material is discussed. Students will select the material and corresponding discussion date on the first week of class.

Field Trip - Students will be given a list of gallery shows and will pick 2 to attend, though they are encouraged to attend more, which will be counted as extra credit.

Artistic Lineage Project - Students will create a list of video artists based on their own research as well as artists and resources presented in class, who fit into their artistic lineage. A brief explanation about why each artist has been selected will be required.

Curation Project - Students will select a gallery or museum space from a provided list and curate a show for that space using a list of video artists that will also be provided. A paragraph discussing the curatorial and thematic choices must be included. *Extra credit is available if students use Sketch-Up or a website like ArtSteps to create a virtual exhibit.*

Group Work

The class will be divided into 4 groups of 6 and each group will be responsible for completing 2 video pieces, the first due at midterms and the second due at the end of the semester. The first project will be entirely screen-based and the second will incorporate video art and installation techniques. *Each group will select a director, cinematographer, editor, set designer, curator, and archivist.* These roles can be switched between the first and second project.

Each group will be responsible for creating an Installation Packet, which includes pricing for the work, a user manual for installation, archiving instructions, and an artist statement.

Please name your files as follows: FirstName_LastName_ProjectName_Date or GroupName_ProjectName_Date (for example: Leslie_Foster_CurationProject_10-12-23)

All projects, unless otherwise specified, will be uploaded via Canvas.



Class Expectations

You are adults, the effort you put into this class will be reflected in what you get out of it.

If you are sick, please let me know, and please take care of yourself; don't come to class. I upload class materials to Canvas every week and am happy to help you catch up if you need. Please communicate your needs and I'll be here to support you.

Please come prepared to participate in class discussions and to honor the work your classmates have done in creating discussion questions. You don't have to understand everything or even have a fully formed idea to participate. The joy of a discussion is building a concept together! Please don't be afraid to ask questions; if you are confused about something, it's likely someone else is too and your question could help build a stronger understanding of a concept.

As stated in our commitment to diversity and safer spaces on the first page of the syllabus, please come to class ready to engage in respectful dialog and a willingness to challenge yourself and be challenged.

When viewing works in class, we'll give them the same attention that we would if seeing them in a theatrical or gallery setting.

In class discussions, please feel free to respond in whatever way feels best, whether that is to discuss your emotional response, share thoughts about form or technique, contemplate the edit style, or share what it might have reminded you of. That being said, please avoid responses like "This was bad/good," especially without expanding on why you felt that way.



Grading

I believe in making the process of grading as transparent as possible and have included an explanation of what it takes to earn each of the letter grades. If you have any questions, I'm more than happy to spend some time discussing this with you, please don't hesitate to reach out!

Although you will not be penalized in grade points for late assignments, you will miss out on feedback and experience. I strongly suggest following the class schedule and due dates. Late group work will not receive peer feedback and the later any work is turned in, the less time I will have to offer you detailed, thoughtful feedback. **Late group work might miss the opportunity to be publicly displayed.**

Life can offer unexpected challenges, from last-minute tech failures to personal emergencies. If you have work that is late but want to make sure you can get thorough feedback from me, please reach out. I'm more than happy to work with you. **The last day to submit late work is the last day of classes for the semester.**

How does grading work? *You pick your grade.*

More and more people are beginning to suspect that grading isn't 100% objective. And even when I try my best as an instructor, I will still have unconscious biases. In doing my part to dismantle some of the oppressive systems that surrounded us, you get to opt-in to your grade. That basically means you decide how much and what kind of energy you can devote to this course. Here's what that looks like:

Option F: The only way to get this grade is to turn in nothing.

Option D: Complete any of the work assigned for this class. Seriously, any of the work.

Option C: Complete all of the group projects and your discussion question. Attend 8 of 14 class sessions.*

Option B: Complete all of the group projects and 1 of the individual projects. Participate in 5 of the 8 class discussions. Attend 11 of 14 class sessions. 1 of 2 field trips completed.

Option A: Complete all of the group projects and all individual projects. Participate in 5 of the 8 class discussions. Attend 13 of 14 class sessions. 2 of 2 field trips completed.

If you don't meaningfully contribute to your group projects, you will not be credited for that project and will lose grade points. I'm willing to discuss extra credit to make up lost points, but these aren't guaranteed.

** If you miss a class because you're sick or have an emergency come up, **let me know** and you will be credited for the discussion.*

Note: You need to follow project instructions to earn credit for turning in the assignments.

Although following the options above is the best way to ensure a certain grade, if you have a different combination of assignments that you feel qualifies for a certain letter grade, I'll consider these on a case-by-case basis.

Academic Honesty

While external sources are not a required element of writing for this class, if you do include an external source, please cite it using proper format (MLA, Chicago, APA, and Turabian are all acceptable but please remain consistent). If citation formatting is unfamiliar, please visit the below resources, including our on-campus Writing Center.

[The Purdue Online Writing Lab](#)

[CSUSM Writing Center](#)

In both written and video assignments, students are responsible for completing and representing their work honestly. If you are struggling with work or are concerned about your progress, please speak to me and I'll be more than happy to work with you to find a solution so instances of academic dishonesty can be avoided.

As the course instructor, I reserve the right to discipline any student for academic dishonesty in accordance with the general rules and regulations. This may include lowering of grades, the failing of an assignment, or the class as a whole. Academic dishonest cases will be referred to the Dean of Students office and may result in suspension or expulsion from CSU San Marcos and the CSU system. [Review our academic honesty policies here.](#)





Accessibility

I'm committed to working with you to make this class as accessible as possible. To that end, please request accommodations as early as possible but know that **it is never too late to request accommodations**. Our bodies, circumstances, minds, and understandings of ourselves are continuously changing.

You don't need to register a disability to request accommodations from me but you do need to let me know. **You don't have to tell me why you might be having a hard time** but letting me know that you are gives me the chance to come up with a plan so you can get what you need.

To register a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services. DSS is located in Craven Hall 4200 and 4300 and can be reached at 760-750-4905 or 760-750-4909 (TTY). All disabilities need to be registered through DSS before any accommodations can be officially granted.

If you have an accommodation or questions about them, please schedule a meeting for me outside of classroom hours so we can ensure confidentiality of all medical information.

Childcare

I believe the classroom should be a welcoming space, which includes students who may have to care for a child during class hours. Children are welcome, though parental discretion is requested with regard to some of the material that will be viewed throughout the course.

For parents who need to pump milk or breastfeed, please feel free to leave the classroom as needed and I'll be happy to make sure you don't miss important information.

Cougar Care Network

Educational success includes far more than what takes place within this classroom. If you are in need of support for challenging life circumstances, from personal and mental, to academic and financial, please know that the Cougar Care Network (CCN) provides information, advocacy, and resources for students.

As a student, you may self-refer if you find that you need support. As your instructor, I may refer you to CCN if I believe you might benefit from assistance beyond what I can provide academically for the scope of the class. [You can get more information about CCN here.](#)



Technology Assistance

If you require support for hardware issues (computer, webcam, etc.) or with any software tools (Cougar Courses, Teams, etc.), please visit [IITS For You Student page](#).

If you need technology items for your coursework (laptop, webcam, wireless hotspot, etc.), please visit [IITS For You Appointment page](#).

Mandated Reporting & Sexual Violence Resources

"CSUSM is committed to fostering a campus community based on respect. To this end, we recognize that all CSUSM community members are responsible for helping to ensure that our community is free from harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, domestic violence, and stalking. In accordance with Title IX, CSUSM is legally obligated to respond to reported incidents of harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, domestic violence, and stalking."

As a faculty member, if I become aware of an incident of harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, domestic violence, and stalking, I am required to notify CSUSM's Title IX Coordinator. The purpose of this disclosure is to ensure that students are made aware of their reporting options and resources for support. For more information about your rights and reporting options at CSUSM, including confidential and anonymous reporting options, [please visit the Title IX page](#).

Communication Policies

I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours Monday - Friday. I respond to communication during regular business hours (meaning Monday - Friday between 9 am and 5 pm PST). **All messages sent after 5 pm or over the weekend will be replied to on the following business day (Monday, for all emails received on the weekend).** If you haven't received a reply within 72 hours, please resend your message. I don't check email during official campus observed holidays.

Schedule

Video Art Basics + Theory

Week 1 - A Brief History of Video Art (Aug 30)

Assign: [Group Project 1](#)

- Syllabus Overview
- Introductions
- Screening

Week 2 - Experimental Genres +
Camera/Lighting (Sep 6)

Assign: [Barbara London + Maya Deren + Kathy Huffman](#)

- Camera /Lighting Workshop
- Video Art Genres Lecture
- Screening

Week 3 - Editing (Sep 13)

Assign: [John Akomfrah + Holly Willis & Aristic Lineage Project](#)

- Editing Workshop
- Discuss London + Deren + Huffman
- Screening

Week 4 - In-class Production 1 (Sep 20)

Assign: [Hito Steyerl + Hyperallergic Episode #61](#)

- Discuss Akomfrah + Willis
- Studio Work (In-Class Production)
- Screening

Video Art in the Institution

Week 5 - Sound (Sep 27)

Assign: [Art & Obsolescence #059](#)

- Screening
- Sound Workshop

Week 6 - In-Class Edit Session (Oct 4)

- Discuss Steyerl + Hyperallergic
- Studio Work (In-Class Editing)

Week 7 - Gallery Tech (Oct 11)

Assign: [Tell Them I Said No: Poseneske + Helguera](#)

- Gallery Tech Workshop
- Discuss Art & Obsolescence
- In-Class Studio Work
- Screening

Week 8 - Project Presentation (Oct 18)

Due: [Group Project 1 + Artistic Lineage](#)

Assign: [Four Video Art Philosophies](#)

- Discuss *Tell Them I Said No: Poseneske*
- Project 1 Screening + Critique

Curation + Gallery Installation

Week 9 - In Class Production (Oct 25)

Assign: [Expanded Cinema & Curation Project](#)

- Discuss *Four Video Art Philosophies*
- Studio Work (In-Class Production)
- Screening

Week 10 - Installation Mock-Up Workshop (Nov 1)

- Workshop
- Screening

Week 11 - Materials (Nov 8)

Assign: [A Brush with...Isaac Julien](#)

- Discuss *Expanded Cinema*
- Materials Test Workshop
- Screening

Week 12 - Installation Techniques (Nov 15)

- Discuss: *Julien*
- 1-1 Group Check-ins
- Installation Techniques Workshop
- Screening

Studio Work

Week 13 Holiday (Nov 22)

Week 14 (Nov 29)

Due: [Group Project 2 Screening](#)

- Screening: Project 2
- In-class Studio Work

Week 15 - Installation Prep (Dec 6)

- Location visit / Installation Prep

Week 16 - Exhibition (Dec 13)

Due: [Project Installation + Curation Project](#)

Please note that the syllabus may be subject to changes as announced throughout the semester.