Systems of Representation DOM-E514901

Professor Lily Díaz-Kommonen
Doctoral candidate Cvijeta Miljak

UPDATED 2/02/2022

During its 2022 edition the Systems of Representation course will focus on the notion of *Simulation*. A simulation is the imitation of something, real or not. The activity of creating simulations entails the design, modeling and, or reproduction of key characteristics and behaviors of a physical object or abstract system, often with the objective to achieve a better understanding of the thing itself.

Learning objectives

In the course we will study the use of simulations in the arts, humanities and sciences, as well as in industry and media for the creation of new products and in relation to contemporary artefacts, including architecture, games, historical reconstructions, to name a few. We will ponder about issues such as authenticity and reproduction in relation to uniqueness.

From a cultural-historical perspective, we will examine the use of simulations in the design and creation of (digital) *media artefacts* in order to:
1. 'Problematize' their 'sharing the world' with other species, including humans and
2. Tease out the ways in which these artefacts shape our perception, practices and values (ethics).

Methodology

The methods used in the course include:

1. Survey of cross-cultural examples which exemplify the use of simulation.
2. Presentation and discussion of post-phenomenology method that enables the researcher to deconstruct the simulation and analyze its components.
3. Researching and reading about aspects related to the topic of simulations.
4. Practice-led research leading to development and presentation of Case-Studies by the tutors as well as participating students.

Learning Outcomes

1. Achieve a general understanding regarding the notion of simulation and its potential use in art and design practices, including research.
2. Assemble a Learning Diary which documents the processes of reflection and doing throughout the course of a project.
3. Be able to design a simulation.

4. Be able to write a short, critical, essay regarding an aspect of simulations.

Assignments and evaluation

Task	Evaluation	Credit hours
*Design a simulation.**	25% or 50%	40
*Using a critical perspective, write a short essay about the process.**	25% or 50%	40
Complete a Learning Diary.	25%	40
Regularly present your ideas in class.	25&	40
Total number of credits: 6		160 hours

*Students can choose between realizing a project, writing an essay, or doing smaller versions of both.

Schedule

The class meets on Tuesday afternoons, from 13:15. The class will begin using primarily online Zoom sessions and proceed towards a hybrid approach, as the situation allows.

Date	Task/topic
1 February	Introduction to the area of study About simulation – A survey of examples from art, humanities and sciences. (LDK)
8 February	About simulation How do we go about creating simulations? 1. The means, methods, and processes used to create simulations 2. The normative contexts in which they are created. 3. The primary uses and purposes served. (LDK)
22 February	The concept of the original and the notion of form in digital media (LDK)
1 March	Simulation, further examples – space, time, memory (CM)
8 March	Presentations of initial student concepts.
15 March	Simulation in the arts – Andreas Broeckmann, invited guest.
29 March	Presentation of refined concepts for project (design or essay)
12 April	1 hour session touching base about state of projects (design or essay)
26 April	1 hour session touching base about state of projects (design or essay)
17 May	Presentations of final works.

Class time

Students are requested to regularly contribute to the "News about Simulation", a 30 minutes section in the class in which we present and discuss news items about the topic. This section is followed by presentations and lectures 30-45 minutes. At the end of each presentation there is a 30-minutes section for interactive discussion. There are two 10 minutes break in the class. At the end of each class session students also present from the knowledge that is accruing in their Learning Diary.

13:15-14:00 – Presentations of independent work done during the previous week
14:00-14:45 – Lecture*

14:45-15:00 – Break
15:00-15:30 – Discussion about materials presented
15:30-16:00 – Group work.

Readings

Baudrillard, Jean, *Simulacra and Simulation*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995. ISBN-0-472-06521-1

https://primo.aalto.fi/permalink/358AALTO_INST/ha1cg5/alma997551334406526

Turkle, Sherry, *Simulation and its Discontents*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2009. ISBN 978-026-2012-706

https://primo.aalto.fi/permalink/358AALTO_INST/ha1cg5/alma995472204406526

A copy of the following title is on order:

DeRosa, Robin (Editor), *Simulation in Media and Culture. Believing the Hype*, Washington, DC: Bowman & Littlefield, 2011. ISBN-978-0-7391-8458-5

https://primo.aalto.fi/permalink/358AALTO_INST/ha1cg5/alma999524418906526

Interesting online resource,
”Story-Based Simulations: Art and Technology Masquerading as Life”, *Transparency*, https://transparencynow.com/complex.htm, (Accessed 16/01/2022.)