



image: John Akomfrah, Arcadia, 2023
Five channel HD Video, color, black and white, 15.1 surround sound
58 minutes 38 seconds

NEW MEDIA: EXPANDED CINEMA

Topics in New Media: Expanded Cinema

Instructor: Assistant Professor Christopher Meerdo (he/him)

Meeting Time: Tuesday/Thursday 8 am – 10:50 am

Spring Semester 2025

Classroom Meeting Place: CVAD, 2nd Floor, Room Number ART 356

Course Number: ASTU 3701-501

Contact: christopher.meerdo@unt.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Exploration of immersive video art using techniques like projection mapping and video manipulation, blending video, sound, and space to create interactive experiences.

This course explores the evolving field of Expanded Cinema, where moving images break free from the single screen and merge with performance, installation, and emerging technologies. Students will engage with historical precedents, contemporary artistic practices, and hands-on techniques for creating immersive, multi-channel, and experimental media environments. Through class demonstrations, creative exercises, screenings, and readings, students will experiment with projection, spatial montage, live media, and other expanded forms while critically examining the cultural and sensory possibilities of cinema beyond the frame.

CLASS OBJECTIVE

- To establish a historical vantage point for expanded cinema, connecting early avant-garde and intermedia practices to contemporary moving image installation and performance
- To build a technical knowledge-base for creating multi-channel, immersive, and live media works using tools such as projection mapping, game capture, livestreaming, and spatial sound
- To develop critical thinking skills necessary to both analyze and produce expanded cinema, with attention to the cultural, sensory, and political implications of moving images beyond the single screen

Students will experiment with a range of expanded cinema practices, from analog projection and multi-channel installation to greenscreen compositing, machinima, and livestream performance. Emphasis will be placed on selecting the most effective forms and technologies to express conceptual ideas, and on situating each student's work within the broader field of moving image culture. This is a workshop-oriented class in which students will gain experience with immersive and experimental production tools, including projection mapping, spatial editing, and real-time media systems. Each exercise will build on the skills and concepts of the previous one, fostering a cumulative understanding of cinema beyond the single screen. Active participants will develop a diverse portfolio of exploratory works through the hands-on integration of formal techniques, historical context, and contemporary expanded cinema discourse.

EQUIPMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All students must meet all equipment and supplies requirements of the course. This course will challenge you to purchase, thrift, borrow or dumpster-dive materials for making artistic projects of your own development. It is important to have this potential financial obligation to the course in mind from the beginning.

Required Materials:

1. **Notebook** - for taking notes during reading discussion, conversations, and critiques
2. **External Harddrive** - formatted for Mac to bring your digital materials to-and-from class. The files you will create this semester will be far too large for cloud storage.
3. **Sculptural Material** - you will need to buy or thrift materials for creating expanded cinema sculptural objects this semester.

As part of being enrolled in this class, you have access to checking out cameras, tripods, scanners, audio recorders, microphones, media players, and other related equipment through CVAD IT. To make a reservation ahead of time to ensure that equipment is available, visit: <https://checkout.unt.edu/patron>

You can check out, pick up, and drop off equipment in person at the CVAD IT checkout desk located in CVAD room 375. Hours for the Lab and more information can be found through [Microsoft Teams by following this link.](#)

Additionally, you can check out more advanced equipment through the checkout office located in the New Media CAVE aka Tech Zak Loyd's office. You can find a spreadsheet of available equipment through the New Media checkout at [this link.](#)

STORAGE/MATERIALS

You have the option to check out a locker in the CVAD building so that you can store your works in progress, materials, and equipment. You are not permitted to store projects in the New Media areas including the classroom, CAVE, Alcove, or the Fab Lab spaces including the production spaces or Demo Room. If you have larger or fragile items, talk to me about the possibility of storing items in my personal office. This is on an as-needed basis.

At the end of the semester you are responsible for removing all materials, artworks, and installations. If you are interested in donating materials or equipment please ask me or New Media Tech Zak Loyd for permission.

GRADING/REVIEWS

Being enrolled in this course is not a guarantee of a passing grade. You must participate in projects in entirety and complete all required work for the course. Your projects and assignments are graded on a percentage system. The following lists the weighted values of each portion of the class content you are responsible for.

Activities:

- Weekly Creative Exercises + corresponding Discussion Posts (9 total - 70% of Grade)
- Course Notebook (10% of Grade)
- Final Project: Proposal, Presentation, and Critique (20% of Grade)

Projects are assessed based on their technical, formal, and conceptual merit. All work in this class must demonstrate a high level of engagement with the medium. All projects in this class must engage with notions of Expanded Cinema. Projects that challenge our notions of what Expanded Cinema can be will receive the highest marks.

This is not a course in traditional Hollywood, Documentary, or Industry filmmaking. Students are expected to push well beyond these traditional and one-dimensional practices.

COURSE NOTEBOOK:

You are required to purchase a dedicated course notebook that you will use for daily reflections, notetaking, sketching, ideation, and reading responses in the course. This will be physically turned in at the end of the semester for 10% of your grade. I recommend the B6 size (approximately 5x7 inches). Make sure the notebook is 100-200 pages. I recommend trying "squared" or "dotted" pages.

MUJI Brand: <https://www.muji.com/sq/products/cmdty/detail/4550002435165>

Moleskine Brand:

<https://www.moleskine.com/en-us/shop/notebooks/the-legendary-notebook/classic-notebook-black-9788883701122.html>

LATE WORK POLICY:

In general, late work is not accepted.

Any project turned in after the due date on canvas will receive a reduction of 1 letter grade (10%) for each day that it is late. For example, if you turn in a project that only receives a score of 80% (B) and it is turned in 3 days late, it will drop to a 50%.

If you have a university-excused absence and provide documentation within 48 hours of the missed deadline, you can receive extra time on a project. This is on a case-by-case basis and you must clearly communicate with me.

PRODUCTION/FABRICATION

Your Expanded Cinema projects will necessarily start to connect to other forms of working in New Media toward the end of the semester. Projects will incorporate materials beyond the screen-space as the semester progresses. Consider the following list to guide your explorations:

- 3D Print / Resin Print
- Wood/Metal/Ceramics/Cement/etc (sculptural materials)
- Re-composed found objects
- Fabric print
- 3D Scan
- Monitor
- Projection
- Projection Mapping
- Custom electronics / motors / robotics etc
- Performance / Time-based / Durational work
- Light Installation
- Photographic / Inkjet Print
- Physical Painting / Drawing (hand drawn or plotter)
- Fabric Print / Embroidery / Weaving / other fibers techniques
- Laser cutout materials
- CNC cutout materials
- Sound equipment (amps, microphones, MIDI, mixer, etc)
- Legacy equipment (VHS, CD Players, etc)

This list will necessarily expand given the trajectory of the course and your own personal interests.

All students in CVAD have access to the Digital Fabrication Lab on the 3rd floor and the general access woodshop on the 4th floor. Make use of these resources while you are in our program. All New Media Students have full access to the CAVE, Lighting Studio, and New Media Classroom outside of class times. Make a reservation online or with Zak if you would like to use these spaces.

CRITIQUES

In this course you will have weekly creative work check-ins with the class and one final formal critique. If necessary, the class will be divided into groups so allow for more time for conversation. Your critique can happen in other spaces beyond the classroom and CAVE. The locations available are: New Media Classroom, CAVE space, Alcove space (if available), or Critique Space 7 (4th floor cvad). Bring a notebook the day of your critique to write down artist suggestions and other ideas provided to you during your review. Allow for extra time for setup and takedown before and after class. Each weekly exercise and final critique must be a new, fully realized project. You are not permitted to reuse work from previous critiques or from other classes. The final critique will be a fully realized, gallery-ready presentation of your work informed by the weekly workshops. You are not permitted to present a final that is not directly related to the theme of this course - Expanded Cinema. That means you cannot present a book, or a ceramic pot, etc.

COMMUNICATION

My Office Location: CVAD, 3rd Floor, Office Number 345H
In-Person Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. & by appointment
Email: christopher.meerdo@unt.edu

I am always available to be reached by email or office hours but I ask that you are respectful and professional in your communication.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance in all classes is required. You are allowed two unexcused absences without it negatively affecting your grade. After two unexcused absences, your final grade will be lowered by 1 letter grade (10%) for each class meeting you miss.

- 3 Times Tardy = 1 Absence.
- Leaving class early counts as an Unexcused Absence.
- Missing a critique counts as 2 absences

Please refrain from walking out of class in the middle of activities. We have a break in the middle of class – schedule yourself accordingly.

An unexcused absence is any missed class without a doctor's note. Simply emailing if you are sick is not an excused absence. In the case of any type of emergency, I also require official documentation. You can review UNT official authorized absences here:

<https://policy.unt.edu/sites/policy.unt.edu/files/06.039%20Student%20Attendance%20and%20Authorized%20Absences.pdf>

CLASS PARTICIPATION

This is a hands-on, discussion-driven studio course, and your full presence matters. You are expected to attend every class, arrive on time, and be ready to work. Participation means engaging in class discussions, offering feedback during critiques, and bringing curiosity, ideas, and energy to the room. Your work should respond to the concepts, artists, and techniques we explore together, while reflecting your own artistic voice.

We want the studio to be a space where creative energy can thrive, but also one where everyone can focus. Please avoid distractions that pull you or others out of the flow—things like sleeping, doomscrolling, unrelated internet browsing, or prolonged side conversations during work time. Occasional chaos is welcome; persistent disengagement is not. Please work with me to keep our classroom a welcoming community for everyone in the course.

OPEN STUDIO TIME

Throughout the semester, there will be class periods set aside for dedicated studio work time. For these days, it is expected that you come prepared to work. This means bringing the materials or files necessary to work toward your upcoming critique. You must remain within the classroom or CAVE but you can work in the FabLab, etc with permission from your professor. You are not permitted to leave class and go home. All students must be back in class within the last 15 minutes of class for cleanup and general announcements. Students who are not in class at this time or who knowingly leave will be marked absent for the day.

REQUIRED READING:

Reading is an essential component of understanding our place as makers. It offers context, history, theory, and new ideas that will incorporate into your overall practice as an artist. We will be doing in-person readings together as a group with some additional sections that may be assigned as homework. You will respond to our readings in your course notebooks and through group discussion.

You may choose to print the readings if you work more efficiently by noting or highlighting the physical pages. The readings have been specially selected to coincide with the theme of the course and will help us think about making artwork and the vocabulary to do so.

CONTENT DISCLAIMER

Content in the arts can sometimes include works, situations, actions, and language that can be personally challenging or offensive to some students on the grounds, for example, of sexual explicitness, violence, or blasphemy. As the College of Visual Arts and Design is devoted to the principle of freedom of expression, artistic and otherwise, and it is not the college's practice to censor these works or ideas on any of these grounds. Students who might feel unduly distressed or made uncomfortable by such expressions should withdraw at the start of the term and seek another course.

CANVAS

This course is integrated with UNT's Canvas learning management system. It is your responsibility to check our class page regularly to keep an eye out for announcements, communicate with the professor and fellow students and keep track of your overall class standing. This is also where each assignment must be handed in and where you have access to assignment sheets and readings.

CLASS TIME COMMITMENT

This class will require a full intellectual and time commitment from you in order to pass with full marks. There are 6 class hours per week that you must schedule for yourself. You should expect to have a comparable amount of time outside this window to complete homework assignments (an additional 6 hours). Realistically, you should budget between 10-20 hours per week on this class. Make sure you are mindful of this as you begin the semester so that you stay on track throughout and are successful in the end.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Tentative and subject to revision.

Dates	Tuesday (Exercise Due / Assigned + Readings + Main Screening)	Thursday (Work Time + Short Screening + Tech Demo)
Week 1 Aug 19 & 21	Intro + Exercise 1 Assigned: <i>Overhead Projector Cinema</i> Reading: VanDerBeek - “Culture: Intercom and Expanded Cinema” Main Screening: VanDerBeek <i>Movie-Drome</i> excerpts; Javanese shadow puppets	Work day: analog projection play Short Screening: William Kentridge <i>8 Drawings for Projection</i> Tech Demo: Overview of course gear; safe projector use
Week 2 Aug 26 & 28	Exercise 1 Due Exercise 2 Assigned: <i>Found Footage Remix</i> Reading: Youngblood - <i>Expanded Cinema (Intro + Paleocybernetic Age)</i> Main Screening: Bruce Conner <i>A Movie</i> , Dara Birnbaum <i>Technology/Transformation</i>	Work day: remix practice Short Screening: Soda_Jerk <i>TERROR NULLIUS</i> (excerpt) Tech Demo: Adobe Premiere basics (import, cut, export)
Week 3 Sep 2 & 4	Exercise 2 Due Exercise 3 Assigned: <i>TV Sculptures</i> Reading: Weibel - “Expanded Cinema, Video, and Virtual Environments” Main Screening: Nam June Paik <i>TV Buddha</i> , Steina & Woody Vasulka excerpts	Work day: looping content & wiring setups Short Screening: Shigeko Kubota <i>Video Sculptures</i> Tech Demo: DSLR filming + file download
Week 4 Sep 9 & 11	Exercise 3 Due Exercise 4 Assigned: <i>CAVE Immersion</i> (Part 1) Reading: Huhtamo - “Elements of Screenology” Main Screening: Pipilotti Rist <i>Pixel Forest</i> , Doug Aitken <i>Song 1</i>	Work day: prepping multi-channel content Short Screening: Stan Douglas <i>Journey into Fear</i> (excerpt) Tech Demo: Multi-channel editing basics in Premiere
Week 5 Sep 16 & 18	Exercise 4 (Part 1) Check-in CAVE Immersion continues (Part 2) Main Screening: Charles Atlas <i>Hail the New Puritan</i> , Stan VanDerBeek <i>Panels for the Walls of the World</i>	CAVE Training Day (all students test media in CAVE) Short Screening: Doug Wheeler light environments Tech Demo: File formatting & syncing for CAVE
Week 6 Sep 23 & 25	Exercise 4 Due Exercise 5 Assigned: <i>Greenscreen Fantasies</i> Reading: Krauss - “Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism” Main Screening: Ryan Trecartin <i>I-Be Area</i> , Hito Steyerl <i>How Not to Be Seen</i>	Work day: greenscreen compositing Short Screening: Michel Gondry DIY FX clips Tech Demo: Greenscreen keying in Premiere
Week 7 Sep 30 & Oct 2	Exercise 5 Due Exercise 6 Assigned: <i>Light Intervention in Public Space</i> Reading: Steyerl - “In Defense of the Poor Image” Main Screening: Krzysztof Wodiczko projections, Jenny Holzer <i>Truisms</i>	Work day: site scouting & projection testing Short Screening: Rafael Lozano-Hemmer <i>Under Scan</i> Tech Demo: Off-camera audio recording
Week 8 Oct 7 & 9	Exercise 6 Due Exercise 7 Assigned: <i>Projection Mapping</i> (Part 1) Screening: Tony Oursler works, Refik Anadol <i>Machine Hallucinations</i>	Work day: mapping basics Short Screening: Philipp Schmitt <i>Camera Restricta</i> Tech Demo: MadMapper basics
Week 9 Oct 14 & 16	Projection Mapping continues (Part 2) Main Screening: United Visual Artists <i>Volume</i> , Joanie Lemercier light works	Work day: mapping refinement Short Screening: AntiVJ collective pieces Tech Demo: Raspberry Pi for multi-channel output
Week 10 Oct 21 & 23	Exercise 7 Due Exercise 8 Assigned: <i>Machinima Cinema</i> (Part 1) Reading: Galloway - <i>Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture</i> (selected essay)	Work day: game exploration Short Screening: Ian Cheng <i>Emissaries</i> (excerpt)

	Main Screening: Angela Washko <i>The Game: The Game</i> , Eddo Stern <i>Sheik Attack</i>	Tech Demo: Game capture + voice recording
Week 11 Oct 28 & 30	Machinima continues (Part 2) Main Screening: Harun Farocki <i>Parallel I-IV</i>	Work day: machinima editing Short Screening: machinima from <i>The Sims</i> & <i>GTA V</i> mods Tech Demo: Advanced Premiere workflows (color grading, sound)
Week 12 Nov 4 & 6	Exercise 8 Due Exercise 9 Assigned: <i>Livestream Performance</i> Revisit Youngblood & Steyerl in livestream context Main Screening: Shana Moulton livestreams, Twitch creative streams	Work day: stream overlays Short Screening: Paper Rad net-broadcasts Tech Demo: OBS Studio setup & live-switching
Week 13 Nov 11 & 13	Exercise 9 Due Final Exercise Assigned: <i>Student Choice Hybrid</i> Main Screening: Tacita Dean <i>FILM</i> , Apichatpong Weerasethakul shorts	Work day: concept dev Short Screening: Matthew Barney <i>CREMASTER</i> clips Tech Demo: Integrating multi-tech approaches
Week 14 Nov 18 & 20	Final in-class work sessions before Thanksgiving break	Final in-class work sessions + optional tech refreshers
Week 15 Nov 25 & 27	No class – Thanksgiving break	No class – Thanksgiving break
Week 16 Dec 2 & 4	Final Exercise Critiques (split over two days)	Final Exercise Critiques (continued)

Academic Integrity

According to UNT Policy 18.116, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Disability Accommodation

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Health and Safety Program

Students are required to follow the Department of Studio Art Health and Safety guidelines and are required to complete training for each studio course. The goal of the Studio Art Health and Safety Program is to protect the health and welfare of all faculty, staff, and students and to cooperate with the University of North Texas' Office of Risk Management. Please visit the website for details and the departmental handbook: <https://art.unt.edu/healthandsafety>

Lighting Studio

The lighting studio is a shared space with its own set of rules. It is most important that you respect the time you have signed up for, especially during the busy hours. It is also important to keep the area clean and orderly. If you take an item from the closet, you want to make sure you return it to the same place. You also want to create a space for yourself to work in that is not cluttered with cords.

- If anything breaks for any reason, please let the lab worker on duty know immediately.
- While the studio is a space that can be used by many people, there are some pieces of
- lighting equipment reserved for students who are enrolled/have completed the Advanced Lighting Techniques. It is always better to ask if you are not sure if you can use a piece of equipment or not.
- All lighting that needs to be plugged in must be plugged into one of the power strips in the studio. Never plug anything but a power strip into the wall.
- When using the C-Stands it is important to understand how heavy the equipment is and you want to make sure you are using the sandbags to weight the stand down.
- Make sure you are keeping the cords clear.
- Never mix water and electricity. If you are photographing a liquid, make sure you are
- careful to keep it away from the equipment.
- When you are changing the light modifiers, be careful of the flash tubes.
- Do not put heavy objects on the cyclorama.
- Leave the studio cleaner than you found it.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13 and 14 [insert administration dates] of the long semesters to provide students with an

opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the spot website at www.spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu.

Incomplete Grades

An Incomplete Grade ("I") is a non-punitive grade given only during the last one-fourth of a term/semester and only if a student (1) is passing the course and (2) has a justifiable and documented reason, beyond the control of the student (such as serious illness or military service), for not completing the work on schedule.

In consultation with the instructor, complete a request for an Incomplete Grade. This form can be found on the department website and must be turned into the department chair prior to the last day of classes (not the exam date). Note: A grade of Incomplete is not automatically assigned to students

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment & Assault

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. UNT's Dean of Students' website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs: http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0. UNT's Student Advocate can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT Emergency Guide: <https://emergency.unt.edu/about-us>

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to the course management system for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Voertman's Bookstore & Art Supply

The Department of Studio Art recommends purchasing your Studio Art supplies from Voertman's Art Department in the Voertman's College Store located across from campus at 1314 West Hickory St., Denton, TX. They have worked with CVAD for many years to provide the materials needed for our students' success.