

ASTU 2702.501 — Beginning New Media: Analog & Avant-Garde

3 credit hours

Course Details

Meeting Time: 8:00am–10:50am, Monday and Wednesday

Room: ART 251

Semester Dates: January 12 – May 8, 2026

Holidays (No Class Meetings):

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday: Monday, January 19, 2026

Spring Break: March 9–15, 2026

Instructor & Support

Instructor: Julia Caswell Freund

Email: Julia.freund@unt.edu

New Media Technician: Zak Loyd

Email: Zachary.loyd@unt.edu

Instructor Office Hours: By appointment. Email to schedule.

Availability: Mondays / Wednesday 11:00–11:50AM, Friday 10:00–10:50AM

Course Mode

In person. Students will use Canvas for resources, assignments, some submissions, and posted notes.

Prerequisites

Two of the following with a C or better: ART 1600, ART 1700, or ART 1800.

Syllabus Updates

This syllabus can change. The current version will always live on Canvas. Any changes will be announced in class and reflected in the posted document.

COURSE DESCRIPTION ///

Introduction to analog, avant-garde, and experimental form, style, and content in new media.

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This is a studio course focused on experimental, fabricated, and physical approaches to new media through hands-on making. Instead of emphasizing mastery of any single software, the course is organized around short, hands-on workshops introducing film, sound, live performance, interactivity, physical computing, and fabrication. We'll study historical and contemporary references and discuss how these methods operate today. Two major projects provide time to extend workshop techniques, present and document in a professional manner, and gain valuable peer feedback. The course emphasizes experimentation, process, and critical reflection, supporting confidence with unfamiliar tools.

LEARNING OUTCOMES ///

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Use analog/physical equipment and basic workflows to support making in new media
 - Create and present works using film, sound, live performance, interactivity, physical computing, and fabrication processes introduced through workshops
 - Apply experimentation, fabrication, and troubleshooting to develop projects from tests to finished presentations
 - Analyze historical and contemporary references and connect them to decisions in their own work
 - Document and present work in a professional manner for critique and portfolio submission
 - Participate in peer feedback and critique with clear communication and follow-through
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REQUIRED MATERIALS ///

You are responsible for showing up prepared. You are also responsible for documenting your own work.

- Laptop: Strongly recommended for at-home studio work
- Journal: To track sketches, notes, wiring, and tests
- External Solid State Drive: (SanDisk 1TB SSD USB-C recommended)
- Optional Soldering Iron: (Yihua 947-V Soldering Iron Kit recommended)
- Time: Plan for 9 hours of commitment per week
- Additional project materials are at the student's expense. I will try to help you brainstorm options to meet your budget if you reach out.

Reading / Viewing Materials

All notes, readings, and screenings will be posted on Canvas as PDFs or links.

Primary textbook: "Understanding New Media Art" (Open Educational Resource).

Available free at: <https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/understandingnewmediaarts/>

Time Commitment

Plan for about 9 hours per week in addition to class time.

GRADING ///

Grade Breakdown

- Workshops: 30%
 - Midterm Project: 20%
 - Final Project: 30%
 - Portfolio: 10%
 - Participation: 10%
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ASSIGNMENT STRUCTURE ///

Workshops (30%)

Six short assignments tied to our demos and in-class making. Most workshops are shared in class and/or submitted on Canvas.

Grading: Complete (Pass) or Incomplete (Fail).

Midterm Project (20%)

A hybrid-process project utilizing the Fabrication “FabLab” facilities developed during open studio weeks and shown in critique.

Grading: Letter grade (A–F).

Final Project (30%)

An individual final project that combines 3–4 demonstrations from the semester, planned and built over the last three weeks, and presented in critique. Your grade on the final project is based on what you present in critique and how it functions in real time.

Grading: Letter grade (A–F).

Portfolio (10%)

Documentation is submitted on Canvas and should show your work installed.

Grading: Letter grade (A–F).

Typical components include:

- Documentation (images/audio/video + short 100 word description)
- For the final: a short reflection (what worked, what you changed, what you'd do next)

Participation (10%)

Assignments and critiques listed on Canvas.

Grading: Complete (Pass) or Incomplete (Fail).

GRADE RUBRIC ///

A

Work shows exceptional quality and a high level of understanding over the course outcomes. Materials, concepts, creative implications, and ideas are advanced. You are prepared and contributing in discussion and critique. You move past the most basic version of the assignment and show initiative and independence.

B

Strong work and clear understanding of course outcomes. You meet expectations, participate, communicate ideas in speech and writing, and show solid technical development. You may need to improve your creative and conceptual ideation or execution.

C

Satisfactory. You meet the basic assignment requirements and show some development of skills and ideas. Participation, creative application, and/or preparation are inconsistent.

D–F

Below expectations. Gaps in understanding and application of course outcomes and follow-through. Repeated problems with preparation or clarity in presenting your work. Work does not meet assignment requirements. Serious gaps in engagement or understanding of course outcomes.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES ///

Attendance and Participation

Although it is not recommended to miss class, personal illness and emergencies do come up. Three unexcused absences are allotted before your grade will be penalized; each additional absence lowers your final grade by one letter unless excused under UNT policy 06.039 with proper documentation. Most lectures, demonstrations, and assignments occur at the start of class and are not repeated. Missed quizzes, exams, or in-class work can only be made up with an approved excuse; missed discussions cannot be made up and will affect your participation grade.

Note: Canvas will not automatically adjust for attendance penalties. It is your responsibility to keep track of your attendance standing.

Late Arrivals and Early Departures

Please arrive before class begins so you can set up and respect whoever is presenting. If you are 10+ minutes late three times, that counts as one unexcused absence. Leaving early works the same way. If you come in late, you're still welcome, but enter quietly and do not interrupt.

Late Work Policy

Late work is not accepted. Anything turned in after the deadline will receive a zero unless you have a university-approved excuse and provide documentation within 48 hours of the missed deadline. All writings, readings, presentations, and artistic work must be ready before class starts unless I say otherwise. If you miss class, it is your job to get notes and announcements from a classmate first.

Extra Credit

There is no extra credit in this course.

Academic Integrity

According to UNT Policy 18.1.16 (Student Academic Integrity), academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication, helping someone else cheat, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty can result in penalties up to and including removal from the university.

Academic Integrity Continued: Use of GenAI tools (such as ChatGPT)

Non-Permitted Use: All work you submit must be your own. You may not have AI fully generate your written work, drawings, project text, scripts, or other required responses and submit that as your work — even if you edit it. Copy/pasting AI output into Canvas and calling it yours is not allowed.

Permitted Use: You may use GenAI tools (for example, ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini) to support your learning: to look up resources, outline ideas, break a task down, check clarity (AI can make mistakes), or proofread your own writing. In short: AI can support you, but it cannot do the assignment for you.

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.

COURSE TECHNOLOGY EXPECTATIONS ///

Baseline Technical Requirements

You are expected to be able to:

- Sign in and connect to UNT Wi-Fi / network
- Send and receive email
- Store, organize, and back up media to an external drive
- Print documents, open PDFs, and use Adobe Acrobat Reader
- Save files in correct formats and upload to Canvas
- Handle basic HDMI / power / audio (aux) cable connections
- Read Canvas announcements and assignment instructions

Canvas Technical Requirements: <https://lms.unt.edu/resources/index.html>

ENGAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS ///

In this course, communication and respect are non-negotiable.

- Any language that targets someone based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender presentation, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under law will not be tolerated.

- Treat your instructor, the New Media Technician, and your classmates with respect in all communication, in person and online.
- Use correct names and pronouns for each other.
- Speak from your own experience. Say “I...” instead of speaking for entire groups of people.
- Use critical thinking to challenge ideas, not people.
- Proofread emails and posts. Avoid “text-talk.”
- Remember: online posts can be permanent. Think before you publish.

Being enrolled in this class does not automatically mean you’ll pass. You are expected to:

- Attend
 - Communicate early if there’s an issue
 - Keep working even when things go wrong technically
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STUDIO EXPECTATIONS ///

This is a shared working space.

- Handle equipment with care and follow all safety instructions.
 - Check out and return equipment on time so others can use it.
 - Arrive with your work ready and, if relevant, installed. Do not take someone else’s critique time to finish your own work.
 - Keep sound at a level that does not disrupt others, unless otherwise permitted.
 - Please no food or drink near equipment unless we make an exception and set up a safe zone.
 - Keep floors and tables clear. Don’t block walkways with bags, tripods, or past projects.
 - Limit casual phone use during class. If you need to take an urgent call, step into the hall.
 - Guests: do not bring unapproved visitors. Follow UNT policy for access to labs and classrooms.
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PARTICIPATION AND DISCUSSION EXPECTATIONS ///

Participation is graded. The goal is that everyone is engaged and no one feels shut out. “Participation” does not mean you have to dominate the room. It means you’re present in an active way.

You are meeting expectations if you:

- Contribute 1–3 comments, questions, or observations each day
 - Show that you understand what was presented or discussed
 - Connect new material to something we covered earlier in the semester
 - Keep your comments on topic and applicable to all; set up an office hour for anything personal or confidential (grade discussions are confidential)
 - Show that you are actively listening (paying attention, phone away, not sleeping)
 - If you have trouble speaking in class: write your thoughts down and read it. We will practice this. It counts.
 - Silence for the entire semester is not considered engagement.
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EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS ///

Three core responsibilities: COMMUNICATION. TRYING. CARING.

What that means:

- You communicate early and directly — with me and with peers.
- You keep working. You test, iterate, and problem-solve instead of waiting for a perfect idea to show up.
- You care about how your presence affects other people in the room.

Trying and caring matter more than polish. A “perfect object” with no effort behind it doesn’t earn more respect here than a work-in-progress backed by thought and labor.

You will need to:

- Work during class work days
- Work outside class
- Ask for help when you need it
- Participate in critique

Supplemental Information ///

ADA 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 delays 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 designated office hours to protect student privacy. 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.

Statement on Flexibility

Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need to be adaptable because we all learn differently. I highly recommend registering for academic accommodations. If you have ongoing circumstances, or if there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to help you stay on track and meet the requirements of the course syllabus.

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 free speech and artistic freedom, 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 material should withdraw at the start of the term and seek another course.

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 if 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

Emergency Notification & Procedures — UNT Emergency Guide

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

Religious Holy Days — University Attendance Policy

A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor, in writing, as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

Health & Safety Program

Students are required to follow the Department of Studio Art Health and Safety guidelines and 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 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>

Course Evaluation

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to the instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course. For additional information, please visit: www.spot.unt.edu

Title IX

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, unprofessional or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature, dating/domestic violence, and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. Senate Bill 212 requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, to report any information to the Title IX Office regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive any information of this type (including, but not limited to, writing assignments, class discussions, or one-on-one conversations) must report it. I am a Responsible Employee and must report any Title IX-related incidents that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX-related incident, ask if they are a responsible employee. If you would like to speak with someone who can provide support or remedies without making an official report to the university, please reach out to the UNT survivor advocate. For more information about reporting options and resources visit:

<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/dean-of-students/programs-and-services/survivor-advocate/get-help>

Course Risk Factor

According to University Policy, this course is classified as a category 1 course. Students enrolled in this course will not be exposed to any significant hazards and are not likely to suffer bodily injury. Students in this class will be informed of any potential health hazards or potential bodily injury connected with the use of any materials and/or processes and instructed how to proceed without danger to themselves or others.

Mental Health Resources

UNT provides mental health resources to students to support academic success and well-being. Resources include:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](#)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](#)
- [UNT Care Team](#)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](#)
- [Individual Counseling including Walk in Crisis Hours](#)

UNT Libraries

Website: <https://library.unt.edu/>

Research and catalog: <https://library.unt.edu/research/>

Additional Research Help — Email the Art Librarian: Rebecca.Barham@unt.edu

Academic Support

Writing Center: Writing assistance, including proofreading, is available through booking a free appointment on the UNT Writing Center website.

Academic Success Center: <https://www.unt.edu/success/asc>

Academic Resource Center: <https://digitalstrategy.unt.edu/>

Technology Support

Working with digital tools can be frustrating when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. I recommend taking technical problems to a UNT IT service desk. UNT and CVAD also have a Student Help Desk for Canvas or other technology issues.

UNT Help Desk

UNT Student Help Desk site: <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu

Phone: 940-565-2324

Walk-In Availability: Monday–Friday: 8am–5pm

Telephone Availability: Monday–Thursday 8am–9pm; Friday 8am–5pm; weekend 11am–3pm

UNT CVAD IT

CVAD IT Help Desk site: <https://cvad.unt.edu/cvad-it-services/index.html>

Email: CVAD.ITServices@unt.edu

Phone: 940-565-4522

Service Desk Office: Art Building, Room 371

Hours of Operation: Check website

Equipment Checkout

CVAD IT Equipment Checkout

Reservation system: <https://itservices.cvad.unt.edu/equipment-checkout/>

Equipment TOA form: <https://itservices.cvad.unt.edu/equipment-toa/>

Hours: Check the website or call

Phone: 940-565-4522

Email: CVAD.ITServices@unt.edu

Location: Art Building, Room 375 student computer lab

UNT New Media Art Equipment Checkout

Location: New Media CAVE

Contact: Zachary.loyd@unt.edu

Hours: TBD

Reserving the CAVE or Lighting Studio

<https://booked.cvad.unt.edu/Web/>

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