

California College of the Arts

Course Title: **Engage: Animated Investigations**

Course Number: UDIST-300-09

Term: Fall 2016

Meeting Times: Friday 9am - 3pm

Location: Founder's Hall, Room 306

Instructor: Christoph Steger, csteger@cca.edu (email me in advance if you want to meet outside of regular class hours)

Teaching Assistant: Gilda Posada, gposada@cca.edu

CIR contact: Cole Goins, cgoins@cionline.org

Course Description:

This interdisciplinary course is a collaboration with the Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR), a Bay Area based non-profit devoted to revealing injustices through in depth reporting and journalistic innovation. As a partnership with a community engaged organization, the course is also part of the ENGAGE at CCA program. Students from different disciplines will envision the future of documentary art and design by exploring creative forms of visualization while working to the standards of professional reporting. With mentorship from instructors and journalists, students will research and identify one or several local topics and create projects through direct engagement with the community. Projects may involve animation, video, drawing, comics, motion graphics, photography, interactive media or any combination thereof. The semester will culminate in a final event and exhibition at the New Parkway Theater in Downtown Oakland.

CCA ENGAGE details:

ENGAGE is a course-based community engagement program bringing CCA students and faculty together with local organizations for mutually beneficial, semester-long projects. ENGAGE courses allow students to work with communities and professionals outside the college while building portfolios, and they offer our partners dedicated access to the creative and critical acumen of CCA students in order to address their needs and those of their extended communities. ENGAGE is a program of the Center for Art and Public Life.

www.center.cca.edu

The Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR) believes that journalism that moves citizens to action is an essential pillar of democracy. Since 1977, CIR has relentlessly pursued and revealed injustices that otherwise would remain hidden from the public eye. Today, we're upholding this legacy and looking forward, working at the forefront of journalistic innovation to produce important stories that make a difference and engage you, our audience, across the aisle, coast to coast and worldwide.

www.revealnews.org

Course Outline:

This interdisciplinary course progresses through small studio workshops and culminates in a large Final Project. With help from CIR reporters, we will conduct research in small groups in order to identify topics that affect local communities. The class will agree on several topics that all final projects will focus on. We will then spend the rest of the term producing work for the final exhibition at the New Parkway Theater on December 15. Final Projects can be created individually or in small groups.

Readings, presentations and discussions will happen simultaneously throughout the semester.

Course Aims and Outcomes:

Working to the standards of investigative reporting, this course explores creative forms of visualization: How can art and journalism come together to enable social change in the 21st century? What aspects of real life stories can be expressed uniquely through the visual arts? What forms of visualization can we imagine that go beyond what already exists? How can we use our diverse art practices in the context of community engagement?

This is an interdisciplinary class with an emphasis on collaboration and group work. Students are expected to use the potential of different creative backgrounds and skill sets to develop unique works that hybridize many approaches. This course is highly recommended for students who are interested in factual storytelling and documentary arts as well as anyone who seeks to expand their personal practice towards social concerns. We are particularly interested in experimental approaches to visualizing reporting, news items and contemporary issues.

Learning Outcomes:

Students who successfully complete this course, will

- **be able to identify and analyze the forms and developments of** documentary art and journalism
- Be able to locate social concerns and design creative strategies of addressing them
- Be able to synthesize factual research and personal expression through structure, editing and composition to create socially engaged work
- Be able to work productively in groups, utilizing the shared knowledge made possible through collaboration
- Be able to utilize interdisciplinary studio practices, combining the knowledge and insights from multiple disciplines, processes, and media

Grading:

The final grade for the course will be determined by evaluation in the following areas:

1. visual communication (of work produced)
2. critical thinking and research (of work produced)
3. work ethic
4. collaboration
5. verbal communication (in critiques and discussions)

Measurement of Student Performance:

Participation: 30%

Workshop 1: 10%

Workshop 2: 10%

Workshop 3: 10%

Final Project: 40%

Grades:

A = excellent

B = good

C = satisfactory

D = unsatisfactory

F = failure

Week 6	October 14:	Field trip 2: Center for Investigative Reporting, 1400 65th Street, Emeryville, CA <u>Student group presentations on local research</u> Discussion: Agreeing on topics for Final Projects
Week 7	October 21:	Discussion: Planning session for Final Projects <u>Workshop: Sound Editing</u>
Week 8	October 28:	
Week 9	November 4:	Studio work time / individual meetings / feedback
Week 10	November 11:	Studio work time / individual meetings / feedback
Week 11	November 18:	Field trip 3: Center for Investigative Reporting, 1400 65th Street, Emeryville, CA <u>Work-in-progress Critique: Final Project</u> Feedback from the Center for Investigative Reporting Discussion: Final event at the New Parkway
Week 12	November 25:	
Week 13	December 2:	<u>Group Crit: Final Projects progress - one week to go!</u> Studio work time / individual meetings / feedback
Week 14	December 9:	<u>Group Crit: Final Projects</u> Studio work time / individual meetings / feedback

Week 15	December 15: (Thursday)	7pm, New Parkway Theater, 474 24th St, Oakland, CA: <u>Screening, Exhibition and Panel Discussion</u>
	December 16:	End of class celebration

Required Materials:

USB thumb drive (at least 8GB)
Sketchbook (any size is accepted), pens, pencils etc.

Travel:

This class will undertake several field trips to the Center for Investigative Reporting at 1400 65th Street in Emeryville. Their offices are easily reachable by bus line 49 (from College Ave/Miles Ave to Ashby Ave/San Pablo Ave). You may also organize private car pools.

Course conduct policies:**Collaboration:**

Collaboration is at the heart of this class. You will be working with different partners on different projects. It is important to support and respect each other in this situation: we each have our individual strengths and weaknesses and bring different attitudes and skill sets with us. Two brains (or three...) are always smarter than one - take these collaborations as an opportunity to create work that you would not have been able to achieve by yourself. Help each other out and ensure that everyone contributes equally to the projects. You depend on your peers as much as they depend on you: this requires serious commitment to every group project and open and clear communication amongst yourselves.

Communication policy:

Check your CCA gmail account (= your @cca.edu address) at least once a day. I will use CCA gmail for all correspondence outside of regular class hours. I assume that you will have read all information that I email out to you ("Oh, I didn't know about this or that" is not an excuse if the information was sent out by email). You can contact me with questions or concerns at any time via CCA gmail I'll attempt to respond as soon as I can.

File storage:

You are fully responsible for archiving your digital work. Bring your USB thumb drive to studio and copy all your files from the local drives. The school cannot take

responsibility for files that were deleted from local drives. I advise you to keep a secure personal file storage device (i.e. an external hard drive) for all of your work. Google Drive can also be used as storage. Always export movies with H.264 compression to avoid large file sizes!

Attendance:

Since this is a collaborative course, you must come to every class. You will only be able to complete all required work properly if you come to every class and your partners depend on you. Each missed class brings your grade down one subgrade from A to A- and A- to B+ / etc. 3 missed classes result in an F. Excused absences are only given under special circumstances if the student provides official documentation (i.e. doctor's note). Please email your instructor if you are sick and are unable to come to class.

Code of Ethics and Plagiarism:

The School expects you to critically scrutinize your course materials and creative work to be sure you have transformed and uniquely personalized your artwork and or any written information. CCA considers plagiarism unacceptable and knowingly using another's work as your own may lead to a judicial process within the school that could possibly result in suspension or dismissal from the college.

Access & Wellness Services:

Students with disabilities, including disabilities that are not clearly evident like chronic diseases or learning disabilities, are encouraged to notify their instructor after class or during office hours. The college will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should contact Access & Wellness Services (Suzanne Guevarra, 510.594.3775; sguevarra@cca.edu) in room 211 of Irwin Student Center to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For more information, consult CCA's webpage at: <http://www.cca.edu/students/disability>

Learning Resource Center:

If you need help with any aspect of this class, whether it is taking lecture notes, completing the writing assignments, preparing for the exams, or reading a text critically, your first resource should be the Learning Resource Center which is located in Irwin Hall, Room #207. Further resources can be found on their webpage (<http://www.cca.edu/students/resources>) or you may contact them via phone: (510) 594 3756.

Please talk to me if you have any troubles with this class, I'll try my best to help wherever I can.

Further Reading:

1. Paul Ward: *Documentary - The Margins of Reality*, Wallflower Press 2006
2. Paul Wells / Johnny Hardstaff: *Re-Imagining Animation - The Changing Face of the Moving Image*, AVA Publishing 2008
3. Suzanne Buchan: *Pervasive Animation*, Routledge 2013
4. Tess Takahashi: *Experiments in Documentary Animation - Anxious Borders, Speculative Media* (in *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 6, No.3, 2011)
5. John Grierson: *First Principles of Documentary* (in Richard Barsam: *Nonfiction Film Theory and Criticism*, E.P. Dutton & Co, 1976)
6. Michael Rabiger: *Directing the Documentary*, Focal Press 1987
7. <https://animateddocs.wordpress.com/>