

COMM 323: Remixing Culture

Fall 2020

TR 11:30am-12:45pm Central

Online

<https://luc.zoom.us/j/7477902472>

Syllabus v1.1

Loyola University Chicago
School of Communication
Instructor: Alan Perry
Office Hours by Appointment

Course Description

Remix is the cross-pollination of critical thinking and creativity. In this class, you will learn about the role remix plays in contemporary society, including legal constraints, moral challenges, political and economic interests, and the participatory culture embedded in social media and practically almost all other forms of internet engagement. You will explore these issues through hands-on play with the language and tools of remix, and critical engagement with remix theory.

Remix is about finding inspiration in what has already been created and then deconstructing, transforming, contrasting, re-using, re-constituting, and re-combining to produce novel creative media that contains cultural value. It happens both in physical and virtual environments. The practice is endemic in contemporary culture. We see it now in many forms of art from assemblages to video art, in data construction, in film and video, animation, games, genetic engineering, food, and many other aspects of our culture. Remixing is not a new behavior or mode of cultural production. It has a long history. Arguably its most ubiquitous form, music, began in the 1960s and 1970s in Jamaica's dance halls, and we can also see its presence in architecture, art, film, literature, etc. It has become a cornerstone of our participatory culture and a core information practice.

New Media technologies have made the processes of production and distribution more accessible to a broader audience. At the same time content which appears to many as source material to inspire collective creativity is subject to vigorous efforts to lock it down as intellectual property. Remix raises questions about intellectual property rights, authorship, the collective, what creativity is and where its boundaries lie, what is novel, innovative, and original, and the very nature of the producer-consumer. We will view remix through multiple lenses: technical, historical, philosophical, legal, political, and artistic.

Schedule

This schedule may change depending on unforeseen circumstances. All changes will be communicated in a timely manner, and the copy on Sakai will always be the most up-to-date.

Week 1

August 25 – Syllabus, Introductions, Community Contract; Commonplace Book & Final Project Proposal Assigned.

August 27 – Watch (Choose Your Own Adventure): [Photoshop Collage Tutorial](#), [Photoshop Composite Tutorial](#), [Double Exposure Effect Tutorial](#), and watch: **(required)** [Photoshop Pong Assignment Intro](#). Bricolage Reading & Response Discussion.

Week 2

September 1 – Studio day to discuss any issues related to Photoshop.

September 3 – Commonplace Book Presentations. Photoshop Pong Round 1 Due

Sept. 6: Last day to withdraw with 100% refund

Week 3

September 8 – Collaborative Reading & Response Discussion, Commonplace Book Presentations.

September 10 – Proposal Peer Review/Brainstorming; Photoshop Pong Round 2 Due.

Week 4

September 15 – Commonplace Book Presentations, Scheduled Individual Meetings on Proposals.

September 17 – NO CLASS unless meeting is scheduled. Scheduled Individual Meetings on Proposals; Photoshop Pong Round 3 & Proposal Draft Due.

Week 5

September 22 – [thoughts on glitch art v2.0](#) Experiencing & Response Discussion.

September 24 – How to Source Video, Commonplace Book Presentations, Photoshop Pong Round 4 Due.

Week 6

September 29 – Final Project Proposal Presentations.

October 1 – Final Project Proposals Presentations Continued. Research Log Assignment Given.

Watch (Choose Your Own Adventure): [Premiere Pro Beginner tutorial](#), [Green screen tutorial](#), [DIY Green screen setup environment tutorial](#), [Premiere Pro Beginner Audio tutorial](#), [Glitch Effect tutorial](#), [Retro VHS effect tutorial](#), and watch **(required)**: [Video Pong Assignment Intro](#).

Week 7

October 6 – Studio day to discuss any issues related to Premiere Pro, Remix without Romance Reading & Response Discussion.

October 8 –Video Pong Round 1 & Research Log Due. Group Discussions. Watch (Choose Your Own Adventure): [databending tutorial](#), [datamoshing for Windows tutorial](#), and [datamoshing for Mac tutorial](#). Play: [Hexed.it](#)

Week 8

October 13 – Studio day to discuss any issues related to Hex Editors & Glitch Art.

October 15 – Remixing Concepts; Video Pong Round 2 & Research Log Due. Group Discussions.

Week 9

October 20 – Originality and Covers Reading & Response Discussion.

October 22 – Video Pong Round 3 & Research Log Due. Group Discussions.

Week 10

October 27 – Video Pong Screening(s).

October 29 – Video Pong Screening(s), Research Log Due. Group Discussions.

October 30: Last Day to Withdraw with “W” grade.

Week 11

November 3 – Appropriation Art Reading & Response Discussion, Creative Research Group Discussion.

November 5 – Digital Studio Day (Individual Meetings) & Research Log Due. Watch: [In Event of Moon Disaster](#).

Week 12

November 10 – Deepfakes Reading & Response Discussion, Creative Research Group Discussion. November 12 – Digital Studio Day (Individual Meetings) & Research Log Due.

Week 13

November 17 – Faked Out Reading & Response Discussion, Creative Research Group Discussion.

November 19 – Digital Studio Day (Individual Meetings) & Research Log Due.

Week 14 – Fall Break

November 24 – Fall Break – NO CLASSES

November 26 – Thanksgiving Day – NO CLASSES

Week 15

December 1 – Final Project Draft Screenings/Exhibition.

December 3 – Final Project Draft Screenings/Exhibition.

Week 16 – FINALS WEEK

Final Project Screenings/Exhibition – Final Project must be submitted before the end of scheduled final time on school calendar.

List of Assignments and Descriptions

Reading Responses & Discussion

8 total

Responses may be either ~200 word short essays, or 1-3 minute audio or video recordings. They are “low stakes” in the sense that they will not be assessed for grammar, structure, pronunciation, presentation, visual effects, etc. A response with full points will demonstrate critical engagement with the material you are responding to.

For an assessment of satisfactory, a short essay or audio/video recording AND attendance for that reading’s discussion are required, unless an alternative is previously discussed & agreed upon.

Virtual Commonplace Book

You will be asked to keep a virtual [commonplace book](#) of media from the internet and/or made up of media you create yourself. These can contain short films, video or imagery you find interesting, inspiring, or potential source material for your projects in the class. Each week you should add 5-7 images/video to your commonplace book, although you will never be penalized for adding more. This is meant to be a daily creative exercise – I suggest you spend a few minutes browsing material online each day, for example in the morning with breakfast, at noon, or before bed. These images may also be screenshots of text (messages, websites, emails, etc.).

This project is inspired by Ann Hamilton’s 2015 exhibition [the common SENSE](#).

The weekly virtual Commonplace Book assignment will be replaced with the Research Log later in the semester.

Collaborative Project – Photoshop Pong

“Photoshop Pong” refers to an early internet culture practice of taking turns making edits to a single image. In this assignment, students will familiarize themselves with the basic tools of digital collage, photomontage, and glitch art. These tools and concepts are useful for remixing still images, and we can see them at play in culture jamming, pop art, and other still visual works. They can also be extended into the realm of video for use in special effects and, historically, film mattes. Some examples would be photoshopping surveillance cameras into a peaceful landscape painting, changing a Coca Cola ad from a happy polar bear to an emaciated one, etc.

You will select 5 still images, **sourced from the internet or the environment around you**, as a starting point from which to edit and add elements. In future rounds, you will select images uploaded by others and add to or remove certain parts of the image to change the meaning of the image itself. These images will then be posted to the [Sakai Forums](#) for other students to download and remix.

In the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th rounds of Photoshop Pong, the “base image” will be selected from those images already posted in the forums. You are free to add elements to this image from other sources, either online or taken in

the environment around you. Each time you sit down to make a new image, think about how you want to change the meaning that already exists in the image. Can you make a happy image look sad? An angry image look depressing?

Requirements:

5 images posted for each round, with the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th rounds of images edited to collage elements together from other images posted by classmates

Collaborative Project – Video Pong

This project extends the general idea behind Photoshop Pong to video format. Students will be asked to start with an existing video and remix the audio and/or video tracks in Premiere Pro. Some examples of this form of remix are fan edits and videos, redubs, supercuts, and unofficial music videos, etc. One example of this is [Bernie Sanders Lofi Filibuster](#). We will discuss how to source video and audio from YouTube.

Compared to the previous project, you will need to consider more than just the sense of sight. You must also consider sound and time. Select a video sourced from the internet as a starting point and add elements (either still or moving) to the video, in order to change the meaning, look, and/or mood/vibe of the video. The finished product will be embedded on the [Sakai Forums](#) for other students to remix from.

In the 2nd and 3rd rounds of Video Pong, the “base video” will be selected from those videos posted to the forum by your peers. In this way we will be producing a “culture” ([in the biological sense](#)) of remixes.

Requirements:

Less than 3 minutes long

3 videos for first round for source videos, 1 edited/collaged/cut video for each round after that

Final Project Proposal – High Stakes

Propose a final project. Your proposal must detail the following:

- 1) a description of your project (answering “what”)
- 2) a justification for your project (answering “why”)
- 3) a step-by-step plan and schedule for completion (answering “how”)

I encourage you to dream big – if part of your project plan requires skills that you are not confident in, we can discuss strategies and resources to build confidence in those skills.

I will be grading this more attentively than other assignments; you will be assessed on a high standard of writing and/or production (for video/audio submissions).

Requirements: 1-3 pages, 5-7 slides, and/or 3-5 minute video/audio detailing the above three points, plus a presentation/“pitch” of the proposal to the class, and participation in the form of feedback

Creative Research Log Weekly Updates

Each week between the Final Project Proposal due date and the Final Project Screening/Exhibition date, update your progress towards researching and creating your final project. You will be grouped into peer discussion groups that will meet three times and have the opportunity to chat and share about your successes and challenges.

In addition to written reflections, you must post images, video, audio, and/or other multimedia that influences your creative research – this is a more directed version of your commonplace book.

Requirements: 100-300 words, 3-7+ images.

This assignment replaces the earlier Commonplace Book assignment.

Final Project + Screening/Exhibition – High Stakes

Create a remix using media of your choice. It may be created using a tool we discuss in class, a tool you are already familiar with, or a tool you have self-taught yourself on how to use outside of class (i.e. Audacity, Ableton, Machine Learning, apps, etc.).

Previous final projects that meet a satisfactory standard have taken the form of video essays, video artwork, short narrative films, mockumentaries, music videos, and recut movie trailers.

Must include the following:

- 1) 300-word artistic/creative statement explaining and/or justifying the work to your audience
- 2) no more than 10 minutes long (if you would like to create something longer please tell me in advance)
- 3) if images/text, a portfolio of 10-20 images or 5-10 pages

Work will be assessed on skillful execution, polish, and conceptual rigor. A successful final project will not have any indication of being unfinished or haphazardly produced, and must demonstrate an understanding of the tools and concepts behind the act of remixing in addition to demonstrating an adherence to a student-made plan/schedule. (To put it perhaps too casually: if you say you're going to do something, and proceed to not do or cut corners on the thing you said you'd do, you will not earn a satisfactory assessment.)

Tables of Readings & Responses, Projects, and Books/Logs by Week Due

Week	Reading & Response Topic
1	Bricolage
3	Collaborative

5	thoughts on glitch art v2.0
7	Remix without Romance
9	Originality and Covers
11	Appropriation Art
12	Deepfakes
13	Faked Out

* REMINDER *

Commonplace Book, Research Log, Photoshop Pong, and Video Pong submissions are not thru the assignment page on Sakai – they are thru the forums!

Week	Project	High- or Low-Stakes?
2	Photoshop Pong Round 1	Low
3	Photoshop Pong Round 2	Low
4	Photoshop Pong Round 3	Low
4	Proposal Draft	Low
5	Photoshop Pong Round 4	Low
6	Proposals & Presentations	High
6	Grade Contract	REQUIRED
7	Video Pong Round 1	Low
8	Video Pong Round 2	Low
9	Video Pong Round 3	Low
11	Last Week for Grade Contract Revisions	- - - -
15	Final Project Draft Screening	High

Week	Commonplace Book or Research Log Due?
2	Commonplace Book
3	Commonplace Book
4	Commonplace Book
5	Commonplace Book
7	Research Log
8	Research Log
9	Research Log
10	Research Log
11	Research Log
12	Research Log
13	Research Log

Course Policies

Accessibility Accommodations

Loyola University Chicago provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC). Professors will receive an accommodation notification from SAC, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Students are encouraged to meet with their professor individually in order to discuss their accommodations. All information will remain confidential. Please note that in this class, software may be used to audio record class lectures in order to provide equal access to students with disabilities. Students approved for this accommodation use recordings for their personal study only and recordings may not be shared with other people or used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students whose classroom comments are recorded as part of the class activity. Recordings are deleted at the end of the semester. For more information about registering with SAC or questions about accommodations, please contact SAC at 773-508-3700 or SAC@luc.edu.

Classroom Citizenship

Students are expected to respect each other. When you enter a classroom, you are a member of a cohort - a community of learning. Your success depends on your neighbors' success. Learning is a collaborative effort - in discussion, group work, and even lecture, understanding is co-produced. Your questions and perspectives matter, and so do your classmates'. Treat each other with tolerance and understanding. The people you'll interact with in class are your peers and future colleagues. Strive to do better on your own, but also strive to help your classmates to elevate the level of conversation in the classroom. You are responsible for your own work, but you are also responsible to your teacher and your peers - your positive substantive participation in discussion and group work is a valuable aspect of the class.

Managing Live Crises and Finding Support

Should you encounter an unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), I strongly encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral (LUC.edu/csaa) for yourself or a peer in need of support. If you are uncomfortable doing so on your own, please know that I can submit a referral on your behalf – just email me or schedule a meeting with me during office hours. To learn more about the Office of the Dean of Students, please find their websites here: LUC.edu/dos or LUC.edu/csaa.

Grading Contract

The grades you earn in this course will be assessed by a Grading Contract method. If you are not familiar with this method of course assessment, it is a method that emphasizes cooperation and agreement between students and instructors. Instead of percentile grading, which you are most likely familiar with from K-12 and other college courses, your final grade will be contracted by a formal agreement between both of us. Your

Grading Contract must be set by Week 6, but can be set at any time prior, and may be revised once before Week 11.

To fulfill any grade contract a student must do the following:

1. Come to class having read any required reading, watched the required videos, browsed the suggested resources, and so forth. You should enter the (virtual) classroom prepared to discuss these materials with your peers.
2. Participate actively in class activities and discussions, making observations and asking questions that help the class think together.
3. You should work to the best of your abilities throughout the remaining semester - both in your classroom conversations and assignments.
4. Experiment with new tools and learning new technical skills with enthusiasm and an open mind.

An **F Grade** is earned by failing to meet your contractual obligation, or the absence of necessary satisfactory work (final project proposal and final project). Any contracts that are not met by the end of the semester will result in the assessment of an F grade for the student.

D Contract: emphasizes Gaining Foundational Knowledge and Basic Facts about Remixing

- satisfactory final project proposal OR final project
- no more than four reading discussions/responses are missed
- no more than three rounds of photoshop pong are missed
- no more than two rounds of video pong are missed
- no more than two commonplace book submissions are missed
- no more than two creative research discussions are missed
- no more than two research log submissions are missed

C Contract: emphasizes Mastery of Basic Concepts of Remixing

- satisfactory final project proposal and final project
- meeting with the instructor at least once to discuss your progress on the final project
- no more than three reading discussions/responses are missed
- no more than three rounds of photoshop pong are missed
- no more than two rounds of video pong are missed
- no more than three commonplace book submissions are missed
- no more than two creative research discussions are missed
- no more than three research log submissions are missed

B Contract: emphasizes Demonstration of Critical Thinking about Basic Concepts of Remixing

- satisfactory final project proposal and final project

- meeting with the instructor at least twice to discuss your progress on the final project
- no more than two reading discussions/responses are missed
- no more than one round of photoshop pong is missed
- no more than one round of video pong is missed
- no more than two commonplace book submissions are missed
- no more than one creative research discussion is missed
- no more than two research log submissions are missed

A Contract: emphasizes Demonstration of Critical Application of Concepts of Remixing

- satisfactory final project proposal and final project
- meeting with the instructor at least three times to discuss your progress on the final project
- full participation in all creative research discussions
- no more than one round of photoshop pong is missed
- no more than one round of video pong is missed
- meeting with the instructor at least twice to discuss your progress on the final project
- no more than one reading discussions/response is missed
- no more than two commonplace book submissions are missed
- no more than one research log submission is missed

For all contracts, any missed work or discussion that is excused prior to the due date or meeting is exempt. Excuses can only be granted under extreme circumstances and with proper documentation – planned vacations are not one of them.

For all contracts, I commit to the following as your instructor:

1. Providing timely feedback on your assignments aimed at cultivating your research skills, analytical abilities, and scholarly and artistic voices.
2. Making myself available for one-on-one consultation and practical help during scheduled office hour appointments.
3. Assuming no technical expertise. I will listen carefully to students if they feel lost and adjust my expectations as necessary to ensure that the focus is on your growth as a student/artist/scholar and not arbitrary assessment.
4. Allowing students with expertise in particular programs (Premiere Pro, After Effects, Photoshop, etc.) to challenge themselves and craft their own experiences beyond the expectations laid out in this syllabus.
5. Working with you to understand your goals and methods when you take intellectual risks in assignments, even if the final product does not turn out as expected.
6. Respecting your identity, perspectives, and intellectual commitments in class discussions and assignments. I may push you to consider other perspectives, but I will not dismiss your thoughts or take them lightly. If you feel I am doing either of those things, I will listen and adjust my responses as necessary.

Contracted Grade: _____

Student: _____

Date: _____

Instructor: _____

Date: _____