

# FLEFF LAB: The Microtopia Project

Park School of Communications, General Communication, Ithaca College, Spring 2011

**Course Number:** GCOM-12000-01

**Credit:** 3 credits, Graded

**Date + Time:** Tu 7:00-9:30 pm.

**Location:** James J. Whalen Center 2330

**Instructors:** Claudia Costa Pederson ([cpederson@ithaca.edu](mailto:cpederson@ithaca.edu)), Nicholas Adrian Knouf ([nknouf@ithaca.edu](mailto:nknouf@ithaca.edu));  
<http://zeitkunst.org>)

**Office Hours:** Tu 6:00-7:00 pm, or by appointment

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Course Reader + Online Resources

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the concept of microtopias through a range of theories and practices of emerging technologies, user generated content, sound, music and other structures. Students will engage in group projects that combine conceptual investigations of microtopias with digital interfaces, sound, music, and social media.

FLEFF Lab: The Microtopia Project is open to all students from all schools at Ithaca College. No prerequisites, and no prior computer, new media, film, video, or social media experience necessary, just a willingness to work in collaborative teams.

## COURSE GOALS

The course combines theory and practice to produce a group project within professional practices of radical design prototyping experiences in new media—essential creative and real world skills for any new college graduate in any industry.

Students will be given the opportunity to develop analytical and writing skills individually and as part of a team.

The course provides a frame to familiarize students with current trends in artistic and creative work as well as with contemporary artists working in the field of digital media.

Course projects are intended to contribute to both the personal and the professional development of students.

By the end of the course, students will have developed skills in concise blog writing, collaborative work, and design practice, all suitable for placement on a resume or CV.

## DESCRIPTION OF REQUIRED READING

You are required to read the materials provided. The purpose of the readings in this course is threefold. Firstly, the essays serve to familiarize you with the kind of conceptual and material culture (art and design projects) of social media, social networking, emerging technologies, and user-generated content. Secondly, these texts are designed to give you a sense about the kinds of research and writings typically expected from professionals in the fields of Art and Design. Lastly, think of these texts as conceptual devices that you can engage with in your projects.

## SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1: Jan 24: What is Microtopia?

#### Required Reading:

Fátima Vieira, “The Concept of Utopia,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, ed. Gregory Claeys (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), <http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/Vieira2010.pdf>

#### Video:

Jeff Pearson, “Pirate Radio USA,” 2006, <http://www.hulu.com/watch/150136/pirate-radio-usa> (accessed January 19, 2012)

**Suggested Reading:**

Frederick Engels, “Socialism: Utopian and Scientific,” in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works* (New York, NY, USA: International Publishers, 1892), 379–434, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/soc-utop/>

**WEEK 2: Jan 31: Millions and Millions of Potential Alices****Required Readings:**

Tetsuo Kogawa, “A Micro Radio Manifesto,” 2003, <http://anarchy.translocal.jp/radio/micro/index.html> (accessed January 19, 2012)

Bertolt Brecht, “The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication,” in *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. John Willett (New York, NY, USA: Hill / Wang, 1964 [1932]), [http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/Brecht1964\[1932\].pdf](http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/Brecht1964[1932].pdf)

**Suggested Readings:**

Joseph Goebbels, “The Radio as the Eight Great Power,” 1999, <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb56.htm> (accessed January 18, 2012)

Frantz Fanon, “This is the Voice of Algeria,” in *A Dying Colonialism*, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York, NY, USA: Grove Press, 1965 [1959]), 69–97

Félix Guattari, “Popular Free Radio,” in *Soft Subversions*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York, NY, USA: Semiotext(e), 1996), 73–78

**Video:**

Guido Chiesa, “Lavorare Con Lentezza (Radio Alice),” 2004, [http://www.archive.org/details/lavorare\\_con\\_lentezza\\_radio\\_alice](http://www.archive.org/details/lavorare_con_lentezza_radio_alice) (accessed January 19, 2012)

**Projects:**

Prometheus Radio Project, “Prometheus Radio Project,” January 17, 2012, <http://prometheusradio.org/> (accessed January 18, 2012)

Women’s Peer-To-Peer Network, “The Women’s Peer-To-Peer Network,” October 22, 2011, <http://womens2p.org/> (accessed January 18, 2012)

**WEEK 3: Feb 7: On the Poverty of Student Life****Required Readings:**

U.N.E.F. Strasbourg, “On the Poverty of Student Life: considered in its economic, political, psychological,

sexual, and particularly intellectual aspects, and a modest proposal for its remedy,” 1966, <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/4> (accessed January 19, 2012)

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th Anniversary Edition (New York, NY, USA: Continuum, 2003 [1970]), 43-86, [http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/Freire2003\[1970\].pdf](http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/Freire2003[1970].pdf)

#### Projects:

Copenhagen Free University, “All power to the free universities of the future!” 2011, [www.copenhagenfreeuniversity.dk](http://www.copenhagenfreeuniversity.dk) (accessed January 18, 2012)

People’s Library, “Catalog,” 2011, <https://peopleslibrary.wordpress.com/catalog/> (accessed January 20, 2012)

Telic Arts Exchange, “The Public School,” 2012, <http://all.thepublicschool.org/> (accessed January 19, 2012)

#### Suggested Readings:

Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Theatre Communications Group, 1993)

Yan Michalski and Antonio Mercado, “The ‘Active Spectator’ Takes the Floor: An Interview with Augusto Boal,” *Theater* 12, no. 1 (1980): 14–18

Kristina Lee Podesva, “A Pedagogical Turn: Brief Notes on Education as Art,” *Filip* 6 (2007), <http://filip.ca/content/a-pedagogical-turn>

University for Strategic Optimism, *Undressing the Academy, or The Student Handjob* (Brooklyn, NY, USA: Minor Compositions, 2011), <http://www.minorcompositions.info/?p=272>

### WEEK 4: Feb 14: Bauhaus to Critical Design

#### Required Readings:

Walter Gropius, “Bauhaus Manifesto and Program,” 1919, <http://www.mariabuszek.com/kcai/ConstrBau/Readings/GropBau19.pdf> (accessed January 20, 2012), <http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/Gropius1919.pdf>

Alexei Gan, “Constructivism,” in *The Tradition of Constructivism* (Stephen Bann, 1974 [1922]), [http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/Gan1974\[1922\].pdf](http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/Gan1974[1922].pdf)

Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby, *Design Noir: The Secret Life of Electronic Objects* (Basel, Switzerland: Birkhäuser, 2002), 57-73, <http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/Dunne2002.pdf>

#### Video:

DxExNxNxIxS, “Bauhaus Documentary,” December 4, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ0qT>

[FtEHAw&feature=related](#) (accessed January 19, 2012)

#### Suggested Readings:

Victor Papanek, *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change* (New York, NY, USA: Pantheon Books, 1971 [1970]), “What is Design”, 23-41 + “Do-It-Yourself Murder”, 65-95, <http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/PapanekDesignForTheRealWorld.pdf>

Stewart Brand, “Spacewar: Fanatic Life and Symbolic Death Among the Computer Bums,” 1972, [http://wheels.org/spacewar/stone/rolling\\_stone.html](http://wheels.org/spacewar/stone/rolling_stone.html) (accessed January 20, 2012)

Radical Software, “Radical Software,” 2003, <http://www.radicalsoftware.org/e/index.html> (accessed January 20, 2012)

#### Projects:

YoHa, “Coal-Fired Computers,” 2010, <http://yoha.co.uk/cfc> (accessed January 20, 2012)

Nicholas Knouf, “Fluid Nexus,” 2011, <http://fluidnexus.net> (accessed January 20, 2012)

Sander Veenhof, “NBEEP6: method for free and untraceable communication,” 2011, <http://www.sndrv.nl/nbeep6/> (accessed January 20, 2012)

## WEEK 5: Feb 21: Refugia

#### Required Readings:

Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (Routledge, 1991), <http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/Haraway1991.pdf>

VNS Matrix, “Cyberfeminist Manifesto for the 21st Century,” 1991, <http://www.sysx.org/gashgirl/VNS/TEXT/PINKMANI.HTM> (accessed January 20, 2012)

subRosa, “Refugia! Manifesto for Becoming Autonomous Zones (BAZ),” in *Domain Errors! Cyberfeminist Practices*, ed. María Fernández, Faith Wilding, and Michelle M. Wright (New York, NY, USA: Autonomedia, 2002), 277–278, [http://refugia.net/domainerrors/DE3j\\_refugia.pdf](http://refugia.net/domainerrors/DE3j_refugia.pdf)

#### Projects:

Stefanie Wuschitz, “Mz Baltazar’s Laboratory,” 2011, <http://mzbaltazarsslaboratory.org/> (accessed January 20, 2012)

ArtFem.TV, “exhibition,” 2012, <http://artfem.tv/exhibition/> (accessed January 20, 2012)

#### Suggested Readings:

Susanna Paasonen, “From cybernetic socialism to feminisation: feminist dreams of cyberrevolution,” 2000, <http://sex.ncu.edu.tw/members/Ning/class/graduate/firestone/firestone1/from%20cybernetic%20socialism%20to%20feminisation.htm> (accessed January 20, 2012)

Sharon Otterman, “Publicizing the private: Egyptian women bloggers speak out,” 2007, <http://www.arabmediасociety.com/?article=13> (accessed January 20, 2012)

May Elian, “Talking with award-winning blogger ‘Tunisian Girl,’” April 19, 2011, <http://ijnet.org/stories/talking-award-winning-blogger-tunisian-girl> (accessed January 20, 2012)

## **WEEK 6: Feb 28: The Evolving Noosphere**

### **Required Readings:**

J. C. R. Licklider, “Man-Computer Symbiosis,” *IRE Transactions on Human Factors in Electronics* 1, no. 1 (March 1960): <http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/Licklider1960.pdf>

The Mentor, “The Conscience of a Hacker,” January 8, 1986, <http://www.phrack.org/issues.html?issue=7&id=3&mode=txt> (accessed January 19, 2012)

The Cyberpunk Project, “The Hacker’s Ethics,” December 7, 2004, [http://project.cyberpunk.ru/idb/hacker\\_ethics.html](http://project.cyberpunk.ru/idb/hacker_ethics.html) (accessed January 19, 2012)

### **Video:**

Adam Curtis, “All Watched Over By Machines Of Loving Grace,” 2011, <http://www.archive.org/details/AdamCurtis-AllWatchedOverByMachinesOfLovingGrace> (accessed January 20, 2012), “The Use and Abuse of Vegetational Concepts”

### **Suggested Readings:**

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, “The Phases and Future of the Noosphere,” in *French Utopias: An Anthology of Ideal Societies*, ed. Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, trans. Norman Denny (New York, NY, USA: Schocken Books, 1971 [1959]), 416–421

Ted Nelson, *Computer Lib/Dream Machines* (Tempus Books of Microsoft Press, 1987 [1974])

Hakim Bey, *T.A.Z. the Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism (New Autonomy Series)* (Autonomedia, 1991)

## **WEEK 7: March 6: Space is the Place**

### **Required Readings:**

Rammellzee, “Iconic Treatise on Gothic Futurism: Assassin knowledges of the remanipulated square point

one to 72odeg,” 1984, <http://web.archive.org/web/20020409185300/http://www.afrofuturism.net/text/Manifestos/Rammellzee01.html> (accessed January 20, 2012)

Mark Dery, “Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose,” in *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture*, ed. Mark Dery (Durham, NC, USA: Duke University Press, 1994), <http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/Dery1994a.pdf>

#### Videos:

Sun Ra, “Space is the Place,” 1974, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwNtxFH6IjU> (accessed January 20, 2012)

Alondra Nelson, “Afrofuturism,” November 30, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFhEjaal5js> (accessed January 20, 2012)

#### Suggested Readings:

Luigi Russolo, *The Art of Noise*, trans. Robert Filliou (Something Else Press, 1967 [1913]), <http://www.ubb.com/historical/russolo/index.html>

Paul Gilroy, *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack* (London, UK: Hutchinson Education, 1987), “Diaspora, utopia and the critique of capitalism”, 153–222

Kali Tal, “Duppies in the Machine, or, ‘Anybody know where I can buy a copy of the UPNORTH-OUTWEST GEECHEE JIBARA QUIK MAGIC TRANCE MANUAL FOR TECHNOLOGICALLY STRESSED THIRD WORLD PEOPLE?’” June 30, 1998, <http://www.kalital.com/Text/Articles/Duppies.html> (accessed January 20, 2012)

Steve Goodman, *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear* (Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press, 2009), Chapters 1, 11, 29, 30

Janet Monae, “Metropolis Screwed & Chopped,” September 2, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nR2PBP8mQZc> (accessed January 20, 2012)

#### Projects:

Kali Tal, “AFROFUTURISM,” 2012, <http://afrofuturism.net/> (accessed January 19, 2012)

## WEEK 8: March 20: Of Other Spaces

#### Required Readings:

Attila Kotányi and Raoul Vaneigem, “Basic Program of the Bureau of Unitary Urbanism,” 1961, <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/6.unitaryurb.htm> (accessed January 19, 2012)

Hilde Heynen, “New Babylon: The Antinomies of Utopia,” *Assemblage*, no. 29 (1996): <http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/HildeHeynen.pdf>

[org/media/pdf/Heynen1996.pdf](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3171393), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3171393>

Shilpa Phadke, Sameera Khan, and Shilpa Ranade, *Why Loiter? Women & Risk on Mumbai Streets* (New Dehli, India: Penguin Books, 2011), “Lines of Control”, 31-40, “Designed City”, 96-103, “Why Loiter?”, 175-188, <http://zeitkunst.org/media/pdf/Phadke2011.pdf>

#### Video:

Paromita Vohra, “Q2P,” August 8, 2009, <http://vimeo.com/6004376> (accessed January 20, 2012)

#### Recommended Readings:

Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec, “Of Other Spaces,” *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 22–27, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/464648>

Felicity D. Scott, *Architecture or Techno-Utopia: Politics after Modernism* (Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press, 2007), Chapter 5, “Italian Design and the New Political Landscape”, 117-149

Johannes Birringer, “Makrolab: A Heterotopia,” *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art Journal* 20, no. 3 (1998): 66–75

#### Projects:

Zavod Projekt Atol, “Makrolab,” December 12, 2003, <http://makrolab.ljudmila.org/> (accessed June 30, 2011)

*fadaiat* (2004-2006), <http://fadaiat.net>

### WEEK 9: March 27: FLEFF Microtopias Panel

FLEFF LAB Microtopias Project Panel with invited artists

### WEEK 10: April 3

Microtopias Initial Project Presentations

### WEEK 11: April 10

Microtopias Lab

**WEEK 12: April 17**

Microtopias Lab

**WEEK 13: April 24**

Microtopias Lab

**WEEK 14: May 1**

Final Project Presentations

Final Project Due

**ASSIGNMENTS****Written Work**

**Blog post summaries:** Each week each student will write a summary (max 500 words) of the readings and the artists under consideration. This summary should include relevant citations from the readings, references to the artists' projects, and discussion of their relationship. Each student will post their summary to the private class blog for the course. The instructors will choose the best summary to be posted publicly to the FLEFF blog associated with the course.

**Microtopias Panel Discussion:** FLEFF LAB Microtopias will be hosting a panel of international artists during the FLEFF festival. The panel will occur during the regular class period. Each student will pick one topic/project/presenter from the discussion and connect it to projects and texts brought up in the course. This written work (max 500 words) will be posted to the private class blog for the course. As with the summaries, the best one will be posted to the public FLEFF blog associated with the course.

**Final Project**

**Description:** Students will work in groups for the final project. The final project addresses a particular theme provided by the instructors. This artifact can be a combination of text, images, sound, and video. The project needs to address the issues raised by the texts and artists presented in the course. Studio exercises in the second half of the course will provide the foundation for this project. During the final weeks of the

course when groups are working intensely on the project, students should expect to meet regularly with their group outside of class for at least three hours per week.

**Initial Project Presentation:** On April 3, groups will briefly present their initial project ideas, detailing their connection to course texts, artists, and theme. This presentation should be no longer than 15 minutes, in order to enable discussion with the other students in the course.

**Microtopias Labs:** On April 10, April 17, and April 24, students will work during the class session on their final project. Groups should come prepared with necessary equipment and materials. Groups should also be prepared to give brief updates to the instructors and the class. The instructors will work individually with each group to refine their project implementations.

**Final Project Submission and Presentation:** Each group will turn in their project on the final day of class (May 1) using whatever format is appropriate. As well, each group will give a 15 minute presentation on their project on the final day of class.

## GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Type all your written work; handwritten papers will not be accepted.

Use standard font, in 12 point.

Doublespace, using 1 inch margins.

Number your pages.

Staple or paper clip your pages together.

At the top of your first page include your name, assignment number, date, and essay title.

Proofread and spellcheck before bringing any drafts to class [Proofread means: read your writing in its entirety once to check if the argument “flows,” read once more to check grammar; reading your work out loud usually helps you detect awkward transitions and grammatical inconsistencies; spellcheck once before you proofread the first time and again the second time; lastly spellcheck the spellcheck] (we will go over this process in class).

## POLICY ON ABSENCES AND LATENESS

You are responsible for finding out from other students (not us) what happened in your absence—getting copies of materials and assignments, discussing work covered in class, and so on. **Students are allowed one absence**, given the intense nature of the course and the collaborative nature of the course. Each extra absence will result in a deduction of a full letter grade. **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU ATTEND ALL CLASSES GIVEN THAT WE WILL DEVOTE AT LEAST PART OF EACH CLASS TO SCREENINGS OF ART**

## PROJECTS AND STUDIO WORK.

### **GRADING POLICY**

The grading policy is as follows:

Attendance and participation in class and at FLEFF events: 25%

Blog post summaries and FLEFF panel Discussion: 45%

Final Project: 30%

For each summary missed, five (5) points will be deducted. For each absence over the one allowed, ten (10) points will be deducted.

ALL STUDENT WORK FOR THE COURSE MAY BE READ AND SHARED BY ALL MEMBERS OF THE CLASS. REMEMBER THAT THIS MEANS THAT YOUR WORK BECOMES PUBLIC UPON YOUR DECISION TO MAKE IT SO.

ALWAYS REFER TO ASSIGNMENT SHEET BEFORE COMING TO CLASS. BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS AS-SIGNED READINGS AND PROJECTS.

### **ACADEMIC COLLABORATION**

Collaborative work is only appropriate for the final project. All of the other work you submit in this course must have been written for this course and not another and must originate with you in form and content with all contributory sources fully and specifically acknowledged. In this class, the normal penalty for the violation of the code is an “F” for the term.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

“Academic honesty is a cornerstone of the mission of the College. Unless it is otherwise stipulated, students may submit for evaluation only that work that is their own and that is submitted originally for a specific course. According to traditions of higher education, forms of conduct that will be considered evidence of academic misconduct include but are not limited to the following: conversations between students during an examination; reviewing, without authorization, material during an examination (e.g., personal notes, another student’s exam); unauthorized collaboration; submission of a paper also submitted for credit in another course; reference to written material related to the course brought into an examination room during a closed-book, written examination; and submission without proper acknowledgment of work that is based partially or entirely on the ideas or writings of others” (as quoted in section 7.1.4 of the IC Policy Manual).

## ACCOMMODATIONS

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodation will be provided to students with documented disabilities on a case-by-case basis. Students must register with the Office of Academic Support Services (322A Smiddy Hall, 274-1005) and provide appropriate documentation to the college before any academic adjustment can be provided.

## ETIQUETTE

It is important that we maintain a standard of respect in our communication and classroom setting. This means being respectful toward fellow classmates, making informed and educated arguments, and maintaining a level of formality. Email communication with the professor should also maintain a level of formality and respect (e.g. include a greeting at the beginning of your emails and write in full sentences.)

## MENTAL HEALTH

Diminished mental health, including significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, or problems with eating and/or sleeping can interfere with optimal academic performance. The source of symptoms might be strictly related to your course work; if so, please speak with me. However, problems with relationships, family worries, loss, or a personal struggle or crisis can also contribute to decreased academic performance. Ithaca College provides a Counseling Center to support the academic success of students. The Counseling Center provides cost-free services to help you manage personal challenges that threaten your well-being.