

Space Atacama, Chile: Exploring Art, Culture, and the Environment in the high Andean Desert

ART 493W, Spring 2018

In Class instruction: T/TH, 2 PM – 4:50 PM, Creative Arts Center, Room 1502

Travel Dates: March 9 – March 18, 2018

Course Website: <https://www.spaceatacama.com/>

Course Description: Space Atacama Chile is a 4-credit, adventure art course exploring ideas about space, perception and the landscape in the context of art and digital media. The highlight of the course is a week-long trip to the high altitude Atacama Desert in Chile and Bolivia during the week of spring recess. The trip features a 3-day trek by 4x4 vehicles across the remote Salar de Uyuni, the largest salt flat in the world. It also includes an overnight desert astrophotography workshop, sandboarding on the dunes of San Pedro de Atacama, a day-long visit in the capital of Santiago, and a visit to the world's largest radio telescope installations, the ALMA observatory. The course is open to both art majors and non-art majors alike - there are no prerequisites.

Over the course of the semester, students investigate the themes of space, perception, time and other notions relating to the experience of the landscape in the context of multimedia art. Students also learn about the history, politics and culture of Chile and the Atacama region. Finally, students research and discuss the particular aspects of the Atacama that distinguish it in terms of its flora and fauna and geology, and its unique astronomical characteristics.

While in Chile these themes are explored through multiple excursions into the extraordinary natural landscape surrounding the remote desert town of San Pedro de Atacama. These trips range from day long hikes to multi-day trips by bus and 4x4, during which students record and document their experiences, gathering data and information for a final art project. Upon return to the US, students complete the course with the creation a final, multimedia art work inspired by their experience of the Atacama. Non-art students and students with little technical experience are encouraged to apply; the skills needed to complete the final project are learned on location and during the final week of study

Global Positioning Studies Course

For Art and Design majors, this course is part of the School of Art and Design's Global Positioning Studies (GPS) program. GPS is an interdisciplinary visual arts initiative that positions students at the crossroads between a local sense of place and a global understanding of that place in the world. Through direct experience, GPS courses encourage students to engage the world as a fertile ground for art making and critical research. All majors are required to take at least one GPS course as part of their regular degree offerings.

Course Goals and Objectives:

1. To learn basic uses of new media in art making, including video, frame-by-frame animation, time-lapse and long exposure photography.
2. To explore themes of time, space and perception in art making and through historical example.
3. To explore the idea of direct engagement with landscape as a basis for artistic expression.
4. To provide an overview of Chilean and Andean history and culture.
5. To gain an understanding of the history of US/Chilean relations.
6. To become aware of the essential characteristics of the Atacama Desert and the Salar de Uyuni that distinguish it culturally, biologically and geologically.
7. To maintain a project travel log journal that documents the student's field experience.
8. To create a final multimedia art project that creatively embodies the student's discoveries and insights in the context of the artistic, philosophical and cultural themes explored through the course.
9. To instill a greater awareness and appreciation for the history and culture of Chile and South America, as well as the natural environment.

Coursework:

During the first nine weeks students are assigned four primary exercises utilizing various multi-media applications in art including video, frame-by-frame animation, time lapse and long-exposure photography, which explore the topics of time, space and perception. Students also conduct research and deliver a short presentation on an assigned topic relating to Chilean and Atacameñan culture, geology, geography and flora and Fauna. While in Chile, students collect data, photographs and recordings and maintain a travel log that documents their experiences, discoveries and ideas. Upon return to the U.S. students work to organize and structure their data in the creation of a final multimedia artwork that synthesizes their experiences in the field.

Graduate Students: In addition to the regular coursework, graduate students are required to produce a research paper analyzing the work of a contemporary Chilean artist, artist collective or artistic movement.

Submission of class projects

You are required to submit all finished works in two places: the EM Facebook page, and the class designated Google Drive Folder. When submitting final work, please follow submission guidelines carefully to insure you are submitting the proper file type. Check the project page. In many cases project files alone are not appropriate formats for final work. To post to Facebook you will have to open a Vimeo account for the semester (www.vimeo.com). A basic account is free. You may use a Youtube account, but be aware that projects using copy write audio material may be taken down. Projects posted later than the due date will be marked own for grading purposes.

West Virginia Mountaineer Short Film Festival

This semester the Electronic Media area will host the 2018 West Virginia Mountaineer Short Film Festival on April 14 in the Creative Arts Center. Attendance and participation is required. Details will be provided later in the semester. You are also encouraged – not required – to submit work for consideration. For submission details and requirements, please see the festival website: <https://www.mountaineershortfilmfest.org/>

Course curriculum and credits:

The curriculum brings together four principle modes of learning:

1. Topical, conceptual and historical readings and presentations
2. Group discussions of concepts and themes
3. Active, outdoor field exploration
4. Studio art work in electronic media

Students who successfully complete the course earn 4 academic credits. Students in the BFA Program with a concentration in Electronic Media earn credit towards their 200 or 300-level studio major requirement. Students in the BFA Program with a concentration in another area earn credits towards studio art electives. Please consult with your major advisor for details.

Grading:

Undergraduate		Graduate	
Experimental frame-by-frame animation	10%	Experimental frame-by-frame animation	10%
Time Lapse exercise	10%	Time Lapse exercise	10%
Video exercise	10%	Video exercise	10%
Long exposure/light animation exercise	10%	Long exposure/light animation exercise	10%
Travel log/journal	10%	Travel log/journal	10%
Readings, discussions & presentation	10%	Readings, discussions & presentation	10%
Final creative project	40%	Research Paper	10%
		Final creative project	30%
Total:	100	Total:	100%

Equipment Checkout Policy

Equipment is available for checkout on a first come first served basis from the EM lab for periods of up to 2 weeks at a time. Students must complete and submit an [Equipment Check-Out Form](#). All equipment must be returned after two weeks. The student is solely responsible for any checked-out equipment, including all additional items (cables, batteries, chargers etc.) Checked out items cannot be transferred to another student. Failure to return equipment, whether lost or stolen, may result in the withholding of the student's grade for the semester and the suspension of check-out privileges. To arrange to checkout equipment contact me at gerald.habarth@mail.wvu.edu

Visiting Artist Lectures - The School of Art and Design is committed to providing important guest artists, designers, art historians, educators, and related art professionals every semester for your benefit. This is an opportunity for you to hear firsthand about the work and life story of those who have forged successful careers in the arts. Art and Design undergraduate and graduate students are required to attend all lectures. All BFA, MFA and Electronic Media minors are required to attend all visiting artist lectures.

Office Hours & Contact

T/TH 1:00-2:00 PM, room 435A (by appointment only - please email me: gerald.habarth@mail.wvu.edu, or call 304-290-3067)

WVU Inclusivity Statement

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Disability Services (293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.

Course Schedule:

<https://www.spaceatacama.com/schedule/>