Semester Evaluation, 6th semester 2012

Art and Technology

ArT 6th semester 2012: final assessment
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General overview

This was the second class of Bachelors students ever to graduate from Art & Technology.

General evaluation of the semester: as always, there was some confusion near the start of the semester, but overall the semester ran well – smoother than the previous year. This is due to input from the prior year's experience being used to inform the organization of events in the courses and semester projects within the framework of the study plan. Another part of this was due to all of the efforts made by students themselves, in organizing their bachelor project exhibitions. The staff (teachers and TAP personnel) tried to be as helpful as possible in this process as well. What follows are final evaluations of the individual courses offered during the 6th semester:

Installation Technology and Design III
- This course was very useful, with inspiring theory and some new perspectives on 'designing' works of art. The course also included a presentation of 'mulitmodal' systems, which was appreciated by the students. Students felt It was good that the course was project-oriented, so that they could go in-depth with the course content directly in relation to their bachelor semester-projects.

Digital Representation IV
- This course focused on building professional websites. While this may not have been viewed as the most exciting topic for all students, they nonetheless acquired skills and competences in the field that may prove useful in future endeavours. Attendance was a problem, however, possibly due to the lack of direct applicability to the semester projects. Some students felt that this could instead be offered as an elective course. They also noted that the content in this course was continued from an earlier course (1 year ago), which some felt was too long of a break between the content.

Realm and Figure/Character Creation II
- A solid course, but many students did not find the class relevant enough to their semester work. While some projects clearly call for skills in 3D modeling (animation, 3D-printing, some types of interactive installations), as it turned out this semester not many groups of students had a pressing need to learn this content for their semester projects. For the sake of teachers and students alike, the topics that are not directly related to semester projects should not be 'abandonded' – unfortunately, this course also suffered from attendance problems. Finally, some students mentioned that this course could connect more tightly (integration via the 2 teachers coordination efforts) with ISAR – Interactive Soundscapes in Augmented Reality (see "Architectural Universe II" below).

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Image and Sound Systems III

- A good course. The teacher is well-prepared and clearly presents the concepts needed for programming in the Java-based Processing language. One small problem (seemingly unavoidable): there are many electives courses that conflicted time-wise with the lectures for this course. Overall, the course is relevant and usable by all. It focuses on the Pocessing language, and was the culmination of the book "Learning Processing" – followed up from the previous Image and Sound systems courses (I & II) in earlier semesters, which covered the earlier sections in this book. Some students noted that it might work better to have this course later in the semester, when the project ideas are more solid within each group.

Architectural Universe II – Interactive Soundscapes in Augmented Reality

- Once past some initial problems the students had with viewing the course content on moodle, this course moved very quickly. In fact, in the form it was offered (a few days workshop), some students commented that they felt it was actually a bit too short. Nonetheless, this course was very well received and all students enjoyed learning the tools to make content in Augmented Reality for mobile devices. One student thought the course might be thematically better if offered during the 5th semester, because it is better suited to Narrative and Realms.

Networked Performance

- As noted in the study guide for spring 2012, this course took the place of manuscript 2 and dramaturgy, narrative & media 2, which were not offered this year (this course took their place). The students felt that this was a nice workshop-style course, which was taught during one whole week. They learned how to cooperate with each other in the topic areas of the courses, and overall felt it was worthwhile towards their studies. At the end of the week, the workshop teachers (including a guest teacher as expert in Networked Performance technologies) organized a presentation of the student projects at the AAU Forskningsdøgn at Gammeltorv at AAU's – this involved 2 'booths' set up at 2 locations on Gammeltorv that were linked via networking systems. Overall, a good course – good content and knowledgeable teaching. The teaching plan did change from initial plans during the workshop, however this only improved the content. All student projects were working at the end of the 1-week workshop, due to good energy level and involvement of everyone.

Aesthetic Communication and Marketing – Market and Experience Design and Marketing Communication

- This course covered both Marketing Communication and Aesthetic Communication. The course was offered in the form of a workshop. Students agreed that the teachers did a good job, and they enjoyed the links between this course, and the rest of the semester (other courses and the theme of the semester: Experience Design). Nonetheless, some felt that it could be a bit more related to the semester projects: Instead of learning how to promote a restaurant/clothes shops/etc., it could be modified to specifically promote bachelor projects. Or, since it's not related to the bachelor projects in it's current form, it could be better to have it during an earlier semester.

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General comments to semester

- Overall, the semester functioned well. However:

  o The final version of the study guide came later than it should have, this created a bit of uncertainty in the student body that slowed some of the processes near the beginning of the semester. This was, however, not impeding any coursework – only the initial group-based startup of semester projects (concept development, etc.). It worked out fine in the end.
  o The study program needs to do a better job at informing teachers who come from the outside (non-core ArT teachers) about what exactly ArT *is*. In other words, what needs to be understood is the expected placement of the course's contents with the bigger picture of the ArT program in it's entirety.

Students planning groups

It is now standard to form 3 planning-groups- PR, Curation, and Industrial Relations. These are a very good idea to continue using in the future.

  o PR group – Promotion of the final exhibition by organizing the event and making posters, etc.

  o Curator group – help organize the overall use of the spaces used for the Bachelor's exhibitions, and resolve any issues that come up when one group's desire for lighting or use of sound might interfere with another group's project.

  o Industrial relations group – Attempt to procure sponsorships (materials and/or money) from sources external to the university.

Comments for the ArT-studienævnet

The semester was an overall success. While some courses (e.g., ISAR and Networked Performance) deviated slightly from the original curriculum, this was approved by the study board and actually was a great use of the specific expertise areas of new faculty and guest professors. It is seen that such content would be beneficial to keep in future years.

The theme of Experience Design focused on creating experiences that were 'engaging' for the user. Students searched for ways to understand what aspects of an interactive installation can make it more engaging, and went on to build their own installations and document their work – many achieved a good level of polish in their projects, and felt good about their results. In terms of course work, some of the courses unfortunately suffered from a lack of student attendance. However, the final projects and the students' documentation (reports and video documentation) generally showed that they put a lot of effort into their Bachelor projects.

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