Virtual Reality and the Future of Storytelling: How Disruptive Technologies Will Transform Media

Professor Sharad Devarajan
2019 Schedule:

Warren 209
August 28th: 2:00pm – 5:00pm
August 29th: 9:00am – 5:00pm
August 30th: 9:00am – 5:00pm

**(Syllabus and Speakers are subject to last minute changes)**

OVERVIEW:
How will virtual reality, augmented reality and other disruptive technologies shape new entertainment experiences and transform the media landscape in the years ahead? With billions being invested into companies like Oculus Rift, HoloLens, Magic Leap and others are we witnessing the birth of a new revolution in immersive content and will the audience be ready?

Each day different areas of artificial reality will be examined as we explore its impact across conventional media industries including television, film, games and publishing. The course is intended to offer students:

i. Exposure to new artificial reality technologies disrupting media & society
ii. An entrepreneurial approach to the media industry
iii. An understanding of the storytelling process
iv. Insights and learning from preeminent guest speakers from the media industry

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Wed Aug 28th: 2pm to 5pm
DAY 1

SESSION 1: 2:00pm – 3:45pm
  • Course Overview
  • Artificial Reality – an Introduction

SESSION 2: 4pm – 5pm
A Long Time Ago in a Galaxy Far Far Away…
Vicki Dobbs Beck, Executive in Charge, Lucasfilm's ILMx LAB (via Skype)

Recommended Readings:
• The Verge: Inside Industrial Light & Magic’s secret Star Wars VR lab

• The Verge: Rogue One’s best visual effects happened while the camera was rolling

• The Guardian: Pixar co-founder warns virtual-reality moviemakers: ‘It's not storytelling’
  https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/dec/03/pixar-virtual-reality-storytelling-ed-catmull
• Star Wars/ Trials on Tatooine VR - TRAILER - YouTube
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yd8gilbPtxA

• Fortune: The Best Protection Against Disruption Is a Great Story, Says Disney's CEO

• NYT: To Get People in Stores, Disney Offers ‘Star Wars’ Augmented Reality Treasure Hunt

• NYT: Iñárritu’s ‘Carne y Arena’ Virtual Reality Simulates a Harrowing Border Trek

• UploadVR: The Void CEO: Star Wars Can Make VR Accessible
  https://uploadvr.com/void-ceo-star-wars-can-make-vr-accessible/

• TIME: These Guys Created a Real-Life Holodeck
  http://time.com/4095869/the-void/

• Polygon: Welcome To The Void

• The Verge: The Void is building a Star Wars virtual reality adventure

• WIRED: I was a Stormtrooper for 15 minutes and it was awesome
  https://www.wired.co.uk/article/star-wars-vr-london-secrets-of-empire-void-experience

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Thu Aug 29th: 9am to 5pm
DAY 2

SESSION 3: 9am – 9:45am
Preparation & Group Time for Final Project

SESSION 4: 10am – 11:30am
VR for Everyone
Aaron Luber, AR/VR Content Partnerships - Daydream/ARCore

Recommended Readings:
• WIRED: Google Cardboard’s New York Times Experiment Just Hooked a Generation on VR

• WSJ: Google Is Bullish on Virtual Reality, But It Has a Long Way to Go
  http://www.wsj.com/articles/google-is-bullish-on-virtual-reality-but-it-has-a-long-way-to-go-1466654402

• The Motley Fool: Google Is Aiming to Bring VR to the Masses

- VentureBeat: Google Daydream’s Star Wars VR touts PC-level graphics on mobile https://venturebeat.com/2017/05/18/google-daydreams-star-wars-vr-experience-touts-pc-level-graphics-on-mobile/
- Techcrunch: Zuck says augmented reality will flourish on phones before glasses https://techcrunch.com/2016/07/28/pokemon-not-magic-leap/

SESSION 5: 12pm – 1pm
A $150 Billion Market Opportunity?
Tim Merel, Founder, Digi-Capital (via Skype)

Recommended Readings:
- Forbes: 5 Ways Apple AR Is Going To Change Everything https://www.forbes.com/sites/charliefink/2017/07/05/5-ways-apple-ar-is-going-to-change-everything/#38e068b03c08
- VentureBeat: Mobile AR could hit $60 billion by 2021 thanks to Apple and Facebook https://venturebeat.com/2017/06/06/how-apple-and-facebook-could-drive-mobile-ar-over-60-billion-by-2021/
- Techcrunch: AR startup Ubiquity6 lands $27M Series B to build a more user-friendly augmented reality
LUNCH: 1pm – 2pm

SESSION 6: 2pm – 3:00pm:
Lecture: VR/AR & The Future of Storytelling Part 1

Recommended Readings:

- Engadget: The struggle to adapt storytelling for virtual reality

- CNET: The best VR I experienced all year had no tech at all

- Recode: Is storytelling the key to VR’s future?

- TED Talk: Chris Milk: The birth of virtual reality as an art form

- Techcrunch: Vrse CEO Chris Milk talks VR storytelling

- Techcrunch: Why Minecraft predicts the future of collaborative work

- Bloomberg: Facebook’s really big plans for virtual reality

- NYT: Virtual Reality Gets Naughty

- The Guardian: VR could change human consciousness

- WSJ: The Future of Therapy: Becoming Someone Else in VR

- WSJ: Virtual Reality, Now With the Sense of Touch

- Techcrunch: Magic Leap raises $461 million in fresh funding from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

- Digi-Capital: AR/VR/XR startups raise record $3.6 billion in last 12 months
SESSION 7:  3pm – 3:45pm
Pokemon GO! and Creating AR Games
Speaker: Carlin West, Founder, Carlin West Agency; Former EVP, 4Kids! Entertainment

Recommended Readings:
- Techcrunch: The Pokémon Go Influence on New Tech
  https://techcrunch.com/2016/08/13/the-pokemon-go-influence-on-new-tech/
- NYT: Pokémon Go Brings Augmented Reality to a Mass Audience
- Techcrunch: Hype check Pokémon Go says more about Pokémon than it does about AR
- Techcrunch: Pokémon Go Has Now Crossed $1 Billion in Revenue
  https://techcrunch.com/2017/02/01/report-pokemon-go-has-now-crossed-1-billion-in-revenue/
- WSJ: A Year After ‘Pokémon Go,’ Where Are the Augmented-Reality Hits?

SESSION 8:  4pm – 5pm
Redefining Entertainment (via Skype)
Yair Landau, Founder, Mass Entertainment; Fmr. Vice Chairman & President Sony Pictures Digital Entertainment; Executive Producer, “Cloudy with a chance of Meatballs”

SESSION 9:  9am – 9:45am
Lecture: Artificial Intelligence, Neuralink, CRISPR and the Disruption of Humanity

Recommended Readings:
- NYT: The Real Threat of Artificial Intelligence
- NPR: 'Like A God,' Google A.I. Beats Human Champ Of Complex Go Game
- The Atlantic: How the Enlightenment Ends
- DailyMail: Ray Kurzweil - Singularity Will Create Super Humans
• Fortune: Elon Musk ‘Artificial Intelligence Is the Greatest Risk We Face as a Civilization’

• NatGeo: Meet Sophia, the Robot That Looks Almost Human

• Bloomberg: Elon Musk’s Neuralink Gets $27 Million to Build Brain Computers

• TED: My daughter, my wife, our robot, and the quest for immortality
  https://www.ted.com/talks/martine_rothblatt_my_daughter_my_wife_our_robot_and_the_quest_for_immortality/transcript?language=en

• NatGeo: How Humans Are Shaping Our Own Evolution

• NYT: The CRISPR Quandary

• Google Duplex: A.I. Assistant
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5VN56jQMWM&feature=share

SESSION 10:  10am – 10:45am
Brain Machine Implants and the New Mind
Tim Urban, Co-Founder ‘Wait But Why,’

Recommended Readings:
• WaitButWhy: Neuralink and the Brain’s Magical Future
  https://waitbutwhy.com/2017/04/neuralink.html

SESSION 11:  11am – 12pm
The Art of Immersion
Frank Rose, Author, Journalist

Recommended Readings:
• Wired: The Art of Immersion: Why Do We Tell Stories?

• NYT: Karen, an App That Knows You All Too Well
  https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/05/arts/karen-an-app-that-knows-you-all-too-well.html

• NYT: The Making of Virtually Real Art With Google’s Tilt Brush

• WSJ: Review: The Promise of Virtual Reality
  https://www.wsj.com/articles/review-the-promise-of-virtual-reality-1517876496
NYT: Young Digital Artists, Anxious About ... Technology

LUNCH: 12pm – 1pm

SESSION 12: 1pm – 1:30pm
Lecture: VR/AR & The Future of Storytelling Part 2

SESSION 13: 1:30pm – 2pm
Lecture: Key Takeaways

SESSION 14: 2:15pm – 3:30pm
Searching For The New Experience
Sandy Smolan, CEO and Co-Founder, VR Micotheaters, Award-Wining Filmmaker, “The Click Effect”

Recommended Readings:
- Vice: A Virtual Reality Dive with the Ocean's Largest Predatory Mammals
- NYT: The Click Effect
  https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/16/opinion/the-click-effect.html
- NYT: They Have Seen the Future, and It’s Wasting Zombies at the Arcade
- VICE: Virtual Reality Journalism Puts You Inside the Refugee Crisis
- Wired: How The NY Times Is Sparking The VR Journalism Revolution
  https://www.wired.com/2015/04/virtual-reality-journalism-nyt-mag/
- The Verge: CNN launches global VR journalism unit and new 360-degree mobile content

SESSION 15: 3:45pm – 5pm
- Final Student Rapid Fire “Elevator Pitch Presentations”

SCHEDULE OF READINGS & SLIDES
Course Readings are indicated in the session descriptions above and subject to change or amendments.
Lecture Slides are not distributed so please be sure to take whatever notes you feel are relevant.

GRADING
Class Participation: 50%

IMPORTANT NOTE – Please be advised that as this is a block week class, class participation requirements are taken very seriously and can materially impact student grades.
- Attendance is mandatory (email in advance if you are unable to attend class)
• Complete class readings, come prepared to engage with the class and speakers
• Students are expected to engage in classroom dialogues
• Prepare smart, challenging questions for speakers
• Keep all laptops, ipads, phones, etc. off during class and speakers
• Be on time and NEVER walk-in late in the middle of a guest speaker
• No food allowed while guest speakers are visiting
• Respect other students & speakers
• Visitors and non-enrolled students are not permitted to attend classes
• “Cone of Silence” Confidentiality is to be maintained by all students: guest speakers are encouraged to speak candidly and openly in “off the record” discussions with students and their dialogues with the class are to remain in confidence.

Group Presentation: 50%

Students will work in groups of a minimum of 6 people, to present a final “Elevator Pitch” project during the last class accompanied by a brief 5 slide powerpoint deck. The presentation by groups should be no longer than 5 minutes followed by 3 questions from the audience. Groups will work together, and be graded together, on the creation of an original VR/AR or other disruptive technology media product or business and present the business strategy and marketing plan.