

Project Year

2009

Project Title

The Cognitive Science of Aesthetics

Project Team

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Audience

Students enrolled in the course, "Cognitive Science of Aesthetics," to be taught in spring 2010, which will include upper level undergraduate and graduate students from Cognitive Science, Computer Science, Neuroscience, Philosophy, Psychological & Brain Sciences, the Mind/Brain Institute, and the Peabody Conservatory of Music.

Pedagogical Issue

Though many researchers throughout the JHU community are independently studying related aspects of the cognition of art perception and aesthetics, no interdisciplinary course uniting the various fields currently exists.

Solution

The main goal of this project is to implement technology in a novel way through the above mentioned introductory course. The course will integrate the theories and methods of the involved disciplines through a website and database which will connect all of the JHU departments studying aspects of cognition of art perception/aesthetics. In addition, the project will use technology and interactive media as the main learning tools, not a common practice within the sciences. Finally, the website will contain interviews of the course's speakers, interactive online psychological experiments, and a growing folder of student projects.

Project Abstract

Currently there is no course at JHU which addresses the study of the cognitive science of aesthetics. This project will allow a new course to function in the following way: (a) biweekly streaming video interviews with the course's speakers will provide students a complement to their background readings with live footage where researchers will discuss in detail the empirical questions relevant to the assigned readings; (b) monthly interactive online psychological experiments testing the theory to be discussed during that month will let students engage in the research themselves and take part as live participants in a study that is constantly collecting data; (c) end-of-semester student projects will be

presented and housed on the website to encourage collaborative research dialogues both amongst students and between students and faculty.