

Reflecting on Design: Weekly Reading Responses

Each week, you are to write a response to a reading, usually a chapter from our textbook, *Artful Design: Technology in Search of the Sublime*, in the form of a short online essay. These reflective essays are intended to complement the practical course projects.

- 1) Reflect on the reading. Choose one topic, idea, or theme therein and formulate a written response.
- 2) The response should be 400-500 words in length and clearly demonstrate understanding of the material. It should favor reflection over synopsis. Feel free to pose well-framed questions in your response.
- 3) Craft your response with citation and context (explicitly note what you are responding to, e.g., “I am responding to idea X from [Artful Design](#), chapter Y”), as if you are writing to a general reader—not just the teaching team.
- 4) In your response, you are encouraged to embed images, videos, and external links.
- 5) Post the response online, which can in one of the following forms:
 - CCRMA webpage (<https://ccrma.stanford.edu/~YOURID/256a/essay-#.html>)
 - OR a post on your blog or a Medium story
- 6) Submit your essay by uploading the URL to your essay (to Canvas); essays are due each week on Sunday at 11:59pm (e.g., your Week 1 essay is assigned on the first day of class; it is due the following Sunday).
- 7) Each week, all essays will be collected into a single public webpage to be shared with the rest of the class and will remain open on the Web.
- 8) Start early. Give yourself time to reflect on the reading each week. It is essential to develop critical lenses about the things we make. Similarly, craft your essays with care. They are not expected to be lengthy, but they should be thoughtful.

On privacy: note that these essays will be publicly available (you should craft your work taking this into account). If you'd like, for any reason, to not make your name known online, you may publish your essay under a pseudonym (and let us know what it is).

Reading Schedule

- Week 1 — Prelude + Chapter 1 “Design Is ____”
 - (exercise) Design Etude #1 (Chapter 1, pg. 54)
- Week 2 — Chapter 2 “Designing Expressive Toys”
 - (video) [“The Idyllic Video Game Sublime”](#)
- Week 3 — Chapter 3 “Visual Design”
- Week 4 — Chapter 4 “Programming + Sound Design”
- Week 5 — Chapter 5 “Interface Design” + Interlude “Dialogue with a Zen Master”
- Week 6 — Chapter 6 “Game Design”
- Week 7 — Chapter 7 “Social Design”
- Week 8 — Chapter 8 “Manifesto” + Coda
- Week 9 — (essay) [“Humans in the Loop: The Design of Interactive AI Systems”](#)
 - (video) [“Experimental Creative Writing with Vectorized Words”](#)