



# EcoArt | Project Guide

AVT 385 | George Mason University  
Term: Summer 2020. Session 1  
Class Days - MTW, 1:30 - 4:10

Professor: Mark Cooley  
Office hours: By online appointment  
Contact: [mcooley@gmu.edu](mailto:mcooley@gmu.edu)

This course requires the completion of several individual and/or collaborative projects. All projects include both research and practice components. Though not all projects will involve every step in this process, the following outline offers a useful, though generalized, guide for successful project development. Please see project pages and course outline for specific project requirements and due dates.

## 1. Research

1. Identify and read key research.
2. Identify and analyze existing artworks.
3. Identify Issue, Approach, Art Genre, and Strategy to use.
  - A. Examples of Issues: Energy, Waste, Climate Change, Technology (e waste, Biotech, Nanotech, Nuclear, etc), Environmental Degradation (Habitat loss, Eutrophication, etc), Sustainability, Resources, Systems, Reforms, Environmental Health, War & the Environment, Environmental Law, Land Use, Pollution, Agriculture, Soil, Toxicants...
  - B. Examples of Approaches: Conservation, Novel Ecosystems, Preservation, Social Ecology, Deep Ecology, Restoration Ecology, Urban Ecology, Industrial Ecology, Human Ecology, Ecosystem Ecology, Sustainable Development, Permaculture...
  - C. Examples of Art genre: Paint & Print, Sculpture, Performance / Event, Photo, Film/Video, Bio Art, Generative Art, Social Practice, Installation, Public Art, Tactical Media, Gardening, Permaculture Design, Product Design, Graphic Design...
  - D. Examples of Strategies: Educate, Intervene, Visualize, Metaphorize, Activate, Celebrate, Dramatize, Satirize, Investigate...

## 2. Design

1. Brainstorming & mind mapping.

2. Project Proposal: Concept statement (including issue, approach, art genre, strategy), and mock-up in appropriate media.

### **3. Make**

1. Prep: Identify appropriate tools, techniques, and collaborators.
2. Prep: Seek instruction, guidance, and tutorials.
3. Make.

### **4. Present**

1. Document Artwork: The need for meticulous and finely crafted project documentation is essential. Keep in mind that In many cases, documentation may be the only way others get to experience the work. Do not ignore technical proficiency in your chosen method of documentation.
2. Write Project Summary: Include relevant research, concept, description of work, findings, and reflections. Where appropriate, you may include preparatory work brainstorming, sketches, failed attempts, stages of development, etc.
3. Submit Artwork Documentation and Project Summary to the professor via email attachment(s) with the exception of files over 10 MB, which must be sent via email link to a file sharing service of the student's choice. All email submissions must include, in the subject line, the student's first and last name and the assignment.

### **6. Critique**

Critical discussion of artworks in an attempt to:

1. Identify, practice, and question various approaches to criticism in the arts in relation to EcoArt practices;
2. Learn how research & methods apply to EcoArt practices;
3. Develop a language that incorporates social and biological function into aesthetic discourse and criticism;
4. Encourage and empower people to make their works better, and
5. Discuss what "better" means in the context of specific project goals.

### **7. Maintain**

Attend to necessary future maintenance needs of projects.