

INFO 5915 - Remaking the City

This workshop-based design methods course will engage students in participatory design projects that use technology to support community-based organizations in urban contexts. Teams of 2-3 students will be paired with organizations working on Roosevelt Island and elsewhere in the city, to work together to address technology challenges and develop joint projects. In the classroom, we will reflect on these experiences, and connect them to broader themes impacting cities and the civic organizations within them – including migration, race, gender and disability. Potential collaborators include schools, libraries, non-profit organizations and government agencies. Students will learn and apply user-centered and participatory design methodologies; theoretical frameworks that help us understand the modern city; the unique technology challenges facing small community-based and civic organizations; as well as how to navigate these challenges to develop sustainable technology strategies within such contexts.

Instructor: Tapan Parikh (tsp53)

Office Hours: By Appointment

Assignments: Students will be required to complete a sequence of design assignments, either individually or in groups. There will also be weekly readings on design, UX and relevant urban issues. Students will be asked to post on the course blog reflecting on the readings and its relation to their ongoing work with their partner organizations. The course will culminate in a final exhibition including all of the team final submissions.

Grading: Final grades will be determined by a combination of in-class participation (15%), submissions to the course blog (20%), a sequence of design assignments (50%), and the final exhibition (15%).

Readings: Readings will be electronically linked to the course schedule.

Course blog: The course blog is hosted at <http://blogs.cornell.edu/remaking/>. You will need a Cornell ID to access it. Each team will be responsible for writing a blog post before each Monday's class reflecting on the work your team did the previous week with your partner organization. Here are some questions to keep in mind as you prepare your weekly reflections:

- What activities did you do with your partner organization?
- What were some observations and reflections that you had of this process?
- What is the "value" of what you are doing? To you? To your partners? To Roosevelt Island?

Acknowledgment: Thank you to the collaborating organizations and individuals of Roosevelt Island without whom this class would not be possible!

Schedule

2/8: Course Introduction; Engaging in Critical Reflection

- Thomas Deans, Writing and Community Action, Chapter 6, Preparing for Community Outreach: Respect and Reciprocity

2/10: Team Formation Activity

- Tim Ingold, That's enough about ethnography!, <https://www.haujournal.org/index.php/hau/article/view/hau4.1.021/665>
- Optional: Jeanette Blomberg, Mark Burrell, Greg Guest, An Ethnographic Approach to Design, <https://www.kth.se/social/upload/6307/An%20ethnographic%20approach%20to%20design.pdf>

2/15: A Brief History of Roosevelt Island

- Tapan S. Parikh and Julia Khadijah Abdurahman, From Welfare Island to "Silicon Alley": Negotiations of Access, Agency and Accountability at a New University Campus, <http://tap2k.org/papers/parikh-abdurahman.pdf>
- Ivan Illich, To Hell with Good Intentions, http://www.swaraj.org/illich_hell.htm
- Optional: C. A. Le Dantec & S. Fox, Strangers at the Gate: Gaining Access, Building Rapport, and Co-Constructing Community-Based Research, <https://ledantec.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Le-Dantec-Strangers-at-the-Gate-CSCW15.pdf>

2/17: Lab Day: Introduction to Photogrammetry

2/22: Planning and the City (w/ Carl Weisbrod, Board Member, MTA; former Director, NYC Planning Commission and RI Resident)

2/24: Roosevelt Island Virtual Tour

- Tobias Carroll, Uncovering the ghosts of Roosevelt Island, <https://ny.curbed.com/2018/5/15/17353502/roosevelt-island-new-york-history-stacy-horn>
- Judith Berdy, The Rocky History of Roosevelt Island, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/06/hillary-clinton-roosevelt-island-history-118970>
- **Team Formation and Partner Selection Due**

3/1: Lab Day: Scanning a 3D Object

- **Assignment: 3D Object**

3/3: Partner Spotlight: Open Doors NYC

3/8: The Right to the City; Project Updates

- David Harvey, The Right to the City, <https://davidharvey.org/media/righttothecity.pdf>

3/10: No Class - Wellness Day

3/15: Presentations: 3D Objects

3/17: Lab Day: Scanning a 3D Scene

- **Assignment: 3D Scene**

3/22: Partner Spotlight: Roosevelt Island Garden Club

3/24: Housing and the City; Project Updates

- DeFillipis and Fraser, Why Do We Want Mixed-Income Housing and Neighborhoods?, http://librarian.net/navon/paper/Why_do_we_want_mixed_income_housing_and_neighbo rh.pdf?paperid=14051011

3/29: Partner Spotlight: Four Freedoms Park

3/31: Gender and the City; Project Updates

- Hayden, What Would a Non-Sexist City Look Like?, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3173814>

4/5: Partner Spotlight: MSDTA

4/7: Social Capital; Project Updates

- Robert D. Putnam, Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/DETOC/assoc/bowling.html>

4/12: Presentations: 3D Scenes

4/14: Lab Day: Communicating in 3D

- **Assignment: Animated Walk-through**

4/19: Partner Spotlight: Cornell Tech

4/21: Reflections on "Value"

- David Graeber, It is Value that Brings Universes into Being, <http://haujournal.org/index.php/hau/article/view/hau3.2.012>

4/26: **No Class - Wellness Day**

4/28: Lab Day / Office Hours

5/3: Practice Exhibition / Walk-through

5/1: Lab Day / Office Hours

5/8: Final Exhibition

5/10: Final Exhibition

5/17: Final Papers Due