Major Studio 1: Fall 2016

Syllabus Template

Parsons School of Design
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Tuesday 12:10PM – 3:40PM, Thursday 3:50PM – 6:30PM
Office Hours

Course description

The goal of Major Studio 1 is to introduce students to the design process, research methods and studio critique environment. The course is a space for critical thinking and discussion about evolving issues in the fields of design and technology. The course is not a technical class, but rather dedicated to exploring the development of concept and process for which innovative use of tools and media will be applied.

The course is run in a studio format, with the primary focus being the creation of self-directed work. Students will work individually and in groups to produce both theoretical and applied projects. In addition to making, all students are also required to contribute to discussion and critique as a substantial part of their grade to demonstrate their understanding and perspective on the subjects studied. Readings, research and writing assignments will complement design projects. Thematics to be introduced include: community of practice; design constraints and rules; speculation and hypothesis; public engagement; design context and impact.

Major Studio 1 is the first in a series of four MFADT Studio courses: Major Studio 1, Major Studio 2, Thesis Studio 1 and Thesis Studio 2. These four courses are the core of the curriculum, with technical and academic electives supporting the central studio. Major Studios focus on development of concept and method; while support electives concentrate on technical development. Students are responsible for establishing intersections across different classes in their course of study.

Learning Outcomes

By the successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand the relationship between concept, form and domain.
2. Practice ideation techniques that explore multiple approaches to making ideas material.
3. Explore process for taking project concepts through successive stages of conceptualization, prototyping, testing and evaluation.
4. Demonstrate competency with use of iterative prototyping in their project based work.
5. Demonstrate competency with research strategies in the presentation and documentation of creative practice.
6. Demonstrate competency with analytical thinking to test and critically evaluate concepts, as evidenced by articulating a competent defense of their own work, and offering constructive criticism of others.
7. Demonstrate competency describing the context of their work; how their work relates to history, ideas, and other creative works in the fields of art, design and technology.
8. Work productively in small team and collaborative contexts.

Course Components

Four Primary Assignments
The course has four primary assignments exploring design and technology within a physical, social, and cultural framework. Projects will be created both individually and in groups at the discretion of the faculty.

1. *5 in 5*; 1 week
2. *Ideas in Form*, 1D to 5D Project, 3 weeks: students select a project idea from 5 in 5, and give form to it in five different ways.
3. *Instruction Sets for Strangers*, an urban space project, 3 weeks
4. Final individual project: research, concept, design and execution, 8 weeks

Critique, Presentation and Discussion
The presentation and discussion of work is an integral component of the course. Students are expected to present their work in a clear and concise manner during both casual and more formalized critique sessions, which may include invited guest critics. Students should also be prepared to ask questions and provide constructive criticism to their fellow students.

Presentation Guidelines
When presenting, students should explain:
Context: what is your area of inquiry? What are you studying, experimenting with, questioning; and why?
Intention: what do you plan to make, and why? How is this making a response to your inquiry?
Impact: what is the goal of your project, what impact do you think it will have, why is it important?

Writing and Research
The ability to formulate and present a strong argument is essential to all creative work. Students will do a variety of writing, which may include automatic writing, reflection documents, blog posts, design briefs, and user scenarios.

Reading and Discussion
Blog: Students will post a short paragraph (~ 300 words) to the class blog in response to assigned readings before each discussion class.

Reading Moderation: Students will sign up in groups of 2 - 3 to moderate discussion for at least one reading per semester. The goal of these discussions is not to summarize the reading, but rather to voice an opinion on how the text relates to areas of personal interest, current projects, and current events. Moderators will post a more in depth reading commentary (~ 600 words) before their given class that ends with questions for discussion. Presentations should focus on interaction and involve rest of the class with conversation or activities. Short exercises, games or visual presentations are encouraged.

Required Readings:

1. Speculation: Vannevar Bush, *As We May Think*, The Atlantic Monthly, July 1945
2. Urban ecologies & intervention: Whyte, *Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, 1980, intro & ch1; Tactical Urbanism Vol2, 2012, pp 1-7
3. Prototyping: Stephen Houde and Charles Hill, *What Do Prototypes Prototype?* 1997
4. Design vision & impact: Maciej Cegłowski, *Web Design: The First 100 Years* (2014)

Class blog, personal blog, and deliverables
Students will post all course work, including reading responses, writing assignments, project prototypes and final projects to the class web site. Individual projects should be tagged according to the project name and stage. Each student should have a personal portfolio site where they feature and write about their work in process.

Final Project
Students will propose a small-scale project that will be fleshed out through a series of concepting, prototyping, testing and evaluation methodologies. This will then be documented in order to capture the final plans for the project.

Final Paper
Students will write a 1500 - 2500 word (3-5 page) paper, to outline the research and defend the concept of their final projects.

**** Students will be required make an appointment with the writing center** after writing their rough draft to get feedback on the development of their argument and assistance with citing their sources.

Schedule

Part 1: Ideas in Form

week 1 — Introduction to course
In class: (session 1, optional): 1/2 PechaKucha, 3 min: who are you, what is your creative bkgrd & fave previous project, why are you here, how are you thinking to meet your goals?
In class (session 2) Brainstorming, domains of interest, mind mapping, communities of practice
*Assigne*d: *5 in 5*

week 2 — Review 5 in 5 > research domain
*** Note, Mon Sep 4th no class for Labor Day*
Assigned, *1D:* chose a 5 in 5 project. Write the 'story' of that project. Describe and research central domains involved in the project and story; prepare a 7 minute research presentation on why you are studying that domain.
Assigned reading: Vannevar Bush

week 3 — 1D research & writing > 2D flat land & 3D
Review: 1D narratives, research domain
Discuss: design constraints
Assigned: represent the project in 2D as well as 3D
Do differences in dimension and form affect meaning, nature of experience? What connections and qualities are more or less possible, evident?

week 4 — 2D & 3D project presentations
Assigned: 4D (time-based) project. Consider the relation of space, time and meaning. Think about ideas such as event,

action, causality. Consider if / how time-based form allows you to express ideas related to your original domain of interest.

week 5 — 4D project presentations
Optional in class or Assigned: Instruction Sets ideation activity
Assigned, 5D (interaction): Instruction Sets for Strangers, location studies & in house prototype. Pair up with another person whose research domain aligns with yours. Consider how your research & making evolves to incorporate interaction.
Assigned: urban ecologies reading

week 6 — 5D, Instruction Sets location studies & prototype
Assigned: Instruction Sets public prototype. Consider invitation, the idea of core experience, and the nature of "failure"

week 7 — 5D Instruction Sets public prototype
Assigned: iterate Instruction Sets public prototype
Assigned: for midterms, each student creates a 7 min presentation of how exploration of domain was pursued through an iterated concept and rendered across a progression forms

week 8 — MIDTERM: individual presentations of domain reach and exploration across a progression of forms
Assigned: Final Proj: written prelim concept
Assigned: design vision & impact reading

Part 2: From Concept to Prototype to Project Plan

week 9 — Concept: Domains to questions to concept
In class: domains, design questions, concept statement
Assigned: Concept statement and Concept prototype
Assigned reading: prototyping

week 10 — Aesthetics: form, style, affect
Assigned: Aesthetic prototype
Assigned writing for wk 12: research paper intro & outline; domains & precedents doc

week 11 — Engagement: audience, context, use cases
Assigned: Engagement / Functional prototype

week 12 — User testing
assigned: user test
Due: research paper intro & outline

week 13 Technical: schematics, technologies, documentation
Assigned: proof of concept prototype

week 14 1x1 meetings
Assigned: documentation, presentation, final deliverables
Due: research paper draft (minimum 3 pg)

week 15 Mock critique
Due: Final Paper

Week 16 Final project reviews
Due: Final deliverables

Final deliverables should be labeled according to the student's last name, project name and be zipped in a single document, which must be under 500 MB in size.

Assessment Criteria

Class Participation	10%
1D - 4D Projects	25%
Instruction Sets	25%
Final Project	40%

Project Examples

For more detail, see project spec sheets

CONSTRAINTS, RULES, CHANCE

7 in 7 or *5 in 5*
Define a set of rules or constraints that will guide your creative process for the following week.
Execute a creative project every day for five / seven days based on these constraints.
Questions: How does the framing of a project, its context, scope, and parameters, determine the content created? What is the relationship between concept and execution?

Goals
To understand the nature of constraints, rules and chance, and how they apply to the design process; to understand the nature of scope and how work in respond to it.

Questions
How do chance operations affect design; what do you feel is the desired balance between random input & mindful decision making? If / how might design constraints help or hinder creativity, by inspiring designers to create work they might not otherwise have thought of.

Readings
The Cut Up Method of Brion Gysin by William S. Burroughs
Selections from John Cage's, *Silence*
Example works: Sol Lewitt, Tristan Tzara, Grow a Game cards, Le Mont Young

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
Instruction Sets for Strangers
Analyze: Choose a space you find interesting. Research its history & architecture. Observe flows & patterns for 24 hours. Document & map. Propose 3 potential interventions.
Define: an intervention you think would facilitate meaningful interaction and be specific to that site. Research & define it. Create a non-verbal instruction set or interface for your intervention.
Consider the idea of invitation (how to get people involved), triangulation (how to get people to interact with one another).
Prototype and test: put the prototype into the space and document the results.

Goals:
To become proficient with brainstorming as a group; observation of urban ecologies, patterns and flows; to become familiar at an intro level with working in public space; prototyping and testing on location; the nature of assumptions and how they relate to initial prototyping; and experiential prototyping.

Readings, required:
William H. Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, Intro & ch1
Mike Lydon, *Tactical Urbanism Volume 2*, 2012, pp1-7

Readings, additional
Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of American Cities*
Iaian Borden, *Another Pavement Another Beach, Skateboarding and the Performative Critique of Architecture*
Guy Debord, *Theory of the Dérive*
Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* ch 7, Walking in the City
Jan Gehl, *Life Between the Buildings*
Edward T. Hall, *Hidden Dimension*, 1966 (on proxemics)
Denis Wood, *Everything Sings: Maps for a Narrative Atlas*; maps of social, physical, cultural aspects
Edith Ackerman, *Experiences of Artifacts*, 2007
Yi-Fu Tuan's *Space and Place*, 1977
Marion Buchenau and Jane Fulton Suri, *Experience Prototyping*

FINAL PROJECT
Final design project
Students work individually to formulate a creative premise or question; methodology and project based response. Students are encouraged to think about their own personal design process: what ideas interest them, how they research them, how they develop a personal premise (opinion) about them, and how they produce a creative work in response to their query.

Final paper
The paper should defend the project-based work that students created in response to their design questions. The paper should explain the project's conceptual background & methodology by forming a clear argument based on a concise presentation of research. The paper is not simply a summary of your project, or a research compilation, it must be structured as an argument that uses research to prove the point students are seeking to make with their work.

Goals
To become familiar with: how to define a domain or research area; formulate progressively focused creative research questions about areas of interest; the nature of prototyping as testing a project stage or idea, rather than executing the final project itself; creative forms of testing with appropriate audience; writing as creative commentary that seeks to persuade or prove, rather than just summarize.

Questions to consider for the final paper:
What are the central questions / experiments you are interested to address, and how does your project address them? What is the context for your project; who else has made interesting work in this field, and how does your project relate to it? How are you countering, building on or deriving inspiration from that work? What are some open questions that your project attempted to solve that remain to be answered?

Readings
Stephen Houde and Charles Hill, *What Do Prototypes Prototype?* 1997
Maciej Cegłowski, *Web Design: The First 100 Years* (2014)

Criteria for Evaluation

Students in the course will receive feedback on the following areas:

Communication
How well is the student able to express their ideas, both verbally and with other forms of communication such as: writing, drawing, mapping, modeling, pre-visualizing etc?

Critical Thinking and Reflective Judgment
To what degree has the student demonstrated and developed critical thinking skills over the course of the semester? Reflective judgment not only asks the questions with concrete answers such as evaluative questions about form, methodology, materials, utility, ergonomics, aesthetics, style, cultural, experience, research, and process critique, but also attacks difficult problems of the world that require research and evidence to support conclusions that can then be offered to the fields encompassed by design and technology.

Design Process
How is the student incorporating proper use of problem identification, brainstorming, generating ideas, analysis, research, writing of specifications and constraints, real world costs, feasibility, testing, iterating along a line of thinking and then approaching the problem differently in the next cycle, evaluation of process and evaluation of the form created, integrating and adapting new processes and ideas along the iterative design cycle.

Contextualization, Conclusion and Evaluation
Have the students been able to connect their work and ideas to historical and contemporary precedents, and to situate their work within the larger discourse surrounding ideas of design and technology? Can the student confidently synthesize several different approaches to a design problem and make conclusions of their own? Can the student evaluate their projects' successes and failures?

Integration and Appropriate Use of Technology
Are the students making good choices about the form and type of technology they are using to express their design concepts? Are the students able to integrate technology into the conceptualization of their projects?

Iteration, Production, Time Management
Are students able to scale their projects to the appropriate time frame and technical/design resources at their disposal? Are students recording their thoughts and processes on their website so that their knowledge can be shared with the rest of the class.

Graduate Grading Scale

A Work of exceptional quality
A- Work of high quality
B+ Very good work
B Good work; satisfies course requirements
Satisfactory completion of a course is considered to be a grade of B or higher
B- Below-average work
C+ Less than adequate work
C Well below average work
C- Poor work; lowest possible passing grade
F Failure
GM Grade missing for an individual

Grades of D are not used in graduate level courses.

Grade of W
The grade of W may be issued by the Office of the Registrar to a student who officially withdraws from a course within the applicable deadline. There is no academic penalty, but the grade will appear on the student transcript. A grade of W may also be issued by an instructor to a graduate student (except at Parsons and Mannes) who has not completed course requirements nor arranged for an Incomplete.

Grade of Z
The grade of Z is issued by an instructor to a student who has not attended or not completed all required work in a course but did not officially withdraw before the withdrawal deadline. It differs from an "F," which would indicate that the student technically completed requirements but that the level of work did not qualify for a passing grade.

Grades of Incomplete
The grade of I, or temporary incomplete, may be granted to a student under unusual and extenuating circumstances, such as when the student's academic life is interrupted by a medical or personal emergency. This mark is not given automatically but only upon the student's request and at the discretion of the instructor. A Request for Incomplete form must be completed and signed by student and instructor. The time allowed for completion of the work and removal of the "I" mark will be set by the instructor with the following limitations: work must be completed no later than one year following the end of the class. Grades of "I" not revised in the prescribed time will be recorded as a final grade of "N" by the Registrar's Office.

Divisional, Program and Class Policies

● Responsibility
Students are responsible for all assignments, even if they are absent. Late assignments, failure to complete the assignments for class discussion and/or critique, and lack of preparedness for in-class discussions, presentations and/or critiques will jeopardize your successful completion of this course.

● Participation
Class participation is an essential part of class and includes: keeping up with reading, assignments, projects, contributing meaningfully to class discussions, active participation in group work, and coming to class regularly and on time.

● Attendance
Parsons' attendance guidelines were developed to encourage students' success in all aspects of their academic programs. Full participation is essential to the successful completion of coursework and enhances the quality of the educational experience for all, particularly in courses where group work is integral; thus, Parsons promotes high levels of attendance. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly and in compliance with the standards stated in this course syllabus.

While attendance is just one aspect of active participation, absence from a significant portion of class time may prevent the successful attainment of course objectives. A significant portion of class time is generally defined as the equivalent of three weeks, or 20%, of class time. Lateness or early departure from class may be recorded as one full absence. Students may be asked to withdraw from a course if habitual absenteeism or tardiness has a negative impact on the class environment.

Whether the course is a lecture, seminar or studio, faculty will assess each student's performance against all of the assessment criteria in determining the student's final grade.

● Canvas
Use of Canvas may be an important resource for this class. Students should check it for announcements before coming to class each week.

● Delays
In rare instances, I may be delayed arriving to class. If I have not arrived by the time class is scheduled to start, you must wait a minimum of thirty minutes for my arrival. In the event that I will miss class entirely, a sign will be posted at the classroom indicating your assignment for the next class meeting.

● Electronic Devices
The use of electronic devices (phones, tablets, laptops, cameras, etc.) is permitted when the device is being used in relation to the course's work. All other uses are prohibited in the classroom and devices should be turned off before class starts.

● Academic Honesty and Integrity
The New School views "academic honesty and integrity" as the duty of every member of an academic community to claim authorship for his or her own work and only for that work, and to recognize the contributions of others accurately and completely. This obligation is fundamental to the integrity of intellectual debate, and creative and academic pursuits. Academic honesty and integrity includes accurate use of quotations, as well as appropriate and explicit citation of sources in instances of paraphrasing and describing ideas, or reporting on research findings or any aspect of the work of others (including that of faculty members and other students). Academic dishonesty results from infractions of this "accurate use". The standards of academic honesty and integrity, and citation of sources, apply to all forms of academic work, including submissions of drafts of final papers or projects. All members of the University community are expected to conduct themselves in accord with the standards of academic honesty and integrity. Please see the complete policy in the Parsons Catalog.

It is the responsibility of students to learn the procedures specific to their discipline for correctly and appropriately differentiating their own work from that of others. Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, academic warning, disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, or dismissal from the university.

● Student Disability Services (SDS)

In keeping with the University's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations is welcome to meet with me privately. All conversations will be kept confidential. Students requesting any accommodations will also need to meet with Jason Luchs in the Office of Student Disability Services, who will conduct an intake, and if appropriate, provide an academic accommodation notification letter to you to bring to me. SDS assists students with disabilities in need of academic and programmatic accommodations as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973. http://www.newschool.edu/studentservices/disability/.