

IDP 316: [Critical] Design Thinking Studio

Fall 2017

Course Schedule:	Mondays and Wednesdays 1.10pm to 4.00pm Fridays 1.10pm to 2.30pm
Location:	Capen Annex
Instructor:	Zaza Kabayadondo, zkabayadondo@smith.edu
Office Hours:	(to be held at Capen Annex) Tuesdays and Thursdays 10.00am to 12.00pm (by appointment)
Prototyping Studio Coordinator:	Leo Selvaggio, lselvaggio@smith.edu
Office Hours:	Mondays and Wednesdays 3.00pm to 4.00pm (to be held at Capen Annex) (additional times offered by appointment)

For office hours with Zaza or Leo, use Calendly to make an appointment.

Course Website: <http://smithiesdesign.com/critical-design-thinking-studio/>

Course Application:

smithiesdesign.com/316
due on 14 September 2017, at 11.59pm.

There is a course application for permission to enroll. There are no prerequisites and first years are eligible, but preference will be given to seniors, juniors, and sophomores.

*This is a 4-credit course. The estimated weekly time on this course will be 12 hours:
7.5 hours of in-class engagement split into instruction, workshop and also studio time reserved for teams to meet and work collaboratively.*

2.5 hours of reading and discussion preparation.

2 hours of project portfolio, design research and fieldwork where necessary.

All required reading materials will be available for download on the course website.

Course Description

This interdisciplinary project-based course emphasizes human-centered design process as well as critical social theory on the relationships between humans and designed things. Through hands-on, individual, and collaborative making, students will learn design thinking skills such as: user-experience research, rapid idea generation techniques, prototyping and iterative implementation. This learning will happen alongside rich class discussions of both seminal and contemporary scholarly work on design's role in shaping the lived experience. Perspectives include: archaeology, critical psychology, civil engineering, postcolonial studies, cognitive science, sociology, and art history. Course application smithiesdesign.com/316.

Course Objectives and Topics Covered

Students in this course will appreciate that a “design” results in social action or interventions that are not limited to new products and new services, but include new experiences and new narratives. Students will learn to be critical of design’s role in shaping and transforming social structures that both empower and endanger users. By critiquing their own designs, and those of the latest social intervention startups, students will interrogate how power and social justice issues are constituted in design processes, institutions, and claims of expertise.

Students will learn the following design process techniques:

Synthesis of user experience research and qualitative research observations. Agility in scaling from single-user insights to multiuser design ideas. Use of storytelling to frame problems, to communicate ideas, and to understand the ethical, political, and socioeconomic implications of design in the world.

Students will develop the following design thinking mindsets:

Human-centeredness – design that is driven by empathy for an articulated “other.”

Experimental – learning through iteration, learning with materials.

Collaborative – leadership and joint effort in vision and execution of design tasks.

Metacognitive – reflective awareness and conscious use of process techniques.

Students are also encouraged to attend the Design Thinking Initiative’s programming for the Smith community.

Friday 13 October 2017 – Workshop (2pm Capen Annex) and Film Screening with Discussion (7pm, location TBA) with Emily Pilloton

Monday 6 November 2017 – Workshop (5pm, location TBA) with Jenn Maer. Both visiting designers will join us in class.

Assignments & Grading

Weekly Reading Assignments (30% Total)

There is one reading per week, to be completed well in-advance of class discussions on Fridays. On the first day of classes, students must sign up to be the lead discussant (10%) for one reading, and the supporting discussant (10% each) for a second reading. The lead discussant’s role is to prepare, in advance, prompts for discussion and steer the conversation to insightful and nuanced readings of the texts. The supporting discussants’ collaborate with the lead discussant in creating a lively class discussion. Together the discussants have flexibility to plan creative engagements with the readings for peers.

Project Portfolio (60% Total)

Emphasis will be placed on process and portfolio work of students. While teamwork will merit a team grade, individual members of the team must demonstrate their contributions to the collaborative efforts of the team.

The grading will be based on a portfolio of three projects (digital and physical documentation of process and results); and the show and tell class sessions.

Deep Dive 1 (10%) [individual]

Deep Dive 2 (20%) [team]

Deep Dive 3 (30%) [team]

The three projects (“Deep Dives”) will be weighted for the same following qualities.

- “Embrace of failure that results in demonstrable learning or new understanding.” The designers must explain their process, describe their iterations, and detail how they incorporate user feedback.
- “Human-centeredness.” There is evidence the design is inspired by users. The role of the user’s story on the evolution of the project is clear and evocative.
- “A major intellectual risk was taken.” There is evidence that “bad” ideas were entertained in a productive and reflective way for the purposes of creating moments of learning.
- [For team projects only] The team shows the ways they work together, and shows examples of reflective teamwork in action.

Community Membership (10%)

Contributions to other teams’ efforts and to class discussions that foster a spirit of collegiality and intellectual generosity will be rewarded.

Late Submissions

An assignment is treated as a late submission if it is not ready for delivery on the due date. Late submissions will not be accepted. Should students experience extenuating circumstances, which require late submissions, they should work directly with the instructor and their Class Dean to accommodate changing needs.

Honor Code

Throughout this course, it is expected that students will adhere to the Smith College Honor Code. It is a violation of the Honor Code to submit another’s work as one’s own or provide one’s work to another student for submission. That said, collaboration is strongly encouraged, and indeed, the goal of the course is to facilitate opportunities to work with fellow students and explore concepts learned in imaginative ways. Team project submissions must outline the role and contributions of each team member. If there are concerns about what is considered to be an Honor Code violation students must refer to the College guidelines and/or talk to the instructor. Any violation of the Honor Code is serious and will be presented to the Honor Board for their adjudication.

Disability Accommodation

Contact the Office of Disability Services in College Hall 104 or ods@smith.edu for any accommodations needed. This must be done as soon as possible to ensure accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion.

Course Schedule

Week 1

Theme: Introductions to each other, the focus of this class, and this thing we call "design."

No Reading.

Friday 8-Sep-17

Syllabus overview. What the @#\$\$! is design thinking? What is critical theory? Why now?

Reading:

Glaser, M. Ilic, M. and Civilization. (2017) The Design of Dissent. Non-Breaking Space Exhibition No. 1.

Week 2

Theme: Using design to find voice. Using design to connect.

Monday 11-Sep-17

A mini design challenge. Introduction to tools and space. Expectations and norms. Discussion of Reading (Glaser et al.)

Wednesday 13-Sep-17

Show and tell prototypes. Modelling critiques. Prototyping Studio - tutorial on the laser cutter.

Friday 15-Sep-17

Show and tell - things of dissent.

Reading:

Hamraie, A. (2013) Designing Collective Access: A Feminist Disability Theory of Universal Design. Disability Studies Quarterly, 33(4).

Week 3

Theme: What's so universal about design?

Monday 18-Sep-17

Design techniques: Empathy. Interview skills. Mapping interview-generated insights. Introduction to assignment: Deep Dive 1. Discussion of Reading (Hamraie)

Wednesday 20-Sep-17

Design techniques: Define. Telling stories. Story-boarding techniques. Prototyping Studio - tutorial on the 3D printer.

Friday 22-Sep-17

Universal Design Workshop with our friends in EGR 100. Location and design challenge to be announced.

Reading:

Latour, B. (1992). 'Where are the missing masses? The sociology of a few mundane artifacts.' In W.E. Bijker and J. Law (Eds.), *Shaping Technology/Building society: Studies in sociotechnical change*, pp. 153-169. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Week 4

Theme: Thingness and non-humans - an argument for the morality of designed things.

Monday 25-Sep-17

Design techniques: Ideate. Understanding Flare and Focus. Prototyping Studio - tutorial on the vinyl cutter.

Wednesday 27-Sep-17

Design techniques: Prototype and Test. Prototyping Studio - tutorial on good ol' hand tools.

Friday 29-Sep-17

Discussion of Reading (Latour)

Reading:

De Laet, M. & Mol, A.(2000). The Zimbabwe bush pump: Mechanics of a fluid technology. *Social Studies of Science*, 30(2), 225-263.

Week 5

Theme: Fluid things.

Monday 2-Oct-17

Studio time. Discussion of Reading (de Laet and Mol)

Wednesday 4-Oct-17

Show and tell for Deep Dive 1. Debrief of assignment.

Friday 6-Oct-17

No Class - Date with TSA (Fall Break)

Reading:

Pilloton, E. & Kuruvilla, J. (2009). *The Design Revolution Toolkit*. Project H Design. San Rafael, CA: Blanchette Press.

Week 6

Theme: I am a design-activist - social change and design thinking for civic action.

Monday 9-Oct-17

No Class - Fall Break

Wednesday 11-Oct-17

Introduction to Deep Dive 2. Time to form teams. Team Dynamics.

Friday 13-Oct-17

Discussion of Reading (Pilloton and Kuruvilla). Hang out with guest designer-activist Emily Pilloton.

Reading:

Rawsthorn, A. (2008). What Defies Defining, But Exists Everywhere? The New York Times.

Week 7

Theme: Design - what is it anyway? Why is it and where?

Monday 16-Oct-17

Fieldwork and team time.

Wednesday 18-Oct-17

Techniques for synthesizing design perspectives.

Friday 20-Oct-17

Discussion of Reading (Rawsthorn).

Reading:

Hodder, I. (2011). Human-thing entanglements: Towards an integrated archaeological perspective. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 17(1), 154-177.

Week 8

Theme: Redefining the object-human relationship.

Monday 23-Jan-00

Fieldwork and team time.

Wednesday 25-Oct-17

Why prototype? Techniques for prototyping experiences.

Friday 27-Oct-17

Discussion of Reading (Hodder).

Reading:

Norman, D. (2016) The Future of Design: When You Come to a Fork in the Road, Take It. LinkedIn Pulse.

Week 9

Theme: Forks and futures - thinking of design as a field of study.

Monday 30-Oct-17

Fieldwork and team time.

Wednesday 1-Nov-17

Show and tell for Deep Dive 2. Class-wide debrief on Deep Dive 2.

Friday 3-Nov-17

Discussion of Reading (Norman).

Reading:

Bjögvinsson, E., Ehn, P & P. Hillgren (2012). Design Things and Design Thinking: Contemporary Participatory Design Challenges. Design Issues, 28(3).

Week 10

Theme: Who gets to call themselves a designer? Iterative cycles of design.

Monday 6-Nov-17

Deep Dive 2 portfolio due. Introduction to Deep Dive 3. Team formation. Meet with IDEO's Jenn Maer. Advice on working with clients.

Wednesday 8-Nov-17

Workshopping and planning project outline in class.

Friday 10-Nov-17

Discussion of Reading (Kabayadondo). Jazzed about Smith in the World.

Reading:

Kabayadondo, Z. (2017) The Disinherited: Zimbabwe's Kombi Riders and a Case for the Role of Cognition in Informal Economies. Under review.

Week 11

Theme: Technological tools as sites of power and exploitation.

Monday 13-Nov-17

Fieldwork and team time.

Wednesday 15-Nov-17

Testing prototypes. Generating valuable feedback. Learning from failure.

Friday 17-Nov-17

Discussion of Reading (Irani).

Reading:

Irani, L. & M.S. Silberman (2016) The Stories We Tell About Labour: Turkopticon and the Trouble with "Design." Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems.

Week 12

Theme: "Wild, wild, wild!"

Monday 20-Nov-17

Norms and techniques for rapid idea generation. Discussion of Reading (Bjögvinsson et al.).

Wednesday 22-Nov-17

No Class - Thank goodness a break (Thanksgiving Break)

Friday 24-Nov-17

No Class - Food Coma. Arghh.

No Reading.

No Reading

Week 13

Theme: Privates and intimates - design, feminism and the questions of our decade.

Monday 27-Nov-17

Fieldwork and team time.

Wednesday 29-Nov-17

Troubleshooting and workshopping ideas.

Friday 1-Dec-17

Discussion of Reading (Søndergaard).

Reading:

Søndergaard, M.L.J. (2017) Intimate Design: Designing Intimacy As a Critical-Feminist Practice. Proceedings of the 2017 CHI Conference Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems.

Week 14

Theme: "Work, work, work, work!"

Monday 4-Dec-17

Fieldwork and team time.

Wednesday 6-Dec-17

Troubleshooting and workshopping ideas.

Friday 8-Dec-17

Portfolio Day - storytelling practice.

No Reading.

No Reading

Week 15

Theme: Show time!

Monday 11-Dec-17

Show and tell for Deep Dive 3.

Wednesday 13-Dec-17

Last Day of Classes - We made it! Studio portfolios due. Debrief of assignments and discussion of course outcomes.
