Art Academy of Cincinnati
Institutional and Instructor Course Syllabus

Course Title: Art, Design and Social Practice
Course Number: MA5100, CR314
Days / Times: Wednesdays 5 - 8:30pm
Instructor: Corrina Mehiel Email: cmehiel@artacademy.edu
Office Hours: By appointment room S556

Department: Art Education, Academic Studies
Credits: 3
Course Prerequisites (see AAC Catalog)
Required Course Status: elective

Course Description (As stated in the AAC Catalog)
Students explore creative solutions that promote and affect social engagement, social interaction, and community building within a range of social challenges. The class is a blend of instructor presentations, class discussions, and creative practice that guides students, or teams of students, through projects that address community needs. An overview of post-studio strategies for contemporary artists and designers will be exchanged. Meeting sessions focus on strategic planning, seminar topics, discussions and reporting.

AAC Universal Educational Objectives:
- Students learn, practice and integrate strategies, methods, and skills needed to conceive, develop and execute works of art and design.
- Students learn ideation, research skills, exploration and investigation as part of the creative process.
- Students learn to describe, analyze, interpret and evaluate their work and the work of others in the context of relevant cultural, historical and global influences.
- Students learn to develop, articulate and express personal content.
- Students learn to see and make connections between their studio practice and their academic studies, including the humanities, social and natural sciences, and art history, as a means of driving and supporting the artistic process and the developing content.
- Students learn critical thinking in their verbal and written communication through writing assignments, presentations, participation in class discussions and critiques.
- Students learn ways to become self-directed and to sustain intellectual and creative growth.
*This syllabus is partially based on the course Art and Social Activism, ART 397B, created by Professor Lonnie Graham at Penn State University.

Art, Design & Social Practice

What role should artists and designers play in affecting change in society?

How can artists and designers impact their communities? This course will require you to think more broadly and learn to identify your assets beyond your skill set as an artist or designer. As a class we will draw on the resources of each contributing student in order to demonstrate the interdependence of all disciplines to fully address the needs of a culture. Through an introduction to social practice methodology used by artists and designers, you will be asked to reflect and critique these methods, while developing a collaborative project.

We are partnered with the Health Department of Cincinnati and the lead poisoning prevention project Operation Paydirt, to explore how art and design can be utilized to address and impact issues of lead contamination in Cincinnati.

*Socially engaged art functions by attaching itself to subjects and problems that normally belong to other disciplines, moving them temporarily into a space of ambiguity. It is this temporary snatching away of subjects into the realm of art-making that brings new insights to a particular problem or condition and in turn makes it visible to other disciplines.*

- Pablo Helgera, Education for Socially Engaged Art.

Mel Chin, Operation Paydirt, Ongoing

Students in this class are required to participate in a community project: asking you to apply your skills as artists and designers outside of or expanding on your own personal creative practice. You will identify personal strengths, social issues of importance, outline a proposal, develop a budget, implement a plan, and then report your findings. Students will explore creative solutions that promote and affect social engagement and community building.

As a student you will be asked to use every element of your experience in this class as part of your learning, including readings, site visits, lectures, discussions, reflections, and other aspects you may not traditionally identify as standard components of education. Class meetings will focus on strategic planning, seminar topics, discussions and reporting.

This course will conclude in a workshop or participatory experience that you as a class organize to share your work with the greater Art Academy and Cincinnati community.
Projects and Workshops

1. **THE GROUP PROJECT** is a partnership with Operation Paydirt, a project started by artist Mel Chin, "inviting children, families and communities to imagine, express and actualize a future free of childhood lead-poisoning." [operationpaydirt.org]

You are challenged to explore how art and design can be used to bring awareness of the issue of lead poisoning to Cincinnati. As a class we will identify criteria and you will use this as a starting point in developing your projects. Our class is partnering with the Operation Paydirt team at the beginning of what will be at least a year-long effort ignite a local conversation about lead pollution, creating projects to discover solutions, together. AIGA Cincinnati members will be available to work with you as mentors as you develop your project(s). You will be challenged to dig deep and identify strengths and assets to shape a project that reflects the interests, concerns and passions of your group.

This project will require written proposals that demonstrate an understanding of weekly readings, in-class discussions and research.

About Mel Chin: "Mel Chin is known for the broad range of approaches in his art, including works that require multi-disciplinary, collaborative teamwork, and often become a platform for valuing the creative involvement of others. Operation Paydirt is his most ambitious contribution to this evolving practice of social change. Chin’s work has exhibited extensively in the U.S. and is the recipient of numerous national and international awards, including honorary doctorates. A retrospective of his work opened at the New Orleans Museum of Art in February 2014."
[operationpaydirt.org]

2. **A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP** will be your opportunity to organize a public forum that you as a class will develop. It is up to you how you structure this but it should be accessible to the public and you will be expected to report on your projects, engage with the broader community, and invite new participants to become a part of the conversation.

Major Course Objectives

- To be able to use creative acts as a force for social change
- To participate in Operation Paydirt Cincinnati to develop an original project concept and create and present a proposal as a team
- Partner with local community groups and facilitate a dialogue toward a shared vision
- Examine and critique socially engaged art and design projects
- Develop a personal definition of socially engaged art and design

Materials

Students are required to maintain a journal/sketchbook as well as acquiring materials necessary to complete a proposal, project and report / presentation.

Expectations for Readings

All readings and other materials not available as a link will be accessible on a google drive folder named Art + Design and Social Practice. Everyone in class will receive an email link to the drive.

We will formulate a set of questions that emerge from each text. Bring at least 3 questions from each reading with you to class. We only meet once a week, so it is crucial that you read prior to class to have productive meetings.

Grading will be determined based on the following criteria:

I. GROUP ASSESSMENT

Concept: The concept of your project and proposal will be evaluated to determine the level of the contribution made to the community, how invested the group is in the process of collaboration and how great a role art and design play in the proposal.

Proposal: Proposal will be evaluated in terms of its clarity, readability, and logical interpretation of its priorities. It is imperative that the proposal reconciles with the goals of the group and clearly illustrates a logical progression of the concepts put forth. The proposal must also elucidate the functional role of the participants of each group and demonstrate an integral position for the arts. Of singular importance is the demonstrated community need and opportunity for engagement in the project proposal.

Feasibility: The concept for your proposal must contain tangible and attainable goals. The budget must reflect each point illuminated in the proposal. Participants must be able to demonstrate either physically or conceptually how each phase of the project will be carried out.

Workshop: The workshop is your opportunity to imagine a community gathering that will be an adequate forum to present your project to potential collaborators or participants. At the final workshop you will have the opportunity to present your final presentations, which must be clearly understandable and concise. Each group member must participate. You should plan to use visuals, presentation tools, traditional art forms, performance, or any other mode of conveying your ideas to the public that you choose.

Group Dynamics: Individuals must demonstrate willingness to collaboratively share ideas, participate in discussions and support one another towards the final goal. The ability to work together is imperative to the outcome of your project.
II. INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT

Class Participation: The basis of this class is collaborative cooperation. Participation is imperative as the contribution of each student may help to guide and enlighten other members of the class. As an activist, committed community member and group organizer, the development of responsible discourse is imperative. Listening and understanding the needs of your organization and other community members is vital. Interaction and the exchange of ideas are a critical part of our role as active members of society. So classroom participation and the exchange of ideas contributes to the development of social skills that are imperative, not only for activists and accomplished artists, but responsible citizens.

Commitment: Level of commitment is demonstrated by each student’s willingness to develop an in-depth proposal and to research the subject on multiple levels with regard to community engagement.

Attendance: It is advisable students attend each class with the exception of special permission by the instructor in advance. Information disseminated in each class and each week’s discussion impacts greatly on the next lesson given. Absence from one or more lesson will severely impact the student’s capacity for understanding and moving to the next level of instruction.

Attendance
As per Student Handbook, students are expected to attend all class meetings and devote additional time 3++ hours per week. Punctuality is mandatory and lateness is not acceptable, as shared time is critical and respectful for collaboration.

Learning Assistance
If you ever feel that your work load is becoming overwhelming, communicate your concerns to me so we can avert any problems that potentially could prevent you from completing the class. Help is available through the office of Student Services, writing tutor and the Advanced Tutoriasl faculty and the AT adminstrator.

Academic Honesty
You are expected to understand and practice academic honesty. This means that all work presented, as your work is your work, or is properly attributed to the original source.

This is stated in the Student Handbook:
“Any work that is not a product of the student’s own efforts is considered dishonest whether it is studio or academic work. Academic honesty includes, but is not limited to the following:

Submission of work not actually produced by the student submitting the work.
Submission of the same work for two or more classes unless previously approved by all faculty concerned.
Failure to cite the words or ideas of another in work submitted for evaluation.”
### Calendar

**Spring Semester 2015**  
**Wednesdays 5 - 8:30pm**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W 1</td>
<td>Jan 14</td>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>Explanation of the plan for the course</td>
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<td>Presentation by the Operation Paydirt Team</td>
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<td>Workshop on community and social based work</td>
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<td><strong>Readings and Viewing for Week 2</strong></td>
<td><em>Miley, Eric, and Me: Basel’s Dazzle and the Dark Death Around Us</em></td>
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<td><em>How the Art of Social Practice is Changing the World, One Row House at a Time</em></td>
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<td><em>The Death of the Artist and the Birth of the Creative Entrepreneur</em></td>
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<td>W 2</td>
<td>Jan 21</td>
<td><strong>UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE OF LEAD</strong></td>
<td>Presentation by Cynthia McCarthy</td>
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<td><strong>Readings and Viewing for Week 3</strong></td>
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<td><em>The Interventionists: Intro</em></td>
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<td><em>Living As Form: Intro</em></td>
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<td>Both essays on Joseph Beuys 7000 Oaks</td>
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<td><em>Education for Socially Engaged Art: Intro and Chapter 1</em></td>
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<td>W 3</td>
<td>Jan 28</td>
<td><strong>SOCially Engaged Art</strong></td>
<td>Fluxus, Happenings, Performance Art, Political Art, Community Arts, Social Practice</td>
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<td><em>Organize Groups</em></td>
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<td><strong>Readings &amp; Viewings for Week 4</strong></td>
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<td><em>Do Better at Doing Good</em></td>
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<td><em>AIGA Cincinnati Design for Good</em></td>
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<td><em>The empowerment manual: A guide for collaborative groups</em></td>
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<td>W 4</td>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td><strong>DESIGN FOR SOCIAL IMPACT</strong></td>
<td>Presentation by Mark Thomas / AIGA mentor team</td>
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<td>In class workshop with AIGA Mentors</td>
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<td>What are the different roles in collaborative social practice art and design projects?</td>
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<td>Who should act as a leader and when?</td>
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<td>How do you know when to delegate tasks?</td>
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<td>W 5</td>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td><strong>MEET WITH YOUR GROUP / NO WEDNESDAY CLASS MEETING</strong></td>
<td>Meet with your mentors to continue planning your project.</td>
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<td><strong>Readings &amp; Viewings for Week 6</strong></td>
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<td><a href="http://projectrowhouses.org/">http://projectrowhouses.org/</a></td>
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<td><em>Houston Artist Rick Lowe Wins MacArthur Fellowship</em></td>
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<td><em>Rick Lowe and Nato Thompson at Creative Time Summit</em></td>
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<td>W 6</td>
<td>Feb 18</td>
<td><strong>FINDING DIRECTION / COMMUNITY ART / Asset Based Community Development</strong></td>
<td>Viewing: <em>Third Ward TX / Discussion</em></td>
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<td>W 7</td>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td><strong>CONCEPTION / ARTICULATING AN IDEA</strong></td>
<td>Guest Presentation / Group Work</td>
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<td>Begin to plan Art + Design and Social Practice Conference / Workshop</td>
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<td><strong>Readings and Viewing for Week 8</strong></td>
<td>Clare Bishop &quot;Participation and Spectacle: Where are we now?&quot;</td>
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<td><a href="http://rilkeanheart.org/v_blog/?p=1091">http://rilkeanheart.org/v_blog/?p=1091</a></td>
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PARTICIPATION AND SPECTICLE / A CRITICAL LOOK AT SOCIAL PRACTICE
Evaluating Creative Social Projects
Who is being heard? What is the purpose of the project?
Group Discussion and brainstorming session for 2nd project
Meet with your AIGA mentor off campus this week

PECHA KUCHA NIGHT
20 slides in two minutes: include images of project, including notes, photos, documentation of process, projected outcomes, challenges, and any other imagery to help paint a picture of your project.

Spring Break

IMPLEMENTATION - reconciling concept with reality
Individual Groups meet with instructor with AIGA mentors
Community Workshop planning

EVALUATION / CONSULTATION
Guest consultant will help evaluate feasibility of your project. Should have a detailed draft ready.

FIELDWORK - developing a meaningful community collaboration
Readings and Viewing for Week 14
http://www.abladeofgrass.org/

BUDGETS & FUNDING
How to make the ideas a reality

IMPLEMENTATION AND DOCUMENTATION
Group meetings
Individual meetings with instructor

IMPLEMENTATION AND DOCUMENTATION
Group meetings
Individual meetings with instructor