

DESIGNING SMART CITIES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

NEW MEDIA & DIGITAL DESIGN 3880 | SERVICE-LEARNING COURSE

CROSS LISTED: DIGITAL TECH & EMERGING MEDIA; COMM & CULTURE; URBAN STUDIES; AMERICAN STUDIES

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Smart urbanism represents the rapid integration of digital media and communication technologies into all modes of urban living as well as the reorienting of urban economies toward creative and high-tech industries. While much of smart urban rhetoric focuses on designing efficient and globally competitive cities through data-driven platforms and practices, critics argue it has led to stepped-up surveillance, discrimination, segregation, and economic inequality in urban environments. This class combines a critical introduction to the promises and perils of the smart city with a community-based project focused on designing urban technologies that promote access, empathy, and equity.

Class readings and discussions will explore the New Yorkers and neighborhoods benefiting least from the so called “gig” or “sharing” economy symbolized by digital services like Uber and AirBnB. Instead of designing new technologies for the commercial exchange of resources and services, we will ask how a smart urban design oriented towards social justice could help rework the current flows of wealth, opportunity, and privilege in New York City.

LEARNING OUTCOMES ■ In this course, students will have the opportunity to:

- Demonstrate critical thinking and design skills in all course requirements.
- Develop an appreciation for, and demonstrate understanding through, oral and written discussion of key concepts and current issues relevant to big data and smart urbanism.
- Develop and demonstrate competency in analyzing issues of digital discrimination, citizenship, literacy, and access in contemporary urban design.

— ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

[NOTE: ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE DISCUSSED IN CLASS & MORE DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLINE]

CLASS PARTICIPATION ■ 20% of final grade ■ An assessment of each student’s class participation is made based on their contributions to in-class discussion. Assessment is not based on mastery of course content but rather meaningful and consistent engagement in group discussion.

FIELD NOTES ■ 25% of final grade ■ Each student keeps weekly field notes for the course that reflect on both their service learning experiences at LSNC and the week’s readings and in-class discussion. These notes will be constructed individually with Google Sheets and Timeline JS. Each week’s entry is due by the beginning of the following class.

READING & SERVICE REFLECTIONS ■ 25% of final grade ■ Each student completes two reading and service reflections of at least 2,000 words each (one as midterm, one as final). Both reading reflections should distill the key concepts of their designated set of course readings and explore those concepts in relation to service learning experiences. More detailed directions for each reflection will be discussed in class and posted to the course site.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT ■ 30% of final grade ■ The class, in collaboration with the Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center, will design a series of hands-on workshops that address digital needs expressed by LSNC patrons. The project’s scope, course of action, distribution of labor, and timeline will be negotiated as a group and with our community partners.

COURSE SCHEDULE

[THIS SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE DUE TO THE COLLABORATIVE PROJECT'S TIMELINE]

WEEK 1: TUE, JAN 17 - SERVICE & DESIGN

- Rios, Jodi. (2012). "Reconsidering the Margin: Relationships of Difference and Transformative Education" from Service-Learning in Design and Planning: Educating at the Boundaries. 39-54.
- Karasti, Helena. (2010). "Participant Interventionist: Researcher Role Integrating Ethnography and Participatory Design." Proceedings of the 3rd Qualitative Research Conference.
- Detroit Digital Justice Coalition: <http://detroitdjc.org/> (review DiscoTech pamphlet)

WEEK 2: TUE, JAN 24 - SITUATING 'SMART' URBANISM (LSNC ORIENTATION)

- Albino, V., Berardi, U., and Dangelico, R.M. (2015). Smart Cities: Definitions, Dimensions, Performance, and Initiatives. *Journal of Urban Technology* (22)1.
- Wiig, Allan, and Wyly, Elvyn. (2015). Introduction: Thinking Through the Politics of the Smart City. *Urban Geography* 37(4), 485-493.
- Mattern, Shannon. (2016). Instrumental City: The View from Hudson Yards, circa 2019. *Places Journal*.
- Hudson Yards Redevelopment: <http://hudsonyardsnewyork.com/the-story/new-west-side>

WEEK 3: TUE, JAN 31 - THE URBAN (PLAT)FORM

- Lefebvre, Henri. (2003). "Urban Form" from The Urban Revolution. New York: Verso. 115-133.
- Sassen, Saskia. (2006). "Reading the City in a Global Digital Age: The Limits of Topographic Representation." *Selected Papers of Beijing Forum 2006*.
- Kitchin, Rob. (2014). "Conceptualizing Data" from The Data Revolution: Big Data, Open Data, Data Infrastructures and Their Consequences. Sage.

WEEK 4: TUE, FEB 7 - COMPARING APPROACHES TO ACCESS

- Tabarrok, A. and Rajagopalan, S. (2015). Designing Private Cities, Open to All. *The New York Times*.
- Huber, Linda. (2016). Is New York City's Public Wi-Fi Actually Connecting the Poor? *Vice*.
- Red Hook WiFi: <http://redhookwifi.org/> Project Loon (by Google): <http://www.google.com/loon/>
- LinkNYC: <http://link.nyc> Internet Basics (by Facebook): <http://internet.org>

WEEK 5: TUE, FEB 14 - UNEVEN URBAN DEVELOPMENT (I)

- Harvey, David. (2015). "Uneven Geographical Developments and the Production of Space" from Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism. Oxford University Press.
- Schiller, Dan. (2014). "Network Connectivity and Labor Systems" from Digital Depression: Information Technology and the Economic Crisis. University of Illinois Press.

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WEEK 6: TUE, FEB 21 - NO CLASS (MONDAY SCHEDULE)

- ➔ DUE: 1st Reading & Service Reflection

WEEK 7: TUE, FEB 28 - UNEVEN URBAN DEVELOPMENT (II)

- Browne, Simone. (2015). "Everybody's Got a Little Light Under the Sun: The Making of the Book of Negroes" from Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness. Duke University Press.
- Mitchell, Tania, Donahue, D.M, and Young-Law, C. (2012). "Service-Learning as a Pedagogy of Whiteness." *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 45(4). 612–629.
- Groeger, Lena. (2016). *Discrimination by Design: The Many Ways Design Decisions Treat People Unequally*. ProPublica.

WEEK 8: TUE, MAR 7 - INFRASTRUCTURES & EQUALITY

- Sylvain, Olivier. (2015). *Network Equality*. 67 *Hastings Law Journal*. (Sections I & II)
- Corsín Jiménez, Alberto. 2014. "The Right to Infrastructure: A Prototype for Open Source Urbanism." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 32 (2): 342–62.
- San Francisco 2.0 (In-Class Viewing): <http://www.hbo.com/documentaries/san-francisco-2-0>

WEEK 9: TUE, MAR 14 - NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

WEEK 10: TUE, MAR 21 - CRITICAL PLATFORMS & PRACTICES (I)

- Fine, Michelle. (2006). *Bearing Witness: Methods for Researching Oppression and Resistance--A Textbook for Critical Research*. *Social Justice Research* 19 (1): 83-108.
- Kirchner, Lauren. (2015). *When Discrimination Is Baked Into Algorithms*. The Atlantic.

WEEK 11: TUE, MAR 28 - CRITICAL PLATFORMS & PRACTICES (II)

- Cahill, Caitlin. (2006). "'At Risk'? The Fed Up Honeys Re-Present the Gentrification of the Lower East Side." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 34(1/2), 334-358.
- Donovan, Gregory. (2014). "Opening Proprietary Ecologies: Participatory Action Design Research with Young People" from Methodological Challenges When Exploring Digital Learning Spaces in Education. Sense.
- Researchers for Fair Policing: <http://researchersforfairpolicing.org>
- MyDigitalFootprint.ORG Project: <http://mydigitalfootprint.org>

WEEK 12: TUE, APR 4 - IN-CLASS RESEARCH & DESIGN WORKSHOP

WEEK 13: TUE, APR 11 - SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN THE 'SMART' CITY

- Katz, Cindi. (2008). "Me and My Monkey: What's Hiding in the Security State." from Indefensible Space: The Architecture of the National Insecurity State. Routledge.
- Meriwether, K. (2014). How Bright is the Smart Schools Bond Act? The Gotham Gazette.
- Canary Home Security System: <http://canary.is/>

WEEK 14: TUE, APR 18 - 'SMART' CITIZENSHIP

- Gabrys, Jennifer. (2008). Programming Environments: Environmentality and Citizen Sensing in the Smart City. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 32(1).
- Barns, Sara. (2016). Mine Your Data: Open Data, Digital Strategies and Entrepreneurial Governance by Code. *Urban Geography* 37(4).
- Zingales, Luidi, and G. Rolnik. 2017. "[A Way to Own Your Social Media Data](#)." New York Times.

WEEK 15: TUE, APR 25 - IN-CLASS RESEARCH & DESIGN WORKSHOP

- ➔ DUE: Planning, Promotion, Community Input, and Distribution of Labor Components for each DiscoTech.

WEEK 16: TUE, MAY 2 - IN-CLASS RESEARCH & DESIGN WORKSHOP (LAST CLASS)

DISCO TECH I: FRI, MAY 5 @ 10AM (WITH LSNC SENIORS)

DISCO TECH II: MON, MAY 8 @ 7PM (WITH LSNC YOUTH)

FINAL EXAM PERIOD - TUE, MAY 9 @ 1:30PM

- ➔ DUE: 2nd Reading & Service Reflection
- ➔ DUE: Collaborative Project Archive