

Parsons BFADT Core Studio 5: Hybrid Fall 2006

Faculty:

Tod Aufiero

Rees Shad

Sven Travis

All three sections of this studio are using the same curriculum and will undertake the same projects. Class content and approach within individual studios may change, but project descriptions and dates will remain constant.

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Core Studio 5: Hybrid

In the freshman and sophomore years students investigated a variety of technology concentrations through their core studios. These include the web, time-based media, interactivity and programming, as well as 3-dimensional visualization. In the first semester of their junior year they are exposed to a new kind of studio – the open studio. In this class students engage in advanced-level projects based on their minor concentration and the technology forms they have learned over the past two years. The primary goal of this studio is to provide students with a chance to investigate the digital forms they have studied and to synthesize their work into a final project incorporating research, design production and presentation. Presentation skills are honed through the process of critique and guest reviews. Documentation, problem solving, and process are focused on in the critique environment. Although this is an opportunity for students to engage in individualized work, teamwork is also permitted, and encouraged.

4 CR.

Prerequisites - Core Studio 3- Advanced Interaction, Core Studio 4- Narrative.

Open to: BFADT Majors Only

I. Overview

Students have been introduced to different levels of interaction and narrative. The goal of Core Studio 5 is to provide a synthesis of the student's education up to this point. In the 6-hour Core Studio, students engage in projects that connect them to their urban context and to each other. Students explore a diverse approach to design practices and processes. They investigate the theoretical foundations of media and technology. For example:

- The focus of the studio is synthesis.
- Core 5 is divided into Introduction- (to each other), Inputs and Outputs- (connectivity, functionality and completeness), Performance- (non-commercial, based on historical precedence, based in current creative and artistic endeavors.)
- Core emphasizes a combination of design research and practical hands-on projects,
- Students learn to take iterative steps required of a strong design methodology in defining their own interests.
- Assignments in the Core Studio include both individual projects and collaborations.
- Students work towards an “exhibition” of their work. (to be defined)

II. The Fine Print

The course meets for two, two-hour and forty-minute sessions per week. As per University policy, 4 absences constitute grounds for failure. Two absences will result in an automatic academic warning. Arriving after the start of class also constitutes an absence. There is no such thing as an excused absence; any failure to attend a class sessions shall be marked as an absence. In addition, all students are required to present at major critiques during the semester. Any student who does not participate in these scheduled critiques may receive a failing grade at the discretion of the instructor.

III. Studio Objectives

1. To build a common vocabulary
2. To learn self directed modes of inquiry,
3. To establish for ones self a difference between “what is design?” and “what do I want to design?”
3. To build and refine presentation and critique skills
4. To emphasize process and methods for defining projects.
5. To reinforce rigorous conceptual development and introduce a range of methods for the expression and articulation of ideas.
6. To define a concept of a connectivity, functionality and completeness.
7. To explore forms of writing, including but not limited to critical writing, design briefs, self-assessment, personal statements, scenarios, project reviews.
8. To establish your own voice as a creative author of works including text, performance, object making and evaluation.

IV. Criteria for evaluation

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

- 1. Communication:** How well is the student able to express their ideas, both verbally and in written form?
- 2. Critical Thinking:** To what degree has the student demonstrated and developed critical thinking skills over the course of the semester? Is critical thinking evident in the visual work, in critiques and presentations, and in written assignments?
- 3. Design Process:** What are the strengths and weaknesses of the student's design process? Is the student able to evaluate the work at different points in the process and to identify areas in their work for future development?
- 4. Contextualization and Connection:** To what degree has the student been able to connect the themes and core concepts of the course to concepts introduced in other classes? Has the student 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 “interface?”
- 5. Integration and Appropriate Use of Technology:** Is the student making good choices about the form and type of technology they are using to express their design concepts? Is the student able to integrate technology into the conceptualization of their projects?

V. Undergraduate Grade Scale Descriptions

A = Work of exceptional quality.

A- = Work of high quality.

B+ = Work of high quality, higher than average abilities.

B = Very good work that satisfies goals of course.

B- = Good work.

C+ = Average work, understanding of course material.

C = Adequate work; passable

C- = Passing work but below good academic standing.

D = Below average work; does not fully understand the assignments.

F = Failure, no credit

VI. Course Components

While each instructor will choose to handle their course in different ways, all sections will include the following components:

1. Core Studio Assignments

Students will work on a series of studio assignments that may range from 1 week to 6 weeks in length. Projects may include a series of smaller related projects that add up to a single body of work, or a set of discrete projects exploring different concepts. In all assignments students are engaged in self-defined directions. Core 5 Projects help students to define areas of research and design and develop self directed design methodology, which serve as preparation for the thesis process, which begins second semester Junior year. Projects may be done individually or in groups, at the instructor's discretion.

2. Critiques and Presentation

There are two major reviews: midterm review and final review. Each review will coincide with the completion of a project. Guest critics may be invited to both sets of reviews, and the final review is open to the public. Students should be able to present their work in a clear and concise manner, and should be exposed to a range of presentation strategies in preparation for the reviews. Final reviews are held the last week of classes.

3. Reading and Discussion

Students will be engaged in reading and discussion of material related to the course. Individual instructors will determine the reading material for their course. Students should be encouraged to discuss and critique the material, and are expected to develop a viewpoint that expresses their own ideas about the assigned texts.

Faculty may choose to formalize the reading/discussion process, assigning students to make presentations on particular texts, running seminars, or requiring students to submit written comments on the reading. Students can also be asked to maintain a blog or reading space on their websites.

4. Writing

Design writing represents one form of expression with the BFADT program. As a result, students in the Core Studio will be required to actively engage in writing as part of their overall studio experience. In addition to learning how to write a design brief, students will also be asked to produce a longer piece of writing associated with some aspect of their course work. This document can take many forms, for example on their website, and should be tailored to fit the needs of the different instructors.

5. Website

All students must document their work on their website. Each project should have a description and sample screenshots/images, writing. Other assignments may also be required to be posted on the student site at the discretion of the instructor.

VII. Failing Grades

Failing grades are given for required work that is not submitted, for incomplete final projects or for examinations that are not taken (without prior notification and approval). Final semester grades are determined by averaging grades received throughout the semester. Make-up work or completion of missed examinations may be permitted only with the approval of the instructor and the major department Chair.

VIII. Incompletes

A grade of I (Incomplete), signifying a temporary deferment of a regular grade, may be assigned when coursework has been delayed at the end of the semester for unavoidable and legitimate reasons. Incomplete grades are given only with the written approval of the instructor and the major department Chair. **The Request for an Incomplete Grade form must be filled out by the student and instructor prior to the end of the semester.**

For graduate students, the deadline for completion of an incomplete is one year. A grade of I will automatically convert to a permanent unofficial withdrawal (WF) after a period of four weeks. Faculty may not post an Incomplete ("I") in ALVIN unless they have first completed the incomplete approval process. Please contact your department for complete instructions and approval forms for awarding an incomplete. Students who have not been attending your class should have already been reported to your department.

IX. Changes of Grade

Errors on final grades may be revised by the instructor with the approval of the major department Chair up to one semester following completion of the course. After that semester has elapsed, all grades become a permanent part of the academic record and no changes will be allowed unless authorized by a Dean. Faculty cannot submit a change of grade through ALVIN.

X. Grade Appeals

Students may petition for an academic grade review by following the procedure outlined below within sixty days after the grade was issued. Before deciding to appeal for a grade

change, the student should request a verbal explanation of the basis of the grade from the instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the explanation, the student may appeal the grade as follows:

- The student submits a letter outlining any questions and/or objections directly to the faculty member, with a copy to the department Chair or Director. If the faculty member is also the Chair or Director, the copy will be sent to the Senior Associate Dean.
- The instructor submits a written response to the student's letter within one month of receipt, with a copy to the department Chair, or the Senior Associate Dean if the faculty member is also the Chair or Director.

If the student is still unsatisfied after the faculty member's written response, the department Chair will review both letters, clarify any outstanding questions or issues and make a determination about the grade. Some cases may also be reviewed and evaluated by the Senior Associate Dean, whose decision will be final. The review will test the fairness and effectiveness of the grading procedure used. Actual coursework will not, under normal circumstances, be reevaluated by the Senior Associate Dean.

XI. Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy

The purpose the Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy is to protect the rights of authors, artists and fellow members of the academic community as well as to support the education of the individual student, who derives no educational benefit from cheating. Studio faculty are expected to educate students about the legal and ethical restrictions placed upon creative work and about the consequences of dishonesty in the professional world. Faculty assigning papers are expected to educate students about the appropriate incorporation of quoted material and other thinkers' ideas. Most important, students are expected to keep themselves informed on these matters, to seek clarification from instructors regarding academic honesty and its relationship to specific assignments, and to conduct themselves accordingly. All incoming students are required to sign an Academic Integrity Statement declaring that they understand and agree to comply with this policy.

Students who cheat in any way primarily cheat themselves; but they also compromise the academic climate for all members of the Parsons community. Dishonest students, whether directly or indirectly involved in an act of cheating, will be held accountable for violations of the

Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy. "Academic dishonesty" is defined as:

- cheating on examinations, either by copying another student's work or by utilizing unauthorized materials.
- any act of plagiarism, that is, the fraudulent presentation of the written, oral or visual work of others as original.
- theft of another student's work.
- purchase of another student's work.
- submitting the same work for more than one course.
- destruction or defacement of the work of others.
- aiding or abetting any act of dishonesty.

- any attempt to gain academic advantage by presenting misleading information, making deceptive statements or falsifying documents.

Guidelines for Studio Assignments

Work from other visual sources may be imitated or incorporated into studio work if the fact of imitation or incorporation and the identity of the original source are properly acknowledged. There must be no intent to deceive; the work must make clear that it emulates or comments on the source as a source. Referencing a style or concept in otherwise original work does not constitute plagiarism. The originality of studio work that presents itself as “in the manner of” or as playing with “variations on” a particular source should be evaluated by the individual faculty member in the context of a critique. Incorporating ready-made materials into studio work as in a collage, synthesized photograph or paste-up is not plagiarism in the educational context. In the commercial world, however, such appropriation is prohibited by copyright laws and may result in legal consequences.

Guidelines for Written Assignments

Direct quotations and references to the statements and ideas of others in written work do not constitute plagiarism if the fact of quotation or reference and the identity of the original source are properly acknowledged.

Written work from other sources may be directly quoted so long as (1) the source is identified before the quotation or in a subsequent citation, footnote or endnote and (2) the fact that the passage is directly quoted is indicated by quotation marks, if a phrase or sentence, or by indentation, if more than one sentence.

Any student who paraphrases the statements of another or brings in ideas or information from a published source must attribute the paraphrased content, ideas or information to the original source, either by using an introductory phrase like “Mr. Smith argues that” or “According to The New York Times” or by identifying the origin in a citation, footnote or endnote. A bibliography listing the sources used in any written assignment should be appended.

Students should ask faculty members for detailed instructions or recommended reference materials on proper formats for quotations, citations, footnotes, endnotes and bibliographies.

Procedures and Penalties

Any violation of the Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy is a matter for disciplinary action.

When a faculty member suspects that cheating, plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty has occurred, the faculty member should first inform the student privately that he or she suspects a violation of the Policy. The instructor should explain the alleged violation clearly, concisely and specifically and should advise the student to review the Policy in the Student Handbook. The instructor should schedule a second meeting with

the student to discuss the accusation fully following the student's review of the Policy. Whenever possible, this full discussion should take place within 72 hours of the initial meeting. If a violation comes to the instructor's attention during finals or a school break, the discussion should take place as soon as possible, but no later than a month after the incident or before the start of a new semester.

Each party may elect, but is not required, to have an impartial advisor present at the meeting. The instructor should select the Chair or Associate Chair of the department that offers the course. The student should select an Advisor from the Office of Advising or from his or her major department.

The role of the department Chair or Associate Chair is to help facilitate discussion between the student and the instructor by calling all parties to the meeting, providing a private meeting space and allowing the different points of view to be expressed. The role of the Advisor is to help the student to understand the Policy and the alleged violation.

During the discussion, the student should be prepared to present the work in question, along with any supporting drafts, sketches, digital files or other documentation. The instructor may ask the student to reconstruct the process involved in creating the work.

After the discussion, the faculty member, in consultation with the department Chair or Associate Chair, will consider the facts and determine whether the charge is valid and, if so, will recommend what penalty ought to be imposed. The penalty for academic dishonesty should take into account the severity of the violation. The department Chair will refer in writing all violations to the Director of Advising for disciplinary consideration. The Director of Advising will convene a committee to determine the appropriate penalty for the course and the appropriate disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action may include Disciplinary Warning, Probation or, in severe cases, even for a first offense, Expulsion from the program. A record of disciplinary action may impact future educational and employment opportunities.

In cases where the student confesses to the violation, the procedures and penalties for academic dishonesty may be altered at the discretion of the department Chair or Associate, and the Director of Advising.

In cases where the work in question is submitted at the end of the semester and/or the faculty member is unavailable, the department Chair or Associate will discuss the incident with the student.

Appeals

A student found guilty of academic dishonesty may appeal the Committee's decision to the Senior Associate Dean, whose decision will be final. The appeal review will test the fairness and effectiveness of the procedure used to determine the facts. If disciplinary action was taken, the student has the right to appeal the decision in accordance with the New School University Code of Conduct appeal procedures.

Course Schedule

Week One

~ Class One ~ September 5 ~ “Meet & Greet”

Class introduction

In Class: meet the group, introduction to syllabus, expectations explained, and an overview of the term’s projects. Begin Project 1

~ Class Two ~ September 7 ~ “Interviews”

In Class: Project 1 interviews continued

Homework due: Core 5 Website (Interface for navigation to place holders)

Week Two

~ Class One ~ September 12 ~

In Class: Project 1 Update

Homework due:

~ Class Two ~ September 14 ~

In Class: Presentation of Bio Docs. Introduction of ‘Closed Loop’ (Project Two)

Homework due: Project One (Bio Docs)

Week Three

~ Class One ~ September 19 ~

In Class: Ben Bacon demo

Presentation of Project 2 Concept

Homework due: Project 2 Concept Presentation (KeyNote or PowerPoint)

Including resource schedule and production schedule

~ Class Two ~ September 21 ~

In Class: Developing initial prototypes

Homework due: Progress

Physical Computing & Code Workshops (out of class, times to be announced)

Week Four

~ Class One ~ September 26 ~

In Class: Developing initial prototypes

Homework due: Progress

~ Class Two ~ September 28 ~

In Class: Proof of Concept Presentation (initial prototypes)

Homework due: Proof of Concept Presentation including Initial connection, user reaction and testing (videotaped)

Week Five

~ Class One ~ October 3 ~

In Class: Final piece production / Individual faculty conferences

Homework due: Progress

~ Class Two ~ October 5 ~

In Class: Final piece production / Individual faculty conferences

Homework due: Progress

Week Six

~ Class One ~ October 10 ~

In Class: In-class presentation, Official connection, More user testing
Homework due: PowerPoint or KeyNote discussing precedents, design/production process, and influence of user testing

~ Class Two ~ October 12 ~

In Class: Open work
Homework due: Progress

Week Seven

~ Class One ~ October 17 ~

In Class: Open work
Homework due: Progress

~ Class Two ~ October 19 ~

In Class: **Mid-semester critique** (Closed Loop presentations)
Homework due: Closed Loop Project module completed and fully functional

All three sections close loop and big party, 10FL Lab?

Week Eight

~ Class One ~ October 24 ~

In Class: Introduction to Project Two: Tease
Homework due: Closed Loop document refined and submitted

~ Class Two ~ October 26 ~

In Class:
Homework due:

Week Nine

~ Class One ~ October 31 ~

In Class:
Homework due: Tease RFPs due

~ Class Two ~ November 2 ~

In Class: Tease RFPs returned and discussed
Homework due:

Week Ten

~ Class One ~ November 7 ~

In Class:
Homework due: Initial Tease design concepts presented

~ Class Two ~ November 9 ~

In Class:
Homework due: Rough storyboard/prototype presented

SMS/MMS Server Technology Workshops (out of class, times to be announced)

Week Eleven

~ Class One ~ November 14 ~

In Class:

Homework due: Initial content on server

~ Class Two ~ November 16 ~

In Class:

Homework due: Systems design finalized

Week Twelve

~ Class One ~ November 21 ~

In Class:

Homework due: Initial user testing (in class)

THANKSGIVING BREAK ~ No Class ~ November 23

Week Thirteen

~ Class One ~ November 28 ~

In Class:

Homework due: Initial user testing (in park)

~ Class Two ~ November 30 ~

In Class:

Homework due:

Week Fourteen

~ Class One ~ December 5 ~

In Class:

Homework due: Secondary user testing (other Core 5 sections)

~ Class Two ~ December 7 ~

In Class:

Homework due:

Week Fifteen

~ Class One ~ December 12 ~

In Class:

Homework due: Public role-out

~ Class Two ~ December 14 ~

In Class:

Homework due:

Week Sixteen

~ Class One ~ December 19 ~

In Class: Final Critique

Homework due:

~ Class Two ~ December 21 ~

In Class:

Homework due: Design documents submitted

Project descriptions

Project One: Bio Doc

Each student will be assigned a subject classmate whom they are to interview and produce a short informative documentary about. The Bio Doc should tell us about the subject's life, interests, and goals and give us a sense of that student as an individual. It should treat the subject with respect and be truly informative for the rest of the class. The finished piece should be a polished work and reveal something about the student producing the piece as well – their personality, interests, developing style, etc.

The Bio Doc will be a Quicktime movie with the following parameters:

1. Can be composed of audio, video and/or still images,
2. Must be 2 to 4 minutes long (at least 2 and no longer than 4 minutes)
3. Should be saved in two formats:
 - a. Broadcast quality
 - b. Web-compression for acceptable access from the web
4. Will be uploaded to the biographies section of the Core 5 web site for presentation by the start of class two - week two.

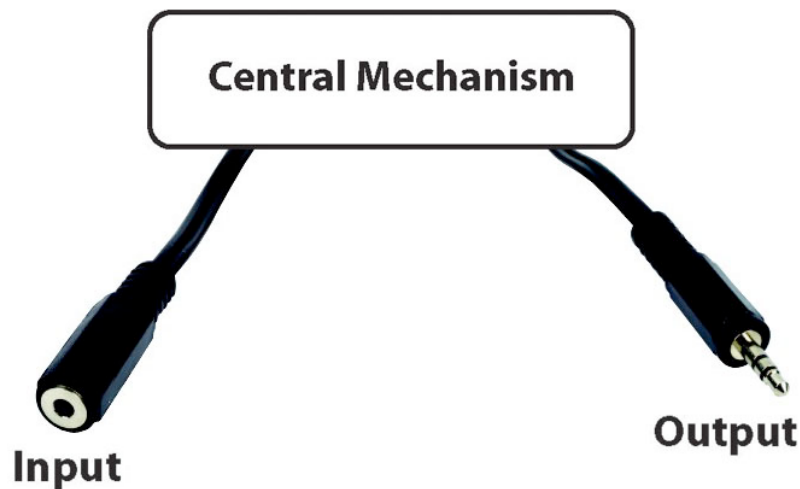
Project Two: Closed Loop

As children most of us played the game of telephone where one child whispers a phrase into another child's ear and that child whispers the phrase into another child's ear on down a line of children until the last speaks aloud what he or she has heard. The result is quite often a misinterpretation of the original phrase. The evolution of the phrase as it is interpreted and translated from child to child can be a very entertaining window on the translation of information in a community. We see it quite often in media reports immediately following a news event, where a news organization's report is carried through several social exchanges between citizens (at the office water cooler, in a cafe, the family dinner table), and in the end is an interesting distortion of the facts surrounding an actual event.

The Closed Loop project will be an exploration of physical connectivity, with each student or group building modules in an information chain. Connections between the modules will be standardized (analog audio), so when the modules are eventually connected the order will not matter. Each module will consist of an input channel, a central interpretation mechanism, and an output channel. The central mechanism will execute some action that must be "observable" by an audience, and must affect the input stream in some manner before it is exported (input can not be sent unchanged to the output). In the final manifestation, pieces will be linked together in a circular (closed) loop.

Several rules will apply to Closed Loop:

1. Modules can be completed by individuals or groups, with a maximum group size of three. Group projects are expected to be more complicated
2. Each module will consist of an input, a central mechanism, and an output. Physical input and output devices will consist of stereo mini jacks, with a female input and male output:



3. The central mechanism in each module must have the ability to input analog audio
4. The central mechanism in each module must feed basic analog audio to the output.
5. The central mechanism in each module must be in some way influenced or controlled by the input
6. The central mechanism in each module must execute some action that is observable by the viewing/listening audience
7. The output of a module can not be identical to the input (the audio must somehow be effected or produced by the central mechanism)
8. The central mechanism can be either physical or virtual
9. The observable aspect of each module must be adjustable in order to allow multiple modules to be present and playing in one space
10. Modules must be designed to deal with unpredictable input (too loud, silent), and so must have some sort of static state or baseline output
11. Modules must be working in order to be considered finished

Important aspects of this project are:

1. Presentation and defense of concept
2. Precedents and research
3. Resourcing and facilitating the production process
4. Producing finished, functional work
5. User testing cycles

Project timeline (note: week 1 is project specific—actually week 2 of the semester):

Date	Class Content
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Faculty description of project (including presentation of one example from each faculty) — Presentation of simple audio connection circuit schematics (Ben Bacon)
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Concept presentation (PowerPoint or KeyNote) including production schedule and resource identification — Workshops on physical computing and code (grad students?)
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Proof of concept (rough prototype) due — Initial connection, user reaction and testing (videotaped)
Week 4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Final piece production — Individual faculty conferences
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Final critique — Installation

Project Three: Tease (in brief, to be expanded later)

Two technology factors are fundamentally changing the way we interact with technology: connectivity and miniaturization. We are increasingly connected via multiple networks (the Internet and cellular), and access to these networks is becoming constant due to ever-present notebook computers and cell phones. During recent years phenomena such as geo-caching, wireless museum wayfinding systems, SMS/MMS driven contests and games, and new approaches to PR/advertisement have taken advantage of these technological evolutions.

The Tease project will combine all of these elements as Core 5 teams create micro-narratives, games, or some as-of-yet-undefined product dependent on the Wi-Fi network in Union Square Park. Teams will create products targeted for access from either tablet PCs or data-enabled Nokia cell phones within the park. Users will access web-based content (on a Parsons server) from various locations in the park. They will be guided to the next content element by either GPS location or physical artifacts. Users may be allowed to add content to the narratives, depending on design. As the users accumulate content, a narrative will form. The nature of that narrative will be a central element of the design challenge. Tease will be a permanent installation, partnering with NYC's WiFi Salon (the organization behind wireless in Union Square Park).

Tease will call for many aspects of production: narrative (writing, audio, video), web design for alternative interface (low-res screens, mobile phones), back-end web programming, systems design (non-linear storytelling or gaming), and complex user testing. Students will form into groups of 4-5 to undertake the project. As part of the project, groups will submit RFPs to Core 5 faculty, which will be evaluated and possibly rejected.

Location: Union Square Park (fully Wi-Fi accessible to the public as of summer 2006)

Technologies: Wireless enabled tablet PCs, data enabled Nokia cell phones, SMS/MMS enabled web servers

Important aspects of the Tease project are:

1. Collaboration: group structure and organization
2. Creation of an RFP (Request For Proposals)
3. Resourcing and facilitating the production process in a complex project
4. Producing and supporting finished work in a public space
5. Multiple, ongoing user testing cycles

Project timeline: approximately seven weeks (to be announced)