

**Foundation Program  
Department of Core Studies**

Fall Semester, 2005 – 2006

THE LABORATORY

Fridays 9.00am - 2.40pm

CRN:

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**Course Description**

Laboratory is a studio/seminar course in which students apply conceptual, visual and tactile skills from their Critical Studies and studio classes in completing projects that address the elements and characteristics of their immediate urban environment, New York City. Students read, write, and create, working with subjects, sites and themes that broadly address key aspects and issues integral to the design process. Through observation, research and response to specific locations or points of view, students learn how to frame design problems within real-world contexts. Laboratory projects frequently have a public dimension and students are introduced to the practice of working in groups to complete large-scale proposals and projects. This interdisciplinary course, taught by faculty from all of the departments at Parsons, exposes students to the breadth of study opportunities in the art and design fields, and the relationships, commonalities and differences among the various disciplinary approaches in the School. 3 CR.

**Learning Objectives**

The objective of this course is for students to:

- 1 Learn to work in teams and to work collaboratively
- 2 Understand research practices and methodologies
- 3 Acquire and develop presentation and project management skills
- 4 Develop problem-setting and solving skills
- 5 Understand research, reading, discussion, and writing as a normative dimension of studio practice
- 6 Develop a cultural literacy about New York City and its resources through the lens of creative practice
- 7 Develop responsible, engaged and informed critique
- 8 Develop formal, craft and presentation skills in a manner that appropriately reflects and communicates intent
- 9 Develop narrative ability regarding artist statement and process

**Course Outline**

In the first semester, the Laboratory investigates the theme, “people in relation to the city” and uses New York City, its spaces, communities, institutions and urban organization as a way to introduce students to how artists and designers understand, respond, critique, and shape their environment. In the three projects this semester, students will be asked to draw from their own backgrounds and experiences:

- 1 to develop an array of creative strategies and processes for use in their work



- 10/08 Scheduled location visit: Groups of two students (self-chosen) walk a prescribed urban landscape at a predetermined scheduled time and record their experience in any medium in order to create a specific map of the experience; each map will become a piece within a cluster-wide map of the same course over a 20-hour period.
- week 6 10/14 **In Class:** Desk critiques & work session of proposal statement. 10 different sketches/approaches completed by each group by end of class
- \*week 7 10/21 **In Class:** Present refined ideas for critique. Present individual strategy card #3  
1:30 – 2:30 Chairs presentation (re: NYC) #2  
Product Design, Fine Arts, Interior Design, Design & Management
- week 8 10/28 **In Class:** Desk critiques & work session. Refined proposal statement due by end of class.
- \*week 9 11/04 **In Class:** Desk Critiques & Work Session. Finalize proposal statement.  
1:30 – 2:30 Chairs presentation (re: NYC) #3  
Integrated Design/Sustainability, Critical Studies, Fashion Design, Design & Technology

*Group Project 3: **IDENTITY & THE CITY (T-SHIRT / APPAREL PROJECT)***

- \*week 10 11/11 Project 2 critique (morning) Present individual Strategy Card #4  
Project 3 – split off into groups of 5  
**Lecture (1-2:30):** Spring board for project 3
- week 11 11/18 **Due:** Identify (by group) 3 sub-communities of interest from the previous mapping project. Research (by group) production costs, timeline, methods of production for t-shirt project.  
**In Class:** informal presentation of sub-communities selected and production time line. Begin researching similar communities, myths/misconceptions/preconceptions about that community (example of sub-community: homeless).

THANKSGIVING 11/25

- week 12 12/02 **In Class:** Informal presentation of 12 "hooks" by group; each group must provide written documentation of their 12 "hooks". Individually present Strategy Card #5 for inventing or examining the "hook." Refine group project to 3 "hook" concepts.
- week 13 12/09 **In Class:** T-Shirt design due for Cluster critique. Implement production.

- week 14 12/16 **In Class:** Most wonderful Field Trip known to humankind.
- \*week 15 12/23 **In Class:** Strategy Card # 6 critique methods of self and/or others. Project #3 due exhibition installation/presentations & opening  
FASHION SHOW???

### *COURSE REQUIREMENTS*

- I. **RESEARCH:** With each project, students will be asked to conduct a specific type of research to inform the development of the project. Research is fundamental to the successful development of each project and comprises a large portion of the grade and evaluation for each exercise and the course. Students will be asked to present their research as part of the final presentation for each project.
- II. **PRESENTATIONS:** There will be formal in-class visual presentations required for this course. Presentations will include both written and visual documentation of research materials, design analysis, and project proposals. Written and visual materials will be collected and assembled in your sketchbook for the course.
- III. **READING AND DISCUSSION:** Students are required to complete the reading each week and be prepared for class discussion.
- IV. **CITING RESOURCES:** Students are required to cite source material using the appropriate bibliographic format for research in this course. Sources should be cited (identified) following proper format on any presentation board, sketchbook, on the Portal, or in a design statement or final presentation. (see NSU Academic Integrity Statement and Citing Resources Guidelines attached)
- V. **TEAMS & COLLABORATION:** Students work in teams in many of the projects of the Laboratory. The ability to collaborate and communicate is a skill fundamental to any design and artistic practice. Students are expected to participate in teams, learn to work together and manage tasks in ways that support each other and the goals of the project.
- VI. **DESIGNING & PROTOTYPING:** Alongside research, reading, and discussions, students are also required to engage in the *process* of designing and prototyping. Relying on and drawing on skills learned in their other 1<sup>st</sup> year courses, students will engage in a design process that culminates in final design proposals and prototypes.

### **Resources and Readings**

#### **Bibliography**

##### *Strategy Cards:*

John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (New York, Viking Press: 1973, c1972)

##### *Mapping:*

Nick Stillman, "Lombardi's Web" (from PUNK PLANET, reproduced in *Utne Reader*, July-August 2004)

James Corner, "The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention," in *Mapping*, edited by Denis Cosgrove. (London: Reaktion Books, 1999)

Katharine A. Harmon, *You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003)

### *Identity in the City:*

Michael and Ariane Batterberry, *Mirror, mirror : a social history of fashion*. (New York : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, c1977)

NYU Bobst & NSSR Parsons GT511 .B37

Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the meaning of style* (London, New York: Routledge, 1988)

NYU Bobst, NSSR Parsons, NSSR NewSchool, CU Cooper HQ799.G7 H4 1988

Anne Hollander, *Seeing through clothes* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1993) [in art]

Alison Lurie, *The language of clothes* (New York : Vintage Books, 1983, c1981).

NYU Bobst GT525 .L87 1983

Peitra Rivoli, *The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons,

Inc., 2005)

Karen Tranberg Hansen, *Salaula: The World of Secondhand Clothing and Zambia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000)

*T-shirt travels* [videorecording] : the story of secondhand clothes & third world debt / Independent Television Service ; produced by Grassroots Pictures, Inc. ; directed, produced & written by Shantha Bloemen. (New York : Filmmakers Library, 2001.)

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/tshirtravels/>

### **Web Resources:**

#### *Strategy Cards:*

Brian Eno, Oblique Strategy Cards

[http://music.hyperreal.org/artists/brian\\_eno/oblique/oblique.html](http://music.hyperreal.org/artists/brian_eno/oblique/oblique.html)

IDEO Method Cards

[http://www.ideo.com/case\\_studies/MethodDeck/MethodDeck/index.html](http://www.ideo.com/case_studies/MethodDeck/MethodDeck/index.html)

Graffiti Archaeology: <http://www.grafarc.org>

#### *Mapping:*

Found city: <http://www.foundcity.net>

Google Earth: <http://earth.google.com/>

Google Maps: <http://maps.google.com/>

### **Department and Class Policies**

#### **Student Responsibilities**

1. Treat class time as an opportunity.
2. Arrive to class on time, with all materials, ready to work steadily throughout the session.
3. Be prepared with all your required materials for every class.
4. Complete all assignments on time.
5. Participate in all class discussions and critiques.
6. Confront difficulties in your work in the spirit of learning, creative exploration and personal growth.
7. Ask for help from your instructors when needed.
8. Respect your fellow students at all times.
9. Disruptive behavior is not tolerated.
10. You are responsible for cleaning up after yourself at the end of each class.
11. No radios, players, walkmans, beepers or cellular phones are allowed in class.
12. NO SMOKING ANYWHERE IN THE BUILDING.

### **New School University Statement on Academic Integrity and Honesty**

Academic honesty is the duty of every member of an academic community to claim authorship of his or her own work, and only for that work, and to recognize the contributions of others accurately and completely. Academic honesty is fundamental to the integrity of intellectual debate and creative and academic pursuits. All members of the University community are expected to conduct themselves in accord with the standards of academic honesty. Students are responsible for knowing and making use of proper procedures for writing papers, presenting and performing their work, taking examinations, and doing research.

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind in the course of academic work will not be tolerated. Academic honesty 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 instructors and other students). These standards of academic honesty and citation of sources apply to all forms of academic work (examinations, essays, theses, computer work, art and design work, oral presentations, and other projects).

**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.

Every student at Parsons signs an Academic Integrity Statement as a part of the registration process. Thus, you are held responsible for being familiar with, understanding, adhering to and upholding the spirit and standards of academic integrity as set forth by the Parsons School of Design Student Handbook.

### **Attendance Policy**

Class attendance is mandatory. There is no substitute for working and participating in class. The attendance policy applies to everyone. There are no exceptions. If a student fails a class due to attendance, he/she is no longer permitted to attend the class. Absences will impact your grade (see Grading). Students must return to class promptly after breaks. Undo tardiness following a given break will result in an absence. Leaving the class before it is over will be considered an absence.

### **Absences**

Classes meeting 1 time per week: 3 absences are grounds for failure.

### **Tardiness**

**Two (2) tardies will be counted as one absence.**

Class begins on the hour sharp. The door to the classroom will be closed at that time. Anyone walking in after the door has closed (class has started) will be marked late. 5 minutes is considered tardy. Over 20 minutes is considered as an absence.

The following may be counted as tardy:

- Coming to class without the required materials
- Sleeping in class

- Being asked to leave class because of disruptive behavior.
- Doing other course work in class.

### **Academic Warning**

Students who do not complete and submit assignments on time and to a satisfactory standard will fail this class. It is a student's responsibility to obtain missed assignment sheets from other classmates and make-up the work in time for the next class.

### **Evaluation and Grading**

#### **A. Course Expectations**

In order to receive a grade for this course, students must actively participate in classroom discussions and critiques, and complete all the assigned projects, including mid-term & final projects.

Expectations for each assignment will be clearly defined; they will be printed in handouts and discussed in each class.

Individual assignments will be evaluated on the following basis:

- if the project fulfills the requirements and objectives of the assignment
- if the student demonstrates initiative and inventiveness in the exploration
- if the student has improved from previous work
- if the project is carefully considered and consistently developed

Assignments must be completed on time and included in class discussion & critique. Late assignments will be penalized. Consideration will be given to how much a student's work has developed and how well that development demonstrates an understanding of the concepts of the course.

#### **A. Mid-semester Evaluations**

Mid-semester evaluations are issued to help students improve performance and make progress. Although a grade may not be given, the comments will indicate your standing on an average - below or above scale.

#### **A. Grading**

*Your grade is determined by your performance on the following :*

Participation (includes reading & discussion): 25%

Initial projects combined: 20%

Project 2: 25%

Project 3: 30%

#### **Grade Descriptions:** (from Parsons Handbook)

- 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