

**Foundation Program**  
**Department of Core Studies**  
Parsons School of Design  
Spring Semester, 2004 – 2005

## **LABORATORY 2**

PUFN 1510

Fridays 9.00am-2.40pm

CRN: 5412

Instructor: Julia Gorton

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Instructor: Emily Moss

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### **Course Description**

**Laboratory, n** < Lat. *Laborare*, to labor > **3**. A place for practice, observation, or testing Laboratory immerses first year students in the study of contemporary art and design practices and culture through; readings, discussions, lectures, studio work, and experience-based research.<sup>1</sup>

In the spring semester, Laboratory 2 focuses on the exploration of three trans-disciplinary themes; *Mass Markets & Globalization*, *Environments & Wellbeing*, and *Meanings & Messages*. These themes position art and design practice within larger social, economic, or cultural contexts. The thematic framework established in Laboratory 2 is intended to broaden students understanding of the study of art and design as applied disciplines that are fundamentally engaged with society and culture.

Laboratory 2 creates opportunities for students to experience and understand the dynamics of working in teams. Laboratory 2 creates opportunities for students learn to formulate and articulate problems and to turn these problems into structured plans of action. This course, taught by faculty from all of the departments at Parsons, exposes students to the breadth of studies in the art and design fields, and the relationships, commonalities and differences among the disciplinary approaches in the School.

### **Learning Outcomes**

The objective of this course is for students to:

- Learn to work in teams and to work collaboratively
- Develop project management, strategic planning and problem-setting skills
- Understand the *processes* of creative practice within an art and design context
- Develop responsible, engaged and informed critique
- Understand research, reading and writing as a normative dimension of art & design studio practice
- Understand how to visually articulate concept(s) or idea(s) in a contextually appropriate form
- Develop formal, craft and presentation skills in a manner that appropriately reflects and communicates intent

### **Course Outline**

The spring semester is a focused exploration of three interdisciplinary themes, common to all disciplines. These themes position art and design practice within larger social, economic, or cultural contexts. Laboratory 2 builds on Laboratory 1's navigation of the city of New York. In their second semester

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<sup>1</sup> Webster's II, New College Dictionary, Houghton Mifflin Co, Boston, NY, 1995.

students navigate the fields of art and design in order to chart and envision their pathway through Parsons and to make an informed and educated choice of major for the continuation of their study.

The intention of the spring semester is to empower students to understand their practice of art and design as intrinsically social and political activities and to encourage them to take initiative, envision change, and state a position. Through working in teams, students research, design and execute an event that investigates, exposes, questions or raises awareness about an aspect of one of the themes described below. These events may be performances, interventions, campaigns, publications, posters, surveys, protests, exhibitions, radio shows, flash mobs, film nights, websites, video, games, etc. that engage an issue in the city or in the School. Each team of students will be asked to develop a “deliverable” and consider various forms of dissemination and distribution for their topic of inquiry.

All events and activities of the teams must stay within the rules and regulations of the University and the laws of the City of New York.

Themes for the semester:

#### *Mass Markets & Globalization*

This theme explores design and art within consumer culture both domestically and internationally. Projects will consider art and design in relation to trade and popular culture and the influences and effects of a global network of production on local economies and culture. The impact of the internet, the evolution of wireless and cell phone cultures and the recent influence of social entrepreneurship linked to micro-finance programs in developing countries will be noted.

#### *Environments & Wellbeing*

This theme will consider how the study and design of space, products, clothing, and textiles may contribute to understandings of our environment and our bodies, and how artists and designers may address social concerns of health and wellbeing in the spaces and products they create for people. Of central concern in this theme are issues of motivation and satisfaction as people are challenged to change personal practices and customs in response to changing social. The role of government and regulatory bodies in affecting new behaviors will be addressed.

#### *Meanings & Messages*

This theme will consider how artists and designers communicate and create meaning in their work. Projects will study how design and art represents (itself) and how practitioners deliver messages through art, illustration, fashion, graphic and three-dimensional design and their methods of production.

### **Course Requirements**

- I. **READING & DISCUSSION:** Students are required to complete the reading each week and be prepared for class discussion.
- II. **RESEARCH:** With each exercise/project, students evaluate, research and respond to a given theme or situation as a way to frame a solution, intervention, or response. Research should include a broad range of resources and should include data collected from observation (visual, aural); from history, texts and writing; from images, photography or other visual information; from analysis; and from precedents. This research should inform final design solutions.

- III. 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, project proposals, and a final “deliverable.” *Written and visual materials will be collected and assembled in your sketchbook for the course.*
- V. 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 Core Studies Citing Resources Guidelines)
- IV. TEAMS:** Students will work in teams to research and develop a project, as a “deliverable,” and consider various forms of dissemination and distribution for their topic of inquiry.

## Course Schedule

01/28	Week 1		Introduction to the themes PROJECT ONE
		2pm	Fall Semester exhibition break down (students take down work)
02/04	Week 2		PROJECT ONE
		11-1pm	Chairs lunch in the Laboratory Places/locations to be announced
02/11	Week 3		PROJECT ONE
		10-11am	Mass Markets & Globalization <i>Artist &amp; Designers Talk</i> Tishman Auditorium
02/18	Week 4		PROJECT ONE
			Project two selections made
02/25	Week 5		PROJECT ONE Critique
		10-11am	Environments & Wellbeing <i>Artists &amp; Designers Talk</i> Tishman Auditorium Team Evaluation
03/04	Week 6		PROJECT TWO
		10-11am	Meanings & Messages <i>Artists &amp; Designers talk</i> Tishman Auditorium
03/11	Week 7		PROJECT TWO
03/18	Week 8		PROJECT TWO
03/25			SPRING BREAK
04/01	Week 9		PROJECT TWO
04/08	Week 10		PROJECT TWO
			New Social Agendas in Design: a symposium hosted by Product Design ( <i>this date may change</i> ) (each cluster should plan to visit the event for at least 1-2 hr)
04/15	Week 11		PROJECT TWO
04/22	Week 12		PROJECT TWO
04/29	Week 13		PROJECT TWO
05/06	Week 14		PROJECT TWO Critique
05/13	Week 15	12-2.40pm	Laboratory Exhibition/Event

## **PROJECT ONE**

### **The Disc Assignment (Rees Shad's & Emily Moss' Classes):**

Our first project will occupy the first five weeks of the term and focus on concept development, prototyping and testing of a product that seeks to answer a specific design challenge related to globalization issues. The class will be divided into five groups of 4 to 5 students, which will work as a team to find a design solution for recycling the large number of CDs and DVDs discarded globally every year. Four different design teams will be designated and the remaining team designated to document the four projects. These documenting students will split off and join the other teams to record their process and production techniques in order to regroup and produce final presentations for exhibition alongside the projects in the Spring exhibition.

This project involves the development of design concepts that recycle the immense number of CDs and DVDs which our global entertainment industry produces every year. A fragile medium, these CDs and DVDs constantly become outdated and unnecessary or are often broken, cracked and scratched beyond use. Their being discarded results in an enormous amount of non-biodegradable waste every year. There are urban landfills around the world that shimmer with these discarded media. What if an effective means of reuse could be found?

### **The White Project (Julia Gorton's Class):**

What is white? Is it a noise, a color, a symbol, a skin color? Using all white clothing from resale shops (anything from boxers to bride gowns) consider what their personal histories might be. Rewrite a future for these garments by recycling them into an entirely new form, for a new purpose or use. A concept statement must be incorporated into the final presentation.

### **Project One Calendar**

Week One: Designating the problem – Research the issue (How severe is the problem, what are the ramifications of the problem, what is being done about the problem)

Week Two: Brainstorming – Consider Possible Solution Based Designs and develop these ideas for presentation

Week Three: initial design iteration – Develop design solution's initial prototype and begin user testing

Week Four: Reconsider design according to usability testing results and begin development of second level prototype

Week Five: Present second stage prototype and process of design to class for critique and team evaluation.

## PROJECT TWO

This project develops a larger design solution over the course of the nine weeks remaining to the term. It will involve working among the larger section with all three instructors (Julia Gorton, Emily Moss, & Rees Shad) who will revolve through the studios throughout the class period, assisting students in their projects. These projects will be selected by student lottery from the following options:

- **Cataclysm Symphonia**

- Cultures develop original forms of music and musical instruments that reflect the resources available to them. In some Polynesian islands native peoples play musical instruments made entirely from palm products or seashells. Some indigenous peoples in the Arctic made everything, their food, their clothing, their tools and yes, their musical instruments from by-products of their primary food source – whale, seal, and fish.
- Consider yourselves to be survivors of a major cataclysmic event who has been forced to wander the streets of New York City and pick from refuse piles for the source of your musical entertainment. Invent original instruments from scavenged artifacts of our civilization and compose a short symphony in memory of its existence.
- This is not an assignment intended for students who are familiar with music composition, its notation, or even have experience playing music. The project seeks to help students to understand the origins and purpose of system design (you will create your own system of notation), consider tonal invention and design, and explore a love of performance.

- **The Consciousness (Raising) Project**

- Develop an event/installation/show that dramatizes the waste inherent in our high packaging culture. The focus could be on shopping bags or Styrofoam or cardboard or.... Re-imagine packaging that is both enticing and works and also lends itself to a second life. Focus can be on re-inventing a single item.

- **The Cottage Industry Project**

- Invent a livelihood for the unemployed using recycled/reused/discarded materials, Assume that you would be hired to train the participants as if in a trade school. Decide what would be produced: jewelry, lamps, furnishings, clothing, household devices; there should be a perceived or created market/demand for the product(s) based on location (NYC) and targeted user. (This could be an extension of the first project using bubble wrap, packing materials, cd's, light bulbs, disposable razors, and water bottles...) Produce an instruction manual or video or demonstration on how to find materials and create the object(s).

- **Designing for the Recycled Olympics**

- Develop a series of original games for an all new Olympic Competition and outfit and equip the players for these games. This should all be done using resources found in the refuse left behind from the 2004 Summer Olympics. Be prepared to actually use and wear your designs in a demonstration for your classmates.

- **Finding Your Special Repurpose**

- In many third world cultures people are forced to scavenge for necessary day-to-day tools in order to exist. Examples of this are old tire treads being repurposed into sandals in Central Africa, or old aluminum cans turned into hard to find automotive parts in Cuba. In this project, students will scavenge for interesting

refuse in the streets of New York City and repurpose the found objects into necessary tools for their day-to-day lives.

- **The Graffiti Project**

- Are you talkin' to me? From paid advertising to informal graffiti, band flyers and political slogans, messages are part of the New York street scene. In this project students will study the history of graffiti and locate and photograph current graffiti and street art. Students will create a personal tag, develop their own messages, and create a series of postcards/posters to be left in shops, clubs and other public spaces. An Internet link will be provided for public response to these messages. All work is to be posted digitally with comments on a live journal, my space, or other blog.

- **The Plastic Bag Project**

- Hold me, use me, throw me out. What first holds our prized treasure is later filled with our disgusting trash. Easy to come by and impossible to get away from, what if these polypropylene bags are the real treasure? Archive your weekly purchases along with the bags that they come in. collect representative examples from different cultural neighborhoods in the city. Explore the use of typography and create a type journal of these graphics. Research the folk tradition of using cast offs to create art, decorative objects or useful products. Rework your cast off bags into other useful forms and/or messages about shopping and spending

- **The T-Shirt Project**

- If you can read this, you are standing too close!
- Research the use of typography on apparel throughout history. Photograph and survey people on the street about the messages that they use their bodies to promote. Coordinate with your team to create your own personal billboard/t-shirt that can be reproduced and worn. Using this design develop a fashion show, political street action, advertising campaign, neighborhood giveaway or an event within the school.

- **The Waste Stream Project:**

- Brief life of a Styrofoam cup, water bottle, car tire, battery, mattress, and other inorganic object. Design a campaign using research (history/statistics), graphics/photography/type, music/sound, humor, etc. to communicate what happens to all that "stuff" that we casually discard. Try to create a more powerful campaign than the cartoon that the NYC Dept. of Sanitation has put forth. Final "deliverable" could be a subway ad campaign, a demonstration, a radio talk show, a T-shirt, or?

## **Project Two Calendar**

Week Four: Choose top three selections for Project two and hand in your list to professor

Week Six: Designating the problem – Research the issue (How severe is the problem, what are the ramifications of the problem, what is being done about the problem)

Week Seven: Present Research to team for discussion

Week Eight: Brainstorming – Consider Possible Solution Based Designs and develop these ideas for presentation

Week Nine: Initial realization of top three concepts team discussion of these to decide on initial design iteration

Week Ten: Initial design iteration – Develop design solution's initial prototype and begin user testing

Week Eleven: User Testing

Week Twelve: Interpretation of testing in order to reconsider design begin development of second level prototype

Week Thirteen: Second level prototype due – presentation and critique

Week Fourteen: Final prototype iteration due

Week Fifteen: Exhibition of Projects

## A Note on Teams

In order for teams to be effective, their members must often step outside of their prescribed job tasks assuming dynamic roles in order to facilitate the overarching task at hand and help build relationships between team members. These roles may be shared or delineated to particular members at the team's discretion, but are most often amorphous, taken up by each member of the team at one point or another. All members should be involved in the brainstorming and development of the concept (group conscience), but it is sometimes effective to delineate a primary coordinator, a researcher/troubleshooter, and a prototype coordinator in order to facilitate a project's development along a constrained timeline. Some of the roles to consider might be:

### Coordinating:

- Listener
- Meeting Convener
- Conflict Resolver
- Energizer/Encourager
- Team Celebrator
- Strategist
- Goal Setter
- Planner
- Deadline Setter
- Risk Taker
- Decision Pusher
- Energizer/Encourager
- Gatekeeper
- Progress Monitor
- Spokesperson
- Enforcer
- Initiator

### Group Conscience:

- Listener
- Opinion Giver
- Feedback Giver
- Problem Identifier
- Challenger (Devil's Advocate)
- Decision Maker
- Praiser/Appreciator
- Tension Reliever
- Enforcer
- Initiator

### Research/ Troubleshooting

- Listener
- Information Seeker
- Information giver
- Investigator
- Opinion Asker
- Usability Tester
- Standards Setter

### Prototype Development:

- Listener
- Procurer
- Volunteer
- Implementer
- Strategist
- Goal Setter
- Problem Solver

## **Resources and Readings**

*The New York Times* (subscription is optional by cluster)

*The Wall Street Journal*

**Readings on Mass Markets and Globalization**– A point of departure.

*Books:*

Amy Chua. World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability. New York, Doubleday, 2003.

Tyler Cowen. Creative Destruction: How Globalization Is Changing the World's Cultures. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2002.

Naomi Klein. No Logo. New York, Picador, 2000.

Kalle Lasn. Culture Jam. New York, 2001

Brink Lindsey. Against the Dead Hand: The Uncertain Struggle for Global Capitalism. New York, John Wiley & Sons, 2002.

Michael J. Silverstein and Neil Fiske. Trading Up: the New American Luxury. New York, Portfolio, 2003.

Joseph E. Stiglitz. Globalization and Its Discontents. New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2002.

*Papers and Articles:*

Kate Douglas. *Born to Trade*, The New Scientist, September 18, 2004.

Pete Engardio, Aaron Bernstein, and Manjeet Kripalani. *The New Global Job Shift*, Business Week, Feb. 3, 2003

Jon E. Hilsenrath. *Globalization Get Mixed Grades in U.S. Universities*, The Wall Street Journal. December 2, 2002.

National Bureau of Economic Research, Digests of Working Papers:

Jeffrey Frankel and Andrew Rose. *Is Trade Good or Bad for the Environment?* NBER No. 9021.

Mary Hallward-Driemeier, Giuseppe Iarossi, and Kenneth Sokoloff. *Global Links Raise Asian Countries' Productivity*. NBER No. 8894

Eric Edmonds and Nina Pavcik. *Globalization Reduces Child Labor in Vietnam*. NBER No. 8760

Shang-Jin Wei and Yi Wu. *Globalization Reduces Inequality in China*. NBER No. 8611

Peter Lindert and Jeffrey Williamson. *Does Globalization Make the World More Unequal?* NBER No. 8228

*Convergence, period*. The Economist. July 18, 2002

*Mass Customization: The Long March*, The Economist, July 12, 2001.

*Shopping and the American Way of Life*, The Wilson Quarterly, Winter 2004

Daniel Akst. *The Buyer's Remorse*

Robert K. Samuelson. *Shop 'ti I We Drop?*

Paco Underhill. *Inside the Machine*.

*Survey: Globalisation and Its Critics*. The Economist. September 26, 2001.

*Survey: The Global Environment*. The Economist. July 4, 2002.

*Two Faces of Globalization*. The Wilson Quarterly. Autumn 2002, pp. 61-84.

"A World on the Edge" by Amy Chua ( p. 61)

"The Fate of Culture" by Tyler Cowen (p. 78)

*World Summit on Sustainable Development*, New Scientist, August 2002.

**Readings on Environments and Well-Being**. A start on an endless list.

Margaret Atwood. Oryx and Crake. New York: Doubleday, 2003

A novel about how a future world run by science-based corporations turns into a series of compounded disasters.

Melinda Davis. The New Culture of Desire: 5 Radical New Strategies That Will Change Your Business and Your Life. New York: the Free Press, 2002.

Thimo te Duits (ed.). The Origin of Things: Sketches, Models, Prototypes. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2002.

Carl Elliott and Peter D. Kramer. Better Than Well: American Medicine Meets the American Dream. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003

Stephen S. Hall. Merchants of Immortality: Chasing the Dream of Human Life Extension. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2003.

William McDonough & Michael Baumgart. Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things. New York: North Point Press, 2002.

Bill McKibben. Enough: Staying Human in an Engineered Age. New York: Times Books, 2003.

Harvey Molotch. Where Stuff Comes From; How Toasters, Toilets, Cars, Computers, and Many Other Things Come to Be As They Are. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Donald A. Norman. Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things. New York: Basic Books, 2004.

Henry Petroski. Small Things Considered: Why There is No Perfect Design. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

## **Readings on Meanings and Messages**

### *Books*

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life. New York: Basic Books, 1997.

Tom Kelley. The Art of Innovation. New York: Doubleday, 2001.

### *Papers and Articles:*

Anthony Aveni. *Is Harmony at the Heart of Things?*, The Wilson Quarterly, Winter, 2001.

Trish Gura. *Rhythm of Life*. New Scientist, August 4, 2001.

Mark Kingwell. *What Does It All Mean?*, The Wilson Quarterly, *Who Do We Think We Are?*, New Scientist, May 17, 2003.

## **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 studio.
3. Be prepared with all your required materials for every class.
4. Complete assignments and readings on time.
5. Participate in 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. 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.

#### **B. 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.

#### **C. Grading**

*Your grade is determined by your performance in following :*

Participation (includes reading & discussion) & Attendance: 25%

Research project 1: 25%

Research project 2: 50%

### **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