

We encounter the **deep questions of design** when we recognize that in designing tools **we are designing ways of being**. — Winograd & Flores, 1980

There is **an ethical stand** underlying Participatory Design that recognizes **an accountability of design** to the worlds it creates and **the lives of those** who inhabit them. — Robertson & Simonsen, 2013

Is there an even bigger risk that Participatory Design, now incorporating design thinking and offering creative and collaborative environments for user-driven design and innovation, also ends up as **the latest fashion in a further modern, market-driven commodification process?** — Thrift, 2006

Project Studio:

Participatory Strategies in Design: Principles and Practices¹

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Office Location: TSRB #320

Class Location: Design and Social

Interaction Studio: TSRB #209

Time: Tuesdays 12:00pm – 3:00pm

Office Hours: Mondays 9:30 – 10:30

OBJECTIVE

To lay a foundation for understanding and informed criticism of collaborative strategies as methods for creating effective, engaging, and sustainable environments of social interaction.

+ *Hands on experience of crafting, planning, and communicating such a strategy in close collaboration with Center for Mental Health Policy and Service Research at Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania.*

OVERVIEW

This project-oriented course is aimed at theoretical and practical exploration of ethnographic and collaborative strategies such as participatory design and co-design. We will start the semester by laying a foundation of design and critical exploration of concepts, projects, and theories related to design methods. In parallel, we will experiment with concepts and prototypes including one larger project in collaboration with Center for Mental Health Policy and Service Research at Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania.

Readings for the course include texts on the history, principles, and techniques of participatory design strategies as well as interaction and experience design. The course is not limited to any technology but rather emphasizes problem finding, problem framing, and a wide range of design strategies including participatory, co-design, and ethnographic methods.

Open to graduate level students from all disciplines.

¹ This course bears a similar name to the edited volume by the Schuler and Namioka (1993). We will find inspiration in the work that this volume brings together. At the same time, we will critically engage with the established theories seeking to extend and expand them in new and productive ways, responsive to the particular time and situation that we address.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand basic theoretical foundations of design methods in general, and participatory strategies in particular
- Understand design process as directed exploration and pragmatic inquiry that is itself designed and always in the making.
- Use the theories and topics presented in this course to identify the problems and analyze the issues of informational artifacts and systems in complex social and political situations.

CLASS POLICIES

Evaluation

This course consists of discussions of selected readings, studio/critique sessions, and a semester-long project.

Grades will be determined based on the following:

Project Assignment: 70%

Readings and Participation: 30%

* Also, see note on attendance

Attendance

Due to a significant amount of in-class material and work, prompt attendance and active participation in class discussions and group critiques is required. Your grade will drop by one letter grade with every two unexcused absences. You will only earn a failing grade if you are absent for 6 sessions or more.

Projects and Assignments

Be sure to hand in your work in time. If you deliver your project later than the due date, your grade on that project will fall one letter grade. If you deliver your work more than one week after the due date, you will not earn any credit for it.

Readings

As you can see under grading section, I put a great emphasis on your preparation and participation in class. All of you are required to read the assigned papers/ book sections and be ready to discuss them in class. In addition, I will be making you in charge of some of the readings in class in which case you will be required to open and lead the class discussion.

Communication

I will use email as means of communication for this course. It is your responsibility to check email often to obtain information related to the course. T-square is also used heavily for communication in class. Make sure to update the settings on your t-square page so you will receive automatic emails about announcements, readings, and assignments. **You are responsible for all announcements made in class, via email or t-square.**

Office Hours

Mondays 9:30 – 10:30. You can always request a meeting by email.

Information for Students with Disabilities

Please notify the instructor if you have any disabilities with which you need special assistance or consideration. The campus disability assistance program can be contacted through ADAPTS: <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>

Honor Code Statement:

Students are expected to adhere to the Georgia Tech Honor Code: honor.gatech.edu

READINGS

Required:

Rutledge International Handbook of Participatory Design

Edited by Jesper Simonsen and Toni Robertson

Participatory IT Design

By Keld Bødker, Finn Kensing and Jesper Simonsen

Recommended:

Participatory Design, Principles and Practices

Edited by Douglas Schuler and Aki Namioka

Convivial Toolbox, Generative Research for Front End of Research

By Elizabeth B. -N. Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers

This Is Service Design Thinking

By Mark Stickdorn, Jakob Schneider and the co-authors

All other readings will either be accessible via T-Square or online. The core readings are listed in the timeline. Other complementary readings will be distributed in class based on the interests and directions chosen by students.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note that the course beginning is heavy in readings. You should be prepared to read 40-50 pages/week in the first four weeks of the course.

Week 1, Aug 19

Course Overview

Overview of the Project and Partnership

Reading: Hargraves and JafariNaimi: "Re-establishing the Center of Human-Centered Design"

Week 2, Aug 26

Participatory Design, History and Principles

Readings: Chapters 1 and 2, *International Handbook of Participatory Design*

Project Kickoff. Preliminary problem statement and exploration

Week 3, Sep 2

Participatory Design, Methods and Practices

Readings: Chapters 3, 4, 5, *Participatory IT Design*

Project Part I: Problem Statement, Vision Statement, and

Week 4, Sep 9

Participatory Design, Methods and Practices

Readings: Chapters 6, 7, *Participatory IT Design*

Project Part I. Concepts and Sketches; Brainstorming and Critique

Week 5, Sep 16

Participatory Design: Case Studies

Readings: TBD

Project Part I. Concepts and Sketches; Brainstorming and Critique

Week 6, Sep 23

Participatory Design: Case Studies

Readings: TBD

Project Part I. Concepts and Sketches; Brainstorming and Critique

Week 7, Sep 30

Project Presentation

Project Part I Due

Week 8, Oct 7

Wicked Problems; Four Orders of Design

Reading: "Wicked Problems in Design Thinking," By Richard Buchanan

Readings: "Ethics as Design: Doing Justice to Ethical Problems," By Caroline Whitbeck

Project Part II. Blueprint of Techniques and Approach

Week 9, Oct 14 — No class. Fall Break.

Week 10, Oct 21

Four Orders of Design

Readings: "Design Research and the New Learning," By Richard Buchanan

Project Part II. Blueprint of Techniques and Approach

Week 11, Oct 28

Design and Politics

Reading: "Do Artifacts have Politics?" by Langdon Winner

Project Part II. Blueprint of Techniques and Approach

Week 12, Nov 4

Critique

Project Part II. Blueprint of Techniques and Approach

In-studio design and critique

Week 13, Nov 11

Critique

Project Part II. Blueprint of Techniques and Approach

In-studio design and critique

Week 14, Nov 18

Critique

Project Part III. Documentation and Presentation

In-studio design and critique

Week 15, Nov 25

Critique (+Thanksgiving Holidays)

Project Part III. Documentation and Presentation

Week 16, Dec 2

Final Critiques and Presentation