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Community Based Art as a Force for Social Change

University Studies Capstone Social Change// W 2012

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What can art do? This course will examine the potential that creative acts have to effect social, political, local and personal change through the social application of art in the context of an arts program geared towards homeless and transitional populations facilitated and directed by PSU students. Through examining an art historical context this course will give an overview of the ideas surrounding community art, dialogical art, new genre public art, and art and social practice. Through reflecting on a variety of socially engaged movements and approaches to socially engaged art making and discussing the works of community based artists the class will gain a rich understanding of this way of working and apply their investigations by creating an art workshop program for the population at the Bud Clark Commons that will culminate in an exhibition of

the art work created through that class. We are partnered with the Bud Clark Commons, a cornerstone of the City's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, to explore how art can be used to serve this transitional population and bring awareness of these issues to the local community. We hope that through this art program offered through the Bud Clark Commons we can begin to break down barriers of poverty, homelessness, power and privilege through art and outreach.

Students will work in conjunction with an artist to learn their community art strategies, and to assist in the facilitation of an art exhibition and public art project that will bring attention to Portland's homelessness issue. Students will also serve as curators by facilitating the production and exhibition of art work by the clients at the BCC. These efforts will all coalesce in the form of a public art exhibition at BCC during a first Thursday, March 1st, 2012.

Students taking this course must note that you will need to provide transportation to the Bud Clark Commons. Students will also be responsible for attending the weekly arts program at BCC that takes place outside of class time.

Course Objectives

- To develop the skills needed to contextualize knowledge and place into public art contexts.
- To be able to use the potential of art as a force for social change.
- To work with the populations at the Bud Clark Commons and your peers to bring together an exhibition that brings community awareness to issues of homelessness, power, access, and privilege.
- To create a meaningful exhibition with the community partner and the surrounding community.
- To examine the various ways one can connect to their community, and mobilize themselves and others to enact social change through creative acts.

Expectations

- To read the assigned texts and participate in class discussions and activities.
To collaborate with the community partner, surrounding community and your classmates in a way that is sensitive and respectful.
- To attend classes, field trips and in class lectures. (Students will not be penalized for classes missed due to illness.)
- To complete all the course requirements and in class activities.
- To work with and support the other students in the class.
- To dedicate 6 hours a week (including field time) outside of class time to readings, assignments and research.
- Students can expect to spend a minimum of 3 hours a week in the community and doing field work connected to their community partners.
- To maintain a respectful class environment: listen when others speak, no talking while others are speaking, cell phones are off when in class, no texting, no working on laptops while there are class discussions or presentations.

University Studies Goal Areas

Inquiry and Critical Thinking

Students will learn various modes of inquiry through interdisciplinary curricula—problem-posing, investigating, conceptualizing—in order to become active, self-motivated, and empowered learners. Communication Students will enhance their capacity to communicate in various ways—writing, graphics, numeracy, and other visual and oral means—to collaborate effectively with others in group work, and to be competent in appropriate communication technologies.

The Diversity of Human Experience

Students will enhance their appreciation for and understanding of the rich complexity of the human experience through the study of differences in ethnic and cultural perspectives, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.

Ethics and Social Responsibility

Students will expand their understanding of the impact and value of individuals and their choices on society, both intellectually and socially, through group projects and collaboration in learning communities. Community Project and Partner Information Students will create a class project that addresses a need of the community partners. Part of this project will result in the public presentation of the collaboration. These projects are intended to connect PSU students to the surrounding community members as well as to connect student knowledge to the community in direct and creative public presentations and projects.

About our partner:



In 2009, the City of Portland secured critical funding and broke ground for the Bud Clark Commons, a cornerstone of the City's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. The Commons is an innovative partnership between the Portland Housing Bureau, Home Forward (formerly known as the Housing Authority of Portland) Transition Projects, Inc., and Multnomah County. The center will provide vital resources, shelter, and housing placement services to individuals and couples experiencing homelessness in Portland, and it will be the first LEED Platinum building of its kind in the country.

The development is comprised of the following elements. Together, these homes and services will create a comprehensive community resource for those most in need.

Housing - 130 studio units of housing built on a half-block building footprint. Income ranges are anticipated to be between 0 - 40% of Median Family Income. Operating subsidies will include an allocation of public housing units and project-based Section 8 vouchers.

Shelter - A 90-bed men's transitional shelter that provides sleeping, living and dining areas, as well as food storage, restrooms, and laundry facilities.

The Day Center - A central intake and information sharing area with services that will include a day area to host a number of services: resource information, ID assistance, birth certificate assistance, TriMet tickets, food boxes, hygiene items, long distance calls, access to case management and shelter wait lists, lockers, showers, clothing rooms, laundry facilities, mail and message service, telephones, internet/computer stations, bicycle parking, and a pet area. Additionally, physical and mental health services along with medication assistance will be available.

Class Schedule

WEEK 1

Monday January 9, 2012: Course overview, project overview. Syllabus review. Presentation on community art. Visit from social worker to discuss working with homeless and transitional populations. +homework assignment.

Wednesday January 11, 2012: Site visit and community partner talk with Stacy Borke, Housing Services Director, Transition Projects.

WEEK 2

Monday January 16, 2012: HOLIDAY-NO CLASSES

Wednesday January 18, 2012: Student presentations on homework assignment/presentations + reading responses 1-4 due.

WEEK 3

Monday January 23, 2012: Curatorial Strategies: Form the care of objects, to the care for creators. Presentation from Jason Sturgill on curation and working with people on exhibitions. Reading response 5 due.

Wednesday January 25, 2012: BCC Field Time + Artist Presentation by Ariana Jacob + Speed Ideating.

WEEK 4

Monday January 30, 2012- Community Artist check in (30min-45min) + Project development. Reading response 6 due.

Wednesday February 1, 2012: BCC Field Time: FIELD TRIP-Class and clients will visit the Portland Art Museum to participate in Object Stories. Everyone needs to bring an object of significance to them, including BCC clients. These objects will likely also be displayed for our exhibition.

WEEK 5

Monday February 6, 2012: Exhibition planning and development.

Wednesday February 8, 2012: BCC Field Time- Class visit from Harrell Fletcher- On Michael Patterson Carver, and the People's Biennial and Neighborhood based projects.

WEEK 6

Monday February 13, 2012: Project and exhibition development

Wednesday February 15, 2012: BCC Field Time: Field Trip to sign painting studio.

WEEK 7

Monday February 20, 2012: Artist Check In (30-45 min) +Project and exhibition planning and development

Wednesday February 22, 2012: BCC Field Time- PSU Student led and selected group activity

WEEK 8

Monday February 27, 2012: Prep for exhibition- install

Wednesday February 29, 2012: Prep for exhibition- install with BCC clients

Thursday March 1, OPENING OF EXHIBITION- MANDATORY ATTENDANCE.

WEEK 9

Monday March 5, 2012: No class since we are meeting on Thursday evening for the opening.

Wednesday March 7, 2012: Exhibition debriefing with clients at BCC and PSU Student led and selected group activity.
+ Project Documentation at BCC

WEEK 10

Monday March 12, 2012: Community Partner Debriefing- meet again with Stacey and Doreen at BCC

Wednesday March 14: Deinstall Exhibition

Readings:

1. "Vulnerability Factors For Homelessness Associated WITH Substance Dependence In A Community Sample OF Homeless Adults"
Author: Brenda M. Booth,
2. "Home Again: Portland 10 year plan to Eliminate Homelessness"
3. "2011 Point in Time, Homeless stats"
4. HRC Fact Sheet
5. "In Their Own Words: Trauma and Substance Abuse in the Lives of Formerly Homeless Women with Serious Mental Illness"
Author: Padget, Deborah
6. "Free Speech Zone", Michael Patterson Carver

Assignments

- 1) Curation of a BCC resident into the end of term exhibition - 20 points
Throughout the term each student will work closely with a member of the BCC community. You will work with that individual to have them generate art work and materials to be exhibited during our two week exhibition. Working with multiple BCC clients is encouraged.
- 2) Facilitation of weekly creativity/production drop in time at BCC - 15 points
Throughout the term students will be responsible for the facilitation of the weekly session at the BCC. Students will work together as a class to plan the activity and direction on the assigned day(s). One days where the instructors have planned the sessions students are still expected to be the leaders. Since this accounts for 15% of your grade we suggest students work together to create a structure where two students each day are responsible for leading.
- 3) Signage project- "Signs of Life" collaboration with local sign painters - 15 points
During the Speed Ideating session led by artist Ariana Jacob, students will engage in multiple dialogues with BCC clients exploring the subject of homelessness. Students and clients will be instructed to take notes while listening to their partners responses. From these responses students and clients will work together to each find a sentence that they would like made into a hand painted sign that will be placed in a business storefront of their choosing. Students will be responsible for the placement of the signs, as well as their retrieval at the end of the course of their public display. These signs and phrases are intended to bring attention to conversations about homelessness and will also serve to promote the exhibition at the BCC that will open March 1, 2012.
- 4) Reading Response forms- 30 points (5 points per response)
Students will need to complete the course reading response form for each of the six readings. Please refer to the class schedule for the due dates for each reading.
- 5) Presentation on socially engaged artist-10 points
On the first day of class students will be assigned a socially engaged artist who they will research and present on. Students must prepare a double sided 8.5 x11 information sheet for the class and bring copies for the group. One side will be text/info and the other side will be images of the artists work and projects. Use Chicago Manual style for citations. At the end of the presentation sessions students will then have a collectively assembled class reader/resource of community engaged artists projects. Images must also be properly cited. Each student will give a 5 minute presentation in addition to compiling the info page.

6) Participation - 10 points

Participation on all levels is central to the success of the class and your personal success in the course. You must be present and engaged. You need to take initiative and leadership. You need to contribute your voice to class discussions and projects. 10% constitutes a full letter grade, so do participate!

Faculty and Community Partner Expectations Regarding the Project

These partnerships should be mutually beneficial ventures, and through these relationships students can situate their academic learning in a real world context, and students assist organizations in creating meaningful projects. Throughout the course we will be looking at a variety of writings related to community and public art as well as the themes put forward by our community partner. Using some of these readings as a starting point students will work directly with the community. Communication and sensitivity to the context of the situation will be key in creating considerate projects.

Course Attendance policies

Students are expected to attend classes, and in class lectures. (Students will not be penalized for classes missed due to illness.) Tardiness to three classes will equal one absence, three unexcused absences could result in a failing grade.

In accordance with CDC guidelines and PSU protocol Students will not be penalized for illness-related absences and will be provided with opportunity to make up missed assignments.

CDC guidance recommends that, based on current flu conditions, faculty, students, and staff with flu-like illness should stay in their home, dormitory, or residence hall until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).

PSU Code of Conduct

It is strongly encouraged that you read the Student Conduct Code (See <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/conduct.html>) It details your rights and responsibilities as a student and as a member of the Portland State Community.

Disability Accommodations

Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty, and the Disability Resource Center. Students with accommodations approved through the DRC are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through the DRC should contact the DRC immediately.