IN123: Civic Media in Action

Meets Mondays and Wednesdays, 2pm - 3:45pm in Walker Building 523. 4 Credits.

Faculty

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Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays, 1pm - 2pm at the [Engagement Lab](http://engagementlab.emerson.edu/), 4th floor, 160 Boylston St., or by appointment x8828

Course Description

Civic Media are media wherein intentionality of their use or production is to generate social change or 'public good," typically originating in the intersection of community and storytelling. In this course, students will work in teams to create civic media projects grounded in real-world needs and guided by community partners. The course will cover participatory design theories and methods for including communities in iterative stages of project ideation, design, implementation and evaluation. Teams may produce a variety of media forms (i.e. game, website, video, artwork, campaign, mobile app, etc.).

During the fall 2014 semester, we will be working with the [Boston Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics](http://www.newurbanmechanics.org/" \t "_blank) to design opportunities for art and artists in the City of Boston. The following is a framework of opportunities from which we will start:

1. **Engaging Artists in Cultural Planning**  
   The City is making a big push to engage stakeholders in the planning process.  A student team could prototype a tool focused on one group of stakeholders (e.g. artists) to, for example, get their feedback on what they would want to see in Boston.
2. **Finding Performance Space**  
   The City has heard repeatedly that we need to make it easier for artists to go from idea to implementation, offering a leaner permitting process for designated spaces.  This [parks prototype](http://parks.newurbanmechanics.org/" \t "_blank) is an example.
3. **Leveraging**  
   One of the big opportunities is to rethink / reopen public space for public expression.  A team could explore a broader notion of "civic media", thinking about how traditional civic infrastructure could be re-purposed for public art or performance (e.g. blank walls,[digital billboards](http://fenway.newurbanmechanics.org/" \t "_blank), bus shelters, etc.)
4. **Tracking the Plan**People tune out of some planning processes because they don't believe that a plan will get implemented.  A team could prototype and test a tracker that could show the progress to date on specific recommendations that come out of the cultural plan.
5. **Promoting Art**The City wants to improve its promotion of art and artists.  Many of the current methods - e.g. calendars - are limited in their impact. A team could explore what new platforms the city could provide to artists or the community to build awareness

Course Learning Objectives

* Through interviews, guest lectures and the collaborative creation of a "Boston Art Ecosystem" map, students will be encouraged to view civic life as a vibrant and dynamic system that involves people, institutions and resources.
* Students will demonstrate a working definition of "civic media" and "civic engagement" in their reflection papers and design process documentation
* Students will reflect on the ethical position of mediamaker/s in relation to their subject, their audience and to society at large.
* Through writing assignments, discussion, and the collaborative creation of a final project students will learn participatory methods for co-creating media products with their intended audience.
* Students will learn about the social and political concerns of diverse members of the Boston community by working directly with them on solving problems.

Course Requirements

This course is a mix of thinking and doing, what you might call "reflective action". We expect you to be present in class, do the readings, complete assignments and group projects.

Assignments (15%)

1. [Boston Art Ecosystem Map #1](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378403)Where is art, public art & performance? This is an observation assignment. Find 5 examples of art in at least 3 different Boston neighborhoods, photograph them, print your photos and bring them to class to discuss. You might photograph a sculpture in public space, a street musician, a theater, a gallery, an art school, a design studio, a poster advertising a performance or any number of other things. We encourage you to do this assignment together but each person must bring in 5 different things. Photos downloaded from the web are not acceptable.
2. [Boston Art Ecosystem Map #2](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378404)

Where are community arts organizations and institutions? This is a research assignment. Find 5 examples of organizations that support, exhibit, host, teach or use the arts in Boston. They should come from 3 different Boston neighborhoods. Find photos of these places and print them out. Downloading and printing photos from the web is acceptable in this case. You may work together but each person needs to have 5 distinct organizations.

1. [User Persona](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378445)  
   In user-centered design, user personas are a document resulting from the interview you've conducted with someone regarding how their personal circumstances intersect with a design problem that you are trying to address. The interview should be the basis of a story of a person with particular needs, barriers, and situations, regarding the design problem statement agreed upon by the class. For this assignment, you should interview another member of the class or a friend outside the class and write up your results. Use the example we have provided ([user-persona-example.jpgiew in a new window](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/files/49853099/download?verifier=KOD9apjlKtjSonsiD9eR2ygWrV6HWURfZIaN666M&wrap=1)) and [this template](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/pages/user-personas-template) to structure what you hand in to us.

Group Project (40%)

1. [10 Ideas and 3 Sketches](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378461)Groups will generate a minimum of ten ideas (1-2 sentence descriptions of media projects) that they will then whittle down into three ideas that will be sketched out in more detail (2-3 images per idea). The 10 ideas should be turned in as a text document. For each of the 3 sketches, students should create a poster with 2-3 images and some text. The posters should focus on communicating the idea visually and use text only where necessary to communicate how something works.
2. [Design Document and Evaluation Plan](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378508)Groups will turn in a design document that describes their proposed project with words and images (video also a possibility). The design document will outline the context & background, the design challenge, the proposed intervention and its audience and how the project will be evaluated. We will provide a template to use.
3. [Project Presentation and Rough Draft](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378552)Groups will present documentation of their projects in action and how results of paper prototyping their project will inform their next steps. Groups will also turn in a rough draft of their paper. The paper will discuss their project and how it connects to the readings around civic media and civic engagement that we have discussed in class. We will provide a template for the paper.
4. [Final Projects and Design Books](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378553)

Groups turn in and present their final projects. Final projects consist of the final paper and the group's design book. The Design Book includes all of the materials documenting the group's ideation, research, testing and documentation of the project including but not limited to: 1) The 10 Ideas and 3 Sketches 2) The Design Document and Evaluation Plan and 3) Results from evaluating the project and 4) Next steps. Be creative and show us how user/community feedback played a role in your creative process.

Reflection Papers (30%)

Reflection papers should be about 2-3 pages (double spaced) and should be critical reflections on the reading to this point in the class. You can pick one or two readings to analyze, critique, or relate to class topics.

Attendance and Participation (15%)

Your presence matters! We want you to engage with and critique the ideas in the class.

We will be taking attendance using Twitter. Each student must post a short question or comment at the end of class to the class' hashtag:[#CivicMediaInAction](https://twitter.com/hashtag/CivicMediaInAction?f=realtime" \t "_blank).

If you are going to miss class you must communicate that to us via email prior to the class. If you do not have a good reason to miss class and/or you do not communicate with us then this portion of your grade will decrease by 5% for each class missed.

Technology Policy

No laptops, tablets or cell phones during class discussions. Laptops can (and should) be used during production and lab time, so please be in the habit of bringing your laptop to class.

Texts and Other Materials

* Dunne, Anthony and Raby, Fiona, *Speculative Everything: Design, Fiction, and Social Dreaming.*Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013
* Laurel, Brenda. *Design Research: Methods and Perspectives.* MIT Press, 2004.
* Whyte, W. H*. The social life of small urban spaces.*Washington, D.C: Conservation Foundation. 1980.

*Other materials will be available on canvas with an average of 60-80 pages of reading or equivalent per week.*

Grading Policy

Your grade will be determined as follows:

| Group | Weight |
| --- | --- |
| **Assignments** | 15% |
| **Group Project** | 40% |
| **Reflection Papers** | 30% |
| **Attendance and Participation** | 15% |
| **Total** | 100% |

See the [Assignment List](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments) for more detail about how individual projects and assignments will be graded.

Interdisciplinary Perspective

This course meets the goals of the "Interdisciplinary Perspective" for the Institute of Liberal Arts. Studies in this perspective challenge students to understand and appraise the role of interdisciplinary knowledge in arts, culture, and/or human affairs by exploring how at least two disciplinary approaches can be brought together to address a topic in a given area. The course brings together art and design with government and sociology.

Disability Statement

Emerson College is committed to providing equal access to its academic programs and social activities for all qualified students with disabilities. While upholding this commitment, we require all Emerson students to meet the high standards of achievement that are essential to the College’s programs and services. To advance these dual aims, the College will provide reasonable accommodations to disabled students who request accommodations through the College’s Disability Services Office (DSO), if the DSO determines that accommodations are both medically necessary and reasonable. Please note that a requested accommodation will only be approved as ‘reasonable’ if it does not compromise any essential requirements of a course. Students who wish to request a disability accommodation must submit their request to the DSO, and not to faculty, since only the DSO is authorized to approve or deny any requests for accommodations. College employees and student’s family members cannot request accommodations on a student’s behalf. Rather, students who wish to request accommodations must themselves contact the DSO since Emerson’s philosophy is that its students are independent and self determined and students with disabilities—like non-disabled students—have control over their lives here at Emerson and are ultimately responsible for making their own decisions. Students who know at the start of a semester that they will need accommodations must submit their accommodation requests to the DSO within the first two weeks of the semester. If a student becomes ill or disabled during the course of a semester, or discovers after the start of a semester that he or she  needs a disability accommodation, he or she is encouraged to submit his or her request to the DSO as soon as possible since the process of approving accommodations takes time, and approved accommodations will not be granted retroactively. The Associate Director for Disability Services can be reached at: 617-824-8592, dso@emerson.edu, 5th Floor 216 Tremont Street.

Plagiarism Statement

It is the responsibility of all Emerson students to know and adhere to the College’s policy on plagiarism, which can be found at: http://www.emerson.edu/policy/plagiarism. If you have any question concerning the Emerson plagiarism policy or about documentation of sources in work you produce in this course, speak to your instructor.

| **Date** | **Day** | **Details** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Wed, Sep 3** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Introduction](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448628&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Mon, Sep 8** | **Mon** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [What Is Civic Media?](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448630&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | | [**Boston Art Ecosystem Map #1**](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378403) | due by 11:59pm | |
| **Wed, Sep 10** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Art Worlds](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448633&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | | [**Boston Art Ecosystem Map #2**](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378404) | due by 11:59pm | |
| **Mon, Sep 15** | **Mon** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Art and Civic Agency](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448634&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Wed, Sep 17** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Design Action Research With Government](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448635&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | | [Guest Lecture: City of Boston](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448636&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Mon, Sep 22** | **Mon** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Civic Motivations Design Studio](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448637&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Wed, Sep 24** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Speculative Design](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448638&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | | [**Reflection Paper #1**](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378430) | due by 11:59pm | |
| **Mon, Sep 29** | **Mon** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Qualitative Methods and Community Partnerships](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448640&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Wed, Oct 1** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Visit Community Orgs](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448641&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | | [**User Persona**](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378445) | due by 11:59pm | |
| **Mon, Oct 6** | **Mon** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Community and Public Space](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448642&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Wed, Oct 8** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Communicating Ideas Workshop](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448643&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Mon, Oct 13** | **Mon** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [NO CLASS](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448644&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 12am | |
| **Wed, Oct 15** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Engagement Games](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448645&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | | [**Reflection Paper #2**](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378451) | due by 11:59pm | |
| **Mon, Oct 20** | **Mon** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [User Centered Design](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448646&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Wed, Oct 22** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Participatory Action Research](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448647&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Mon, Oct 27** | **Mon** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Space, Art and Creativity](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448648&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | | [**10 Ideas and 3 Sketches**](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378461) | due by 11:59pm | |
| **Wed, Oct 29** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Crit Session](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448649&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Mon, Nov 3** | **Mon** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Quantitative Design](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448661&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Wed, Nov 5** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Local Knowledge](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448662&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Mon, Nov 10** | **Mon** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Workshop](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448663&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | | [**Design Document and Evaluation Plan**](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378508) | due by 11:59pm | |
| **Wed, Nov 12** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [User Testing / Paper Prototyping](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448664&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Mon, Nov 17** | **Mon** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Gentrification](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448665&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Wed, Nov 19** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [User Testing / Paper Prototyping](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448666&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Mon, Nov 24** | **Mon** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Workshop](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448667&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | | [**Reflection Paper #3**](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378550) | due by 11:59pm | |
| **Wed, Nov 26** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [NO CLASS](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448669&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 12am | |
| **Mon, Dec 1** | **Mon** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Workshop](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448670&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | | [**Project Presentation and Rough Draft**](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378552) | due by 11:59pm | |
| **Wed, Dec 3** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Workshop](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448671&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Mon, Dec 8** | **Mon** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Workshop](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448672&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Wed, Dec 10** | **Wed** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Workshop](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448673&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 2pm to 4pm | |
| **Thu, Dec 11** | **Thu** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [**Showing up and participating**](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378573) | due by 11:59pm | |
| **Fri, Dec 12** | **Fri** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | [Festival of Ideas](https://canvas.emerson.edu/calendar?event_id=1448674&include_contexts=course_1234040#7b2273686f77223a2267726f75705f636f757273655f31323334303430227d) | 3:30pm to 5:30pm | | [**Final Projects and Design Books**](https://canvas.emerson.edu/courses/1234040/assignments/5378553) | due by 11:59pm | |

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