SW 713: Art and Design for Social Work, Social Justice and Community Change

Program Notes for Winter 2019: We focus this term on the following arts and design experiences:

1) **Juliana Huxtable:** This course coincides with the UM appearance of Juliana Huxtable February 6-7 2019 co-sponsored by the School of Social Work and the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design. **Students must attend at least 1 of the 2 performances of Huxtable and must register online no later than January 28th. Students will assist briefly as ushers and hosts at Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre Michigan League, and will then be seated in the first row of seats directly in front of the main stage.** Juliana Huxtable attended Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, where she studied art, gender studies, and human rights. In her work, Huxtable explores the intersections of race, gender, queerness, and identity. She uses a diverse set of means to engage these issues, including self-portraiture, text-based prints, performance, nightlife, music, writing, and social media. Huxtable does not privilege any method over another, and the lines between different forms of her work are often fluid. This destabilization of creative categories is in accordance with her larger project. Whether inserting her own image in landscapes inspired by the African American religious sect Nuwaubian Nation or including the iconic “Protest” section of the jazz album We Insist! Max Roach’s Freedom Now Suite (1960) in a DJ set, Huxtable critiques existing social norms and categorical distinctions while indicating alternate, more hopeful possibilities.

2) The Social Justice Collection, SSW Art Collection, University of Michigan. The art in the School of Social Work collection reflects the values of the profession and the mission of the School, which is to improve the well-being of the economically and socially disadvantaged and other vulnerable populations by using research and an innovative curriculum to advance a more just, healthy and productive society.

3) Can abstract art be about politics? *Abstraction, Color, and Politics in the Early 1970s* presents large-scale work by four leading American artists—Helen Frankenthaler, Sam Gilliam, Al Loving, and Louise Nevelson—who chose abstraction as a means of expression within the intense political climate of the early 1970s. That question was hotly debated as artists, critics, and the public
grappled with the relationship between art, politics, race, and feminism. Many of those debates centered on bringing to light the roles that gender and race played in how “great modern art” was defined and assessed, and on employing art to advance civil rights. Within this discourse, abstraction had an especially fraught role. To many, the decision by women artists and artists of color to make abstract art seemed to represent a retreat from politics and protest: an abnegation of a commitment to civil rights and feminism. (University of Michigan Museum of Art)

Course Description

Art and design can be powerful resources for promoting the development of individuals and communities and have been an essential aspect of social work practice since the rise of the social settlements in the 1880s. The arts and artistic expression were deeply embedded in the work of such social settlements as Hull-House and Henry Street Settlement. These early arts programs contributed to the development of community theaters, such as the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York, provided arts education for low-income individuals, and exposed low-income and immigrant communities to the larger cultural resources in their communities.

Currently the arts are an essential element of social policy and social work practice at many different levels: clinical, group, community, and political. Collaborations between artists, designers, and social workers can be mutually beneficial, in respect to knowledge of underrepresented populations and the skills and substantive knowledge of methods for engaging individuals in creative activity. This course brings together historical and contemporary approaches to arts and empowerment with experiential interaction with local arts activities.

Course Objectives:

This course is aimed to create the following impacts on student learning:

• increased knowledge of the history of community based art and design in the US;

• increased knowledge of methods for collaborative community based art and design;

• develop skills in collaboration with community groups in developing community based art and design projects;

• Knowledge and skills to evaluate the impact of community based art and design activity.

Course Design

Our class is organized around principles of adult learning, empowerment, and collaboration. We will develop a co-learning environment that will include presentations, skill building activities and exercises, speakers, and different media. Experiential activities will be central to the structure and process of this course.
**Relationship of the Course to our Four Curricular Themes**

*Multiculturalism and Diversity* issues will be central to this course, which will provide students with a foundation for examining these issues.

*Social Justice and Social Change* issues will be discussed throughout this course. The relationships among injustice, conflict, and social change will also be discussed.

*Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation* approaches from a strengths approach which links professional human service delivery systems with those formal and informal systems historically and currently available to these diverse cultural groups.

*Behavioral and Social Science Research* will be used throughout this course and will provide a foundation for evaluating the knowledge base on how art and design methods can be developed from an evidence based perspective.

**Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values**

This course will operationalize the NASW Code of Ethics, as it applies to ethical responsibilities to service consumers (clients), colleagues, and organizations. Other social work codes of ethics will also be examined in the treatment of these ethical responsibilities for selected cultural groups nationally and internationally. We will examine additional codes of social justice particularly around importance of arts as cultural essentiality.

**Relationship to the intensive focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (PODS)**

Our course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices, and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students [in] developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks as well as strengthen critical consciousness, self knowledge, and self awareness to facilitate PODS.

**Course Requirements (Still in process)**

Assignments

Course Policies

Course Grades

Course Schedule/Readings (Partial):


- Location of vitra design museum:
Night Fever design exhibition:


Interview with Alila Benabdellah:

https://youtu.be/dBdfV0vUpL8


February 1st 2019  ✓ 9:00 - 9:30 am: Introductions and welcome – Arts and Social Work. Explain and discuss the ways in which live art and abstract art can address politics by analyzing the decision by women artists and artists of color to make abstract art and live art Part 1.

✓ 9:30 – 10:00am: Explain and discuss the ways in which live art and abstract art can address politics by analyzing the decision by women artists and artists of color to make abstract art and live art Part 2

✓ 10:10 – 10:30am: Interrogating the public response of abstract art as a retreat from politics and protest - an abnegation of a commitment to civil rights and feminism Part 1

✓ 10:30 – 11:00am: Interrogating the public response of abstract art as a retreat from politics and protest - an abnegation of a commitment to civil rights and feminism Part 2

✓ 11:00-12pm Demonstration and application of increased knowledge of the history of community based art and design in the US Part 1 of 2

✓ 11:30 – 12:00pm Demonstration and application of increased knowledge of the history of community based art and design in the US Part 2 of 2

✓ LUNCH

✓ 1:10-1:30: Apply model of socially just practice in considering use of abstract art and design for social change.

✓ 1:30 - 2:00pm: Apply model of socially just practice in considering use of live art and design for social change.

✓ 2:10 – 2:30pm: Apply model of ethical decision making in considering art and design for social changes in communities and communal spaces, Part 1

✓ 2:30 – 3:00pm: Apply model of ethical decision making in considering art and design for social changes in communities and communal spaces, Part 2

✓ 3:10 – 3:30pm: Knowledge and skills to evaluate the impact of community based art and design activity.

✓ 3:30 – 4:00pm: Have a conversation about the history of abstract art and how it was responding to the social structures of that time.

✓ 4:10 – 4:30pm: Have a conversation about the history of live art and how it was responding to the social structures of that time.

✓ 4:30 – 5:00pm: Engage with abstract art in both embodied and analytical ways (as audience, artist, and scholar-historian).
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 - 9:30 am</td>
<td>Engage with live art in both embodied and analytical ways (as audience, artist, and scholar-historian).</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00 am</td>
<td>Have a sophisticated articulation or description of ways abstract art is displayed, raises vulnerability, and empower the subject of the work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:10 – 10:30 am</td>
<td>Have a sophisticated articulation or description of ways artist's bodies are displayed, made vulnerable, and empowered.</td>
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<td>10:30 – 11:00 am</td>
<td>Appreciate the ways that abstract art can challenge boundaries between audience/performer.</td>
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<td>Appreciate the ways that live performance art can challenge boundaries between audience/performer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 – 12:00 pm</td>
<td>Develop an application of ethical problem solving and ethical issues within live performance art.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Develop an application of ethical problem solving and ethical issues within abstract art.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 - 2:00 pm</td>
<td>Creatively reinterpret the work of a live artist or movement covered in the course through a final public performance, commentary, or review, Part 1</td>
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<td>Establish a deeper sense of meaning as creators and as citizens.</td>
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<td>Establish a deeper sense of meaning as art-based social workers.</td>
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<td>Describe one or two overarching issues for the future use of art and design for social change.</td>
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