Semester at CityStudio

Spring 2014
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15 Credits, 12 weeks, 20 students
1800 Spyglass Place, Vancouver, B.C.
January 6 - April 9, 2014

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What is CityStudio?

CityStudio has established an innovative collaboration between the City of Vancouver (CoV) and the city’s six post secondary institutions (BCIT, ECUAD, Langara, SFU, UBC, VCC), supporting the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan. CityStudio has created an energetic hub of learning and leadership where students gain hands-on experience with complex real world problems, while co-creating 2020 Action Plan solutions on the ground with CoV staff. In addition to mentoring emerging sustainability leaders for urban sustainability and the green economy, CityStudio coordinates a large network of courses on 6 campuses that focus learning, research and action on topics identified by the City of Vancouver. The Spring CityStudio and partner courses will focus on the theme of Embracing the Future. Specific city plans as well as the document Vancouver 2020: A Bright Green Future will inform and provide context for our work.

What is Semester at CityStudio?

Janet Moore is a faculty member at the SFU Semester in Dialogue. Janet also co-founded and co-directs CityStudio. In the spirit of collaboration she found a way to bring her teaching at Semester in Dialogue to CityStudio. The result is “Semester at CityStudio”. The program is similar to Semester in Dialogue because it takes 20 students, full time for 15 SFU Credits. The program is different because it takes place at CityStudio and focuses on both dialogue AND design. The students work full time for 12 weeks on a group project with City Staff.
Student Learning Outcomes

City of Vancouver - Place, Context and Municipal Government

- Gain competency on basic issues of municipal planning, elections, budgets and decision making
- Learn to plan, invite and host conversations with Municipal employees, community leaders and experts
- Appreciate the complexities of working with municipal governments
- Appreciate the complexity of collaborative and interdisciplinary projects

Problem Framing and Ideation

- Demonstrate the ability to frame a problem
- Demonstrate the ability to connect projects to municipal, regional and national plans and strategies
- Work through multiple iterations of a project idea (ideation)
- Investigate best practices at the local and global level connected to your own project
- Develop strategies and tactics related to systemic change

Working with Others - Collaborative Learning and Community Engagement

- Demonstrate the implementation of a major group project related to the City of Vancouver strategies
- Demonstrate the ability to work in a group by shifting positions and being adaptive to change
- Create a plan, implement and evaluate a small stakeholder conversation (not a community consultation)
- Plan, facilitate and host small and large public dialogues

Self-Awareness for Leadership

- Describe your own learning in weekly reflective writing assignments
- Develop an individual project that forms one part of the larger course theme
- Listen deeply and participate in regular dialogues with guests and classmates
- Demonstrate progress in responding to others in the classroom and through group work

Professionalism, Public Speaking and Presentation Skills

- Experience group projects with real deadlines for real clients
- Create a powerpoint, poster, media release and public report for a CityStudio project
- Host an event with City Staff to engage in conversation about group projects
Course Delivery

Dialogue + Design

The learning at CityStudio is immersive and experiential, and framed within the modes of dialogue and design thinking. There is a focus on group process, learning and leadership while working with students, faculty members and guests of CityStudio. Students will engage in research, field investigations, readings, problem-solving sessions and skills workshops.

Dialogue in the classroom allows students to learn how to listen deeply, to challenge their own perspectives and learn how to be effective team members. Dialogue as a practice challenges students to slow down, engage in complex thinking and re-imagine possibilities for change.

Design is the process of moving ideas into action by examining the societal context, asking the hard questions, undertaking meaningful research, generating ideas, documenting processes, testing and presenting outcomes, analysis and critique, and refining our work; all towards the goal of implementing solutions.

The course emphasizes gaining familiarity and interacting with other disciplines, and depending on the context, students will conduct dialogue activities, design thinking, presentations, public events and multi-stakeholder processes.

Guests of CityStudio

Guests will participate regularly in the course to create a mix of perspectives for the classroom associated with specific course theme of Access to Nature in the context of Greenest City Planning.

Location and Timing

The course’s primary activities are located at 1800 Spyglass Place, underneath the south side of the Cambie Street Bridge, except for field trips and specialized events. Course activities will occur Monday thru Friday 9:30-3:30pm with a break for lunch, and there will be occasional evening and/or weekend activities. We will also be interacting with students and faculty from our partner institutions on and off site.

Field Trips

A number of field trips will occur during the semester. Groups of students will be asked to organize the transportation and events for each trip.

Course Activities and Assignments

A variety of readings, class exercises, individual and group assignments and field investigations are used to achieve the goals of this course. Depending on the context, students will conduct these activities either individually, in small groups and/or as part of the entire class. The activities include:

Individual Components

- Individual Project
- Sketchbook
- Participation, Facilitation and Hosting
Group Collaboration Component
- Urban Interventions and City Hall 101
- Group Project and Report
- Tours, Events, Bike Fridays

Photos and Student Biographies
Students work in pairs and prepare brief biographical sketches of each other. Each 200 word biography is prepared by the other member of each group and is based on an interview and follow-up discussions with that person. Each completed biography is emailed to Linda Bannister (semester@sfu.ca) for posting on the course website along with an accompanying photo of the person.

Sketchbook (Individual)
Students prepare an ongoing sketchbook of observations concerning how the values, approaches, and experiences of the course provide insights into your personal and professional growth. This is you in your life in the course. Please include notes, visualizations, sketches, writing, photographs, reflections, concept maps, and artifacts of your life in and outside the course. This will be handed in at the end of the course (and returned).

Reflect and Take Action - The Individual Project
What are you good at? What do you love? How do you want to be in the world? What is your project in the world? What is the one thing you've been thinking about doing but have been neglecting? How do you get in your own way? Wednesday is the day during the term where we will work together, in small groups and in peer coaching sessions to explore these questions.

Every second week in the course we ask that you write a one page reflection on your learning related to specific questions. You can use your journal/sketchbook for ideas and inspiration. Your peers will be helpful in asking you these questions and listening/paraphrasing your responses. We will provide feedback on the reflections and expect you to edit them as you would any other writing assignment. Late reflections will not be accepted.

The reflections will build on a theme of taking action - something that you will do during the course and/or after the course. You will pitch your project ideas to the class midway through the semester. We will see the results of your thinking through a 5 minute individual presentation where you will discuss your project and its action steps nearing the end of the course. The final hand in will be discussed in class.

City Hall 101 and Tactical Urbanism Research
The first part of the course will examine 4 key research areas: City Organization, Healthy City, Greenest City Goals, Project Sites and Interventions. Details to be discussed in class. Presentation to take place during first month.

Group Project
In groups of 4, students will work closely with one key CityStaff to develop a project integral to City needs. The projects will a take a range of forms and include data collection, research and implementation. Groups will have multiple opportunities to pitch and refine projects. There will be one midterm checkpoint to freeze project direction and scope. Final projects will
include a poster, a report and a digital submission. Projects will be displayed at CityStudio Showcase in April.

**Designing, Launching, Hosting and Reporting on a Public Event**
Students organize, advertise, facilitate, run and report on one event related to the CityStudio Showcase in Early April, 2014.

**Grading and Feedback**

Grading and mentoring will occur at various points throughout the semester. Mentoring will be provided by the instructors (and students) as various assignments emerge. Written assignments will be reviewed and edited in a timely fashion by faculty. Opportunities to revise and resubmit them (as necessary) based on feedback from the instructors will be provided. Oral presentations will be critiqued both in class and privately. Mentoring will be available to all students. It is expected that students will meet with the instructors on a regular basis to discuss projects and any issues relating to the course.

While informal feedback will be provided to students throughout the semester, formal grading will occur in the context of 3 evaluation areas. They are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Areas</th>
<th>Course Number – Letter Grade Assigned for Each Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Presentations, Participation and Hosting of Public Events</td>
<td>DIAL 390</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Project</td>
<td>DIAL 391</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Project and Final Group Project</td>
<td>DIAL 392</td>
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**Readings**
The approach to general reading assignments is different than that typically associated with undergraduate courses. Students are encouraged to read and digest such information to help build the perspectives that will contribute to the various dialogues in the course. In addition, a reading package will be handed out to guide some of your investigations.

**Readings**
**CityStudio Manual** – to be provided online and containing:
- Vancouver 2020: A Bright Green Future
- Greenest City Action Plan and Implementation Updates
- Healthy City Strategy
- Vancouver Food Strategy
- Dialogue Reading Package
- City of Vancouver Budgeting

Sample resources:

*Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System*. Donella Meadows
http://www.sustainer.org/pubs/Leverage_Points.pdf
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelve_leverage_points

*What is Dialogue?*
This is the basis for our guest visits and our group work.
http://www.co-intelligence.org/P-dialogue.html

*Vancouver’s Greenest City Action Plan.*
Please come with thoughts and feedback on the plan.

*The Brain at Work*, David Rock,
Set aside an hour with friends to watch this - fascinating and important context for our work. Please come to class with the ideas that make the most impact on you.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XeJSXFep4M

**Guests and Dialogue**

There will be numerous guests in our classroom throughout the course. Invited guests from diverse professions and organizations will be asked to engage in open and respectful discussions with students about the issues associated with the semester’s focal topic. We intentionally structure the sessions to avoid lecture and question/answer format and encourage conversations in which students are interacting fully with guests. These experiences are designed to teach skills in “reading the room,” hearing a variety of perspectives, and respectfully sharing your own views.

To facilitate such exchanges, student pairs are assigned responsibilities for preparing their classmates for specific guest visits. A week prior to the guest visit, they distribute to the entire class: a one page biography of the guest they are ‘hosting’ and a sample of possible questions to lead the dialogue. Each student pair will also be responsible for greeting, their guest(s), facilitating the dialogue, and thanking their visitor. Details for the format and content of information provided to the class follow.

**Dialogue Guest Biography Template**

*Format:*
- Word Document or Adobe Pdf (preferable)
- Font – At least 12 pt.

*Content:*
- Name of Guest and Current Position if applicable
- Small Photo or Image if available - in top left corner
- Short Biography 250 words max.
• Option for Additional Resources – other books / papers / websites/news articles
• 3 Key Dialogue Questions (or proposed structure for dialogue)

Responsibilities for Hosting:

• Contact Guest with details about location and timing – contact Janet or Duane if difficulties arise.
• Check Bio with Guest if necessary
• Distribute bio and questions/resources as mentioned above
• Greet Guest at Classroom and explain intention of dialogue
• Set up Classroom with name cards
• Host/Facilitate the dialogue – timekeeper for breaks and starting/ending on time
• Thank guests
• Thank you letters are sent out by program staff.
• Field trips – arrange transportation/maps/plans and lunch plans if necessary

Weekly Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30-12</td>
<td>City Hall Dialogues (Janet)</td>
<td>Design Thinking and Projects (Duane)</td>
<td>Workshops and Coaching</td>
<td>Project Presentations and Co-Location Day – Janet and Duane</td>
<td>Bike Friday</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-1</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-3:30pm</td>
<td>Debrief and Project Work</td>
<td>Project Work</td>
<td>Coaching with Instructors and Peers</td>
<td>Project Work</td>
<td>Project Work</td>
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GUESTS TBD

Janet Moore and Duane Elverum 2013