

## Introduction to Contextual Practice- Spring 2018

1:30- 4:20 pm Mondays and Wednesdays

Full Course Meetings: DH C200

Professors: Angela Washko (CFA 307), Imin Yeh (DH C200), John Carson (CFA 310)

Graduate Assistant: Erin Mallea

Class Website: <http://cp.art.cmu.edu/>

### DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

For decades, art has moved out of gallery and museum spaces and into all facets of public life, where complex social situations and diverse audiences have become important parts of the work. Moving beyond the limits of traditional Public Art and its focus on static sculptures, today's new strategies embrace more dynamic forms of public engagement.

**Contextual Practice** acknowledges that all artwork exists within specific social conditions and then embraces that context as a fundamental material of the artwork. Evolving out of the history of site-specific, conceptual, performance, and socially-engaged practices, **Contextual Practice** covers a range of exciting new methods to making art in the public arena including (but not limited to): urban interventions, environmental art, hacktivism, socially engaged online projects, participatory art, guerilla performance, and project-based community art.

Students in this field-based class will create projects that work with the social dynamics of a variety of on/off-campus and online public contexts. We will research new trends in public engagement through art, architecture, and design, as well as politics, ecology, sociology, identity, and economics. Contextual Practice students will experiment with how their art practice can intersect directly with world outside of traditional art venues and how they can proactively create new sites and audiences for their work.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify and apply methods and strategies to aid the development and technical execution of independent work in the public sphere
- Integrate form and content in work via questioning, experimentation, problem solving and invention
- Demonstrate an understanding of social dynamics through research and practice in a variety of public settings
- Communicate information, ideas and proposals effectively in visual, verbal and written forms
- Indicate intended and/or potential future directions for your art work

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is a must! Come to class on time and ready to actively participate. We will cover a lot of material in this semester. More than 3 unexcused absences constitute a full letter grade reduction. Three late arrivals (more than 15 minute late) counts as one absence.

### PARTICIPATION

Your active participation in class critiques and discussions is also of the utmost importance. Lack of engagement in class discussion will adversely affect your grade.

### GRADING

15%	One Shot Performance (project & documentation)
20%	Place Project (project & documentation)
20%	Digital Intervention Project (project & documentation)
20%	Participation Project (project & documentation)
10%	Class Participation
15%	Sophomore Review

A – Overall excellent performance. Work demonstrates extraordinary dedication, innovation & execution. Regular class attendance and high-level of participation. Evidences a commitment to learning and art making beyond course requirements.

B – Very good work and execution, but may need some improvement. Regular class attendance and participation. Presents timely completion of assignments and projects. Work at above average expectation for course requirements.

C – Generally meets course requirements. Completes assignments with reasonable execution. Acceptable work, but doesn't evidence inquiry beyond conventional boundaries.

D – Unacceptable work and overall poor class performance. Improvement required at all levels.

F – Failure

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### **PROJECT 1: One Shot Intervention**

**Project Due: Monday, January 22nd**

Create a small intervention in any public site. This could be an action, gesture, performance, alteration, disruption, improvement, destruction, addition, etc..

Document this intervention with only one photograph. Think carefully about how your image tells the fullest story. **Upload this single image to the class website and select the category One Shot Intervention before class on Monday January 22nd. Additionally submit this link and a one paragraph description of the project to the Canvas assignment.**

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### **PROJECT 2: Place**

**Project Lecture: Wednesday, January 24th**

**Contextual Analysis Due: Monday, January 29th**

**Proposal Due: Wednesday, January 31st**

**Final Project Due: Monday, February 12th**

Choose a public site/context as a place to make work. Make sure it is a place off-campus in which you are truly interested to make work. For example: the Pittsburgh Port Authority bus system, the Starbucks on Craig Street, Nine Mile Run, Andy Warhol's grave, Braddock Public Library, a Dollar Store or Market Square. Propose a site-specific creative response or intervention in that place.

#### **Contextual Analysis:**

Make a contextual analysis of the place. Consider the various aspects of the location: its history, function and ambience. Hang out and take notes on all the systems you recognize as you analyze the site and the people who use/occupy the site. Break down your research into two main categories, the physical and the social. Make list of at least 10 physical and 10 social traits of the site to present in class. You can add drawings and photographs if they are helpful to you. Using the contextual analysis as a starting point, determine which aspects of the site, physical or social, are most intriguing to you. **Contextual Analysis should be turned in on Canvas and will be discussed in class.**

#### **Proposal:**

Design a project that responds to the physical and social traits that you defined in your contextual analysis as MATERIAL to work with. Think about the people who use or pass through the site, and how you might engage them aesthetically, poetically, politically or otherwise. You might consider accentuating, amplifying or transforming some existing attribute of the place. You might wish to reveal some hidden aspect, or to add something new, or to animate the site by performing or collaborating with it.

**Write up your final proposal as a roughly 150 word text, with additional images or diagrams if you need them.** Address where you will work, what you will do, how you will do it, and why you want to do it. Proposals should be turned in on Canvas and will be discussed in class.

#### **Final Project:**

Work on and complete the project. This will mainly be done outside of class, with one-on one meetings with your instructor. This is a chance to discuss and support the progress of your projects.

Final project documentation should include no more than 3 images and/or 5 minutes of video, accompanied by a 500 word max. contextualizing artist statement. **Post this to the class website, categorize as “Place”. You will additionally submit the link to your website post to Canvas for grading.**

This documentation, writing, and your verbal presentation will form the basis of critique and evaluation. Your final project grade will be assessed using the Final Project Rubric (below).

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### **PROJECT 3: Intervening Online**

**Project Lecture: Wednesday, February 14th**

**Contextual Analysis Due: Monday, February 19th**

**Proposal Due: Wednesday, February 21st**

**Final Project Due: Monday, March 5th**

In this project you will select a digital space to inhabit regularly over the course of several weeks and create an intervention in which you perform, participate in, subvert, or disrupt while responding to the specificity of that space. You will be asked to start regularly recording yourself inside of the space - experimenting and planning your disruption/performance/intervention in the space. After doing contextual analysis by making 3 gestures for homework in a space that you are interested in working within, stage your final intervention in your chosen digital space and record it using screen capture software (or a series of still images or a website if this makes more sense for the space you are working in).

We will discuss what constitutes a “digital space” in class, but this could include online spaces like massively multiplayer online role-playing games, chat rooms, Twitter, Craigslist, online forums, Amazon Mechanical Turk, dating sites and many more. We will look at many different strategies and approaches by other artists in class to get a sense of what this might look like.

#### **Contextual Analysis:**

To prepare for your final project, you will post at least 3 images (screenshots) of you doing 3 different gestures (act) in a multi-user online space to the Project #3 Contextual Practice assignment in Canvas. The action you decide to do is very open, so long as it responds to the specificity of the digital space you select. These gestures do not have to relate to what you do ultimately for your final project. **Proposals should be turned in on Canvas and will be discussed in class.**

#### **Proposal:**

Submit a proposal outlining which online space you are interested in making your work in and what the nature of your performance/intervention/participation in the space will be. **Write up your final proposal as a roughly 150 word text, with additional images or diagrams if you need them.** Address where you will work, what you will do, how you will do it, and why you want to do it. **Proposals should be turned in on Canvas and will be discussed in class.**

#### **Final Project:**

Work on and complete the project. This will mainly be done outside of class, with one-on one meetings with your instructor. This is a chance to discuss and support the progress of your projects.

Final project documentation can take on a number of forms depending on the nature of the space that you are making work in. Your documentation may manifest in the form of a series of screenshots, video or an independent website. The documentation should be accompanied by an approximately 500 word contextualizing artist statement. **Post this to the class website, categorize as “Online Intervention”. You will additionally submit the link to your website post to Canvas for grading.**

This documentation, writing, and your verbal presentation will form the basis of critique and evaluation. Your final project grade will be assessed using the Final Project Rubric (below).

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## PROJECT 4: Participation

**Project Lecture: Wednesday, March 7th**

**Contextual Analysis Due: Monday, March 21th**

**Proposal Due: Monday March 26th**

**Final Project Due: Wednesday April 4th**

This project emphasizes social interactions with a group of people or a person. You will move away from the general passive audience dynamic in public space (sculpture on a lawn that people see when they walk by, sign on a door that anyone can read) to a more participatory dynamic. Choose a specific group of people or a prompt for creating new communities or frameworks for participation. Create a project that engages an audience as potential viewer, recipient and/or integral creator of a mutual work of art.

Sensitively consider the implications of the project for the individuals and groups that you are working with and be mindful of the power dynamics, benefits, and potential consequences that come out of their engagement with your project. Perhaps you will work with people you find in a number of contexts - your commute to school, the Pittsburgh Steelers stadium, Bike Pittsburgh, food trucks, the gym, etc. Although you may choose to work with a pre-existing group, this project may involve the creation of a new group. You may also opt to create your project with one or two of your classmates.

### Contextual Analysis:

Complete two of the contextual analysis forms for this project for two separate possible participatory projects. The forms will ask you to consider what group of people you want to work with or what group you want to create and answer the following questions: Why are you interested in working with or forming this group? What is and/or will be your relationship to them? What are some of the qualities that define this group? Why would these people be interested in participating in your project? **Contextual Analysis should be turned in on Canvas and will be discussed in class.**

### Proposal:

**Write up your final proposal for your participatory project. It should be a roughly 150 word text, with additional images or diagrams if you need them.** If you do choose to work with your classmates on this project, provide descriptions for what your roles will be in the project. Address where you will work, what you will do, how you will do it, and why you want to do it. **Proposals should be turned in on Canvas and will be discussed in class.**

### Final Project:

Work on and complete the project. This will mainly be done outside of class, with one-on one meetings with your instructor. This is a chance to discuss and support the progress of your projects. Final project documentation should include no more than 3 images and/or 5 minutes of video, accompanied by a 500 word max. contextualizing artist statement. **Post this to the class website, categorize as "Participation". You will additionally submit the link to your website post to Canvas for grading.**

This documentation, writing, and your verbal presentation will form the basis of critique and evaluation. Your final project grade will be assessed using the Final Project Rubric (below).

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### Final Project Rubric (100 pt)

<b>Documentation</b>	Visual documentation of project is professionally shot and presented. Documentation best represents the intention and concept of the work.	<b>20 pt</b>
<b>On Time</b>	Project proposal is turned in online in <b>TWO places</b> . Uploaded to the Canvas Assignment AND added to the class Wordpress Website.	<b>10 pt</b>

<b>Conceptual</b>	Shows ingenuity while critically engaging with the specificity of the project prompt.	<b>20 pt</b>
<b>Research</b>	Shows a rigorous amount of research and in-depth analysis of every component of project.	<b>20 pt</b>
<b>Ambition</b>	Shows risk-taking, utilizes project to experiment and expand their artistic limits.	<b>20 pt</b>
<b>Participation</b>	Actively engaged in class discussions and critiques. Generously receiving and offering thoughts and criticisms.	<b>10 pt</b>

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## **SOPHOMORE REVIEW**

The sophomore review grade will be assessed by the quality of your visual and written documentation and the presentation to the Sophomore Review committee. The Sophomore Review is an opportunity for students to reflect on the progress and direction of their work toward the end of the second year and to consider how to make the most effective use of their third and fourth years, in relation to their short-term and/or long-term ambitions. More detailed information about the Sophomore Review will be distributed later in the semester.

Documentation Workshop: Monday, April 9th  
Presentation Workshop: Wednesday, April 11th  
Mock Review: Wednesday, April 18 and Monday, April 30

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## **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

If you have a disability and have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, We encourage you to discuss your accommodations and needs with your professor as early in the semester as possible. We will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided as appropriate. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, we encourage you to contact them at [access@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:access@andrew.cmu.edu).

## **Statement of Support for Students' Health & Well-being**

Take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is almost always helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is here to help: call 412-268-2922 and visit their website at <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for help getting connected to the support that can help.

*If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal or in danger of self-harm, call someone immediately, day or night:*

*CaPS: 412-268-2922*

*Re:solve Crisis Network: 888-796-8226*

*If the situation is life threatening, call the police*

*On campus: CMU Police: 412-268-2323*

*Off campus: 911*

If you have questions about this or your coursework, please let me know. Thank you, and have a great semester.

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**The School of Art recognizes the diversity of racial identities, religious backgrounds, sexual orientations, and gender identities that is fundamental to our culture. All classes and studios in the School of Art are safe spaces for self-identification, self-expression, and inclusivity.**

## Fall 2018 Introduction to Contextual Practice - Course Schedule

Week	Day	Date	Activity	Room
1	W	1/17	What is Contextual Practice? How the class website works. Introduce Project 1: One Shot	DH200
2	M	1/22	Project 1: One Shot Due	sections
2	W	1/24	Project 2: Place Lecture	DH200
3	M	1/29	Project 2 Contextual Analysis	sections
3	W	1/31	Project 2 Proposal due	sections
4	M	2/5	Project 2 Work Day / Individual Meetings	sections
4	W	2/7	Project 2 Work Day / Individual Meetings	sections
5	M	2/12	Project 2: Place Final Due Critique	sections
5	W	2/14	Project 3 : Digital Intervention Lecture	DH200
6	M	2/19	Visiting Artist Talk Project 3 Contextual Analysis due and	DH200
6	W	2/21	Project 3 Proposal due	sections
7	M	2/26	Project 3 Workday / Individual Meetings	sections
7	W	2/28	Project 3 Workday / Individual Meetings	sections
8	M	3/5	Project 3: Digital Intervention Final Critique	sections
8	W	3/7	Project 4: Participation Lecture	DH200
		3/12	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
		3/14	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
9	M	3/19	Visiting Artist Talk	sections
9	W	3/21	Project 4: Contextual Analysis	DH200
10	M	3/26	Project 4 Proposal due	sections
10	W	3/28	Project 4 Work Day / Individual Meetings	sections
11	M	4/2	Project 4 Work Day / Individual Meetings	sections
11	W	4/4	Project 4: Participation Final Due Critique	sections
12	M	4/9	<b>WORKSHOPS: Sophomore Review</b>	DH200
12	W	4/11	<b>WORKSHOPS: Sophomore Review</b>	DH200
13	M	4/16	Visiting artist Talk	DH200
13	W	4/18	Due: Group 1 Presents Mock Soph Review	sections
14	W	4/25	Work Day on Soph Reviews	sections
	F	4/27	<b>SOPHOMORE REVIEW</b>	
15	M	4/30	Due: Group 2 Presents Mock Soph Review	sections
15	W	5/2	Work Day on Soph Reviews	sections
	F	5/4	<b>SOPHOMORE REVIEW</b>	