

Collaborative Studio Sp2025

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Co-designing with TRANSIT ARTS

Photo credit: Susan Melsop



Engagement stations for Sustainability

Credit: Susan Melsop

What the ***#@&!*** is Social Design?

How might social design and community engaged design activate Climate Action?

These two questions set the stage for this collaborative studio enabling students to engage directly with urban youth in design projects for sustainability. Specifically, this Collaborative Studio is a service-learning course engaging students and urban teens in design thinking and making that promotes sustainability and encourages pro-environmental behavior.

Across the globe, we face wicked problems and grand challenges –from racial injustices to environmental degradation– these issues affect us all. This studio brings awareness to these interrelated issues and demonstrates how designers have joined transdisciplinary teams addressing critical causes activating design as an agent for social change and environmental justice. Using a systems thinking approach, students will gain awareness of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and OSU’s six-dimensional framework of sustainability. Navigating between scales of macro and micro, students will apply SDGs conceptual framework to the local (micro) placed-based learning environment on the Eastside with TRANSIT ARTS youth.

For this place-based, service-learning course we will experience community-engaged design first-hand and lean into Design Activism for Sustainability. We will leverage both design practices of visioning, storytelling, and making to foster community building and will operationalize the objects/tools/signs designed together to promote pro-environmental behavior in the public sphere. Students will work in interdisciplinary teams and collaborate with urban teens on innovative design projects; these may take the form of activist campaigns, urban furniture, murals, and/or mobile markets. Together, we will develop new design tools and novel ways to encourage pro-environmental behavior and foster environmental stewardship.