Trash Animals
The Art Of Living In A Human World

Term: 14 weeks | Fall 2022
Tuesdays Sep 06 - Dec 13, 4:55 - 7:25pm
Location: 19 West 4th, Room C-12
Professor: Gal Nissim | galnissim@nyu.edu

Office hours: M 10-12 by appointment (sign up here)

COURSE SCHEDULE

Course Description:

Cities reshape the evolutionary path of urban wildlife. Synanthropic animals – animals who live near human habitats – are generally drawn to human-made trash and relatively well-adapted to climate change. In this class, we will discuss human-made environments as ecosystems and examine the many animals who live in these ecosystems, the complex relationships between animals and trash, and the different ways in which waste is tightly connected to human consumption and other behaviors. We will also react to these themes in artistic form.

This class sits at the intersection of art, science, and technology. It combines studio practice and research with example case studies and critical texts. Through a series of creative experiments and assignments, students will work to design interventions and creative projects that explore these themes. We will draw attention to what happens when we design spaces with only one species in mind. This class is for students who are eager to develop projects that tell a story, raise awareness, transform perceptions, or inspire change around an environmental justice issue.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Develop new observation skills with the goal of seeing from a wider ecological point of view.
2. Develop the ability to use technology and art as tools to investigate the relations between humans and non-human animals.
3. Build familiarity with researchers, artists and artworks, who create at the intersection of technology, art and science.
4. Develop the analytical and critical skills to look at the visual arts from an environmental perspective.
5. Create and finish projects that combine art and tech and develop the ability to present and critically discuss the works.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, POLICIES and GRADE VALUES

Grading is based on successful completion of all assignments, class journals, class participation and attendance.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance &amp; Participation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blog Posts &amp; Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juxtaposition Assignment</td>
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<td>Culinary Art Activation</td>
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<td>Plastics Activation</td>
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<td>Assignment</td>
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<td>Final Project</td>
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- **Attendance and Participation**: We expect regular attendance and thoughtful participation from all students.

- **Punctuality** is required. In general, please try to join at least five minutes before class time, and be ready to start work at the posted start time.

- **Collaboration v. Solo work**: We are happy to have you do either.

- **Late Work/Extensions/Incompletes**: Late weekly writing assignments will be accepted for half credit up until the start of class. Extensions and incompletes will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. If you want to request either, please do so in advance.

- **Academic Dishonesty**: Plagiarism results in failure in the class and referral to an academic dean. Plagiarism includes: copying sentences or fragments from any source without quotes or references; not citing every source used in your papers; citing internet information without proper citation; presenting someone else’s work as your own; or copying verbatim from any source. You are subject to the CAS guidelines on plagiarism: cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity.

- **Academic Accommodations**: Please feel free to make suggestions to your instructor about ways in which this class could become more accessible to you. Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980. They are located at:
READINGS and ASSIGNMENTS

- **Readings:** All readings will be available on NYU Classes or online.

- **Weekly Assignments:** Weekly work goes toward 3 projects. You are expected to follow the course outline, regarding techniques and specific explorations in the development of these projects. You should be prepared to show/talk about these assignments in class.

- **Weekly Writing:** Please post writing assignments the day before class.
  - You are required to post weekly to document and share your process and progress.
  - Write a question or comment about each reading.
  - The weekly writing will be graded Pass/Fail.

BLOG/PDF LINKS
Please post your homework to the correct week. Be mindful of which tab/sheet you are posting to so you are with your section!

CLASS BLOG URLS

COURSE SCHEDULE
(subject to change with plenty of notice based on in-class trajectories)

The course will be divided into two parts. First half of the semester will be focused on short exercises. The second half will focus on the final project.

**Week 1 - Sep 06**
**Topics:** Introduction

**Learning Objectives:**
- Introductions:
  - to ourselves / to each other / to the work / to the course, expectations, all your questions answered, logistics, housekeeping
  - Intro to Trash Animals and Urban Ecosystems
  - Trash & NYC Love and hate story
  - Language

**Assignments for next week:**
- Juxtaposition Assignment – share the outcome in class.
• **IMPORTANT**: Register to the Rat Academy Trainings (In-Person) on Friday, Sep 16, 12-2 pm [here](#). This is a required visit - please ensure your schedule is arranged so that you can make this event.

• Recommended watching: [Animals. On HBO](#)

**Week 2 - Sep 13**

**Due**: Juxtaposition Assignment Crit (1 hr)

**Topics**:
- Food waste

**Learning Objectives**:
- Food waste
- Disgust
- Animals who share our food

**Assignments**:
Culinary Art Activation

**Read**:
- [How Disgust Explains Everything By Molly Young](#), The New York Times

**Watch**:
- [Eco-friendly Changes in the Restaurant Industry](#)

**Extra**:
- [Nonpolitical Images Evoke Neural Predictors of Political Ideology](#)
- [Trait Physical Disgust Is Related to Moral Judgments Outside of the Purity Domain](#)

**Friday, Sep 16 Outside event (required)**:

**Field Trip**: In-person Rat Academy presentation

[Event Registration link](#)

**Where**: 54 MacDonough St. Brooklyn, N.Y 11216

**When**: Friday, Sep 16, 2022. 12:00PM-2:00PM.

Suggested watching: [Rat Film: The History of Baltimore Told Through a Unique Lens](#)

**Week 3 - Sep 20**

**Due**: Culinary Art activation Crit

**Topics**: Water Waste

**Learning Objectives**:
- CSO
- Water Waste

**Assignments**:
- Written reflection on Rat Academy
- Document 24 hr of plastic interactions
Read:
The Truth About Alligators in the Sewers of New York

Week 4 - Sep 27
Due: Written reflection on Rat Academy
Topics: Plastic
Learning Objectives:
● Art and plastic
● Microplastic
Assignments:
● Newtown Creek Field Guide (PDF, Audio)
● Written assignment about Newtown Creek (individual field trip)
● Plastics Activation (start ideation and research process)
Read:
● Meet The Fish Of The East River

Week 5 - Oct 4
Field Trip: Visit to the Tideland Institute
Assignments:
Plastics Activation (keep developing).
Recommended individual field trip:
Visit Dead Horse Bay and search for treasures
Pre Reading and Listening about the BOP:
● BOP general overview: Restoring Wildlife to New York Harbor - YouTube
Or if you prefer listening to the BOP's story through podcasts:
● Recent Installation in Hudson River: 11 Million New Oysters in New York Harbor (but None for You to Eat) - The New York Times (nytimes.com)
● Explore BOP's curricula here: Billion Oyster Project - Digital Platform (bopuiprod.azurewebsites.net)

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BREAK - Oct 11: NYU classes meet on a Monday schedule. No class.
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Week 6 - Oct 18
Due: Plastics Activation Crit
Guest Speaker: Shinara Sunderlal Education Outreach Coordinator, BOP (1 hr)
Additional Materials from Shinara:
Assignments:
Assignment 4
Reading:
Potential background reading about Freshkills:

- Draft master plan
- NY Times article
- Sedge Wrens at Freshkills Park
- Red Foxes at Freshkills Park
- Grasshopper Sparrows at Freshkills Park

Week 7 - Oct 25

Guest Speaker: Rachel Aronson, Education Programming Coordinator for Freshkills Park.
Topics: Fresh Kills Landfill
Learning Objectives:
- Consumption behavior
- Capitalism

Assignments for next week:
Finish Assignment 4

Week 8 - Nov 1
Due: Assignment 4 Crit
Topics:
- Final Project - Process and Development
Learning Objective:
- Final Project Guidelines
- Research methods
Assignment:
- Final Project research
- Spend the week reading about/learning about your topic.

Week 9 - Nov 8
Due: Present research on your chosen animal, their environment and people
Topics: Final Project research
Assignments:
- Brainstorming Workshop (10X10) (~1hr)
- Create a proposal for a final project

Week 10 - Nov 15
Due: Final projects proposals (+ project planning)
Learning Objective:
- Guest speaker (TBD)
- Final projects proposals check in
Prototypes & User Testing - tools and goals

**Assignment:** Prototype your final project

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**Week 11 - Nov 22**

**Due:** Final project prototype (bring to class)

**Topic:**
- User testing and feedback

**Learning Objective:**
- Feedback Musical Chairs

**Assignment:**
- Continue development for final projects
- Blog post: write about the feedback you’ve got and how you are planning to improve your project.

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**Week 12 - Nov 29 - Hold Tour**

**Due:** Refine prototype

**Field Trip:** [Visit Life Between Buildings](#) Conversation with Jody Graf, Assistant Curator, MoMA PS1.

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**Week 13 - Dec 6**

**Due:** Refine prototype

**Learning Objectives:**
- Workshopping of final projects
- Individual progress report meetings: Meet with Professor to discuss your final project

**Assignments:**
- Finish Final Projects
- Blog post: Include a documentation of your work (video, photos, etc.) and write one paragraph explaining your project

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**Week 14 - Dec 13**

**Present:** FINAL PROJECTS

**Crit:** FINAL PROJECTS CRIT (as time allows)

**Assignments:**
- Post presentation to your blog
- Write final reflection - [Guidelines](#)
- Include project documentation