

# A Producer Prepares:

## Advanced Topics in Curation, Ethics, and Arts Programming (TAPS 1280Z)

Professor: Sydney Skybetter

skybetter@brown.edu

Location: [The Internet](#)

Schedule: Mondays, 9:30am ET - 12:00pm ET

Office Hours: Online, [by appointment only](#).

Note: Syllabus is \*categorically guaranteed\* to change

"Gimme my check, put some respect on my check

Or pay me in equity, pay me in equity

Or watch me reverse out the debt (skrrt)."

- [APES\\*\\*T](#) by THE CARTERS

'Stay in the kitchen, cooking up, cut your own bread

Heart full of equity, you're an asset."

- [Intentions](#) by Justin Bieber ft. Quavo



"I thought the future would be cooler" by Addie Wagenknecht

## So before *\*literally\** anything else:

To call the process here, we're in the midst of a horrific global pandemic. I know you know this. But I want to acknowledge its traumatizing effects on you, and me, and everyone else taking this class. If you tell me that you're having trouble, there will be no judgement on my part. I hope you'll extend me the same courtesy, especially as the Zoom room inevitably breaks, or when, while I'm lecturing, you observe my children doing naked parkour on my furniture, which they also recently set on fire.

You should know that:

- 1) Under no circumstances should you feel obligated to share personal information about your health, or anything else, at any time.
- 2) I am happy to discuss matters with you by appointment and over office hours. I'm here to be a resource and facilitator for you, though I should also note that as a professor, I am designated a "[Responsible Employee](#)" and am required to report "details of incidents or suspected incidents of sexual and gender-based harm or discrimination."
- 3) If I can't help you, or be of use or service, chances are good I can connect you to a university resource or person who *can* help, or be of use or service.
- 4) If you need extra time on anything, or help in some fashion, or need to miss class, just let me know. We'll figure it out. We'll get through this.

## Course Description

This course is a continuation of [A Producer Prepares \(TAPS 1280M\)](#), and furthers students' orientation to the complex relationships between cultural entrepreneurs, buyers, sellers, producers, managers, audiences and artists. Through readings, guest speakers and case studies, with particular emphasis on emerging media technologies, business practice and live art administration, "Advanced Topics..." will arm students with the critical, historical, managerial and curatorial tools necessary to produce work in the contemporary cultural economy, with particular emphasis on memes, think tanks, activist interventions and the relationship between the state and art. This class seeks to situate arts curation and production within histories of cultural practice, management and technology, and ultimately aims to endow student producers with the tactical, critical and strategic acumen necessary to thrive in an arts sector in flux.

## Class Structure:

This course meets once per week, with time allocated for media viewings, workshops and discussion. Please note that this is a reading intensive course, with a typical weekly reading load of over 100 pages. Over 10 weeks, participants will spend 2.5 hours per week in class (25 hours total). Required readings and collaborative project work is expected to take approximately 7.5 hours per week (115 hours). Additionally, researching and composing weekly responses and individual presentations is estimated at a total of approximately 40 hours over the course of the term.

## Projects and Grading:

### **Participation: 30%**

Participants are expected to complete all readings in a timely fashion, actively listen during lectures and presentations, ask questions and be fully engaged in class discussion and workshops. Classroom contributions can be in the form of posing critical questions to advance class conversation, sharing of key passages, responding to instructor prompts, or other means to be determined.

### **Group Presentations: 20%**

Groups will receive a shared grade and feedback on the basis of the effectiveness of their presentation, and facilitation of class discussion.

### **Individual Presentation: 30%**

Individuals will receive a grade and feedback on the basis of the effectiveness of their presentation, and facilitation of class discussion.

## **Weekly Responses: 20%**

### **Attendance and Presence:**

This course will take place online amidst an aforementioned global pandemic. Asynchronous engagement with course material is absolutely fine, pending an individualized, agreed-upon plan and continuous communication with the instructor. While on a Zoom call, video participation is optional. Absence from scheduled zoom calls will not result in a lowered grade, but lack of overall engagement and unexcused tardiness submitting course materials will.

### **Individual Presentations:**

Course participants will receive class time to present on their work (through textual, critical, creative, compositional, discursive means or otherwise) and facilitate discussion in a fashion that is useful or interesting to them. This can take the form of an art crit, presentation of pre-published draft language for group consideration, a collaborative making of some thing, or pretty much anything else. Participants should review intended presentation plans over office hours in advance of presenting. Plan on presenting for no more than ten minutes, followed by solo facilitation of class conversation for no more than ten additional minutes.

### **Group Presentations:**

Participants will be assigned to small groups to present on weekly texts and media. Groups should review draft presentation plans over office hours. These presentations must include:

- Contextual overview of agreed upon materials, including historical frame, authorial biodata, and cultural and theoretical usages.
- Analysis germane to that week's readings, emphasizing the means by which relevant materials were made, how they work, intended usages and creative applications.
- A group activity that explores a performative, formal, poetic, computational or choreographic vector pertaining to the week's readings and media.
- Facilitation of classroom discussion.

It is recommended that participants research varying modes of presentation and facilitation, like [this](#), for example. Note that the individuals you are facilitating may be connected to Zoom calls via audio only or audio + video. Plan on presenting for roughly five minutes per person in your group, and group facilitating class conversation for no more than ten additional minutes.

### **Weekly Responses to Readings:**

Each week, please upload some sort of internally coherent response to Canvas by 5pm the evening before class. This response can take the form of any sort of media (visual, audio, textual, notational, archival) but should gesture towards questions that catalyze class discussion. If you are presenting that week, you do not need to compose an additional weekly response.

### **Media:**

Media will be made available online, in the library, and by appointment, TBD. If you are unable to access any assigned material, let me know and we'll troubleshoot / workaround together. Additionally, for like, fun, I reserved a ton of \*excellent\* media that illustrate the reception of curation and producing within the larger cultural sector. Interested in dance? Check out *Frances Ha*. Theater world? Check out *Slings and Arrows*. Want something that's light and funny and super gay that has basically nothing to do with class at all? Check out *She Ra*. It's all on OCRA for your convenience.

Please also note that there are a TON of excellent films on Netflix that I'm not able to assign due to platform copy protection and our library's inability to negotiate access. For example, [Forty Year Old Version](#) is \*phenomenally written\* and \*painfully relevant\* to this class, but because it's only available via Netflix I can't assign it. So while for legal reasons I can't <officially> encourage you to, I dunno, organize among your classmates to use Zoom to simulcast copy protected material, and I can't <officially> suggest that you use [Tor](#) to access international media torrents, quis custodiet ipsos custodes et cetera.

## Names and Pronouns:

If you prefer to be called by a different name or wish to be referred to by a different gender pronoun than the one under which you are officially enrolled, please let me know. Participants are expected to respectfully refer to each other by their preferred names and pronouns in class.

## Academic Integrity:

Breaches of academic integrity will not be tolerated and will be reported immediately. Infringement on the academic code entails penalties ranging from reprimand to suspension, dismissal, or expulsion from the University. Please familiarize yourself with [Brown's Academic Code](#).

## Accessibility and Accommodations:

If you require any special accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible so that your learning needs can be met. To ensure accommodations, students are advised to contact the [Student and Employee Accessibility Services](#).

## Email:

You are welcome to email me with questions and concerns. Please note that requests or questions regarding scheduled assignments received after 5pm the night before that assignment is due may not receive a response. If you've read this far into the syllabus, email me your favorite animated gif by the second class.

## Required Texts:

Each participant will be required to acquire the following books. Additional texts will be assigned on the basis of individual projects and class interests.

Note that if your Brown undergraduate financial aid package includes the Book/Course Material Support Pilot Program (BCMS), concerns or questions about the cost of books and course materials can be addressed to [bcms@brown.edu](mailto:bcms@brown.edu). For all other concerns related to non-tuition course-related expenses, whether or not your Brown undergraduate financial aid package includes BCMS, please visit the Academic Emergency Fund in E-GAP (within the umbrella of "E-Gap Funds" in UFunds) to determine options for financing these costs, while ensuring your privacy.

## Books:

- Brown, Adrienne Maree. "Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds." AK Press, 2017.
- Costanza-Chock, Sasha. "Design Justice: Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need." Cambridge: MIT Press, 2020.
- DeLaure, Marilyn and Fink, Moritz (Editors). "Culture Jamming: Activism and the Art of Cultural Resistance." New York: NYU Press, 2017.
- Fisher, Anna Watkins. "The Play in the System: The Art of Parasitological Resistance." Durham, Duke University Press, 2020.
- Ingraham, Chris. "Gestures of Concern." Durham, Duke University Press, 2020.
- McCray, W. Patrick. "Making Art Work: How Cold War Engineers and Artists Forged a New Creative Culture." Cambridge: MIT Press, 2020.
- Mina, An Xiao. "Memes to Movements: How the World's Most Viral Media Is Changing Social Protest and Power." Boston: Beacon Press, 2019.
- Sinclair, Kamal and Clark, Jessica. "Making a New Reality." Blurb.com, 2020.

## Online Resources:

- "[A Brief Guide on How to Get Your Creative Work Seen, Funded, and Supported](#)" by Eva Recinos.
- "[A 'Great Cultural Depression' Looms for Legions of Unemployed Performers](#)" by Patricia Cohen.
- "[Alternative Models for Artist Sustainability in a COVID Economy and Beyond](#)" featuring Amy Smith.
- "[America's hollow middle class](#)" by Anne Helen Petersen.

- "[Artist Producer Resource.](#)"
- "[Building the Middle Class of the Creator Economy](#)" by Li Jin.
- "[Business Deductions](#)" by Amy Smith.
- "[Considering Alastair, Questioning Realness](#)" by Andy Horwitz.
- "[Creating New Futures.](#)"
- "[Entrepreneurs Bet Big on Immersive Art Despite Covid-19](#)" by Zachary Small.
- "[From One White Male Leader to Another, Anti-Racism is a Core Leadership Competency](#)" by Tim Cynova.
- "[I Turn My Camera On](#)" by Marlowe Granados.
- "[Master Budget Template](#)" by Keira Chang.
- "[Million Dollar Voice.](#)"
- "[Movement Building in a Digital Age.](#)"
- "[On Black Death and Fundraising](#)" by Sydnie L. Mosley.
- "['Ratatouille,' the Musical: How This TikTok Creation Came Together](#)" by Christina Morales.
- "[Single Project Template](#)" by Keira Chang.
- "[The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement](#)" by Bob Projansky.
- "[The 'Boogaloo' Started as a Racist Meme](#)" by Cassie Miller.
- "[The Boogaloo Tipping Point](#)" by Dale Beran.
- "[Valuing Your Time](#)" by Amy Smith.
- "[Why So Many Organizations Stay White.](#)"

#### Media:

- "[Angels in America](#)" by Jeremy O. Harris.
- "Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo," via OCRA.
- "Cabaret," via OCRA.
- "[Follow your passion,](#)" via Twitter.
- Lil Nas X: "[How Lil Nas X Took 'Old Town Road' From TikTok Meme to No. 1 | Diary of a Song,](#)" "[#duet with thetiktokdrummer nah he killed it tho,](#)" "[somebody asked me to make my last tiktok into a sound.](#)"
- "[normies are getting creative](#)" via Twitter.
- "Sing!" via OCRA.
- "Singin' In the Rain," via OCRA.
- "The Producers," via OCRA.
- "The Ratatouille:" "[I Knew I Smelled a Rat,](#)" "[POV: I take my kids to see Ratatouille the Musical,](#)" "[Remy: The Musical OG Song,](#)" "[cookin' up some choreo for #ratatouillemusical,](#)" and "[Lin Meets Ratatouille.](#)"
- "The Yes Men Fix The World," via OCRA.
- "TRAVELING THE INTERSTITIUM WITH OCTAVIA BUTLER" via the Sundance Film Festival.
- "Westworld," Season 1, Episode 1, via OCRA.

#### Podcasts:

- "[Miguel Gutierrez's Strongly Worded Emails About Art and Money.](#)"
- "[On TAP 043.](#)"

### Week to Week Schedule:

Readings and media listed under each heading are expected to be completed for that day. Be ready to discuss in class.

#### Class #1 // [1.25.21]: *Introduction Slash WTF Are We Doing Here*

What are we doing here? How does this work? How are we going to use Zoom / sign in to edit your name, pronouns, and profile picture. Let's play with the chat function! After class, sign up for [solo presentation and group facilitation slots here](#), [office hours here](#), and fill out [this COVID-planning and accessibility form](#).



Readings:

- "[A Brief Guide on How to Get Your Creative Work Seen, Funded, and Supported](#)"
- "[America's hollow middle class](#)"
- "[Building the Middle Class of the Creator Economy](#)"
- "[A 'Great Cultural Depression' Looms for Legions of Unemployed Performers](#)"
- "[Entrepreneurs Bet Big on Immersive Art Despite Covid-19](#)"

Media:

- "[Follow your passion.](#)"
- "[normies are getting creative](#)"

Class #2 // [2.1.21]: *Let Us Now Praise Octavia Butler*

In class: Please [sign up here for one office hours slot per month](#).

Readings:

- Emergent Strategy:
- (-) "Introduction"
- (-) "Principles of Emergent Strategy"
- (-) "Elements of Emergent Strategy"
- (-) "Fractals: The Relationship Between Small and Large"
- (-) "Intentional Adaptation: How We Change"
- (-) "Interdependence and Decentralization: Who We Are and How We Share"
- (-) "Resilience: How We Recover and Transform"
- (-) "Creating More Possibilities: How We Move Towards Life"
- (-) "Outro"
- (-) "Thank you"
- "[On Black Death and Fundraising](#)" by Sydnie L. Mosley

Optional Media:

- *TRAVELING THE INTERSTITIUM WITH OCTAVIA BUTLER* ([Via the Sundance Film Festival](#), January 29th at 1pm ET.)
- *Marriage Story* (Available via OCRA). Note that this film includes sexual situations, adult language, and white people from competing film franchises overacting.
- *The Forty Year Old Version* (Available via Netflix). Note that this film includes sexual situations, drug use and adult language.

Optional Reading:

- [Parable of the Sower](#) by Octavia Butler

Class #3 // [2.8.21]: *Just Design feat. [Stephanie Pereira](#)*

Readings:

- Design Justice:
- (-) "Acknowledgments"
- (-) "Series Editor's Introduction"
- (-) "Preface"
- (-) "Introduction: #TravelingWhileTrans, Design Justice, and Escape from the Matrix of Domination"
- (-) "Design Values: Hard-Coding Liberation?"
- (-) "Design Practices: 'Nothing about Us without Us'"
- (-) "Design Pedagogies: 'There's Something Wrong with This System!'"
- (-) "Directions for Future Work: From #TechWontBuildIt to #DesignJustice"

Media:

- *Singin' In the Rain* (Available via OCRA).

#### Class #4 // [2.22.21]: *Do Better* feat. [Kamal Sinclair](#)

Readings:

- [Making a New Reality](#).
- ["Movement Building in a Digital Age"](#)

Podcast:

- [On TAP 043](#)

Media:

- *Sing!* (Available via OCRA).

#### Class #5 // [3.1.21]: *Ay Technocracy* feat. [Patrick McCray](#)

Readings:

- [Making Art Work](#):
  - (-) "Acknowledgments"
  - (-) "Introduction: Schematics"
  - (-) "1: Preamplifier"
  - (-) "7: Parallel Processing"
  - (-) "8: Overload"
  - (-) "Conclusion: Waves, Loops, and Bubbles"

Media:

- *Westworld*: Season 1, Episode 1 (Season 1 Available via OCRA). Note that this media includes violence, sexual situations, adult language, gore, and pretentious misogyny. It's HBO, so like, it's like that, you know?

#### Class #6 // [3.8.21]: *All Your Memes Are Belong To Us* feat. [Addie Wagenknecht](#)

Readings:

- [Memes to Movements](#):
  - (-) "Introduction: Hands Up, Umbrellas Up"
  - (-) "The Revolution of the Cat"
  - (-) "Ahem, Attention Please"
  - (-) "Narrating Our Way to Power"
  - (-) "A Contest of Memes"
  - (-) "Acknowledgments"
- ["The Boogaloo Tipping Point"](#) by Dale Beran
- ["The 'Boogaloo' Started as a Racist Meme"](#) by Cassie Miller
- ["I Turn My Camera On"](#) by Marlowe Granados
- ["Ratatouille, the Musical: How This TikTok Creation Came Together"](#)

Media:

- The Ratatouille: ["I Knew I Smelled a Rat,"](#) ["POV: I take my kids to see Ratatouille the Musical,"](#) ["Remy: The Musical OG Song,"](#) ["cookin' up some choreo for #ratatouillemusical,"](#) and ["Lin Meets Ratatouille."](#)
- Lil Nas X: ["How Lil Nas X Took 'Old Town Road' From TikTok Meme to No. 1 | Diary of a Song,"](#)  
["#duet with thetiktokdrummer nah he killed it tho,"](#) ["somebody asked me to make my last tiktok into a sound."](#)

- "[Angels in America](#)" by Jeremy O. Harris
- *Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo* (Available via OCRA).

### Class #7 // [3.15.21]: *Big Intersectional Money Day* feat. [Amy Smith](#)

- In-class: Anti-racist, anti-classist, anti-hegemonic, libratory financial practices. Don't miss.

#### Readings:

- "[Artist Producer Resource](#)"
- "[Master Budget Template](#)" by Keira Chang.
- "[Single Project Template](#)" by Keira Chang.
- "[The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement](#)" by Bob Projansky.
- "[Valuing Your Time](#)" by Amy Smith.
- "[Business Deductions](#)" by Amy Smith
- "[Million Dollar Voice](#)"
- "[Creating New Futures](#)"
- "[Why So Many Organizations Stay White](#)"
- "[From One White Male Leader to Another, Anti-Racism is a Core Leadership Competency](#)" by Tim Cynova.
- "[Alternative Models for Artist Sustainability in a COVID Economy and Beyond](#)" featuring Amy Smith.

#### Media:

- *The Producers* (Available via OCRA). Note that this media includes blatant, cartoonish misogyny, Nazis, and humor that has aged very poorly.

### Class #8 // [3.22.21]: *The Artists Are Present* feat. [Miguel Gutierrez](#)

#### Readings:

- [The Play in the System](#):
- (-) "Introduction: Toward a Theory of Parasitical Resistance"
- (-) "Interlude: Thresholds of Accommodation"
- (-) "Chapter 1: User Be Used: Leveraging the Coercive Hospitality of Corporate Platforms"
- (-) "Chapter 3: Hangers-On: Chris Kraus's Parasitical Feminism"
- (-) "Chapter 4: A Seat at the Table: Feminist Performance Art's Institutional Absorption and Parasitical Legacies"
- (-) "Acknowledgments"
- "[Considering Alastair, Questioning Realness](#)" by Andy Horwitz

#### Podcast:

- "[Miguel Gutierrez's Strongly Worded Emails About Art and Money](#)"

#### Media:

- *Cabaret* (Available via OCRA). Note that this media includes sexual situations, Nazis, and Liza Minnelli at the height of her powers.

### Class #9 // [3.29.21]: *\*Gestures at Literally Everything\** and *Where Does Work Come From?* feat. [Bill Bragin](#)

- In-class: The usual song and dance, plus a micro-lecture about the difference between doing work and having a job, where those things come from, and how a slew of miscellanea including stuff like, how can I find an accountant? And, do I need a lawyer? Come for the dropped knowledge, stay for the flow charts!



Readings:

- Gestures of Concern:
- (-) "Acknowledgments"
- (-) "Introduction: The Shape We're In"
- (-) "Idiot Winds"
- (-) "Democratizing Creativity, Curating Culture"
- (-) "Citizen Artists, Citizen Critics"
- (-) "Affective Commonwealths"
- (-) "Epilogue: The Poet and the Anthropocene"
- "[Bill Bragin on artistic investigation and process at NYUAD](#)"
- "[A year of pain and potential: the view from The Arts Center at NYUAD](#)"
- "[How to Make a Scene](#)" by David Byrne

Media:

- "[Between the artist and the audience: A look at NYUAD Arts Centre's spring programme](#)"
- "[The Leading Edge: Music and art that pushes the boundaries](#)"
- "[Bill Bragin, Executive Artistic Director, NYUAD](#)"

Optional Reading:

- The "Stickiness" chapter from Gestures of Concern is great if you're interested in theories of gesture and how the body signifies.

Class #10 // [4.5.21]: [The Way of the Future](#) feat. [Chris Barr](#)

Readings:

- Culture Jamming:
- (-) "Foreward"
- (-) "Acknowledgments"
- (-) "Introduction"
- (-) "Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing, and Sniping in the Empire of Signs"
- (-) "The Faker as Producer: The Politics of Fabrication and the Three Orders of the Fake"
- (-) "Turning Tricks: Culture Jamming and the Flash Mob"
- (-) "Memes, Movements, and Meteorology: Occupy Wall Street and New Mutations in Culture Jamming"
- (-) "Jamming the Simulacrum: On Drones, Virtual Reality, and Real Wars"
- (-) "The Yes Men: An Interview"

Media:

- *The Yes Men Fix The World* (Available via OCRA). Note that this media includes cartoonish phalluses.



Raja Feather Kelly