Course Syllabus: AHST 6420  _  Design in the Public Interest
Type | Credits: 3 Credit Seminar
Instructor: Maggie Hansen
Location: The Tulane City Center - 1725 Baronne Street (Central City)

Introduction:
This seminar is an introduction to the field of Public Interest Design through readings, case studies, and small projects that will be designed and executed in teams. At the Tulane City Center, we are working to expand the role of designers and the impact of good design in our home, New Orleans, by creating a space for more voices in the design process. We believe that all citizens are impacted by our built environment and should be empowered to participate in the decisions that shape it. We use the design process as a powerful coalition building tool and our role in many projects extends beyond architecture to diplomacy, education, and facilitation. Through this process we are also able to prove the value of design excellence in our city and shift conventions (both in perception, and reality) around who architects serve and what they work on. In short, the Tulane City Center brings together creative makers and doers, working for a better city. We advance community-driven ideas through collaboration, design education, and scrappy problem-solving.

This course will introduce students to the why and how of public interest design and will provide a chance to learn through doing by working with community partners on their design projects. The specific projects and community partners for this spring have not yet been selected but will be chosen from an open call for ideas from community groups and local non-profits and will fall within our Inform, Explore, or Imagine project categories. A Reflection paper and discussion will follow conclusion of the design/engagement work.

Course Objectives:
This Design in the Public Interest Seminar provides the opportunity to thoroughly research and understand models for practicing Public Interest Design. The seminar will stress the principles and methods of engaging community members in the design process. Students will learn how to collaborate as a team and with community partners on a project that both meets the goals of the community partner and demonstrates a commitment to design excellence.

Readings:
1) Whitney M. Young’s Keynote Address at the 1968 AIA National Convention
2) An Architecture of Change by Jose L. S. Gamez and Susan Rodgers from Design as Activism, 2008
3) Leading from the Side; Leadership, Civic Engagement and the Built Environment. by Dan Pitera. 12 October 2013. Published in Syncopating the Urban Landscape; More People, More Programs More Geographies. Detroit Collaborative Design Center. April 2014