The Spring 2015 Studio Collaborative is a pilot for a new curricular structure: self-standing classes that are joined together in a collaborative structure, to enable genuinely interdisciplinary, project-based work. The experiment, which is part of Georgetown’s Red House Initiative, is based on the idea that deeper learning occurs when students from different disciplines collaborate with each other on authentic projects aimed at making real-world change. The aim of this specific experiment is to learn together whether, by connecting sets of courses that share fundamental issues -- in this case, issues in science, ethics, and communication, we can create a multiplier effect that will exceed the effect of stand-alone classes.

Who’s involved?

- Introduction to Bioethics, co-taught by Prof Maggie Little and Arjun Dhillon, Th 1-3:30, in EthicsLab (201 Healy)
- Shaping National Science Policy, co-taught by Profs Francis Slakey & David Goldston, M 5:30-7:45 in Healy 201
- Introduction to Rhetoric, taught by Prof Matt Pavesich, T/Th 2-3:15 in Healy 106
- Studio faculty (content and design experts brought in to help students develop their project)
- Course Fellows and Design Fellows (other students hired to help facilitate activities)
- Invited guests experts

How is this structured?

As part of this experiment, you will be a member of four things: a class, a cohort, a team, and, of course, the group collaborative as a whole.

Class

The course you registered for is your disciplinary home-base. Here you’ll be introduced to topics and methods of that discipline through readings, lectures, class discussion, and other activities. Each class will have its own assignments and activities that are independent of the collaborative effort. It will have its own meeting times, content, and deadlines. It’s in these settings where you learn how to ask the important questions of our respective fields and learn the methods and modes particular to these disciplines.
Cohort

Students from across the classes will also be divided into four interdisciplinary cohorts of 12-18 students, which will form the incubating home for team projects. Each Cohort will have its own protected Studio slot of two hours per week (times to be determined), as well as access to Open Studio hours. Spending time in a shared space allows you to incubate your ideas and work with your teammates on your projects, with access to studio faculty and outside experts who will be brought in to help with the projects, and surrounded by fellow students who will represent a range of backgrounds and disciplines. Each cohort will be governed by a different theme (see below); students will be assigned their cohorts at the beginning of the semester based on their preferences and their schedules.

Team

Teams of 3-6 students will be formed within each cohort to work on projects that the teams each decide upon. Each team must have at least one member from each class. The parameters for teams and projects is determined by the specific cohort, which will have different themes. But for all projects, key components will be working with real-world partners, developing a strategy of implementation or circulation, and taking effective steps to see the project make its way into the world. The projects, which must be based on interdisciplinary collaboration, will be done in two stages. Preliminary projects, which take a first run at developing a semester-long project, will be due the week of February 2; final projects will be due the last week of class.

Collaborative

As members of the collaborative, all of you are welcome in any of our classes at any time. The Studio Commons website will allow you to peek into what the other classes are doing on a given day; if you feel it would be helpful to join in (say, when a particular concept key to your own project is being discussed, or an important guest coming to give a talk), you can just show up -- no advanced notice or special permission needed.

Interdisciplinary Projects & the Four Cohorts

The specific parameters for team projects is determined by the cohort, which will have different themes and rules for team composition.

- **gov.co** will work to make change through channels of federal, state, or local governance. Projects might include developing and advocating for specific legislation or a proposal for a federal agency regulation. Teams in this cohort will be assigned, and can’t change after the preliminary project has been presented.
● **org.co** will aim to develop something constructive for an organization -- an NGO, professional organization, or industry. Examples might include working with an NGO to develop an ad campaign, or working with a pharmaceutical company on a protocol for fair drug pricing. Teams in this cohort will be assigned, and can’t change after the preliminary project has been presented.

● **pub.co** will work to develop something of use to the “polis” -- the general public. The goal of this cohort’s projects, generally more broadly aimed than the first two, will be to move people on the ground, to stir discourse and action. Examples might include a compelling short documentary on dying with dignity, or an open access decision-aid to help people considering sequencing their genome. Unpredictability is baked into this cohort’s projects. Teams in this cohort can be decided by students, and can change, by request, during the semester, and teams may re-boot the idea for their final project after the preliminary project has been presented.

● **x.co** will be an experimental design-driven cohort with very low constraints, to allow for more experimental methods and emergent outcomes. Intended audiences and goals will emerge more purely from the design process. More radical unpredictability will be the hallmark of this cohort. Teams in this cohort can be decided by students, and can change, by request, during the semester, and teams may re-boot the idea for their final project after the preliminary project has been presented.

**Studio**

A central component of the course, and a significant amount of your time, will take place in *studio*. Studio is owned by you, the students, and will be a place of creative collaboration. In studio you’ll spend time with your project team, in the midst of a variety of people and tools all of which can contribute to your work, as you build your materials and presentation.

Studio time is time for open-ended, interdisciplinary project work. Through peer-to-peer learning -- both other members of your project team, or other folks in your cohort who help workshop your projects along the way, you’ll encounter material from all three courses, as well as Studio Faculty to help you develop your projects (film, legislation, etc).

The Studio Commons website will have a calendar that indicates Open Studio hours, what experts are available in Studio at any given time, etc.

**Crits**

Critiques—or *crits*—are public events during which student teams present their work to an audience for evaluation, assessment, and feedback. Crits serve as the primary method for
assessing project work in studio, and they offer an opportunity for collaboration with faculty, students, and other people. There are three types of crits you will experience in studio:

**Juried Crits** are the most intensive and formal crits. During a juried crit, we bring guests and collaborators into studio to serve as formal jurors, who critique the final products you deliver. This is a public event; jury members, students, faculty, and others are invited to attend. An invitation may be circulated around campus, and we put up a sign in the hall inviting passers-by to join. You will be expected to deliver something that the jury deems valuable, and you will be asked to defend your work and to collaborate on improving it. The work you deliver and your performance during juried crits will be major factors in your grade (see below). There will be two juried crits during the semester. The first will be during the week of February 2, when teams will present their preliminary projects; the second will be at the end of term, when teams will present their final projects (dates tba).

**Wall Crits** happen within the context of your cohort. They are public and may include external audiences, but there is no formal jury. Instead, design faculty help facilitate a collaborative critique, where professors and students collaborate on critiquing and improving your work. Wall crits are opportunities for faculty to provide a formative assessment, and they are a point of public collaboration where work is shared and partnerships between students and teams are discussed. The work you present at wall crits is not graded, but your performance and collaboration during wall crits will be a factor in your grade. The schedule of wall crits will be determined by the Studio Faculty lead in each cohort.

**Desk Crits** are informal crits that happen regularly within the context of your home discipline—your class time. They involve feedback and collaboration with faculty, though we may invite others to participate in them from time to time. Desk crits may be scheduled or impromptu.

**Assessment**

50% of your final grade will be based on the work for your class, determined by your individual professor and found on that syllabus. Class assignments and activities will be a combination of formative (ungraded) and summative (graded) assessments.

10% of your grade will be based on your semester’s engagement with interdisciplinary collaboration, and will be graded by Studio Faculty.

40% of your grade will be based on your final team project. A detailed rubric will be provided, but assessment here will include process, presentation, research, and impact. Students will be graded individually in the context of the team effort.