THE UNIVERSITY AS A DESIGN PROBLEM
IDST 325
Spring 2013 (3 credits)
M 3:30-5:45*

Professors: Randy Bass, English & Executive Director, Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (bassr@georgetown.edu)
Ann Pendleton-Jullian, Distinguished Visiting Professor of Design at Georgetown, Architect, and Former Director, Knowlton School of Architecture, The Ohio State University

This course will take on the envisioning of a new model for the university as a learning-focused ecosystem. The studio will take Georgetown University as its specific 'site,' in which four fundamental forces are profoundly affecting everything we do: digitization, globalization, urbanization, and the increasing role of culture, religion, and diversity. We will be applying a rigorous but speculative design process, as manifest within architectural design studios - one that will entertain both the pragmatic and radical.

So, what exactly are we going to make? Beginning with the leadership’s vision within the tradition of GU, we will design new speculative models for the university as a whole, and then using the dna from the overall model, we will apply that to the design of a micro-sites of the University (institutes, programs?) that will encapsulate the larger design but at a scale that is manageable to explore new structures for learning and research, new mechanisms for connectivity and new learning means. All work will be explored in diagram form, drawings, multi-media and text.

The course will be run interactively and flexibly; structured in four parts: precedent studies to frame the problem more fully; a part on information and idea visualization; and two design phases with a first world-building exercise done as individual projects, which we will curate and collate into a final set of four (or so) projects. World building is a concept
borrowed from new film production methods where whole worlds with coherent qualities are imagined as contexts within which stories happen. No prior drawing experience is necessary. Any skill based software and special skills needed will be incorporated into the studio teaching.

The design studio is offered in connection with Georgetown’s Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (CNDLS) and the Doyle Program on Engaging Difference. It will admit fourteen to sixteen undergraduate students ideally representing many disciplines. Along the way we will engage a wide range of readings, speakers (David Theo Goldberg, Cathy Davidson, John Seely Brown, President DeGioia, and others) and resources on learning, liberal education, and alternative educational systems.

* In addition to the main class time. Students will choose one other slot for focused critique of independent group work. Suggested: Th 3:30-4:45 or Fri 11-12:15. We will settle with the final group of enrolled students.