

# **CREATIVITY, SOCIAL DESIGN AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIES: CASES FROM ALPINE ITALY**

**Dolomiti semester program:**

**ACTIVE LEARNING IN THE ITALIAN ALPS - SUSTAINABILITY, HERITAGE AND CREATIVITY**

Bianca Elzenbaumer, Ph.D.

Fabio Franz, M.A.

[bravenewalps@gmail.com](mailto:bravenewalps@gmail.com)

“Economies are always diverse and always in the process of becoming.”  
(Community Economies Collective)

## **Course description**

We will explore in theory and practice how contemporary art and design can contribute to foster ethical economic relations. To do so, we approach the economy as comprised of diverse practices and as a constant site of becoming shaped through everyday action. In the course we will activate methods of practice-based research and participatory practice to examine how concrete examples of Alpine community businesses (such as a community academy, a community sodas business and a family farm) and still existing common lands contribute to global discourses around shaping economies that have the well-being of people and the environment at their core.

## **Course structure**

The course is organized into:

- ✓ Eight class sessions (24 contact hours)
- ✓ Two guided visits (10 contact hours)
- ✓ Three labs (12 contact hours)

The course totals forty-six contact hours, corresponding to three semester credit hours.

Upon request, a supervised project can be added to the graded assignments in order to complete other fifteen contact hours, resulting in a total of four semester credit hours.

## Evaluation

10% Attendance and active participation

30% Midterm exam

10% Labs

10% Presentation

40% Final paper

## **Introduction to methods of research-through-design and participatory design practice; introduction to commons and community economies; definition of the course's key concepts.**

Class session #1 – Introduction to methods of research-through-design and participatory design with a focus both on theoretical approaches and the analysis of case studies.

- ✓ Gaver, W. (2012). What Should We Expect from Research Through Design? In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, CHI '12*. ACM, New York (pp. 937-946). New York: ACM.
- ✓ DiSalvo, C., Clement, A., Pipek, V. (2013). Communities: Participatory Design For, With, and By Communities. In J. Simonsen, and T. Robertson (Eds.) *Routledge International Handbook of Participatory Design* (pp. 182-210). Oxon: Routledge.
- ✓ Askins, K. (2015). Participatory Geographies. In D. Richardson, N. Castree, M. Goodchild, A. Kobayashi, W. Liu, D. Marston (Eds.) *International Encyclopedia of Geography*. Washington DC: Wiley-Blackwell with Association of American Geographers.

Class session #2 – Definition of community economies; relation to contemporary art and design practice through two case studies (Company Drinks and Feral Trade).

- ✓ Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2008). Diverse economies: performative practices for “other worlds”. *Progress in Human Geography* 32 (pp. 613–632).
- ✓ Gibson, K., Rich, K. (2015). Feral trade: taking back markets for people and the planet. *Unlikely: Journal for Creative Arts* 1, 1-7.
- ✓ Miller, E., J.K. Gibson-Graham (2015). Economy as Ecological Livelihood. In *Manifesto for Living in the Anthropocene* (pp. 7-16). New York: Punctum Book.

- ✓ Orsi, E. (2012). *Practicing Law in the Sharing Economy: Helping People Build Cooperatives, Social Enterprises, and Local Sustainable Economies*. American Bar Association, Chicago.
- ✓ Manos, M. (2012). *Business as a Medium*. California: Garnet Hertz.
- ✓ Myvillages, K. Böhm, M. Pope (2015). *Company: Movements, Deals and Drinks*. London: Jap Sam Books.

Class session #3 – Definition of commons; relation to contemporary art and design practice through two case studies (Ex-Asilo Filangieri Napoli and R-Urban).

- ✓ De Angelis, M. (2010). On the commons: a public interview with Massimo De Angelis and Stavros Stavrides. *E-flux Journal* June-August (pp. 1-17).
- ✓ Franz, F., B. Elzenbaumer (2016). Commons & community economies: entry points to design for eco-social justice? *Design Research Society Conference*, University of Brighton.
- ✓ Petrescu, D., Petcou, C. (2015). *R-URBAN or how to co-produce a resilient city*. *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization* 15, 249-262.
- ✓ Trogal K. (2018). Caring: Making Commons, Making Connections. In *An Atlas of Commoning* (pp. 122-127). Berlin: Arch+.

**Introduction to the core community economies case study; history of common lands in the Alps; contemporary applications of common rights in the field of cultural production.**

Class session #4 – Introduction to the alpine community economies case study “Comunità Frizzante” – a community-run fizzy drinks project creating sodas with local flavors and reinvesting its revenue in activities that foster social inclusivity.

- ✓ Myvillages, K. Böhm, M. Pope (2015). *Company: Movements, Deals and Drinks*. London: Jap Sam Books.

Lab #1 – Getting involved in a drinks production run at Mas del Gnac, the food lab of “Comunità Frizzante”.

Class session #5 – History of common lands in the Alps; contemporary applications of common rights in the field of cultural production.

- ✓ Bonan, G. (2014). Between New Order and Old Customs: the Comunità Generale of Fiemme (Trentino, Italy) during the First Half of the 19th Century. Presented at *Common People, Common Rules*. 30-31 October. Public University of Navarre.
- ✓ Capone, N. (2017). The Concrete Utopia of the Commons. The right of “Civic and Collective Use” of Public (and Private) Goods. In *Philosophy Kitchen 7* (4) (pp. 117-131). Università degli Studi Torino: Torino.
- ✓ Papadopoulos, D. (2010). Insurgent posthumanism: the state of things. *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization* 10, 134-151.
- ✓ Puig de la Bellacasa, M. (2014). Ecological thinking and materialist spirituality: thinking the poetics of soil ecology with Susan Leigh Star, in Bowker, Clarke, Timmermans (Eds.), *Boundary Objects and Beyond: Working with Leigh Star*. MIT Press, CA/Massachusetts.

Visit #1 - All-day guided tour to common lands in the municipality of Nomi to explore their contemporary use.

**Introduction to permaculture design principles; sketching a community orchard on a plot of common land; cartography as tool for active citizenship; map making with QGIS.**

Lab #2 - Introduction to permaculture principles, survey of a plot of common land in the municipality of Nomi, sketching a community orchard that can produce fruits for the “Comunità Frizzante” project.

Class session #5 - Cartography as tool for active citizenship (discussed in relation to local bottom-up mapping projects).

- ✓ J. W. Crompton (2009). Cartography: performative, participatory, political. In *Progress in Human Geography* Vol 33, Issue 6 (pp.840-848).
- ✓ S. Elwood (2009). Citizen cartographies and the shifting politics of expertise. *24th Annual International Cartography Conference*. Santiago, Chile. 17 November 2009.

Lab #3 - Map making with QGIS.

**Week 7 & 8 - Practical application of QGIS maps; final project seminar, outline of the paper, group presentation and feedback.**

Visit #2 - All-day guided tour to common lands in the municipality of Folgaria with the maps we have produced and visit to the family farm La Fonte.

Class session #7 - Final project seminar: this seminar aims at helping students to analyze the experiences of the previous weeks, to select appropriate literature and reference case studies, and write the final paper.

Class session #8 - Presentations: each student will prepare a presentation on the preliminary analysis of alpine community economies and an outline of the paper; every participant is expected to ask questions and give feedback to the presenter.