



**NEW JERSEY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN**

### ***FANTASY WORLD DESIGN***

**COURSE:** AD 463 – Collaborative Design Studio (5 credits)  
**PROGRAM:** School of Art + Design  
**LOCATION:** Fourth-year studio course/fall term (undergraduate)  
**INSTRUCTOR:** Jessica Ross

**DESCRIPTION:** The penultimate design studio in the School of Art + Design brings all students from Digital Design, Industrial Design, and Interior Design (and on occasion, Architecture, Information Technology, or Biomedical Engineering) back together for a required collaborative experience during which the students from the various disciplines work on common ventures, simulating a professional environment in which each student brings her or his discipline-specific knowledge to a team working on a complex project. The projects and faculty change each year with three to four studios offered annually from which teams of students may choose. Projects in past collaborative design studios have included an interactive circus, adaptive re-use of the abandoned Newark Prison into a Museum of Industry, Lifestyle Studio in which students developed a product and/or service for marketing to a chosen demographic, Superhero Studio in which students developed/designed a superhero along with her/his lair, costumes, accessories, and storyline, Fantasy Studio in which fictional warring fantasy societies were created requiring the design of characters (including and especially non-human ones), habitats (cities and landscapes and furniture), weapons, attire, and more. Each project has individual components and contributions from each discipline participating, that add up to a complete effort.

**PROJECT:** The studio will focus on the creation of a fictional civilization. Students will design a human-based civilization that would require all the tools, technologies, systems, transportation, cities and infrastructure, crafts, etc. The era and characters will be fixed early in the project to allow the students to focus on design and production. Following the philosophy of Peter Jackson and WETA Workshop, students will create the world as if it were real. Every weapon, tool, prop, and component are to be designed with functionality in mind and with a consistent look and feel. The story to be used involves the discovery of artifacts that show the existence of a “lost civilization” complete with politics and conflict. The class must determine the ruling species, the nature of any government, military capabilities including armor and weaponry, religion, culture, art and architecture, biology, ecology, and geography. The total design of the civilization will be the subject of an exhibit at the end of the semester.

**REQUIREMENTS:** Students work collectively as a group to set the direction of the story/civilization. Research on different aspects of a (the) civilization are assigned to each student for sharing in class-wide discussions early in the semester. Mirroring the process in industry, each student is responsible for different aspects of the design which are reviewed regularly throughout the semester by colleagues to assure a common direction. For example, one student was responsible for transportation, another for weaponry, and still another for residential development. In the production of the exhibit, one student was responsible for invitations and publicity, a pair of students (with full participation by the instructor) created/painted the physical mural for the exhibit, another produced animations of characters, etc. The full civilization was later presented in exhibit format, and individual files (including process screen captures and photographs of production) were all submitted.

**OBJECTIVES:** (1) Provide design students from different disciplines an opportunity to collaborate in a manner that allows each student to contribute his or her own expertise towards a common goal and work in a manner that is reflective of the professional design process. (2) Provide an opportunity to increase proficiency in an information-technology enabled/facilitated design process. (3) Allow students a measure of choice (within an admittedly limit set of constraints) to personalize and focus their design efforts in their final year of undergraduate study. (4) Provide students with an opportunity to indulge (within tight constraints) flights of fancy in a thoughtful and iterative design process. (5) Provide opportunity to design and create a multiple-media physical and digital exhibit that requires consideration of how to tell a story in addition to (merely) creating the assets and components of the story.

**RESOURCES:** Students have access to wood and metal shop to build prototypes and physical assets for the final exhibit. Digital work will be done on student workstations supplemented as needed with access to Animation Lab and Motion Capture Lab. Students have 24/7 access to their assigned design studio throughout the semester and have use of an additional “wet” room for physical fabrication/construction near their design studio. A room is made available for the final exhibit that provides time for setup as well as the exhibit itself.