**Course Description:** Movies that Matter presents cinema about real issues that shape our lives while examining the processes and creative possibilities the art of film presents through stories that attempt to make a difference in how we see the world around us. The films in Movies that Matter are presented thematically.

Movies that Matter is a course in which we analyze past as well as current films and domestic as well as international films and through compelling and entertaining stories, these films have depicted social, political, cultural, gender, racial and ethnic inequities and we teach students that film can inspire and educate as well as entertain.

**Partner Description:** FilmAid International - filmaid.org is a global humanitarian relief organization that presents films to refugees in huge, outdoor screenings.

Founded in 1999 to help people in Macedonia who fled from their homes in Kosovo, FilmAid has expanded its reach into Afghanistan and Africa with the encouragement of the United Nations. In addition to showing films to refugees, Filmaid International teaches refugees to make films in their community based Participatory Video Project films. These PVP films are productions in which refugees shoot films about subjects that have impacted their lives including forced early marriage, child abuse and involuntary resettlement and repatriation.
Course Name: Comic Books & Social Issues
Partner: It Gets Better
Faculty: Candy Lavin
Mentor: HexComix

Course Description: Comic Books & Social Issues
Students will be introduced to the comic book plot structure and will learn how comic book creators use the comic book story to focus on socially relevant issues. Students will develop their own social conscientiousness by creating an own original comic book story and script.

Partner Description: It Gets Better Project
The It Gets Better Project is a nonprofit organization with a mission to uplift, empower, and connect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth around the globe. Growing up isn’t easy, especially when you are trying to affirm and assert your sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It can be a challenging and isolating process – but, the good news is, no one has to do it alone.
**Course Description:** Modern Mysticism  
This class engages the concept of the soul/spirit. Do we have one, what is it and what can it do for people while they are alive and where does it go and what can it do when the human body dies? In this class we will explore the spirit as viewed through modern mysticism, mystic individuals and social movements. We will look into cross-cultural perspectives regarding death and life after death, the magical customs surrounding these beliefs and the eternal search by individuals and cultures for meaning within these concepts. We will explore rites of intensification that allow people to bring death into the life cycle. We also experiment with some of these practices and concepts when we hear from possible guest speakers such as ghost hunters and mediums.

**Partner Description:** Hollywood Forever Cemetery  
Our site partner is the Hollywood Forever Cemetery. We will visit the cemetery, which is actually one of the most gorgeous places in Los Angeles, and participate in their annual Dia de los Muertos Festival at the end of October. Our class will explore one method of contacting those in the afterlife - which is through the Day of the Dead. In fact, we will create a large, interactive altar at the cemetery that is visited by thousands during the festival. We will decide on who to honor with our altar. Past altars have honored space explorers, Dr. Seuss, various saints, female scientists, writers and artists. This experience enables us to research this custom, explore diverse perspectives on the afterlife, have a first hand experience into certain concepts so that students may form their own analytical perspectives and, have a team-based creative and incredibly fun experience!
Course Name: Made in LA  
Partner: PBS series Craft in America  
Faculty: Joan Takayama-Ogawa  
Mentor: Jo Lauria  

**Course Description:** Made in LA Site partner: PBS series Craft in America. Made in LA introduces students to the history of prominent LA makers in clay, jewelry, furniture, fiber, and glass. This course is blended with 7 online off campus "Treasure Hunts" where students will attend exhibitions in LA. Think of LA as our campus. Mentor Faculty: Jo Lauria, former Decorative Arts Curator, LACMA.

**Partner Description:** PBS Series winner of Peabody Award and two Emmy Nominations http://www.craftinamerica.org/series Our series explores America’s creative spirit through the language and traditions of the handmade, and will take you on a journey to the artists, origins and techniques of American craft.

Craft in America Study Center – Exhibition space for Crafts http://www.craftinamerica.org/  
CRAFT IN AMERICA, Inc. is a Los Angeles-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a mission to promote and advance original handcrafted work through educational programs in all media.
Course Description: **LA Past Livest** An interdisciplinary course geared at generating an on-line archival display of LA’s past communities.

Thematic focus: This course will introduce students to the Los Angeles’ cultural center, the Barnsdall Art Park, as both a model and experience of communities. The theme of the creative community will bring forth the realms of the arts (gallery and theatre), design (Frank Lloyd Wright, Schindler etc.), and communal spaces (LA neighborhoods) to provide a foil for students to interact, research and integrate these multiple domains.

Partner Description: **Barnsdall Art Park** -http://www.barnsdallartpark.com/

The growth of the city and the proliferation of social and professional identities coincide with a need to re-discover communal spaces and platforms. Students will be introduced to the Barnsdall Center not only as a place of interaction but also as a model of thinking creatively art, design and society in terms working in groups in generating projects.
Course Name: True Stories  
Partner: Culver City Senior Center  
Faculty: Laurel Ollstein  
Mentor: Beth Ruscio, Bernadette Sullivan -- along with many different professional actors

**Course Description:** True Stories  
Students will learn interviewing techniques, which they will put to use partnering in small groups with Elders from the Culver City Senior center. Research will be done to learn more of the history of the period of each life story of the elder partner. Students are then guided through a process in which they work individually and collectively to create an original script that explores personal identity, family history and various compelling intergenerational issues. This course improves writing, self-expression, communication and collaborative skills. The course will culminate in a performance/reading at the senior center for the seniors and their families. Projections of photographs from the subjects and historical news clippings may be integrated with the readings.

**Partner Description:** Culver City Senior Center  
Culver City Senior Center is in Culver City a fifteen minute drive from OTIS campus. It’s a beautiful center with a very diverse population of senior citizens.
Course Description: Food, Community & Urban Gardening

Sustainability is a discipline and practice that looks at ways natural systems function and ways humans social systems interact with the ecology. In big cities like Los Angeles, we consume more resources every year than what we can put back and this directly affects our food source as well as the environment. This course, therefore, gives specific attention to community gardens as creative projects established by everyday people to address the big, daunting problems at local levels and often using minimal resources.

In-class discussion will be augmented with ethnographic practice. We will spend Week 3 - Week 7 in the garden learning the basics—and by learning I mean, we get our hands dirty by working the soil, germinating seeds, and planting them in the community plot provided for my class at Emerson Avenue Community Garden. Students will document their observations using live fieldnotes that will be posted on Instagram and they will write a Fieldwork Paper that gives them a chance to reflect on what they learn from their hands-on experience in the garden. Prospective students are encouraged to look up @otisfoodpolitics and #otisfoodpolitics to see the events we engage in as well as students' posts.

If we put seeds in the plot, we have to also take care of them and help them grow so students are expected to take turns watering once a week and also to complete 1 hour of volunteer work for the entire semester. Our culminating project is a group assignment that asks students to partner and think about a solution to a problem identified by the site partner or which comes out of their own observations. This problem involves research and design-thinking to come up with a culturally relevant and sustainable response.

Partner Description: Emerson Community Garden is located 1.5 miles from Otis at 8050 Emerson Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90045. The garden is open daily from 3:15-Sundown and 9AM-Sundown on weekends. Volunteer workdays are held every 2nd Saturday of the month. To learn more about the garden, go to: www.eacgc.org Mentor: Dan Morgan, garden member; master gardener. You can learn more about her and her many interests—she is a beekeeper, fabulous cook, bread and jam maker, staunch environmentalist and educator—by following her Instagram account @danahdmorgan
Course Name: “Homeboy” Histories
Partner: Helper Foundation
Faculty: Ysamur Flores-Pena
Mentor: Helper Foundation Staff

Course Description: “Homeboy” Histories The course will focus on identity and the way in which it is expressed: political, ethnic, and social identities serve as markers for social mobility and control. This multi-layered approach finds its most characteristic expression through personal experience and artistic expressions.

Partner Description: H.E.L.P.E.R is a multi-service, multi-ethnic agency and has specialized in implementing programs and services to diverse groups with maximum efficiency and impact. H.E.L.P.E.R believes that the needs of groups and individuals cross traditional ethnic, racial and other cultural boundaries. H.E.L.P.E.R serves as a bridge between people with common needs in order to identify and secure resources that may be pooled for the greater good of all. http://helperfoundation.org/
Course Name: Human Ecology
Partner: Transition Mar Vista/Venice
Faculty: Elektra Grant
Mentor: Joanne Poyourow
https://www.change-making.com/about/

Course Description: Human Ecology
This course provides an overview of basic environmental concepts, how they relate to one another, and how they impact every aspect of modern life on a global and local scale. This systems view will deepen understanding that sustainability is part of every discipline; and that every realm of human activity needs to transition toward sustainable actions. With peak oil as the primary environmental and economic focus, this course will look at cooperative, community-driven responses that aim to meet basic needs as sustainably and close to home as possible.

Partner Description: Transition Mar Vista/Venice are a grassroots group on the west side of Los Angeles, with the mission of transitioning to more resource-aware and locally self-sufficient lifestyles to meet the challenges ahead. The Transition concept is a proactive, grassroots response to the twin crises of climate change and peak oil (the end of cheap oil). Through the Transition movement, we Transition society from our current high-power, high-consumption lifestyle toward our inevitable lower-powered future.
https://www.facebook.com/TransitionMarVistaVenice/