

DEGREE PROGRAMS

CAIL PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Our Mission

Creative Action provides all BFA students with a series of collaborative experiences that extends beyond the boundaries of their own major, integrates disciplinary skills and knowledge, and is sited within a public context. Students work in interdisciplinary teams with a community organization, and focus on team building and research to address the needs of the communities and to implement real-world solutions when possible. The goal is to move beyond the traditional boundaries of the classroom and respond to community challenges using students' diverse visions.

Creative Action Mission Statement: How Can Art Transform a Community?

Through collaboration between real-world partners and multidisciplinary teams, students investigate contemporary issues and utilize their art and design skills to propose innovative solutions. Creative Action, an Integrated Learning Program (CAIL), empowers students to consider the transformative power of their work. CAIL classes actively engage diverse communities on issues of social responsibility, environmental sustainability, and cultural diversity in a cooperative effort to affect change.

Foundation

Flowing from the PLOs, each class-level has specific learning outcomes that tie into the larger goals of the program. They are exposed to best practices as well as successful case studies in multidisciplinary collaboration. The foundation year teaches through participant observation, with students visiting partner sites as well as interacting with guest speakers and one another. Most of the faculty in the foundation year are practicing fine artists or illustrators and grades are given based on outcomes, collaborative skills, and professional development.

Formally, foundation year learning outcomes are:

- Students will understand best practices for working in teams on a collaborative visual art and design.
- Students will be able to give a clearly articulated classroom presentation,
- Students will respond to an issue and/or site using skills and concepts based on their community engagement and basic research.

Sophomore

The sophomore CA class is administered through Otis College's Liberal Arts and Sciences Program (LAS) and focuses on strengthening the academic research and response skills of students. Social scientists, art historians, and community organizers predominantly teach LAS classes. A major signature assignment for sophomore LAS classes is a research paper. Every student completes an 8-page research paper that is focused on relevant topics to their site partner and students create hypothetical art and design projects in groups.

Formally, sophomore year learning outcomes are:

- Students will engage in context-driven research (in terms of history, culture, and/or politics) for a specific purpose.
- Students will develop collaborative skills and work in teams.
- Student teams will organize their concepts and communicate their ideas to community partner or group.

Junior

The junior level CA classes are the ultimate culmination of the skills learned at the foundation and sophomore level. At this point, students actively engage with their site partner, are able to independently research and assess needs within the community served, and finally utilize their art and design skills collaboratively with other Otis College students to fulfill the mission of the partner organization. Specifically, students do project-driven research; they look at the ethical implications of art and design; negotiate the complexities of art and design in each unique environment; and begin to learn about project management and successful implementation. While previous sophomore and foundation classes do not focus on the creation of an actual object or piece of intellectual property, junior CA classes require this.

Formally, junior year learning outcomes are:

- Through diverse research practices, students will be able to critically analyze the social, cultural and environmental contexts of art and design problems, identify ethical considerations and develop sustainable solutions that address the needs and aspirations of the communities we engage with.
- Student groups will synthesize knowledge and organize ideas in an oral and visual presentation to a community partner, a classroom or organization.
- Students will plan, propose and in some cases implement creative solutions for a specific context, informed by engagement with a community and/or group.

Electives

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Course Title	Course Number	Credits
Food & Community Garden	CAIL 200	3.00
Human Ecology	CAIL 201	3.00
Innovative Materials Research	CAIL 200	3.00
kNOw Memorials	CAIL 200	3.00
LA Past Lives	CAIL 200	3.00
Paranormal LA	CAIL 200	3.00
Shelter Me	CAIL 200	3.00
Trees in Paradise	CAIL 200	3.00

True Stories	CAIL 200	3.00
Birding in Winged Los Angeles	CAIL 301	3.00
Otis Goes Green	CAIL 301	3.00
Collaborating with Catastrophy	CAIL 301	3.00
Comic Book Heroes	CAIL 301	3.00
Community Radio	CAIL 301	3.00
Made For Kids Malawi	CAIL 301	3.00
Reimagining MacArthur Park	CAIL 301	3.00
Rise Above Plastics	CAIL 301	3.00

Elective Descriptions

CAIL 200 - Food & Community Garden (3.00)

Food and Urban Gardening: Food justice is defined by three principles: 1. Access to fresh, healthy, locally grown, and culturally appropriate food 2. Living wages and fair working conditions for all food system workers 3. Community control over food systems, through community-based agriculture, cooperatives, faith-based initiatives, etc (Los Angeles Community Garden Council). Moreover, food justice as a theoretical concept recognizes that "food choice" is impacted by intersecting factors such as race, class, and gender at all levels: production, distribution, and consumption. A food justice framework shows how inadequate access to nutritious and whole food options leads to chronic ailments that could be prevented if people had affordable, healthy choices in their neighborhoods. Corporate control of food, along with real estate practices, have contributed to the development of food deserts, which further impacts BIPOC women and children's right to access affordable and healthy food options. This class will therefore explore food justice through partnership with Holy Nativity Community Garden in Westchester, which has been helping to address food injustice since 2008. Through meetings with the garden manager/master gardener, students will learn why the garden was started, the community it serves, and other ways they contribute to food justice in the city. Students will use ethnographic fieldwork techniques (e.g., observation and mapping) to understand how the places where we live fundamentally impact our health. Fieldwork practices will be complemented by collaborative games and a group project that will challenge students to develop socially responsible, culturally relevant, and sustainable responses to food injustice in their communities.

CAIL 201 - Human Ecology (3.00)

CAIL 200 - Innovative Materials Research (3.00)

This course will be a long-term project for the duration of several semesters. It is a course that benefits students across all majors. Materials are being used in every discipline. The goal is that students of all majors will help to develop and build a materials collection within the library. With the help of the Head Librarian and her team as a committing partner/client, students will envision the space, and design innovative ways to display them effectively. They will develop the first step to an innovative materials collection that, in the long run, will be a permanent section of the library and will serve as a reference tool for students and faculty of all majors. Eventually, depending on budget and space, even a hands-on interdisciplinary maker lab, similar to the KEA lab in Copenhagen.

CAIL 200 - kNow Memorials (3.00)

Together we will research the history of the monument as a means to visually represent hegemonic power structures in society, and how artists and designers have historically upended this visual structure of power. This CAIL 200 course will partner with a local arts and culture organization to help study and build place-based community-centered environments open to the public. Course Learning Outcomes: Students will: Practice context-driven research (in terms of history, culture, and/or politics). Develop collaborative skills. Develop communication skills. Develop an awareness of cultural bias. Demonstrate a respect for the diversity of ideas

CAIL 200 - LA Past Lives (3.00)

LA Past Lives: Villa Aurora will focus on the cultural landmark and artists' residency at Villa Aurora in Pacific Palisades. This historic home of exiled German-Jewish writer Lion Feuchtwanger and his wife Marta is a metaphor for the urban history of Los Angeles and the creative communities concerned with the ongoing explorations associated with art and design. We will focus on Villa Aurora's history and impact on Los Angeles both as a site of refuge and residence for an international body of artists.

CAIL 200 - Paranormal LA (3.00)

In this course we will look at paranormal movements, cults, spaces, places and occurrences that have happened in Los Angeles and the wider landscape. We will explore the movements of Spiritualism, the New Age, religious ecstatic sects, and various folk religious groups. We will look at local paranormal legends, ghost stories and hauntings. Students will perform ethnography and also work in a team to identify, research and write about a real site where something supernatural occurred and will work to create an app that can be used to map the paranormal spaces of Los Angeles

CAIL 200 - Shelter Me (3.00)

This course supports the development of research techniques, collaboration, critical analysis, creative thinking, articulate expression, and information literacy. The Site Partner for this course is SELAH, a coalition of neighborhood organizers who recognize unhoused individuals as fellow members of our community worthy of the same dignity, respect, and representation afforded to any housed person. It's a sad fact that both nationally and locally, we are seeing dramatic increases in the number of people living on the streets. The demographics of homelessness have changed; people experiencing homelessness are not only getting younger, but they are more likely to work at full-time jobs. Research indicates that one in three people who are homeless have college degrees. Many are families with children. Some are elderly who have aged into homelessness. Still others have fallen on hard times and can't afford the high housing prices. It is vital to gain a historical perspective of the current conditions that lead to homelessness - by understanding the past and present, we can hopefully visualize a better future.

CAIL 200 - Trees in Paradise (3.00)

"Trees in Paradise asks students to consider the landscaped and endemic history of California by researching both native and non-native trees and plants in local Los Angeles ecosystems. Through a series of field trips, lectures and group research students will understand the role these plants and trees play in the current state of climate change in the state of California, and how we can manage them to help create an environmentally sustainable future for the state. Working with Friends of Ballona Wetlands, students will have the opportunity to take part in plant restoration and creek clean-up projects to protect

one of LA County's only remaining wetlands and use their knowledge and skills to create tools to assist the organization in educating and raising awareness of the environmental importance of the Ballona wetlands and the restoration and preservation of native species. Partner: Helper Foundation"

CAIL 200 - True Stories (3.00)

This course improves writing, self-expression, communication, and collaborative skills by introducing students to interviewing techniques and writing skills that will be useful in their professional practice. Small interdisciplinary student groups conduct interviews at the Wende Museum or the Culver City Senior Center. The research focuses on learning about an elder's life experiences and the associated historical period and location in which they lived. As they collect the information, students are guided through a process in which they work individually and collectively to create an original book that explores the Elder's personal identity, family history, and various compelling intergenerational issues. The illustrated book is based on transcriptions of the interviews, students' research, observations, and revelations concerning the seniors' life experiences. The course culminates in presentations of each subject's life story and the associated student artwork at the Wende Museum.

CAIL 301 - Birding in Winged Los Angeles (3.00)

Birding is exploding in popularity, and the city of Los Angeles is well positioned as a bird's paradise with 500+ native species recorded, more than any county in the United States. But bird populations are under threat. The 2025 US State of the Birds reported continued widespread declines in American bird populations across all mainland and marine habitats, with 229 species requiring urgent conservation action, including the much-loved Allen's hummingbird found nesting throughout Southern California. This class will explore and learn about the birds of Los Angeles, their habitats, and habits, and will partner with a local Audubon organization to promote and support conservation efforts for LA's feathered friends.

CAIL 301 - Otis Goes Green (3.00)

This course provides art and design students with the knowledge and tools needed to make ecodesign an integral part of the design process. Students in this course will have an opportunity to discuss Green Design with top Green Designers and work with Otis College's Environmental Steering Committee to create green solutions for the campus. We believe it is at the design education level where we have the best opportunity to create a sustainable future. Sustainability minor elective. Partner: Environmental Steering Committee, Otis College

CAIL 301 - Collaborating with Catastrophy (3.00)

In line with disaster design projects such as the 2008 Post-Disaster Design Competition in which New York City sought innovative ideas for providing provisional housing for residents who may lose their homes as the result of a catastrophic coastal storm, Collaborating w/ Catastrophe: Disaster Design will engage in a site-specific, conceptually dynamic approach to disaster design. This course will take into consideration pre-disaster and post-disaster potentials and engage a variety of design processes to develop emergency housing solutions, survival products or other cultural engagements with how we, as a society, cope with catastrophe. Students will be put into work groups that take into account varied experiences and skill sets. These work groups will spend the first part of the semester doing research into the cultural ideas surrounding disaster. Field trips to outside sites and institutions, such as the El Segundo Fire Department, are planned so that students will have a chance to meet with individuals and organizations involved with "disaster". The same groups will then begin the design process of their final projects, which will be completed by the end of the semester.

CAIL 301 - Comic Book Heroes (3.00)

An exploration of comics and their rich history of championing progressive causes, creating community, and inspiring real-life heroes. This course focuses on the power of storytelling and collaboration in the medium of comics. Working with students from different programs of study, and hearing from distinguished guest speakers with years of experience in the world of comic creation, you will learn techniques to create a compelling visual narrative and the value of teamwork as it applies to comic production and beyond. By the end of this class, you and your team will deliver and present to the community partner a final work that will serve as a form of outreach and inspiration for LGBTQ+ youth. Community Partner: It Gets Better.

CAIL 301 - Community Radio (3.00)

Student teams learn about FM, AM, and Internet radio production, producing content that reports on, engages, and rediscovers the Westchester community. Students gain hands-on experience in the audio production studios at both Otis and LMU, while learning to listen, record, and edit the sound around them. They produce a creative, fun, and informative radio show, available online at Otis and rebroadcast on the LMU radio stations. Partners: KXLU, KLMU

CAIL 301 - Made For Kids Malawi (3.00)

Black Lives Matter Everywhere. Enacting and reinforcing values central to creating equitable lives and opportunities for all people requires participation. The Made for Kids: Malawi class, team-taught by CAIL studio and LAS faculty, applies real-world research and design processes in two settings. First in Los Angeles and second via Zoom in Malawi. By working with local and international partners, students have two opportunities to learn about colonialism's effect on Black lives everywhere. Although we will be working online with students from Malawi, you also will have a chance to help them develop their creative skills by working in collaborative teams. Students in Los Angeles and Malawi will participate in one or two workshops led by artists to introduce new creative practices. By the end of the semester, you will have completed a socially conscious research project, designed, and recorded a lesson plan based on your skill set, and strengthened your research, collaborative, and professional skills.

CAIL 301 - Reimagining MacArthur Park (3.00)

This course engages students in a process that looks at history, urban planning, art, design, and community organizing in order to reimagine MacArthur Park in the Westlake neighborhood of Los Angeles (the original home of Otis College). Student work will support three planned closures of Wilshire Blvd where it bisects the park. Working with the City of Los Angeles Council District 1 as a client, Student artists will design alternative visions of the park that interrogate the park's history, reunify its 35 acres of greenspace and reimagine its place in the city.

CAIL 301 - Rise Above Plastics (3.00)

Students develop creative ideas and strategies to support the mission of the class partner to help reduce global single-use plastic pollution and microplastics from cosmetics and textiles. The class will educate students in understanding how plastic pollution fits into the broader issues of social and environmental justice, climate change, and the context of the gas and oil industries. Starting with research on the impact plastic trash has on our local oceans, wildlife, and communities, they will then work in multidisciplinary teams to develop and execute project proposals to educate and encourage the reduction, reuse, and refusal of single-use plastics such as plastic bags, bottles, and packaging and create awareness around microplastic and nanoplastic pollution.