

Media Assignment
Dr. Marusya Bociurkiw
Associate Professor of Media Theory
Ryerson University, School of Media
Class: MP8912/RTA893 - Social Justice Media

RTA 893 Social Justice Media is a mixed undergrad and graduate course that examines ways that media can be used to address social justice issues. The course has three modules: 1) neoliberal university, 2) disability justice, 3) feminist/queer/ Black archives/counter archives. The course's main assignment involves small groups of students collaborating with community activists, activist-academics, and activist artists selected by the professor. The collaborators come to class and pitch their research/artistic projects. The students select the collaboration of their choice and then must liaise with their community collaborator to come up with a creative/scholarly solution to the research question or problem being addressed by their community partner. The class concludes with a social justice media fair normally held in the atrium of our building, the Rogers Communication Centre. Collaborators, friends and the general public attend. This year (2020) we held a smaller version of the fair, and all collaborators were present, which resulted in a vibrant discussion.

This assignment has resulted in some extraordinary Final projects, some of which have continued long after classes are over, like a BIPOC toolkit for organizers of queer female events. Some of the final projects have included: promotional videos, and a soundscape on issues faced by students commuting on the TTC.

For the Rise Up Archives (a two-time collaborator) students developed a prototype for a feminist walking tour app (<https://riseuptour.wordpress.com/>) and video remediation of print archives.

RTA 893 Social Justice Media
Final Creative Assignment (group) - 45%

Early in the semester, several research/activists will come to class to pitch their research/activist projects and what they need your help and creativity with. You will form groups of 4-5 people and will give me 2 choices of who you'd like to work with. I will assign your collaborator that week.

Your group will create a final creative output that provides a creative solution to, or tool for, the problem or issue posed by them, accompanied by a detailed report. This may be laid out explicitly by the researcher, or it may be up to you to decide upon the format. The creative output may be in the form of a piece of writing, a video, a podcast, a pop-up event or exhibit. This will be decided in consultation with your collaborator, your group, and me. Each group will decide upon a single liaison person to communicate with you throughout the project. The liaison person will arrange a group meeting or two with the collaborator to develop the project. It will be up to all of you to negotiate the frequency/type of contact with your group. The

collaborators will be invited back for the Social Justice Media Fair April 7. They will have permission to make use of the final result in their ongoing work, and so will you.

A. Final Project Proposal (group) - 10%

You must submit a 750 - 1000 word proposal (3-4 pages, double-spaced) for your final project. (see final project guidelines). This will include:

- A research question/s
- A 250-500 word description of the group, organization or artist/academic you've chosen to work with, their project, how you will connect it to course content, the potential output, and the methodology you will use.
- A 250-word annotated bibliography that includes at least 3-5 articles or books appropriate to this project, and a bibliography of at least 5 possible additional sources. In your own words, you will write a few sentences describing the source and explaining why it is relevant to the project. Do NOT copy article abstracts.
- 1-2 pages outlining your timeline and research/equipment (if applicable) plan.
- 1-2 pages describing the potential final output: drawings or other forms of illustration may be used.

B. Final Creative Assignment (group) - 35%

1. **Creative output:** This will be up to you and the collaborator, but could include such formats as: an online toolkit; a pop-up event; a short video; an app; a policy brief, creatively designed; an online game; a podcast; a speculatively designed interactive object/form of apparel. You can and should draw from the skills and ideas of your group, or you may try something you've never done before!
2. **Research report.** This report is your opportunity to connect the practical aspects of your research collaboration with ideas and concepts presented in class. Specifically, you will be asked to connect the project to at least one of the modules (neoliberalism/media activism; design fiction/disability; placemaking feminist/queer/race archive). This report will be comprised of:
 - a) Introduction that describes the project and its challenges(1-2 pages.);
 - b) literature review that outlines the academic and popular literature on the subject (both topic and related module) and the gap in literature (1-2 pages);
 - c) Methodology + academic rationales for the methodology (1-2 pages);
 - d) Findings (what did you discover? What surprised you? What might you do differently next time? (2-3 pages);
 - e) Policy recommendations (1-2 pages);
 - f) Bibliography
3. **Individual report on group work.** (2 pages). Here, you will reflect on your role in the project and the interactions and commitment of your group members.