ESIGN

REDUCING DISPARITIES IN BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH





Why DSI?

Social design is the creation of new social conditions—in cities, corporate cultures or communities—resulting in increased creativity, equity, social justice and inclusivity; greater resilience; and a healthy connection to nature. It is relevant to every business, government, city, community and individual. It uses systems design, critical thinking, human-centered design, strategy, game mechanics, social change, collective leadership, imagination and beauty to move people to think differently and become more resilient and resourceful themselves. This is what our program is about—what we teach and what our students are out in the world doing. It's the design of systems, and the relationships between people and things, instead of only the things themselves.

Here's why the MFA Design for Social Innovation (DSI) program is unique:

It's a balance of the academic and practical. Social design is a practice that can be mastered only by practicing it. This is an experience-based program where you'll learn to think critically, explore, iterate and measure. You'll also have a robust résumé before you graduate.

We define design broadly. And the curriculum reflects that. You'll study with a group of pioneering practitioners who have worked in development, health care, media, tech, government, game design, research, business strategy and innovation, and social design. We are now STEM certified, as well. We live diversity. Students have come to our program from 28 countries and counting. Cross-cultural literacy is one of the skills that employers look for, and it's a key aspect of the program here. We're in the heart of New York City, and it simply doesn't get more diverse or exciting than that. Our lecturers are inspiring global experts in science, business, philanthropy, entrepreneurship, health and some things that have not yet been heard of. Our students are connected to an unmatched network of potential partners by the time they leave school.

It's about creative collaboration and leadership. Our students join us because it fulfills a deep need that nothing else can—to go out and create change, disrupt the status quo, work with communities and use their own powers of creativity to bring something to life that has not existed before. They are remarkable people—curious, unpredictable and visionary.

We impact the future. If you want to know what a DSI MFA will do for you, take a look at what our alumni are doing. They are working in industry, government, nonprofits and NGOs, education, at creative consultancies and as founders of their own enterprises.

This is a two-year degree. It takes that long because we take the discipline and rigor seriously. If you do too, please browse our website (dsi.sva.edu) and talk to our students, faculty and alumni to learn more.

-Miya Osaki, chair

About the Program



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In the first year, students are immersed in social innovation in all its forms, such as corporate programs, nonprofit organizations, foundations and social entrepreneurs, and across a broad range of issues, including food, equity and justice, ethics, poverty, wealth creation, health and the environment. Skills like change design, communication design, game design, social movement design, mapping, modeling, visualization design, leadership and entrepreneurship are covered. Classes include lectures, client projects and creative assignments.

A principal second-year goal is the creation of a thesis. With the help of a team of mentors and advisors, students will identify and research an issue of their choosing, then develop a thorough understanding of the context and challenges. They will write a proposal that captures their recommended solution, identify a community and partner out in the world to work with and then prototype and design it to implement and measure impact. Each thesis must be reviewed and approved by the thesis committee and the department chair for the student to be eligible for degree conferral. Another key second-year initiative is producing a for-profit enterprise, culminating in a presentation to potential funders.

Throughout the two-year program, the Guest Lecture Series is curated to inspire

new thinking and dialogue about the vast variety of ways to create a career in design for social innovation. Speakers include business leaders, environmentalists, indigenous leaders, field workers, researchers, academics, shamans, poets, artists, musicians, policy makers, physicians, astronomers, physicists, human rights activists and other innovators in social design.



TOP: Catherine Mazzocchi ('20) and Jennifer Ulloa's ('20) *Power is Local* thesis project focuses on Black and Latinx communities in northern Manhattan, aiming to ensure that people most impacted by energy insecurity's increasingly harmful effects can develop critical policy action. OPPOSITE: Second-year students Alisha Mahen, Kexin Lyu, Baitian Yu, Danielle Skinn, Elana Wolpert and Monica Tarriba Urias participated in a Thesis Show 2020 virtual panel discussion, "Accessibility and Information Exchange," moderated by faculty member Karen Proctor. The projects sought to empower communities through education. (top) Tara Maurice ('20) and Tianyue Zhang's ('20) thesis, PRETTY/UGLY, explores the impact of the fashion industry on the environment. (bottom)



CASE STUDY María Alejandra Sandoval

Adapting Design for Different Social Contexts

As a strategic and social impact designer, María Alejandra Sandoval ('18) has found herself working across an array of cultural landscapes. From financial justice in Colombia to immigration bias training in the Midwest of the United States, Sandoval's work as a designer has brought her to diverse geographies. While this has presented a great deal of creative opportunities for social impact, working with people of such varied experiences, Sandoval has had to confront her own cultural perspective and how that may influence her work as a designer.

MFA DESIGN FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION



Questioning the full effect of working with these different communities is part of what brought María to the MFA Design for Social Innovation (DSI) program in the first place. "It's like coming to someone else's house, you adapt yourself to the house's norm," she says. "You don't expect the owners of the house to change the way they live because of you." When entering distinct social or cultural contexts, María recognized the need to be aware of these differences in order to maximize the benefits design can bring to these spaces. As both a graduate of the DSI program and a professional designer, María has made this consciousness integral to her design work.

Joining the DSI cohort gave María the opportunity to examine and reflect upon various approaches to work and research from diverse cultural perspectives. This has become all the more necessary to her job as a senior designer at Dalberg Design, where she continues to pursue projects internationally. "None of the products [or] programs would actually thrive if we don't understand the culture and context people live in," María says. "In order to do [my work at Dalberg Design] successfully and meaningfully, I have to

understand their mental models and culture." This more expansive approach to design for social impact can be seen in the ongoing success of María's thesis project MakeGuffin. Designed with partner and fellow alum Nick Chan, MakeGuffin is a workshop that helps individuals on the autism spectrum bond with others through creative activities. The project continues to be hosted by the JCC in Manhattan. who they collaborated with for their thesis. María credits the success of the workshop in part to stepping back from the role of "expert designer" and engaging with adults on the spectrum on an equal level.

Accessing how people work and think on a personal level has enabled María to thrive in her role as a designer, while ensuring that she's serving people in the best way for them. Collaborating with clients such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation for various social projects, María continues to reexamine her own position, and the background of those she works for and with. "Before coming to DSI, I was a Colombian designer designing for Colombians," she says. "After passing through DSI, I became a Colombian designer capable of working not only with interdisciplinary teams but with culturally diverse ones as well."

After passing through DSI, I became a Colombian designer capable of working not only with interdisciplinary teams but with culturally diverse ones as well."

-Maria Alejandra Sandoval

Designer in Residence Program

In support of DSI's focus on cultivating an experience that is both academic and practical, the designers in residence are hybrid practitioners who offers their expertise, capabilities and perspectives for a semester-long design exploration with students, faculty and staff. They are uniquely forward thinkers, design-spirited leaders, knowledgeable advisors, and creative and playful disruptors from various sectors and areas of interest. They challenge and explore what is critical in the world today when thinking about social design practice. Our students have the opportunity to research and learn together, carve out new spaces and imagine creative possibilities.

In spring 2020, DSI welcomed its very first designer in residence, Sloan Leo, director of social innovation at the Vaid Group. Sloan is a community-centered design strategist exploring the intersections of social innovation and social justice. During the residency, Sloan devoted weekly office hours to students for one-on-one conversations about how they can better integrate community building into their work, exchanging innovative ideas or planning for the future. They developed workshop materials, exchanged capabilities and resources, and ultimately worked to build up our community of students and practitioners.

Sloan also conducted a series of public lectures and webinars titled Ideas in Action: Conversations on Community Design. Various guest speakers from Sloan's professional network stopped by, including our chair, Miya Osaki; Keesha Gaskins-Nathan (director of democratic practice, Rockefeller Brothers Fund); Urvashi Vaid (CEO, The Vaid Group); Rajasvini Bhansali (executive director, Solidaire); and Katherine Maher (CEO, Wikimedia Foundation).



Spring 2020 designer in residence Sloan Leo with department chair Miya Osaki

The opportunity to engage with students who will no doubt be understood as pioneers later down the road has been priceless. As much as I have been invited to share I have received in return. The sophistication of their political analysis, their relentless push to understand systemic challenges and their commitment to deep community engagement are hallmarks that I applaud DSI for imbuing."

-Sloan Leo, DSI spring 2020 designer in residence

Curriculum/ Sample Program

Degree candidates must successfully complete 60 credits, including all required courses, with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0. A residency of two academic years is required.

FIRST YEAR/FALLCREDITSDisruptive Design: Research and Insights3Environmental Ethics1Fundamentals of Design for Social Innovation3Global Guest Lecture Series I3Mapping and Visualization Design3Technologies for Designing Change I1Understanding Natural and Social Systems1

FIRST YEAR/SPRING

Communication Design	3
Creative Writing for Social Designers	1
Games for Impact	3
Global Guest Lecture Series II	3
Introduction to Thesis	3
Technologies for Designing Change II	2

SECOND YEAR/FALL

Entrepreneurship	1
Global Guest Lecture Series III	3
Leadership I	2
Metrics and Data Visualization I	3
Thesis Consultation: Research, Writing, Presentation	6

SECOND YEAR/SPRING

Global Guest Lecture Series IV	3
Leadership II	2
Metrics and Data Visualization II	3
Monitoring and Evaluation	1
Thesis Consultation: Implementation	6

Course Offerings

A sample of our course descriptions follows. All course descriptions can be found online at: dsi.sva.edu/program/curriculum.

COMMUNICATION DESIGN

In this course, students learn to use language and both verbal and visual communication skills to engage, persuade and shift behavior, through story writing and telling, cogent logic and public presentations. The class is based on developing a personal voice as well as working with external clients and organizations to design communication as a system with intentional impact on outcomes. The class culminates with presentations to external clients.

DISRUPTIVE DESIGN: RESEARCH AND INSIGHTS

Students explore how to meaningfully connect user and audience understanding to strategies for enterprise and social change. While discussing the processes, thinking and practices of primary, ethnographic-based research, students investigate how to collect compelling user stories as they come to understand the nuances of behavior, culture and emotion in the lives of their audiences.

OPPOSITE: Holding Privilege is an experiential learning game created for designers and design students to catalyze conversations and reflections around relationships to power, identity and privilege. It was designed by Andrea Miranda Salas ('20) and Lorena Estrella ('20) as part of the Fast Track Independent Study course.

CREATIVE WRITING FOR SOCIAL DESIGNERS

The maxim that all change begins with language is true in the visual arts to the same extent that it is anywhere else. Yet social impact designers-who make their professional careers developing initiatives that change lives, often with enormous public consequence-are often not taught how to write. Both the design and social innovation fields are rife with argot and clichés that deaden meaning instead of uncovering it. The goal of this class is to give social designers access to the power of creative writing in order to more fully understand themselves, and combine that self-knowledge with writing that will infect and inspire their audiences.

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

We begin this course by developing a shared understanding of sustainability. Students cultivate personal rationales for why sustainability is important to them, and they become inspired and hopeful about their role as designers in contributing to the shift toward a sustainable future. Then we explore what ethics are, from multiple points of view, and establish a classroom set of ethical principles that we can live by, and that we can apply throughout the course and beyond. After that, we use systems thinking and creativity to examine the intersection of sustainability, ethics and design, including discussions on economics and quality-of-life indicators, how to distinguish problems from symptoms and how to solve more than one problem at a time while minimizing the creation of new problems. We unpack the operating principles (physical laws/ecological principles) for life on Earth. We end the course by applying our ethical principles to ethical dilemmas currently in play in the world.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

This course is devoted to equipping students with the business language and concepts needed for real-world-venture success. Students will gain practical knowledge and hands-on experience in the key business building blocks needed to execute a successful start-up that is viable, financially sustainable and scalable. Students will also have the opportunity to evaluate and present their respective theses as a business concept.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This course is designed to complement the thesis process, and will examine how to assess program effectiveness through monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Monitoring is the routine process of data collection and measurement of progress toward program objectives; evaluation is the use of social research methods to systematically investigate a program's effectiveness. Students will be guided on the development of their own measurement plan and data collection.



FUNDAMENTALS OF DESIGN FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

This course explores the skills needed to be an actor in social innovation, including change models, facilitation, relationships, team building and leaning into uncertainty. Structured as part lab and part discussion, students complete readings, journal assignments and activities related to interaction, dialogue, capturing and observing data, writing research and facilitation plans, and developing relationships. At the end of the course, each student facilitates a group discussion with different representatives from part of a system, with the goal of helping the group see the system through multiple vantage points to shift to a collective intention and prototype new solutions.

GLOBAL GUEST LECTURE SERIES

This lecture series exposes students to the lives and ideas of some of the most important people defining social innovation in the world today. Speakers are curated to inspire new thinking and dialogue on various opportunities for careers in social innovation and how design plays a role in each of them.

LEADERSHIP

This course provides a foundational understanding of key leadership theories and practices, with a particular emphasis on collaborative leadership and social change. The course draws from psychology and other disciplines and introduces students to approaches for working with others to set strategic direction, determine appropriate courses of action and galvanize resources toward shared and common goals.

GAMES FOR IMPACT

Games designed to address social and political issues are one of the fastest-growing categories in the "serious games" movement. This course incorporates game theory and analysis with hands-on development of social impact games: interactive experiences that integrate sociopolitical events, values and messages into their design and game mechanics. Working in teams, students take on game projects from concept to a functional prototype, and refine their projects through several iterations, ending with presentations to a jury of experts.

INTRODUCTION TO THESIS

In this course, students investigate a variety of topics, researching each to the point of confirming their own interest and the viability of the concept. Exercises in problem definition, audience identification, research

> and barriers to change help students test their own hypotheses. Criteria include demonstration of need on the part of the audience, a clear articulation of concept and metrics for success. By the end of the semester, students have a fully vetted topic for their thesis.

OPPOSITE, TOP: In the Communication Design course, students actively collaborate to respond to real-world design problems. Here, students worked with Weill Cornell Medical College on an innovative interactive learning installation developed by Dr. Jonathan St. George, assistant professor of clinical emergency medicine. BOTTOM: Danielle Hernandez's ('19) thesis project guided interracial families through co-learning workshops to help white parents instill a positive understanding of ethnic-racial identity in their multiracial children.

MAPPING AND VISUALIZATION DESIGN

This course teaches mapping and visualizing systems in order to facilitate a journey from thinking to making. Readings, discussions and weekly "experiments" are employed to investigate how mapping and modeling techniques can aid in creating sustainable frameworks of action. The course helps students visualize and articulate their thinking, explore planning and communicating solutions, and develop new models of engagement and action.

UNDERSTANDING NATURAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS

This course teaches understanding of social and environmental issues in the context of the complex human communities and natural systems in which they exist, both online and on the ground. Topics such as climate change, health, national security, personal identity and social justice are examined in relation to the players and places that impact humanity and the environment. In addition to online communities, study includes the interwoven dynamics of business, not-for-profit organizations and public agencies.

TECHNOLOGIES FOR DESIGNING CHANGE I

True social transformation happens not with new gadgets or software but with the new behaviors and cultures that become possible because of those technologies. This class will explore design's role in driving technological and social change. We will also challenge narrow definitions of "technology" and introduce topics in critical theory, philosophy and futures studies to complement designers' change-making practices.

METRICS AND DATA VISUALIZATION

This yearlong course looks at the theory and practice of gathering and visualizing data by integrating the identification of metrics into ongoing student projects and evaluating metrics from case studies in order to understand their strategy. In the fall, the course focuses on data and visualization for exploration: asking useful questions and engaging in purposeful discovery. In the spring, students study data and visualization for explanation: how various tools and techniques help us communicate with and influence others. Guest lecturers include data scientists. financial modelers and corporate social responsibility experts.

TECHNOLOGIES FOR DESIGNING CHANGE II

Fostering social change requires engaging stakeholders and decision makers in robust dialogue and debate about critical design, technology, and policy choices. In this class, students will examine current and emerging issues in technology and society such as big data, surveillance capitalism, new power, and more. They will develop and practice facilitation skills to stimulate their peers and the public around these topics using community-centered design methods.

OPPOSITE: Luciana Rodrigues ('19) presents her thesis *Friends With Death* to a group of industry professionals. Her work focused on helping young people who have lost a parent give their grief a sense of purpose.



-Nicholas Chan ('18), senior design consultant, Doblin



Nota A UMAN

To see how our alums are putting social design to work, go to: dsi.sva.edu/alums-at-work.

Manolo Ampudia project director, Uncommon **Design Strategy**

Jade Broomfield visual designer, Allbirds

Rutvika Gupta designer and researcher. Nava

Gina Kim product designer, ACLU

Akshata Malhotra

Center on Healthcare

vice president, product and

UX design, Sourcemap

Rhea Rakshit

senior design strategist. Siebel Center for Design at University of Illinois at interaction designer, Peterson **Urbana-Champaign**

Luciana Rodrigues

Danielle Shepard design strategist, Capital One

Josh Treuhaft senior experience strategist, R/GA Portland

Faculty

Go to dsi.sva.edu/faculty for biographies of our faculty.

Miya Osaki chair	Nicholas Fortugno	Kate Reed I
	Sahar Ghaheri	Edwina Por
Kobla Asamoah	Corwin Green	Karen Proc
Siri Betts-Sonstegard	Emily Herrick	Natalia Rac
Maggie Breslin	Lee-Sean Huang	Marc Rettig
Mattie Brice	Anne LaFond	Kalli Retzej
Asi Burak	Paul Lillehaugen	Wenfei Xu
Jaimie Cloud	Kara Meyer	
Alison Cornyn	Mari Nakano	

Kate Reed Petty
Edwina Portocarrero
Karen Proctor
Natalia Radywyl
Marc Rettig
Kalli Retzepi
Wenfei Xu



Ted Alcorn

Micaela Blei

The Moth

Campbell

Bill Browning Terrapin Bright Green

Antionette Carroll Creative Reaction Lab

Michelle Cashen Brooklyn Grange

Everytown for Gun Safety

Sara Ave and George Ave

Andi Broffman and K.O.

Community Solutions

Greater Good Studio

For up-to-date information, go to dsi.sva.edu/lecturer.

Lisa David **Public Health Solutions**

Christian Delsol UNDP

Sloan Leo The Vaid Group

Robert Fabricant Dalberg Design

David Fenton Fenton Communications

Leetha Filderman PopTech

Ruth Gates Gates Coral Lab

Jennifer Gootman West Elm

Amv Hall Eileen Fisher

Nicholas Higgins Brooklyn Public Library

Tracy Johnson Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Chervl Kiser The Lewis Institute for Social Innovation

Mai Kobori and Eulani Labav **Blank Plate**

Amy Larkin Environmental Debt

Hosan Lee TableTribes Nancy Mahon

MAC AIDS Fund

Chelsea Mauldin Public Policy Lab

Erin Mazursky Rhize

Hannah Nicdao and Shayla Byrd Google

Angela Patton Girls for a Change

Paul Polak Out of Poverty

Jake Porway DataKind

Doug Powell IBM

Katie Puccio and Liz Wells Desk Lunch

Nathaniel Raymond Harvard Humanitarian Initiative

Matt Stinchcomb Etsv

Lizz Winstead Lady Parts Justice League

Hannah du Plessis



First-year students work in their Communication Design course on a project for their community partner, Blank Plate.

Application Process

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

For a full list of application requirements and detailed instructions, visit: sva.edu/grad/howtoapply

Online Application and \$80 Application Fee: sva.edu/apply

DEADLINES

For information on application deadlines, visit: sya.edu/grad/timeline

IMPORTANT LINKS

- FAQ: sva.edu/grad/faq
- International students: sva.edu/grad/intl
- Tuition and fees: sva.edu/tuition
- Visit SVA: sva.edu/grad/visit

We encourage applicants to visit our department. Contact us directly to schedule a department tour at: dsi.sva.edu/contact. If you have any questions about the application process,

contact Graduate Admissions at 212.592.2107 or email: gradadmissions@sva.edu.

Miya Osaki, chair Chessa Cahill, director of operations Gale Linares, administrative assistant Christian Gomez, systems administrator

Tel: 212.592.2205 Email: dsiinfo@sva.edu Site: sva.edu/dsi Department sites: dsi.sva.edu

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As a DSI graduate, I see every human interaction as a system.

[Now], as a college design professor, I want my students to see the possibilities for change that design has. It goes beyond the limits of a computer or a nice illustration—it has the power to change our reality."

—Rodrigo Muñoz ('16), program director, Universidad San Francisco de Quito; founder, Andes Materials

ACCREDITATION

The School of Visual Arts has been authorized by the New York State Board of Regents (www.highered. nysed.gov) to confer the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts on graduates of programs in Advertising; Animation; Cartooning; Computer Art, Computer Animation and Visual Effects; Design; Film; Fine Arts; Illustration; Interior Design; Photography and Video; Visual and Critical Studies; and to confer the degree of Master of Arts on graduates of programs in Art Education; Critical Theory and the Arts; Curatorial Practice; Design Research, Writing and Criticism; and to confer the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching on graduates of the program in Art Education; and to confer the degree of Master of Fine Arts on graduates of programs in Art Practice; Art Writing; Computer Arts; Design; Design for Social Innovation; Fine Arts; Illustration as Visual Essay; Interaction Design; Photography, Video and Related Media: Products of Design; Social Documentary Film; Visual Narrative; and to confer the degree of Master of Professional Studies on graduates of programs in Art Therapy; Branding; Digital Photography; Directing; Fashion Photography.

The School of Visual Arts is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (msche.org), 3624 Market Street, Suite 2 West, Philadelphia, PA 19104, 267.284.5000. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The School of Visual Arts is an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (nasad.arts-accredit.org).

The Interior Design program leading to the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design is accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (accredit-id. org), 206 Grandville Avenue, Suite 350, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4014.

The School of Visual Arts' Department of Art Education is currently pursuing accreditation of its educator preparation programs by the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP). Pursuant to Section 52.21 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, the educator preparation program offered by the School of Visual Arts is considered to be continuously accredited for purposes of meeting the New York State requirement that all such programs maintain continuous accreditation. The School of Visual Arts' Master of Arts in Teaching in Art Education program was previously accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

The Master of Professional Studies in Art Therapy degree program is approved by the American Art Therapy Association, Inc., and as such meets the education standards of the art therapy profession.

CREDITS

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COVER: A project exploring disparities in black maternal health by Alyson Fraser Diaz, Dasha Zlochevsky, Abdulrahman Alghamdi and Annan Yang (all '21) as part of the Mapping and Visualization Design course.

School of Visual Arts

209 East 23rd Street, NYC sva.edu/grad