Mapping Systemic Relationships
Syllabus

Fall 2016
This one-credit course meets on Saturday, November 5 from 12 noon to 6 p.m. and Sunday, November 6 from 12 noon to 2:45 p.m.

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Description
Systems thinking is relational thinking, and the best way to understand systemic relationships is to map them out. In this class we will develop, discuss, and compare a range of mapping (i.e., diagramming) methods and models. Key methods include concept mapping, issue mapping, influence mapping, analog mapping, and boundary critique; key models include systems archetypes, the regime shift model, and the logic model / action research cycle model. We will use these methods and models to examine social and environmental issues, and the resulting maps will inform our conversations as we consider and critique strategies for effective engagement. No explicit familiarity with systems thinking is required; this class will serve as both introduction for newcomers and augmentation for old hands.

Students will work in small groups to apply mapping techniques to case studies (provided as text, audio, video) of social and environmental issues. These mappings will challenge students to articulate and clarify both their understandings of complex situations and their hypotheses about affecting change in areas of concern or opportunity. Throughout the course, hands-on exercises will be woven together with introductions to relevant systems theory and discussions of mapping insights.

This is not a class in art, design, engineering, or business techniques, per se. Rather it is a class in systems thinking approaches that can inform how the artist, designer, engineer, or businessperson understands and engages in the world.

Preparation
Become familiar with 3-5 case studies, as well as other introductory materials, which instructor will provide (as text, audio, or video) one month prior to the class

Day One
Develop mapping techniques for examining these case studies and/or ones with which students are already familiar

End of day one / overnight assignment
In small groups, continue to discuss and work on a selected mapping project

Day Two
• Project presentations and critiques
• Workshop summary, discussion, and reflection

Evaluation
Based on individual participation throughout the two-day workshop