

The Artist-Led School:*Experiments in Art, Education and Community Engagement***COURSE INFORMATION** Term: Spring 2026**Delivery Method:** In-Person**Meeting Time:** 10:30 AM – 1:20 PM, M + W**Location:** FFA 463 and various off-campus locations**Instructor:** Dr. Lisa Novak**E-mail:** lvnovak@utep.edu**Office Phone:** (915) 747-5862**Office:** FFA 461a**Office Hours:** M + W: 7:30-8:30am, and by appointment**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

From *Black Mountain College* to *the School of the Damned*, this course examines historical and contemporary artist-led schools, alternative art education models, and counter-institutions. Students will investigate how these spaces challenge traditional educational hierarchies and reimagine art education through community engagement and pedagogical practices. Part performance, part utopian vision, part classroom as a work of art, the course culminates in a collaborative project where students imagine their own "school" and counter-institutional program, facilitate public "curriculum engagements" and, if time permits, create a risograph-printed guide and resource documenting their emerging vision.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

ARTE 2307 Minimum Grade of C. May not be taken concurrently.

COURSE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze and critically evaluate historical and contemporary models of artist-led schools and alternative art education
- Identify and articulate how counter-institutions and artist-led schools and community program challenge traditional educational hierarchies and power structures
- Apply pedagogical practices and theories to reimagine art education in their own curriculum and community
- Recognize the classroom as a site for artistic practice, performance, and vision-making
- Collaboratively conceptualize and design an original "school" or counter-institutional program that reflects critical engagement with course materials

- Facilitate meaningful public curriculum engagements
- Document and reflect on experimental pedagogical practices through written, visual, and performative means
- Produce a risograph-printed guide and resource that articulates and shares their emerging vision for an alternative art education

COURSE OUTCOMES

- Students will demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of historical and contemporary artist-led schools and alternative education models
- Students will articulate theoretical frameworks for understanding how counter-institutions disrupt traditional educational power structures
- Students will critically evaluate different models of art pedagogy and their effectiveness in community contexts
- Students will analyze the classroom itself as a performative space and site for artistic experimentation
- Students will work collaboratively to develop shared visions for reimagined educational spaces

REQUIRED MATERIALS

There are no textbooks required for this class. All readings essential to this course will be provided to you either in class in print and/or online on Blackboard.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING	Education Reports	20%
	Research Presentations	20%
	“School” Group Projects	30%
	Visual Assembly	20%
	“School” Prospectus	10%
	Total	100%

Course assignments include writing bi-weekly education reports, presenting research on artist-led (counter)institutions; developing and co-hosting your own “school” or educational “department” for your peers; hosting a visual assembly and developing a program and prospectus for a “school” for print. Detailed assignment guidelines and rubrics will be provided in class.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND INCLUDE MULTIPLE COMPONENTS THAT ARE NOT FULLY LISTED HERE.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

It is necessary for you to have access to the internet and Office365, including Microsoft Word and PowerPoint on your phone, tablet and/or laptop. As your projects progress, you may also require access to Adobe Express, the Stop Motion app, Spectrolite (iOS only) or other design and presentation software. All the programs listed should be freely accessible to you using your UTEP email address and login details. Please bring your chargers, tablets and/or notebooks to class.

The syllabus, assignment outlines, texts, resources, and all other relevant course content will be distributed in class, but they are also available online via the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the internet and a stable web browser. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser. If you have difficulty accessing any of the above, do not hesitate to contact the UTEP Help Desk at helpdesk@utep.edu or by calling 915-747-4357, as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs and are much better equipped than I am to help you.

MAKE-UP WORK

Make-up work will be given *only in the case of a documented emergency*. Note that make-up work may be in a different format than the original work, may require more intensive preparation, and may be graded with penalty points. *If you miss an assignment and the reason is not considered excusable, you will receive a zero.* It is therefore important to reach out to me—in advance if possible—and explain with proper documentation why you missed a given course requirement. *Once a deadline has been established for make-up work, no further extensions or exceptions will be granted.*

COURSE COMMUNICATION:

Communication is very important to me, so please get in touch should you have any questions regarding deadlines, course content, accommodations, or assignments. Do not wait until the last minute to contact me if you are concerned about anything including absences, assignments, and late submissions. Here are some examples of how we will stay in contact with each other throughout the term:

Office Hours

This term my office hours are Mondays and Wednesdays between 7:30–8:30am. My office is located on the 4th floor of the Fox Fine Arts Building near the art education classroom, in office A461a. You can drop by during those hours or, if you prefer to plan ahead, you can schedule a meeting with me by talking to me before or after class, or by contacting me via email (lvnovak@utep.edu). Even though I prefer to meet with you face-to-face, I am more than happy to arrange to meet with you on Microsoft Teams or Zoom, both of which you can access using your UTEP email account.

Email

My UTEP e-mail (lvnovak@utep.edu) is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to you *within 48 hours of receipt*. When e-mailing me, please use your

UTEP student email account only. *Make sure you address your email to me appropriately, state the topic or reason for your email in the subject line, address and sign your emails properly,* and clearly state your question(s) you may have. Your e-mail should end with your name signed at the bottom.

Blackboard Messages

In addition to email, you are welcome to contact me through the message board on the Blackboard course site. *However, the best and most reliable way to contact me is still via email.* Please ask your peers or IT for assistance if you are unsure how to locate and/or access the course message board on Blackboard.

Announcements

Check the Blackboard announcements frequently for any updates, changes in deadlines, readings, or other important messages.

MODELING PROFESSIONALISM

You are expected to maintain professional conduct at all times in class and out in the community. This includes being on time to class meetings, site visits, group presentations and one-on-one meetings with me. Respect for all members of the class is expected. Please allow for individual differences and opinions.

Participation

Our class meetings are in-person on the 4th floor of the Fox Fine Arts building in room A463, every Monday and Wednesday from 10:30am to 1:20pm, January 22 to May 6, 2026. Please note that students will be required to meet off campus on some occasions. Regular class attendance is expected to maintain a respectful, immersive and engaging learning environment. The best way to demonstrate participation is to ensure that you engage critically with all course materials, pose questions and participate in discussions, and take part in other activities as instructed by your professor during class, outside of your weekly lessons, and/as part of your weekly tasks and course assignments.

Clean-Up

All Students and future art educators are expected to maintain a clean classroom and be stewards of their community and environment. Cleanup is an important part of any studio, art-based, and collaborative space. As such, you are responsible for disposing and storing materials and cleaning up any residue left on tables and floors at the end of class.

Absences

You are allowed *two absences* for the term without penalty. *For each absence after the second absence your course grade will be lowered by one letter grade (A to B, for example).* *Three instances of arriving late or leaving class early count as one absence.* *Arriving 30+ minutes late to class automatically will count as one absence.*

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusions. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Community Standards for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline.

GUIDANCE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

allowed only with prior permission from instructor

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, is only allowed with approval from the instructor BEFORE being used. Without permission, you will be expected to think creatively and critically to complete assignments without assistance from these tools.

If given permission to use any of these tools, students must properly cite and give full credit to the program used upon submission of every relevant assignment. For example, text generated using ChatGPT must be cited:

*Chat-GPT(version). Date of query (year/month/day). "Text of your query."
Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>*

A short paragraph describing how the tool(s) was/were used for the assignment must be included.

using ai for brainstorming

Some AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, can be beneficial during the early brainstorming stages of an activity, and you are welcome to explore them for that purpose. However, keep in mind that AI-generated ideas are not your own and may hinder your ability to think critically and creatively about a problem. It is also important to remember that these technologies often "hallucinate" or produce materials and information that are inaccurate or incomplete—even providing false citations for use. That said, you are not allowed to submit any AI-generated work in this course as your own. If you use any information or materials created by AI technology, you are required to cite it like you would any other source. Consider how this will affect your credibility as a writer and scholar before doing so. Any direct use of AI-generated materials submitted as your own work will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Community Standards.

PLAGIARISM DETECTING SOFTWARE

Some of your course work and assessments may be submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used to review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

COURSE DROP POLICY

According to UTEP Catalog, “At the discretion of the instructor, a student can be dropped from a course because of excessive absences or lack of effort. A grade of “W” will be assigned before the course drop deadline and a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.” See Policies and Regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for a list of excuse absences. *Therefore, if I find that, due to non-performance in the course, you are at risk of failing, I will drop you from the course. This includes excessive absences early in the term. I will provide 24 hours advance notice via email.*

ILLNESS PRECAUTIONS

Please stay home if you have symptoms of a communicable illness. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations.

INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students who become pregnant may also request reasonable accommodations, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy. Accommodations that constitute undue hardship are not reasonable. To make a request, please register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact CASS at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

STUDENT RESOURCES

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support.



Please refer to the QR code for a listing of campus resources or www.utep.edu/student_resources