

Fast Facts and Frequently Asked Questions: CHATTANOOGA AS TEXT: PLACEMAKING

*"The world is a book that demands to be read like a book."
-- Umberto Eco*

Chattanooga As Text (CAT) is an exciting, interdisciplinary 3-week course offered free of charge to rising 10th and 11th grade girls from the Chattanooga area. Chattanooga as Text is the name of the course conceived at Girls Preparatory School, using the city of Chattanooga, both its present and its history as a major resource from which to learn. This year's course topic will be Placemaking.

1. Why Placemaking?

The concept of placemaking is especially important in the fields of urban planning and design. By exploring this concept, the CAT students will discover and harness the power to make change in the world around them. CAT students will be asked to become mapmakers: learning, filling in, changing, and discovering. Students will literally and figuratively build maps. The skills, talents, and experiences that they have uniquely developed are precisely what make them excellent mapmakers of their worlds. Being good mapmakers will in turn help inspire them as citizens to reimagine and reinvent the essential public spaces of their community.

2. What can girls expect to do throughout these 3 weeks?

- Learn through innovative and traditional methods
- Explore science, history, design-thinking, technology, and social entrepreneurship
- Read and discuss various texts
- Work in teams of four to dive deeply into a local problem or opportunity in the Chattanooga region
- Develop an innovative solution to a community problem that will be pitched to local stakeholders
- Use all their "senses" in learning and in making/doing
- Look inward and look outward in order to be better placemakers for their communities.
- Use GIS (Geographic Information Systems)

3. What is GIS?

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is becoming increasingly common in all sectors of the workforce but it is a skill that is rarely taught in high schools.

Skills gained using GIS tools and GIS field data collection can be applied to almost every discipline including business, environmental science, history, geology, physics, chemistry, earth science, and more.

4. Can you tell me more about how the credit works?

This course is offered for one (1) general elective credit with the possibility of elective credit for science, history or other applicable subject.

The course draws on three principles of honors education outlined by the National Collegiate Honors Council: active learning in which learning is both product and process and the student, not the teacher, is the primary agent; an expanded idea of what texts are and how one reads them; and, finally, a recognition of the importance of both autonomy and collaboration in learning.

*"A good map lays bare the history and hence the soul of a place, like an x-ray."
-- Cees Nooteboom*

CLASS FORMAT

- Context- Students learn about place and placemaking - geologic setting, historical setting, and social setting from guest experts and teachers, relevant readings, and hands-on activities and labs prior to field experiences.
- Experience- Field trips or work with guest innovators/ designers
- Analyze- Think through context and experience, make connections, ask questions
- Create- *Weeks 1-2*: Use design thinking in groups of 4 to empathize (develop deep understanding of the challenge), define (clearly articulate problem you want to solve), prototype (design a prototype or series of them to test a solution(s)), test (continue to improve design by testing and re-testing). *Week 3*: Use social entrepreneurship methods and canvas to think through all aspects of the solution and to guide the pitch.

GROUP CHALLENGE TO STUDENTS:

Initial mini challenge (first 2 days): "How might we enhance Miller Park?"

Main challenge to be pitched at end of course: "How might we....." (The study of placemaking will be divided into 4 parts).

CLASS ADMINISTRATION:

Two teachers from complementary disciplines, history and science, will collaborate on classroom instruction and field trips. Additionally, a separate Program Manager will oversee planning and coordination of field trips, guest speakers, budget, community partnerships and the work of the GPS Development Office.

CONTENT / SKILLS / OUTCOMES

BASIC CONTENT OF CLASS:

- GIS (geographic information systems): learning to use and analyze existing GIS in new ways, creating content and uploading to GIS maps
- geologic setting: basic plate tectonics theory and geologic setting of Chattanooga; resource formation and learning about resources in the Chattanooga area (coal, limestone, etc)
- historic and social setting of Chattanooga
- psychology: group behavior (for students working in groups) and Maslow's hierarchy (to understand human needs when designing)

SKILLS TAUGHT AND USED IN THE CLASS:

- GIS (Geographic Information Systems)
- process of design thinking and social entrepreneurship
- computational thinking
- research using library and library databases and internet research
- presentation skills
- interviewing
- self advocacy
- leadership within groups
- appropriate risk-taking as a means of success through failing
- analysis of text and experience: recognizing bias, analytical skills, empathy
- community understanding and engagement
- soft skills: writing professional emails, making professional phone calls, professional networking, willingness to ask for help and articulate personal strengths

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

- identify resources necessary to address research problems (assessed by pitch rubric)
- contributions and leadership within a diverse working group (assessed by 4C's rubric)

- experience with design thinking process and social entrepreneurship methodology (assessed by attendance and participation as well as pitch rubric)
- developing an innovative solution to a human need in Chattanooga and pitching to local stakeholders, and potentially department heads for discipline elective credit (assessed by pitch rubric)
- learning use of GIS (Geographic Information Systems) to gather data and analyze visual relationships between data sets (assessed by successful completion of GIS lesson)
- familiarity with local history (assessed by participation and writing responses and incorporation of historical content in pitch rubric)
- familiarity with geologic principles and how they apply to Chattanooga's geologic history. (assessed by participation and in-class writing responses as well as incorporation of scientific content in pitch)
- interviewing skills, networking skills (assessed by 4C's rubric)
- presentation experience (assessed by pitch rubric and participation/attendance in class)
- draft of college essay/short answer response articulating CAT experience (in-class writing assessment)
- prototyping/creating and testing models: provides avenue for appropriate risk-taking and failing quickly and often (assessed by 4C's rubric)

ASSESSMENTS:

- in class writing assignments
- self, peer and teacher assessment of collaboration, critical thinking, communication and creativity using 4C's rubric
- completion of in-class assignments
- participation and attendance
- final pitch using rubric

For questions, please contact Claudia Goldbach: cgoldbach@gps.edu