

Studio Critique

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CS 247

BROWN MEDIA INNOVATION BASE CAMP

Have an idea that would **transform how we communicate** online or share, receive and distribute information?

Want to develop ideas for technology that will **shape the future of media**?

Applications due October 17

Camp Dates: November 6 (evening)- November 8 (midday) at Columbia University, New York City

At Base Camp, you will work in interdisciplinary, bicoastal teams to develop new ideas and plans for media innovation, that may result in "Magic Grant" projects. Brown Fellows, industry experts, and faculty will be on hand to provide feedback, guidance and support.

All travel costs to and in New York will be provided. You don't need to have a concrete idea or team to participate—interest in media innovation is what we're looking for!

THE BROWN INSTITUTE FOR MEDIA INNOVATION

Stanford | ENGINEERING Columbia Journalism School

brown.stanford.edu

WHAT?

Your media innovation can be about civic technology, computer-mediated communication, online collaboration, fighting corruption, virtual or augmented reality, visual search... You name it, we fund it!

WHO?

All student levels: undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral.

FUNDING

Magic Grants provide up to \$300,000 for student projects.

WHY?

Shape the future of media and impact society through innovations.

APPLY NOW!

SPACE IS LIMITED. 15 Stanford students to be selected to work with 15 Columbia students.

<http://bit.ly/Fall15BC>

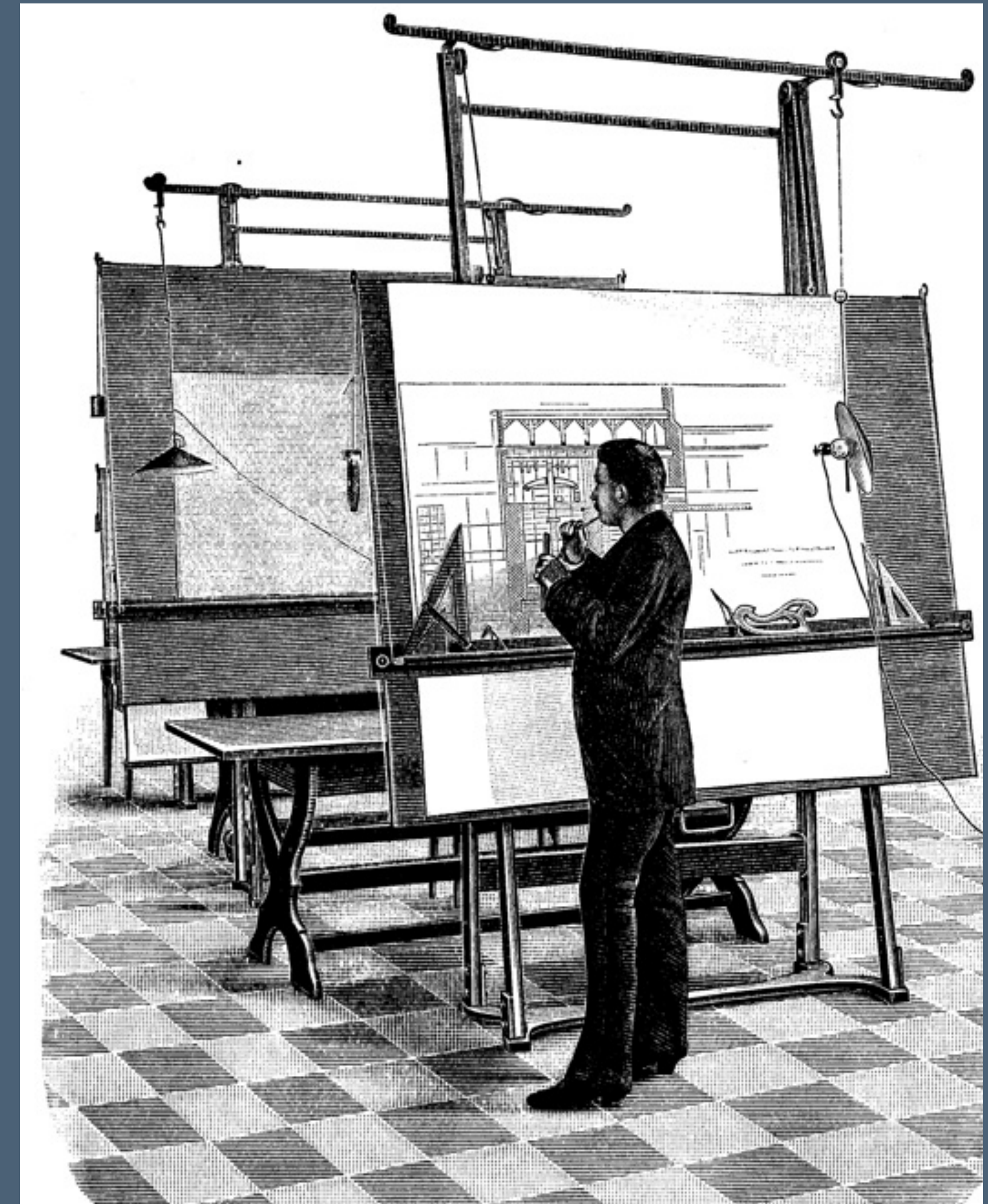


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Design studio



- Popularized by the École des Beaux-Arts in France in the 1800's
- Learning-by-doing with expert critique



Why critique?

- Nudge a designer out of an unproductive design space
- Help a designer see the bigger picture, then restart their brainstorming
- Train a designer to better evaluate their own ideas

A critic vs. a critique

- Critique is an open-ended process that is intended to push the designer to be even better.
- Being critical (e.g., being mean, or attacking the idea) does not serve that goal. It shuts people down.
- Your goal: give the designer an “aha!” moment about their own idea.

Getting critiqued

Set the stage, but briefly

- Tell everyone your design goals before you describe your project.
- Don't give a feature tour, focus on a user's experience.
- Be quick. The more you say, the less feedback you get.

Breathe.

- Your goal is not to defend your idea.
- Your goal is to understand the feedback, and why people are reacting the way they are. Use this information to improve your design.
- Or do you really think that your design is the best possible idea in the world, and can't be improved?

Write it down.

- Dedicate a team member or a friend (if a solo project) to be the notetaker.
- You want to focus your energies on being a part of the conversation, not on trying to remember everything.

Sharing critique

What should I say?

- Match your feedback to the design goals. Is this assignment focusing on usability, aesthetics, needs, or idea generation?
- Good heuristics:
 - Can I see a nearby point in the design space that gets more to the core of the problem?
 - Did the designer make assumptions that should be questioned?
 - Is the designer fixated on a part of their design that isn't as crucial to the design goal?

Example: getting to the core

- Suppose the designer was exploring ways to help parents calm down crying children at the supermarket.

What might your crit involve?

- “What if you focused not on how the parents deal with whining kids, but with what made the kids upset in the first place?”

Example: question assumptions

- “Do you have evidence that the parents actually want to quiet down their kids? Maybe they just want to get in and out quickly to minimize the pain to everyone else, and trying to fix it will only prolong things.”

Example: question assumptions

- “Are you sure that the parent can get out their iPhone to use your solution? Don’t they often have a kid in one arm and holding the hand of another one? I’ve never seen a parent staring at a phone in the market.”

Example: questioning fixation

- “The interaction design for the touch interface is really beautiful. I wish you had focused on verifying the design approach first. A beautiful interaction is lost on a design that doesn’t solve a need.”

Always suggest a better path

- One of the best scripts for a critique comment is:
“I really like [an aspect of the design].
It can be even better.
And here’s how: [suggestion].”

“I like”, “I wish”

This week, try starting your comments explicitly with these phrases.

Project 3

Launch!

Urban computing

- Improve the urban environment, human life quality and/or city operation systems
- Think about: how do people interact in a city, and with the city?
 - Government
 - Commerce
 - Safety
 - Accessibility
 - Social integration
 - And more!

The format

- From needfinding through brainstorming, prototypes to an implemented prototype
- We strongly recommend a web or mobile web prototype
 - We understand you might build it differently if you launched publicly
- Teams of three within your studio, final project faire at the end of dead week

The milestones

- Part I: form team, identify area of interest, needfinding
- Part II: brainstorming
- Part III: prototyping
- Part IV: working implementation
- Part V: user study and redesign plan
- Part VI: final presentation

The schedule

- Your team can pass the milestones at your own pace. We have a recommended schedule.
- Show us your milestone during any class studio period. Submit early, since milestones will involve iteration.
- We will give you \checkmark^- , \checkmark , \checkmark^+ feedback each time:
 - \checkmark^- , definitely go back and do it again
 - \checkmark , it's fine to move on, but consider rethinking things before you do
 - \checkmark^+ , you rocked our socks

The grading

- 5pts for passing each milestone, no matter the feedback (total 30pts)
- 7pts for final presentation
- 23pts for final project design and implementation
- You can change anything until the final submission: our goal between now and then is to help you earn 30/30
 - View us as coaches, not evaluators