Foundations of Design Justice

DARK MATTER UNIVERSITY at the University of Michigan
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Instructors: Bz (Brenda) Zhang, bz@spaceindustries
DMU Roster, darkmatteruniversity.org

Time: Wednesdays, 6:00pm to 9:00pm EST (Remote)

The design professions cannot survive and thrive without immediate change toward an anti-racist model of education and practice. Foundations of Design Justice is an introductory seminar collaboratively taught by Dark Matter University to provide knowledge and tools for design students, teachers, and workers to move forward together. Design Justice advances collective liberation by challenging the privilege and power structures that use architecture and design as tools of oppression. This work takes place through critical understandings of historical contexts, the development of new forms of knowledge and practice in our present, and speculating on future radical efforts of racial, social, and cultural reparation, through the process and outcomes of design. This class introduces students to the practice of Design Justice by building a shared foundation of anti-racist forms of communal knowledge and spatial practices, grounded in lived experiences.

Throughout a series of modules, students will participate in weekly discussion and contribute reading responses, case study research and analysis, and a final capstone project. The course is rooted in new forms of knowledge production, so students can expect to co-create this shared learning environment. Topics include: design justice principles, community work and power building, infrastructure and neighborhood systems, the social and political dimensions of housing, the role of labor and capital in the built environment.