Can voting for a singer in a reality show spread and teach democratic principles? Is curating a social justice Tumblr “real work” that can make a real-world difference? This graduate-level seminar will explore these questions and the ways in which scholars, artists, and activists have tried to understand, promote, and problematize participatory and public culture. At stake is how we, as a society, define and encourage meaningful civic engagement and activism in the digital era through the production and sharing of media. Students will get hands-on experience exploring and creating digital and traditional media associated with the ideas of participatory and public culture, such as zines and podcasts. In addition, students will be responsible for doing weekly readings, participating in class discussions, posting brief reading response assignments, and writing a conference-length original research paper on a topic chosen in consultation with the professor.

Readings may include:


