Soon after Hurricane Katrina, policymakers took the unprecedented step of converting the New Orleans public schools into a portfolio nearly entirely composed of privately managed charter schools, heavily relying on “talent” from outside the city. However, after nearly a decade of reform, these mostly white transplants face new challenges to their legitimacy as they shift from the immediacy of a crisis footing to an enduring encounter. This talk examines how newer experimental cultures cultivated by education entrepreneurs in the city use “design thinking” to reorient the problem-space of reform and create racialized modes of collaboration.

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