1.25 Credits (Includes Course Practicum)

Spring 2016
M.W. 2:40-4:10pm/Cross Street Studio

Instructor: Allison Orr
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Cell Phone: 512-694-1648
Office Hours: Tues 2-3:30pm and by apt.

DNC/ENVS
376-01

The Artist in the City—Civic Engagement and Community Based Art-Making in the Urban Landscape

Overview
Through theoretical analysis and practical application, students will study the basic principles and methodologies of community-based art making practice. We will examine how artists engage directly in the life of the city by incorporating public employees and public land, addressing social, political and environmental issues, and exploring new means for civic participation through their artistic practice. Discussions, readings, and research will provide a historical and analytical context. The theory learned will be applied through a courses practicum through which students will directly engage with the residents/employees of the City of Middletown. For final projects, students will present short creative-based projects in collaboration with Middletown community members. These projects will be presented May 7th as part of the Riverfront Encounter.

Objectives
Through this course, students will

- Understand and analyze the principles and methodologies of community-based art practice
- Develop an increased awareness of various theoretical lenses (including historical, cultural/political and aesthetic) through which community-based performance can be considered.
- Utilize an ethnographic embedding process, shadow and conduct field research in the Middletown community through the course practicum
- Practice conducting and writing ethnographies
- Experience art-making as a tool for environmental studies, civic engagement and activism
- Gain a deeper understanding of the Middletown community and the city's connection to the river
- Practice a collaborative, applied arts process by directing a creative-based project with Middletown community members
- Direct a publicly presenting artistic work at the Riverfront Encounter
- Contribute regularly to an online platform which will track students' individual and collective process throughout the course.

Materials
- Course texts and readings as indicated in the syllabus
- Journal, audio/video recorder, and needed safety equipment for practicum/fieldwork
- Additional materials for final projects as determined

Milestones
February, exact date TBD
Class Practicum/Fieldwork begins

Feb./March, dates to be assigned
Oral Class Presentation on Assigned Artist/Company (in pairs)

March 4th
Paper #1 Due

March 28th/April 11th
Initial Final Project and Revised Final Project Proposals Due

May 7th—Riverfront Encounter
Presentation of Final Projects. All day event. Attendance Mandatory

May 10th—FINAL
Final Class Meeting and Paper #2 Due
Course Description & Requirements

This course is both a seminar and a creative process workshop. Students will complete readings (available on-line and as indicated on the syllabus); participate in classroom discussions and assignment; take part in field ethnography/course practicum; and present arts-based final projects at the Riverfront Encounter May 7th. As a class, we will engage in in-depth discussions of all of those experiences and complete analytical, self-reflexive and ethnographic writings.

Assignments will consist of:

- **Two 5-7 page papers:** Paper #1 is due March 4th and should analyze the work of the assigned artist in the context of the readings and class discussions. You should site 3-5 additional readings/resources about the artist to address the strategies she/he uses as a community-based artist. Finally, place the artist’s goals and aesthetics in relationships to your own.

- **Paper #2 is due May 10th** and discusses your final creative project in the context of the artists and theory studied in the course. Site the methods you employed in your project, noting your successes and failures, outcomes and observations.

- Participation in one **In-Class Presentation**, to be done in pairs with one other student, on an assigned artist. Oral presentation should last approximately 20 minutes and include overview of the artists’ work, goals, and strategies and select work samples (videos).

- **Final Project proposal** (initial and final versions) discussing your intended goals and methods for your final, community-based art project

- Creation and presentations of a **final creative-based project** that collaborates/features Middletown community members and is publicly presented for an audience at the Riverfront Encounter on Sat., May 7th. All-day attendance at the Riverfront Encounter is mandatory.

- **Ongoing 1-2 page Ethnographies** as assigned

- **Participation in online class journal/web platform** as assigned

- Attendance and participation in **class practicum**, initially supervised and directed by professor but eventually conducted by students in pairs, small groups, or alone as determined with instructor.

- **Consistent attendance to class and ongoing, thoughtful contributions to class discussions and learning**

### Final Grade Calculation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper #1</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicum/Field Work/Ethnographies</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Performance Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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### Student Expectations

- **Arrive on time to class and practicum; contact Professor if you will be late or absent**

- **Refrain from using electronic devices in class (no laptops unless you have special accommodation)**

- **Practice thoughtful engagement with and respect for fellow classmates and community participants**

- **Communicate regularly with Instructor and reach out for help**

### Instructor Expectations

- **Prepare students for success in course and field work**

- **Support students’ efforts to work well in community and create excellent artistic projects**

- **Address any concerns with students directly**

- **Be open to student feedback and requests**

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Attendance and Participation

This is a collective and community-learning endeavor. To that end, everyone is expected to participate fully and conscientiously in all aspects of the course including discussions (both in class and online), course practicum/fieldwork, and field trips. A maximum of two excused absences is allowed. If you cannot attend class/practicum or will be late, please notify instructor immediately in order for this absence to be excused. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade and significantly impact your ability to be successful in this class. Promptness is also crucial.
Grading

Grading Rubric

A range: The student is fully engaged in all aspects of the course and is highly motivated, well prepared, reads the assigned texts and thinks carefully about the readings' main ideas in order to advance class discussion. This student contributes deep insight into the readings and stimulates class discussions, while listening and responding to other students, helping to generate further discussion. Written work is outstanding in form and content, as well as being free of defect. Arguments are insightful and well crafted—they expand and further ideas encountered in course materials and/or discovered independently through research in original ways. Thinking is unified and coherent, as well as complex, critical, reflexive and nuanced. Creative work is also outstanding. It engages with the course concepts, shows evidence of a rigorous rehearsal/preparation process, and utilizes original material (or use of existing materials in a unique way). The structure is cohesive and the work demonstrates development overtime.

B range: The student comes to class prepared with thoughts and questions that show insight and familiarity with the readings. Student is able to refer to specifics from the readings and shows interest in other students’ contributions. The written work makes independent and well focused arguments. The student provides persuasive evidence from sources in support of key points. Arguments demonstrate good comprehension of the material as well as some sustained critical thinking. However, the writing falls somewhat short on any one of the three dimensions of excellence outlined above—evidence, argument, expression. By comparison to an "A" paper, it may make some minor errors of fact or interpretation or the arguments made do not have the complexity, the insight or the integrated structure, nuance and originality of an A-range paper. The performance work is strong however, it falls short regarding engaging the concepts of the course, rigorous rehearsal/preparation process, and originality.

C range: The student meets the basic requirements of class participation, show some signs of class preparation, but is clearly less than conversant with the readings. Contributions to class discussions may offer some insightful ideas but may stray from the issue at hand, or do not help to generate discussion or to advance it. Attendance or tardiness may be a problem. Their written and performance work falls significantly short on any of the major dimensions of excellence outlined above. The work has some but not all of the basic components of good argumentation (i.e., unified argument, evidence, coherent structure). For example, written work may offer a thesis of some kind, but it presents no evidence to support the thesis; or it may present an incoherent thesis or a thesis that is too general; or it may simply repeat points made in a reading or in class without integration into an overall argument. Such written work is usually poorly organized and not carefully proofread. Performance work is undeveloped and/or under rehearsed/not thoughtfully prepared or carried out.

D or Below: Student fails to meet one or all of the basic requirements of the course in terms of attendance, participation and assignment completion.

Accomodation

If you have an accommodation letter from the university providing extra time for assignments or allowing use of electronics, or other accommodations that the instructor should be aware of, please bring your letter to the instructor at the beginning of the course.

Practicum

Students are required to participate in the course practicum, which will consist of fieldwork outside of class time. Exact schedule of fieldwork to be determined within the first two weeks of the course. Journal and recording device is required as well as personal protective equipment as deemed necessary by the fieldwork setting (steel toed boots, safety glasses/vests, etc). Students must arrange their own transportation to/from the fieldwork sites. Students are encouraged to use the Middletown city bus: http://www.middletownareatransit.org
Course Outline/Schedule

Schedule is subject to change. Please refer to course Moodle for most updated schedule.

Week 1
January 25  Syllabus review and introductions

January 27  Principles of Community-Based Performance
Reading: Watch Trash Dance
  Introduction & Chapter 4 in Local Acts by Jan Cohen-Cruz
  Introduction from Community Performance by Petra Kuppers
Assignment: Journal/Online reflections on Trash Dance

January 29  Required Attendance—MLK Commemoration and
  Keynote on Environmental Justice;
  Dr. Dorcea E. Taylor, PH.D
4:15pm  http://www.wesleyan.edu/mlk/

Week 2
February 1  Researching Middletown/Olin Library Visit
Reading: Fieldworking, Introduction & Chapter 7
  Middletown History source TBD

February 3  Tour of Middletown Waste Water Treatment Plant
Reading: Fieldworking, Chapters 1 & 2
Assignment: Journal/Online reflections, MLK Day Keynote
**Research Topics for Student Presentations and Paper #1 Confirmed

Week 3—Class Practicum begins
February 8  FieldWriting and The Collaborative Listener
Reading: Fieldworking; Chapters 4 & 5
Assignment: Ethnography #1 DUE

February 10  Legacies of Community-Based Art Practice
Reading: Chpts. 1-3; Local Acts, by Jan Cohen-Cruz
  Barbara Shaffer Bacon reading TBD
Presentation on John O’Neal/Junebug Productions (TBD who)
Presentation on Suzanne Lacy (TBD who)

February 11  Mandatory Attendance at Lunch time lecture by Barbara-
  Schaffer Bacon, Location TBA
12-1pm  Optional Attendance at Think Tank for meeting with
  Barbara, COE
1:30-3pm

Week 4
February 15  Creative Placemaking
Reading: “Art and Culture in Neighborhood Ecosystems” and “Q&A
  with Maria Rosario Jackson”; Remapping Performance by
  Jan Cohen Cruz
Assignment: Ethnography #2 DUE
February 17  Methodologies for Community-Based Art Practice
Reading: Chpts. 6-7 plus closing; Local Acts by Jan Cohen-Cruz
Presentations on John Malpede and the LA Poverty Dept (TBD who)

Week 5
February 22  Theatre of the Oppressed
Reading: Chpt. 2; Engaging Performance, by Jan Cohen-Cruz
Chpt. 1; The Community Performance Reader
Augusto Boal Presentation (TBD who)

February 24  Self-representing: testimonial performance
Reading: Chpt. 3; Engaging Performance, by Jan Cohen-Cruz
Marty Pottenger Presentation (TBD who)
Assignment: Ethnography #3 DUE

Week 6
February 29  Partnering—Artists in Unconventional Contexts
Reading: Chpt 3; Remapping Performance, by Jan Cohen-Cruz
Mondo Bizarro Presentation (TBD who)
Sojourn Theater Presentation (TBD who)

March 2  Unpacking The Process So Far
Reading: TBD

Paper #1 due March 4th by 5pm

SPRING BREAK (March 4th-20th)
**Reading and assignment schedule below subject to change

Week 7
March 21  Questions for Making
Reading: Excerpts from Hiking the Horizontal, by Liz Lerman
Additional Readings TBD

March 23  Researching the River—Class with Middletown Historical Society
Reading: TBD
Assignment: Ethnography #4 DUE

Week 8
Initial Final Project Proposal due by March 28th at 9am
March 28  Final Project Idea Presentations

March 30  TBD
Reading: Excerpts from Hiking the Horizontal, by Liz Lerman

Liz Lerman at Wesleyan this week; exact times/dates TBA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 4</td>
<td>Moving forward in the making</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading:</td>
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| April 6        | Continuation                                             |
| Reading:       | TBD                                                      |

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<tr>
<th>Week 10</th>
<th>Revised Final Project Proposal Due by April 11th at 9am</th>
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<tr>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>Final Project Presentations and Work Sessions</td>
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<td>Reading:</td>
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| April 13       | Final Project Presentations and Work Sessions            |
| Reading:       | TBD                                                      |

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<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>Final Project Presentations and Work Sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading:</td>
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| April 20       | Final Project Presentations and Work Sessions            |
| Reading:       | TBD                                                      |

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<thead>
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<td>April 25</td>
<td>Final Project Presentations and Work Sessions</td>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Rehearsals and Final Project Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>Rehearsals and Final Project Preparation</td>
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| May 7—Riverfront Encounter |                                                          |

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>Final Meeting from 9am-12noon</td>
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*Final Paper (Paper #3) Due at Class Meeting*