

The City through the body
Department of Dance & Urban and Regional Planning
College of Fine & Applied Arts
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Spring 2023

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Participatory planning & design of a neighborhood park in Valparaíso, Chile. Image courtesy of Aldea, 2018.

Land Acknowledgement

We begin this class by acknowledging that the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign occupies the lands of the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Piankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Chickasaw Nations. These lands were the traditional territory of these Native Nations prior to their forced removal; these lands continue to carry the stories of these Nations and their struggles for survival and identity. These Nations remain in relationship with these lands, and as a land-grant institution, the University of Illinois has a particular responsibility to acknowledge these relationships, its role in their dispossession, and its duty to facilitate their restoration.

Course description

Focusing on the creation of situated, experimental and embodied research methods, the course explores how we understand, represent and challenge urban conditions of oppression and inequality through the body. Using an international, interdisciplinary, and intersectional approach, this collaborative graduate course uses theoretical and practical strategies from choreography and planning to tackle historical inequities in the urban context. The tools of improvisation, sensory and embodied approaches to reframing perception and experimental composition and choreography will be interwoven with ethnographic and community engagement tools including storytelling, and other modes of narrating histories and futures. Our goal is to provoke and support students to think about new questions and methods in their work with a social justice outcome.

As part of the class, students will learn and articulate potentials, values, and ethical principles unique to choreographic and arts-based methods and strategies for social and environmental change in the city involving diverse populations and contexts. The course will promote a reflexive practice and the need to develop cultural competencies to work with art and diverse communities. Students will also learn different tools to bring people together and effect change in their environments.

The course's activities include group discussions; learning, practicing and creating situated and experimental methods; choreographic exercises and scores, writing activities; guest speakers and artists; media screening; individual and collaborative research; site visit; and readings. Most of the course work and assignments will be developed during class meetings with some exceptions. Course assignments will require students to design a method or a collection of methods or strategies that they could use either with community they are working with in their research or practice or to explore a site. These projects will involve creative planning sessions and collaboration with other students and instructors.

It is important to note that one of the main characteristics of this course is that it is organic, flexible, and open in nature and that many of the goals and tasks will emerge from the learning process, our interactions in class, and the engagement with one another.

Course Objectives:

Through active participation and co-construction of activities and assignments, students will be able to:

1. Apply and articulate values, ethical standards and principles rooted in feminist and queer perspectives to arts-based engagement involving diverse populations and settings.
2. Experiment and take risks to explore choreographic and arts-based methods that can contribute effectively and ethically to communities across diverse populations and cultures.

3. Become familiar with situated, experimental methods, embodied approaches and engagement tools to use in their research.
4. Research, design, and present a proposal of methods to work with communities or sites that communicates effectively and aesthetically.

The course will include three phases -

1. Foundational concepts and experiments with queer, decolonial, feminist and critical race theory.
2. Experimental methods to explore the built environment and landscapes through the body which will help to define research questions and/or topics of interests.
3. Practicing and designing collaboratively and individually new methods and approaches for researching/practicing in community-based projects that respond to the built environment. This will involve centering each graduate student's own research project with collective support. Format for presenting their project is open - a paper, essay, data collection, ethnography, audiovisual project, performance, community workshop, archive, journal, etc. These will be shared in a final presentation at the end of the course.

In addition to lectures, participatory exercises, guest speakers and artists, media screening, individual research, group discussions, site visits, and readings, course assignments will require students to lead discussions on assigned readings, archive experiences, objects and thoughts through the course of the semester and design new methods. Participation in all the sessions is critical for achieving excellent performance in the course.

The course is structured in weekly thematic sessions that combine one lecture-based session and a session on strategies and/or fieldtrips.

Class format and structure

The course will be delivered mostly in person following the University's guidelines concerning the evolving health conditions. Some weeks the sessions may be delivered online to accommodate guest speakers or instruction needs.

The course is structured thematically. Each week we will explore a theme and combine lecture-based sessions with hands-on exercises. Some weeks the sessions will involve local fieldtrips or working outside, and students must accommodate their time and commitments to attend these activities. The mobilization to and from the places we will visit are the responsibility of each student. We will facilitate carpooling when we can.

Course Objectives

The primary goal of this course is to investigate and develop understandings of ways in which art and creative practices (broadly understood) can facilitate building critical communities and envision more just urban futures.

Through active participation in course activities and assignments, students will be able to:

1. Identify global practitioners, artists and grassroots movements that are active in this arena and describe the aesthetic, sociocultural and ecological significance of their work.
2. Describe ways in which artists/art works function in the local community infrastructure as well as in broader social, cultural and political spheres.
3. Understand the critiques and challenges related to creative placemaking and arts districts.
4. To become familiar with common qualitative research and engagement methods used in art-based planning.
5. Research, design, and present a proposal for a community-based project that communicates effectively and aesthetically.
6. Collaborate with others in creating works of art that engage community and affects positive change.
7. Develop choreographic strategies that extend performance beyond the conventional settings for presentation.
8. Expand our creative potential through collaborative exchange and practice.

Course Requirements

To achieve the course objectives, students will:

1. Actively participate in all session and planned class projects involving participatory exercises, creative and artistic activities, and field visits.
2. Read selected articles on course-related topics and discuss them in class.
3. Interact with peers and with communities during field visits.
4. Commit to a reflexive practice and document their involvement in all of the above activities through drawings, photographs, video, sketches, journal entries, etc., and submit this documentation at the completion of the course for evaluation.
5. Initiate, plan, present and execute a proposal for new methods to explore the built environment and communities through body with a social justice outcome.
6. Develop choreographic and/or creative strategies that students may apply in their research or practice.

Textbooks:

There is no required text for this class. All readings have been placed on the Canvas web site, organized by session and arranged in chronological order.

Canvas Course Web Site

Much of the course resources, readings, assignments, and announcements will be available through the course website via Canvas.

Course Grade

<i>Formal Graded Assignments</i>	<i>Due Dates</i>	<i>Points</i>
Reflection 1	April 7	15
Reflection 2		15
Final Project - method proposal and presentation		25
Participation,(includes leading discussions on assigned readings) and archive of learning and experimenting process	3 points each week starting from Week 2	45
TOTAL		100

Your course grade will be determined by your successful completion of the components below and your active participation in this course. Course grades will be assigned on an absolute scale (A, B, C...) and will be determined by a criterion-based scale. For example, generally an A+ 98 – 100; A 94 – 97; A- 91 – 93; and so on.

Team members will receive the same grade for team assignments.

Grading Criteria

Grading rubrics will vary by assignment & can be viewed in each assignment sheet; the following are general guidelines:

- Original ideas, thoughtfully presented, carefully edited for written work, well-rehearsed for oral assignments, proper attribution of the work of others, will yield most, possibly all, of the points per assignment.
- Work that includes some original ideas and is well edited, but lacks a thorough understanding of the assignment, will receive partial points per assignment.

- Work that indicates poor preparation and poor understanding will receive only a few points per assignment.
- Work that lacks originality, is poorly edited, and shows a lack of care on the part of the student (for both oral and written assignments) will not earn any points.
- Written or oral work that is not properly attributed, lacks academic integrity (e.g., plagiarism), will receive no points & disciplinary action may be taken.

Course Policy

Attendance

The knowledge and skills you will gain in this course highly depend on your participation in class activities. Because of that, **attendance to class is required** and will count as part of the participation grade. We plan to track class attendance to help us understand how and when students are engaging in the course. If you are unable to attend class because you are ill or have a valid reason, contact us by email in advance of the absence.

COVID-19 Policy

Following University policy, all students are required to engage in appropriate behavior to protect the health and safety of the community. Students are also required to follow the campus COVID-19 protocols.

Students who feel ill must not come to class. In addition, students who test positive for COVID-19 or have had an exposure that requires testing and/or quarantine must not attend class. The University will provide information to the instructor, in a manner that complies with privacy laws, about students in these latter categories. These students are judged to have excused absences for the class period and should contact the instructor via email about making up the work.

Students who fail to abide by these rules will first be asked to comply; if they refuse, they will be required to leave the classroom immediately. If a student is asked to leave the classroom, the non-compliant student will be judged to have an unexcused absence and reported to the Office for Student Conflict Resolution for disciplinary action. Accumulation of non-compliance complaints against a student may result in dismissal from the University.

Please refer to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's [COVID-19 website for further information on face coverings](#). Thank you for respecting all of our well-being so we can learn and interact together productively.

Academic Integrity

Please be aware of the university guidelines regarding academic integrity, which can be found in the Student Code (<http://studentcode.illinois.edu/>). The standard for this class is that any work submitted by a student is solely, entirely, that particular student's own work. Students caught cheating—including the use of undeclared outside sources (including the net) will receive an F for the course. While you may study with other students, the submission of others' ideas as your own is academically dishonest. All forms of academic dishonesty will be considered a serious offense of university policy. Students committing any form of academic dishonesty will be reported to their home department, the College of Fine and Applied Arts, and to the Senate Committee on Student Discipline.

Diversity and inclusion:

The Department of Urban and Regional Planning (DURP) and the Department of Dance is committed to creating an environment of inclusion and opportunity that is rooted in the very goals and responsibilities of practicing planners and artists. Conduct that interferes with the rights of another or creates an atmosphere of intimidation or disrespect is inconsistent with the environment of learning and cooperation that the program requires. By enrolling a course in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and the Department of Dance, students agree to be responsible for maintaining a respectful environment in all activities, including lectures, discussions, labs, projects, and extracurricular programs. We will be governed by the University Student Code. Please see the Student Code Article 1—Student Rights and Responsibilities for further details.

Request for Special Accommodations:

To obtain disability-related adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 217.333.4603, email disability@illinois.edu or go to the DRES website at <http://disability.illinois.edu/>.

Please also schedule a private meeting with one of the course instructors to discuss your needs and requirements. All accommodations will try to be met once the student makes a request. Please note accommodations are not retroactive to the beginning of the semester but begin the day the student contacts their instructors with a current letter of accommodation from DRES.

Counselling Center

The Counseling Center is committed to providing a range of services intended to help students develop improved coping skills in order to address emotional, interpersonal, and academic concerns. The Counseling Center provides individual, couples, and group counseling. All of these services are paid for through the health services fee. The Counseling Center offers

primarily short-term counseling, but they do also provide referrals to the community when students could benefit from longer term services.

Reading Material

All readings are in pdfs available on Canvass or linked in the syllabus.

Description of Assignments

The course will include different assignments which main objective is to build towards the final project.

Participation (ongoing): One of the main components of this course is the active participation during classes. Most assignments therefore will be done during class. Each week you'll receive a maximum of 3 points for your participation in class discussions, leading reading discussions and participating in-class exercises, engaging with others, and gradually building a personal archive of the class. Each week throughout the semester students will collect objects, thoughts, experiences, drawing, photos, videos, concepts, reflections, movement, etc. This archive will serve as inspiration and registration of the process that will lead toward the final project at the end of the semester. Their chosen things and ideas will connect to the class topics, readings, exercises and their own research/practice. During some session's instructors will ask you to bring what you have collected and discuss them with your peers.

Reflection 1 Due Friday, February 17th

Please write a 3 -5 page reflection paper. Double spaced 10 pt

Reflective writing is a process of identifying, questioning, and critically evaluating course-based learning opportunities integrated with your own observations, experiences, impressions, beliefs, assumptions, or biases. It describes how the learning process stimulated a new or creative understanding of the content of the course. A reflective paper describes and explains critically, in an introspective, first-person narrative, your reactions and feelings about how you experienced learning throughout the course.

In this assignment we ask you to identify 3-4 questions that have arisen for you through the first five weeks of the course. Put those questions in dialogue with the readings and exercises offered so far. Cite sections of the readings and exercises that have influenced you, speak to how your research questions are shaping up. Discuss the relationship between the embodied practice and the readings. Consider how these theoretical and embodied perspectives shape your own ethical concerns and approaches.

Share the archive you have collected so far. Comment on why you have made your choices of what to archive and how the items give you pleasure and insight.

Reflection 2 Due Friday, April 7.

3-5 page Reflection Paper. Double spaced, 10 point.

Describe in detail how you are developing a methodology in conversation with the material of the last module. Cite examples from methods we have worked on in class or from other sources. Think about your method as a geological striation. How is it layered; how does one layer support the other? Think about it spatially if possible. Speak to how it engages aspects of community and creativity.

Final Project – due the last week of class

The final project is the result of the incremental learning and exercises of the entire course, and it consists of two parts. It includes the sharing of your course archive in any format of your choice that inspires or reflects the method you will create. It also includes, a project that offers an original creative method that you have developed based on the learnings of the class in relation to a specific community or place. The format of this final project will vary according to each student’s creative and learning process. The assignments are due the last week of the semester.

Course structure and topics overview:

Module 1: Foundational topics and concepts		
Week 1	S1. W Jan 18	Asynchronous- Welcome and Reflection on Canvas
Week 2	S2. M Jan 23	Course Roadmap
	S3. W Jan 25	Defining the city and the body
Week 3	S4. M Jan 30	Feminist and Queer Research Ethics
	S5. W Feb 1	
Week 4	S6. M Feb 6	Reflexivity and positionality
	S7. W Feb 8	
Week 5	S8. M Feb 13	Decoloniality
	S9. W Feb 15	Activity at KAM
Week 6	S10. M Feb 20	ILand
	S11 W Feb 22	Strategies: Creating a score
Week 7	S12 M Feb 27	Ethics of community engagement
	S13 W Mar 1	
Week 8	S14 M Mar6	Storytelling
	S15 W Mar 8	Strategies: Collective Storytelling

Week 9	S16 M Mar 13	Spring Break
	S17 W Mar 15	Spring Break
Week 10	S18 M Mar 20	Relational arts
	S19 W Mar 22	Exercise Memory and protests
Week 11	S20 M Mar 27	Collaborations between architects and choreographers
	S21 W Mar 29	Work on Scores outside. Equinox
Week 12	S22 M Apr 3	Cuerpo-territorio
	S23 W Apr 5	Strategies: Bodymapping
Week 13	S24 M Apr 10	Practice of collaboration
	S 25 Apr 12	Practice of collaboration
Week 14	S26 M Apr 17	Practice of Collaboration
	S27 Apr 19	Archiving movements and objects
Week 15	S 28 Apr 24	Project preparation
	S 27 W Apr 26	Final Project Presentations
Week 16	S 28 M May 1	Final Project Presentations
	S 29 W May 3	Class wrap up

Week 1- Jan 16: Welcome

The objective of this first asynchronous class is that student's share their expectations of the course and at the same time have the opportunity to experiment methodologies of movement.

The exercise can be found on Canvas in Modules, Week 1 and in the discussion section

Week 2- Jan 23: Defining

The goal of this session is to reflect and share our understanding of the body, the city and its relation.

What is the significance of the body on collaborative city making? What is the role of the body in urban research and practice? What is embodied practice and research?

Assigned readings due on Wednesday 25th

- Bench Anfield. 2015. Chapter 5, Still Submerged: The Uninhabitability of Urban Redevelopment in Sylvia Winter, edited by Katherine McKittrick (pp. 124-141)
- Diana Taylor. 2003. Chapter 1. The Archive and the Repertoire. Duke University Press.

Week 3-Jan 30: Feminist and Queer Research Ethics

The goal of this week's session is to reflect and discuss and understand a feminist and queer approach to research.

What is a feminist research? What ethics does feminist and queer research involves? What is the difference with other type of research perspectives? What are its contributions and limitations?

Assigned readings due Monday:

- Sara Ahmed. Introduction. *Living a Feminist Life*, pp. 19-20 and Chapter 3: Willfulness And Feminist Subjectivity, pp. 65-88.
- Mayfield Brooks, *Improvising While Black*, *Contact Quarterly*, pp. 33-39.
- Catalina Cabal Hernandez. Unpublished manuscript pp. 1- 7. 2021

Suggested Reading: Lisa Nelson <http://oralsite.be/pages/Anthology-Lisa-Nelson>

Week 4- Feb 6: Reflexivity and Positionality

The goal of this week's class is to understand how reflexive practice and our ability to locate our own positionality impacts our approach and methods. How do we understand this theoretically and in the movement of our bodies in different contexts?

Assigned reading due Monday:

- Vasudevan (2022) Developing a relational solidarity politics in ethnographic research: reflections from a planner, *Gender, Place & Culture*, DOI: [10.1080/0966369X.2022.2064833](https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2022.2064833)
- [Ferguson, Isis. 2016. The Principles of Ethical Redevelopment. Common Edge](#)

Week 5-Feb 13: Decoloniality

The goal of this week is to think through ways we approach de-colonizing as a practice, by locating it's structural impact in the ways we understand land, body and art practice. We will use the Krannert Art Museum as an example of how curatorial methods shape how we see and perceive aesthetics and power.

Assigned reading:

- Liboiron, Max. *Pollution is Colonialism*, Intro pp.1-35
- Pastrana Santiago, Nibia. Pamphlet from 2019 Whitney Biennial

MODULE 2 – Methods

Week 6-Feb 20: Creating a score

The goal of this week is to introduce particular methods and see how they can influence and be in dialogue with our own. We will start with the Field Guide to iLANDing:scores for researching urban ecology. This is compilation of interdisciplinary collaborative scores based in movement that we can understand as an approach to improvisational method.

Assigned reading:

- iLAND, Field Guide to iLANDing:scores for researching urban ecologies. 2007

Week 7-Feb 27: Sharing methods of community engagement

The goal of this week is to share examples and experiences of arts-based community engagement practices with each other and use them to shape scores as method.

Assignment: Students will share one to two examples of creative community engagement that has impacted them either negatively or positively. We will create collaborative scores in response to the examples.

Week 8-Mar 6: Storytelling

The goal of this week is to share Magdalena's practice of storytelling. And to use it to inform collaborative methods.

Assigned readings:

- Catalina Ortiz (2022). Storytelling otherwise: Decolonising storytelling in planning. *Planning Theory*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/14730952221115875>
- Magdalena Novoa (2021) Gendered Nostalgia. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*.

Week 9-Mar 13: SPRING BREAK

Week 10-Mar 20: Relational Arts – examples in the field

The goal of this week is to put art and planning practices in conversation with protest and resistance.

Guest Artist: Cristobal Bianchi

Assigned Readings due Monday:

- Goldman, Danielle. I Want To Be Ready. Chap. 3, Bodies on the Line and techniques of non-violent protest.
- Foster, Susan. Choreographies of Protest. Theatre Journal, Volume 55, Number 3, October 2003, pp. 395-412
- Taylor, Diana. 2021. Presente!

Week 11-Mar 27: Collaborations between Choreographers and Architects – examples in the field

The goal of this week is to see how architects and choreographers have created collaborative methods and to activate the synergies and overlaps in our processes.

Guest speakers: Daniela Mansi (Choreographer and Professor Universidad de Chile) and Gabriela Garcia de Cortazar (Architect and Professor Universidad de Chile) presenting the project: The Waiting Room <https://lasaladeespera.cargo.site/>

Assigned Reading:

Suggested Reading:

<https://theatrum-mundi.org/project/>

Adesola Akinleye. Dance, Architecture and Engineering

Week 12- Apr 3: Cuerpo Territorio y Body Mapping

The goal this week is to continue to share more examples from practitioners in the field

Guest Speaker: Sofia Zaragocin

Assigned Reading:

- Sofia Zaragocin & Martina Angela Caretta (2021) *Cuerpo-Territorio: A Decolonial Feminist Geographical Method for the Study of Embodiment*, Annals of the American Association of Geographers, 111:5, 1503-1518, DOI: [10.1080/24694452.2020.1812370](https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2020.1812370)

MODULE 3-Creations and Collaborations

Week 13-15- Apr 10-26: Practicing Collaboration

The goal of the rest of the semester is to develop our final projects, inspired by the concepts and topics of the course and student archives and reflections. We will share our final projects during the last 3-4 classes of the semester. Class time will be devoted to collaborating on shared methods and supporting each other in our research interests and questions.

Week 16- May 1 – Final Projects and Wrap up