

The City through the Body
Department of Dance & Urban and Regional Planning
College of Fine & Applied Arts
Professor Magdalena Novoa
Professor Joe Bowie
Spring 2024

Mon-Wed: 11.00-12.20
Room: 109 907 1/2 W Nevada
(Dance Building)
Email: mnovoa@illinois.edu
Email: joejb2@illinois.edu
Office hours: By appointment



Street Ballet, Urbana. The City through the Body, Spring 2023. Choreography by Julia Curry.

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. We aim to provoke and support students to think about new questions and methods in their work with a social justice outcome.

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. 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 visits; and readings. Most of the coursework 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 they could use with the 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 our 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	Feb 16	15
Reflection 2	Apr 5	15
Final Project - method proposal and presentation	April 29-May 1	25
Participation- includes leading discussions on assigned readings, doing weekly assigned activities and reflections on canvas 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; 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 needs a thorough understanding of the assignment will receive partial points per assignment.
- Work that indicates poor preparation and 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) and will not earn any points.
- Written or oral work that is not correctly 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 engage in the course. If you cannot attend class because you are ill or have a valid reason, contact us by email before the absence.

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 that particular student's work. Students caught cheating, including using AI and undeclared outside sources (including the net), will receive an F for the course. While you may work with other students, submitting 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 the Senate Committee on Student Discipline.

Diversity and inclusion:

The Department of Urban and Regional Planning (DURP) and the Department of Dance are committed to creating an environment of inclusion and opportunity rooted in the 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, care, and cooperation that the program requires. By enrolling in a course in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and the Department of Dance, students agree to be responsible for maintaining a respectful, safe, and caring environment in all activities, including lectures, discussions, labs, projects, and extracurricular programs. For further details, please see the Student Code Article 1—Student Rights and Responsibilities.

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 also provide referrals to the community when students could benefit from longer-term services.

Reading Material

All readings are in PDFs available on Canvas or linked in the syllabus.

Description of Assignments

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

Participation (ongoing): One of the main components of this course is active participation during classes. Most assignments, therefore, will be done during class. Each week, you'll receive a maximum of 3 points for participating in class discussions, leading reading discussions, and participating in-class or outside 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, drawings, photos, videos, concepts, reflections, movements, 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 sessions, instructors will ask you to bring what you have collected and discuss them with your peers. Students are always welcome to offer ideas for learning and sharing that are not in the syllabus and that can enrich further our class experience.

Leading reading discussions: Please sign up in this [link](#).

Everybody must come prepared to discuss the readings and share their perspectives with each other.

Discussions leaders: With your peer prepare to lead a discussion session that supports meaningful engagement with everyone in the class. The goal is to create space for interdisciplinary perspectives that resonate with the concepts of the readings and expand our own thinking of research methods. Leading the readings discussion then is not about summarizing the readings or demonstrating that you fully understood them, but to allow for perspectives across our diverse disciplinary backgrounds to emerge and influence our practices together and individually.

Reflection 1 Due Friday, February 16^h

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 5th.

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 results from the incremental learning and exercises of the entire course, consisting of two parts. It includes sharing 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 about 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: Definitions		
Week 1	S1. W Jan 17	Asynchronous- Welcome and Reflection on Canvas
Week 2	S2. M Jan 22	Course Roadmap
	S3. W Jan 24	Defining the city and the body
Week 3	S4. M Jan 29	Feminist and Queer Research Ethics
	S5. W Jan 31	Collecting & Discarding based on students’ RQ
Week 4	S6. M Feb 5	Decoloniality
	S7. W Feb 7	Zine activity at IMC
Week 5	S8. M Feb 12	Reflexivity and positionality
	S9. W Feb 14	Strategies: Moving and reflecting
Module 2: Methods		
Week 6	S10. M Feb 19	ILand
	S11 W Feb 21	Strategies: Creating a score
Week 7	S12 M Feb 26	Ethics of community engagement
	S13 W Feb 28	Strategies: Practicing scores
Week 8	S14 M Mar 4	Relational arts
	S15 W Mar 6	Visit to the Indigenous Memorial on Campus
Week 9	S16 M Mar 11	Storytelling
	S17 W Mar 13	Strategies: Collective Storytelling
Week 10	S18 M Mar 18	Spring Break
	S19 W Mar 20	Spring Break
Week 11	S20 M Mar 25	Arpillera Urbana

	S21 W Mar 27	Work on Scores outside.
Week 12	S22 M Apr 1	Cuerpo-territorio: Visit to the Maps library
	S23 W Apr 3	Strategies: Body mapping
Module 3: Creations and Collaborations		
Week 13	S24 M Apr 8	Practice of collaboration
	S 25 Apr 10	Practice of collaboration
Week 14	S26 M Apr 15	Practice of Collaboration
	S27 Apr 17	Archiving movements and objects
Week 15	S 28 Apr 22	Project preparation
	S 27 W Apr 24	Project Preparation
Week 16	S 28 M May 29	Final Project Presentations
	S 29 W May 1	Class wrap up

Week 1- Jan 17: Welcome

The objective of this first asynchronous class is for students to share their expectations of the course and simultaneously have the opportunity to experiment with movement methodologies.

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

Week 2- Jan 22-24: Defining

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

What is the significance of the body in 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 24th

- 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 29-31: 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 involve? What is the difference with other type of research perspectives? What are its contributions and limitations?

Assigned readings due Monday:

- Sara Ahmed. <https://feministkilljoys.com/2023/03/06/killjoysolidarity/>
- 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 5-7: Decoloniality

The goal of this week is to think through ways we approach de-colonizing as a practice by locating its structural impact in the ways we understand land, body, and art practice. We will explore zine-making as a decolonizing methodology.

Assigned reading due Monday:

Assigned reading:

- Liboiron, Max. Pollution is Colonialism, Intro pp.1-35
- Pastrana Santiago, Nibia. Pamphlet from 2019 Whitney Biennial
- Maynard, Robyn and Betasamosake Simpson, Leanne (2022). Making Freedom in Forgotten Places in Rehearsals for Living, pp. 57-78.

Week 5-Feb 12-14: Reflexivity and Positionality

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

Assigned reading due on Monday

- [Gavin-Bravo, C. Semillas de la rebelión: Revolutionary postmemory, hip-hop, and Chilean exile. *Lat Stud* 21, 238–254 \(2023\). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41276-022-00407-x>](#)
- [Ferguson, Isis. 2016. The Principles of Ethical Redevelopment. *Common Edge*](#)

MODULE 2 – Methods

Week 6-Feb 19-21: 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 a compilation of interdisciplinary collaborative scores based on 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 26-28: 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 a method.

Assignment: Students create a score specific to their final project and bring it in a written format on Monday.

Week 8-Mar 4-6: 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 9-Mar 11-13: 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 10-Mar 18-20: SPRING BREAK

Week 11-Mar 25-27: Memory and Human Rights– examples in the field

We aim to learn directly from social leaders and artists how they engage with arts, memory, and human rights.

Guest speakers: Aida Moreno, Elizabeth Aguilera y Dani Negri (Daniela Pizarro)

Assigned Reading and taks:

[Arte, Mujer y Memoria: Arpilleras from Chile. Exhibition in the Museum of Latin American Art, Los Angeles.](#) Explore the exhibition.

Week 12- Apr 1- 3: Cuerpo Territorio y Body Mapping

This week's goal is to continue sharing more examples from practitioners in the field.

On Monday we'll hold the class in the Maps library.

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)
- Winkler, Tanja (2023). *Contemplating Planning Knowledges and Ethics in TheoRISE*, Yiftachel, O, and Mammon, N. eds. Pp. 60-66.

MODULE 3- Creations and Collaborations

Week 13-16- Apr 8-26: Practicing Collaboration

The rest of the semester aims 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 semester's last 3-4 classes. Class time will be devoted to collaborating on shared methods and supporting each other in our research interests and questions.

Week 16- Apr 29-May 1 – Final Projects and Wrap-up