

Artist as Social Instigator

M/W 11-12:15

Instructor: Laura Epperson
Phone: 515.210.8073

Email: laura.mw.epperson@gmail.com
Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:30-2:30p

“And I think it is healing behavior, to look at something so broken and see the possibility and wholeness in it.”

—adrienne maree brown

Course Description:

This course examines theories, practices, and politics associated with creating artistic experiences meant to facilitate social action and/or change outside of the formal theatre setting. Specifically, we will explore work in which: communities engage with a professional production, communities and professional artists create and perform a collaborative production, and communities work with teaching artists for diverse goals in a variety of contexts. Throughout this course, we will critically interrogate how our values impact our artistic practice(s); reflect on the artist’s role in community-based practice; and identify effective strategies for building community partnerships. We will also practice regular self-reflection through weekly journaling that will help as we each write and revise our personal artist philosophy.

Guiding Questions:

- What are your core values and how do they impact your artistic practice?
 - What is the relationship between socially engaged art-making and community-based artistic collaborations?
 - What activities and projects are considered socially-engaged and community-based?
 - How might creating art outside of traditional settings invite more people into the artistic process?
 - What artistic skills contribute to effective facilitation of community-based artistic processes in various settings/contexts?
 - How does giving/receiving feedback and engaging in regular self-reflection support a socially-engaged artistic practice?
 - Name a question of your own:
-

Objectives:

- To articulate, share, and revise your ever-evolving artist philosophy.
- To curate a growing list of artists, philosophers, educators, activists, and thinkers who inspire your aesthetic *and* social practices.

Objectives (continued):

- To identify and define various forms, practices, and theories associated with socially engaged art-making in community-based collaborations.
 - To formulate the artist’s role in and skills needed for community-based collaborations.
 - To synthesize understandings of socially engaged, community-based artistic collaborations through the development and presentation of a community-centered art project proposal.
 - Name an objective of your own:
-

Required Texts:

All of our readings will be available via our Canvas course page. The texts and materials we will engage with are listed in the Course Calendar below.

Additional Resources:

Throughout this course we will share and discover artists, philosophers, educators, activists, and thinkers who inspire our work as socially-engaged artists. We will create a page on Canvas dedicated to curating our growing list of resources. Please begin to gather resources you would like to share with the class.

Attendance:

This course is discussion and collaboration based. Attendance and participation are essential not only for your own learning and growth, but for the learning and growth of the whole class. I expect each person will be present for all class meetings, except in the case of the following excused absences: illness (documentation from a physician if missing more than one session), personal/family emergencies, professional obligations (give at least 2 weeks notice), and religious holy days (give 14 days notice, per UT policy). If you exceed 3 unexcused absences, you and I will meet to discuss your attendance challenges and consequences for absences moving forward. Excessive absences may result in a meeting with your advisor and/or a lowered final grade.

Accommodations:

Students with disabilities may request appropriate accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement: <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>. Please also set up a meeting with me to discuss how to best meet your needs in this course.

Academic Integrity:

I assume all written and creative work you submit is your own. Plagiarism is a serious offense. Use appropriate citations to give credit when and where it's due (MLA preferred). Refer to the Dean of Student's website for additional info:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php>

Grading:

Participation	10%
Journal	15%
Creative Introduction	5%
Inspiration Share	10%
Observation/Interview	10%
Artist Philosophy	20%
Project Proposal + Presentation	30%

Assignments:

(Full assignment descriptions and assessment criteria are available on Canvas)

Participation (10 pts): Active participation will ensure you and your colleagues get the most out of this course. I recognize that "active participation" looks different for each of us and may vary depending on the context. At the beginning of the course, we will discuss participation and identify how our community of practice will define active participation this semester. This

discussion will serve as the basis for your earning participation points during each session. If you have any questions or concerns about participation in this course, please let me know.

Journal (15 pts, due 9/26, 10/31, and 12/10): You will keep a journal throughout the semester, a space to establish a dialogue with yourself about the material you encounter in and out of class and take note of your thoughts and questions. You are encouraged to explore a personal/public style of writing/expression, as I will be engaging with and responding to your journal. It is important that your journal take a form and style that seems authentic and useful to you. You might keep a handwritten journal, a blog, video entries, or audio/podcast episodes. Your reflections in this space may be free form and creative. Please complete at least one entry each week, more if you are so inclined. See Canvas for more details.

Creative Introduction (5 pts, due 9/5): On the second day of class, everyone will offer a creative presentation to introduce themselves to the group. These presentations will set the foundation of our work together throughout the semester. How do you want to frame your experiences and interests for your classmates? This is an opportunity for you to begin to think about how your human experiences, values, and goals are connected to your creative practice and artistry. As one of my mentors always reminds me, I encourage you to consider both form and function with your introduction. Each presentation should be between 3-5 minutes, incorporate some kind of artistic element, and answer the following questions: Where/how do you locate yourself at UT? What is/are your artistic medium(s)? Why do you create? What is one goal you have for this class? See Canvas for more details.

Inspiration Share (10 pts): Throughout the first part of the semester, you will each share with the class an artist, scholar, educator, philosopher, educator, person who inspires your (socially-engaged) artistic work. This could be a person you know/have worked with personally or someone who inspires you from afar. Your 10-minute presentation should offer details about this inspiring person and their work, specific connections to how this person has impacted your own life/process, and how this person's work relates to our ongoing exploration of socially-engaged and community-based art-making. I encourage you to again consider form and function with this presentation. How might the work of the person you put forward inform the style/structure of your presentation? See Canvas for more details and presentation sign-ups.

Observation/Interview (10 pts, due 10/22): You will each have the opportunity to observe and/or interview an artist doing socially-engaged, community-based work. A list of possible observations sites and artists to interview will be provided by the fourth week of class. Opportunities will included local artists working on and/or off-campus who are open to observation as well as artists based outside of Austin who have agreed to be interviewed. You will coordinate your observations/interviews through me. Please discuss with me if you would like to observe/interview an artist who is not on the provided list. During your observation/interview, you will use an observational tool and/or interview questions to take notes on how the facilitating artist invites participation, leads by learning, and scaffolds the experience for participants. See Canvas for more details.

Artist Philosophy (20 pts, due 10/1, 11/5, and 12/12): Throughout this course, you will each write (and rewrite) a statement of your values, principles, methods, and goals as a socially-engaged artist. At the beginning of the semester, you will spend time both in and out of class reflecting on your experiences and beliefs as you locate and clarify the foundation of your artistic practice and passion. You will write (at least) three drafts of your philosophy over the course of the semester and receive both instructor and peer feedback. Each draft should be 1-2 pages, single-spaced, typed, thoughtfully written and well-edited. At the end of the semester, you and I

will co-design an evaluation rubric for your philosophy that we will both complete. See Canvas for more details and supporting resources.

Proposal Development + Presentation + Portfolio (30 pts, full proposal due 12/12): As the culminating project for this course, everyone will work in small groups to devise and plan a socially-engaged and arts-based project proposal. Starting in Week 9, our class will become a lab space in which the different project groups will move through the proposal development process together. During this lab time, the proposal will be broken down into a series of 9 “Check-Ins,” one Check-In due each class. At the end of the semester, you will pull all of these Check-Ins together to create a final, cohesive proposal. Each group will share their final project proposal with the class through a creative presentation during the last two weeks of the semester. There is already information about this project on Canvas and we will discuss it in **great** detail later in the semester. For now, it may be helpful to know how both points and proposal Check-Ins will be broken down.

Project Proposal Point Allocation

Participation/collaboration during in-class development lab: 5 pts

Project Presentation: 10 pts

Final Project Portfolio (complete proposal): 15 pts

Scaffolded Project Proposal Check-In Structure

- Check-In #1 (due 10/24): Identify project model (community/audience engagement, community/professional production, or teaching artist residency)
- Check-In #2 (due 10/29): Who, what, where why, how? (project description)
- Check-In #3 (due 10/31): Project objectives/goals
- Check-In #4 (due 11/7): Evaluation protocols
- Check-In #5 (due 11/12): Project timeline
- Check-In #6 (due 11/4): Identify facilitation/presentation form and function
- Check-In #7 (due 11/19): Facilitation/presentation: essential question, objectives, activity ideas
- Check-In #8 (due 11/26): Draft facilitation/presentation plan (Engage, Explore, Reflect structure)
- Check-In #9 (due 12/12): Full project proposal + 1 revised facilitation/presentation plan

Daily Course and Assignment Calendar
 Assignments/readings are DUE on the date listed.
 (Schedule subject to change.)

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS/READINGS DUE
Weeks 1 & 2: Introductions to Course and Each Other		
Wed Aug 29	What is this course? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce course units and major assignments • Build collaborative community agreements • Introduce Artistic Introduction assignment 	Review syllabus
Mon Sept 3	No Class Meeting	Enjoy the day in celebration of labor rights.
Wed Sept 5	Who are we as artists? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process 	DUE: Creative Introductions READ: "Critical Response Process," https://lizlerman.com/critical-response-process/
Week 3: Reflecting on Artistic Principles and Core Values		
Mon Sept 10	What are our core values and artistic principles? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create artistic process maps 	READ: <i>The Reflexive Teaching Artist</i> by Dawson and Kelin, pp 12-24 Bring responses to reflection questions from reading + completed core values worksheet (in journal)
Wed Sept 12	How do our core values impact our artistic practice? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model and introduce artist/non-artist inspiration assignment • Introduce Artist Philosophy assignment 	READ: <i>Emergent Strategy</i> by adrienne maree brown, selection from introduction TBD
Week 4: Exploring Theoretical Frames for Community-Based Change-Making		
Mon Sept 17	What is pedagogy of the oppressed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce observation/interview assignment 	Inspiration Share: _____ READ: <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> by Paulo Freire, selection TBD
Wed Sept 19	How does pedagogy of the oppressed connect to community-based art-making?	Inspiration Share: _____ READ: <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> by Paulo Freire, selection TBD
Week 5: Exploring Theoretical Frames for Community-Based Change-Making		
Mon Sept 24	What is emergent strategy?	Inspiration Share: _____ READ: <i>Emergent Strategy</i> by adrienne maree brown, selection TBD
Wed Sept 26	How does emergent strategy connect to community-based art-making?	Inspiration Share: _____ DUE: Journal

		READ: <i>Emergent Strategy</i> by adrienne maree brown, selection TBD
Week 6: Community/Audience Engagement		
Mon Oct 1	How do we articulate our artist philosophies? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artist Philosophy workshop • Introduce Project Proposal assignment and development process 	Inspiration Share: _____ DUE: First Draft of Artist Philosophy
Wed Oct 3	What are examples of community-based art-making in conversation with professional productions?	Inspiration Share: _____ READ: "Urban Bush Women: The Community in Theory and Practice" by George-Graves
Week 7: Community Engagement/Productions		
Mon Oct 8	What are examples of community-based art-making in conversation with professional productions?	Inspiration Share: _____ READ: Case Study: Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company in "EmcArts — Case Studies in Innovation and Adaptive Capacity," pp 11-28
Wed Oct 10	What are examples of community-based art-making that results in a professional-community production? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest visit by Leah Harris 	Inspiration Share: _____ WATCH: "Discussion Public Works Dallas: A Retropsective on Thursday 26 October 2017," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__rIQNo7pcg
Week 8: Community Production and Teaching Artistry		
Mon Oct 15	What are examples of community-based art-making that results in a professional-community production?	Inspiration Share: _____ WATCH: <i>Trash Dance</i> (documentary about Forklift Danceworks)
Wed Oct 17	What are examples of community-based art-making through teaching artist residencies?	Inspiration Share: _____ WATCH: ITAC4 keynote speech by Marc Bamuthi Joseph OR ITAC4 keynote speech by Liz Lerman
Week 9: Teaching Artistry and Project Development Lab Intro		
Mon Oct 22	What are examples of community-based art-making through teaching artist residencies? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign-up for project groups 	Inspiration Share: _____ DUE: Observation/Interview READ: "Happening Yesterday, Happened Tomorrow" by Renée Watson
Wed Oct 24	Project Development Lab: What project model(s) will we use?	Inspiration Share: _____ DUE: Project Check-in #1 READ: <i>Theatre for Youth Third Space</i> by Stephani Etheridge Woodson, pp. 207-216.
Week 10: Project Development Lab Week 2—Project Description + Objectives		

Mon Oct 29	Who, what, where, why, how? • Workshop project description	DUE: Project Check-in #2
Wed Oct 31	Project Development Lab: What are our goals?	DUE: Journal Project Check-in #3
Week 11: PD Lab Week 3—Artist Philosophy Workshop + Evaluation		
Mon Nov 5	How do we give and receive generous critical feedback? • Artist Philosophy Peer Review	DUE: Second Draft of Artist Philosophy
Wed Nov 7	What tools and strategies might we use to evaluate our project goals? • Workshop evaluation protocols	DUE: Project Check-in #4
Week 12: PD Lab Week 4—Project Timeline +Facilitation/Presentation Intro		
Mon Nov 12	How can we use backward design to intentionally scaffold a project timeline? • Workshop project timeline	DUE: Project Check-in #5
Wed Nov 14	How might we incorporate art-making into diverse facilitations and presentations? • Brainstorm presentation ideas	DUE: Project Check-in #6
Week 13: Project Development Lab Week 5—Facilitation Design		
Mon Nov 19	How might we structure an arts-based facilitation or presentation? • Workshop presentation design	DUE: Project Check-in #7
Wed Nov 21	No Class Meeting	Enjoy fall break!
Week 14: PD Lab Week 6—Facilitation Strategies + Presentation Sharing		
Mon Nov 26	How can we be generous co-facilitators with our collaborators? • Workshop presentation facilitation	DUE: Project Check-in #8
Wed Nov 28	What are our projects?	Facilitation/Presentations: <hr/> <hr/>
Week 15: Presentation Sharing		
Mon Dec 3	What are our projects?	Facilitation/Presentations: <hr/> <hr/>
Wed Dec 5	What are our projects?	Facilitation/Presentations: <hr/> <hr/>
Week 16: Course Reflection		

Mon Dec 10	What's next? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Semester reflection/celebration	DUE: Journal
---------------	--	---------------------

Final Artist Philosophy and Proposal Portfolio due December 12 at 11:00a.