

**COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT THROUGH THE ARTS:  
In The Time Of COVID-19 & Social Change  
SYLLABUS  
Fall 2021**

Tuesdays 10am-12:50pm  
Residential College, East Quad Green Room B423  
RCHUMS 341.001 & AMCULT 311.010  
3 credits

**INSTRUCTOR**

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Office Times: Wednesdays, 9am-5pm

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

How can the expressive arts triage the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and police brutality on Black children and teens living in systemically under-served communities in Washtenaw County? This Engaged Learning course will focus on how the expressive arts are applied as a healing tool in response to the traumas that may have been experienced by school-age youth, whilst recognizing their resilience and strength. Students are offered opportunities to engage with children and youth in Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor through an internship with the community-based program, [Telling It](#).

In class and in community, students will learn how expressive art forms and artists apply their disciplines using racially and culturally respectful and sensitive pedagogies. They will examine the impact of traumatic circumstances and events on the healthy development of the brain and body and their amelioration using age-appropriate methods that are playful, creative and pay attention to healing and social emotional learning.

***\*Please note: There will be a mandatory training on Saturday 10/2, 10am-4pm including a lunch break.***

## QUESTIONS ADDRESSED BY THIS CLASS

1. In which ways do the identities of outsiders need to be understood before entering into a host community? How does an outsider form empathetic alliances, partnerships and collaborations?
2. How should students apply and articulate values, ethical standards and principals unique to expressive arts-based engagement involving diverse populations and settings? And, how do we match expressive arts-based methods effectively and ethically across diverse populations and cultural backgrounds?
3. How do we contradict the messages of diminished self-worth when young people of color experience a disproportionate death toll in their communities and the brutality of the police towards them, their family members and peers? What is the historical backdrop that made possible the racist biases that systemically affected the health, housing, educational and career paths of black and brown youth?
4. What has been the mental health impact on youth that are required to shelter in place for an extended period and who may already be struggling with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)?
5. Why is an intermodal approach that intersects games and the expressive arts in uncensored and non-judgmental spaces, so effective at supporting the healthy brain and social emotional development of young people?
6. During a time of profound impact with the COVID pandemic and systems revolution, what are the healing centered, trauma and strengths-aware expressive arts responses that have the potential to address social emotional-needs and interrogate systemic inequities?
7. How do strategic planning designs, funding proposals and an analysis of systems (e.g. logic models) relate to arts-based initiatives at the community level?
8. What have I learnt about myself through my engagement with as well as application of multiple expressive art forms?

## SYLLABUS

### Teacher Statement

This class is designed to be physically as well as intellectually engaging. We explore themes that can be emotionally triggering for some students, and with the backdrop of a pandemic and social change, connect us with the realities of how the issues we cover are experienced by those we serve in the community. My commitment is to do whatever it takes to make this experience enriching and meaningful for you using the expressive arts and other tools that have the potential to take us out of our comfort zones as growth and mutual learning experiences. Let me know what I can do to support you if need be.

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### WEEK 1 – 8/31/21

#### Themes: Who are we?

Where are we?

What do we know?

What do we want to learn?

How do we engage in this classroom and build community?

Class orientation, team building, Training Day and internship information. (Confirmation of internship selections needs to be made by Week 3.)

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### WEEK 2 – 9/7

#### NO CLASS ROSH HA'SHANA

#### No assignment due

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### WEEK 3 – 9/14

#### Themes: What do we need to know about ourselves before entering a community?

What is the transformational potential of games?

Defining Social Emotional Learning

Continuing class orientation and team building, guidelines to weekly reflections, training details and confirming internship selection. Games As Artforms: a workshop on the hidden and not-so hidden impact of playing games for community-building, healing and for social emotional learning.



## **Student Toolbox**

*Entering community & building community*

*Games for Social Emotional Learning*

*Intermodality*

*Poiesis (making art as world-shaping)*

*Dialogue across difference. "There is a conversation in this room that only these people at this moment can have. Find it." Adrienne Manée Brown."*

### **Preparing for Class**

- A. Levine, Stephen K. Art Opens to the World: Expressive Arts and Social Action from Art In Action: Expressive Arts Therapy and Social Change (2011):pp.21-29**
- B. TED Talk Play Is More Than Just Fun by Stuart Brown 18 mins.**

[https://www.ted.com/talks/stuart\\_brown\\_play\\_is\\_more\\_than\\_just\\_fun?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/stuart_brown_play_is_more_than_just_fun?language=en)

**In-Class Assignment: What is the purpose of art?**

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## **WEEK 4 – 9/21**

**Themes: How does identity factor into entering a community and how do oppressive systems and trauma intersect with identity? In which ways have the COVID-19 pandemic and police brutality impacted Black and Brown youth? Internship selection.**



*Humility and empathic engagement across difference*

*Introduction to understanding how the brain and the autonomic nervous system serve to inform us*

*Expressive arts response to adversity*

*Games*

*Active listening*

### **Preparing for Class**

- A. TED Talk on Identity and Injustice by Bryan Stevenson 23 mins**

[http://www.ted.com/talks/bryan\\_stevenson\\_we\\_need\\_to\\_talk\\_about\\_an\\_injustice](http://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice)

- B. TED Talk on Adverse Childhood Experiences by Dr. Nadine Burke-Harris 16 mins**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=6&v=95ovIJ3dsNk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=6&v=95ovIJ3dsNk)

- C. Understanding Trauma: Learning Brain vs Survival Brain by Jacob Ham You Tube Video (5 mins)**

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=effects+of+trauma+on+the+brain&&view=detail&mid=857C3999FF856C6DBE2E857C3999FF856C6DBE2E&&FORM=VDRVRV>

**Assignment Due: Reflection #1**

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**WEEK 5 – 9/28**

**Themes: The Power of the Theatre Arts for Change.** How have the theatre arts been employed as a tool for individual, community and organizational empowerment? You are introduced to the work of community activists, teachers and theatre artists, Dorothy Heathcote and Hector Aristizabel and the pedagogies of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal that influenced them.



*Pedagogy of the Oppressed: Paulo Freire*

*Primers in Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert, Aristizabel's Blessing Next To The Wound and Boal's Forum Theatre and Image Theatre, part of his pedagogy of the Theatre of the Oppressed.*

**Preparing for Class**

- A. **Augusto Boal's FORUM THEATRE for teachers** by S. MacDonald and D. Rachel 2000
- B. **The Blessing Is Next To The Wound** The Sun 358 (2005) pp.5-13 by Diane Lefer
- C. **Dorothy Heathcote BBC Omnibus 1971** 60 minutes (*If you're short on time, you can fast forward through sections, but do focus on when she and other teacher artists are with children*)

[www.bing.com/videos/search?q=three+looms+waiting+BBC+Omnibus+Documentary+1971&view=detail&mid=A93F7BE2335FF127954CA93F7BE2335FF127954C&FORM=VIRE](http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=three+looms+waiting+BBC+Omnibus+Documentary+1971&view=detail&mid=A93F7BE2335FF127954CA93F7BE2335FF127954C&FORM=VIRE)

**Assignment Due: Reflection #2**

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**Saturday 10/2 10am-4pm**

**Training Day with the staff of Telling It**

Lunch provided

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## WEEK 6 – 10/5

**Themes:** An intermodal response to Race, Racism, Oppressive Systems and the Importance of Metaphor



*Code switching behavior and language*  
*Dance and Movement*  
*Language arts*  
*Metaphor (making sense of the world)*

### Preparing for Class

A. **TED Talk Allegories on Race and Racism** by Camara Jones 20 mins.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNhcY6fTyBM>

B **TED Talk The Urgency Of Intersectionality** Kimberlé Crenshaw 18 mins.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle\\_crenshaw\\_the\\_urgency\\_of\\_intersectionality#t-1117437](https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality#t-1117437)

C. **Dance and Identity** Leila Awadallah 3 mins and 2 mins.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQ4evJfmBws>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fX4tJB7eaGc>

### Assignment Due: Reflection #3

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## WEEK 7 – 10/12

**Theme:** Guest poet and film maker, Asia Johnson, visits the class via Zoom from Los Angeles to share how her arts practice has impacted her both personally and professionally. Asia will present examples of her work and dialogue with students about her creative process and what she has learned about herself, her community and the power of the expressive arts.



*Language arts (throw downs)*

### Preparing for Class

A. **Spoken word poet** Jamila Lyiscott 5 mins.

[http://www.ted.com/talks/jamila\\_lyiscott\\_3\\_ways\\_to\\_speak\\_english?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/jamila_lyiscott_3_ways_to_speak_english?language=en)

- B. **TED Talk The Danger of a Single Story** by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche 19 mins.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story)

**Assignment Due: Reflection #4 Written in the form of poem/rap/song/short story.**

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**WEEK 8 – 10/19**

**NO CLASS FALL STUDY BREAK**

**No assignment due**

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**WEEK 9 – 10/26**

**Theme: How does community or public art affect social change? What are the healing and change-agent attributes of participating in the creation of visual art?**



*Visual art*

**Preparing for Class**

- A. **In case of Emergency Make Art** NYT Op Ed by Caroline Paul, May 30, 2020

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/30/opinion/coronavirus-mcnaughton-art-children.html>

- B. **Through Kids' Eyes: Virus outbreak brings sadness, fear, joy** by Martha Irvine. AP News May 27 2020

<https://apnews.com/2a04651b0b4f757dee0c883de45eb904>

- C. **Murals Send A Message of Hope in Grim Times** by Hilarie M. Sheets. NYT May 4 2020

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/01/arts/design/street-murals-art-los-angeles-virus.html>

**Assignment Due: Reflection #5 represented through visual art**

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**WEEK 10 – 11/2**

**Theme: Education, An Issue of Social Justice. An historical backdrop to the current racist and classist inequalities in education policy and teaching practices in American schools. What do policy makers,**

teacher-educators and teachers need to know in order to teach in multi-cultural classrooms? What impact did the integration of schools through the ruling of Brown vs. Board of Education have on students and schools? We will interrogate the phrases, “At all deliberate speed” and “Separate but not equal.” We will examine the disparities in K-12 classrooms, in suspension and expulsion rates between students of color and white students through the lenses of race and class as part of the school to prison pipeline or nexus.



*Understanding the cradle/school to prison nexus and how that impacts our youth.*

### Preparing for Class

- A. We Want To Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom by Bettina A. Love pp 27-41
- B. <https://www.npr.org/2016/05/01/476224759/is-there-a-better-way-to-pay-for-americas-schools> 4 minutes audio plus fact sheet
- C. TED Golden Gate ED Growing Roses in Concrete by Jeff Duncan-Andare 13 mins

<https://vimeo.com/53863431>

### Assignment Due: Reflection #6

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### WEEK 11 – 11/9

Theme: Funding and evaluating the impact of projects and programs.



*Fundraising/grants/crowdfunding/donors  
Budgets  
Logic Models  
Mission Statements  
Evaluating Impact*

### Preparing for Class

A. Bagamoyo College of Arts et al. Participatory action research on HIV/AIDS through a popular theater approach in Tanzania. Evaluation and Program Planning. 25 2002) pp. 333-339

B. Civic Engagement And The Arts: Issues Of Conceptualization And Measurement. by



Mark J. Stern and Susan C. Seifert. University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy & Practice, 2009. Read Part Three, pp. 35-47 & The Conclusion, pp. 56-57.

Assignment: Start to prepare for Community Engagement Represented Through the Expressive Arts to be presented to the panel on 11/30.

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### WEEK 12 – 11/16

Theme: Interrogating Facilitating and Leadership. Students will take it in turns to lead a game or brief exp arts activity with the class followed by dialogue on the skills required based on what students have learned in the field and in class. Students can lead games that they've led before or try out a new idea.



Skillful facilitating of games and other activities.  
Deepening understanding of the game as an art form.

Assignment: Prepare to lead a game or brief exp arts-based activity in class. Reference Chapter Eight of the Telling It Toolkit for ideas and guidance.

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### WEEK 13 – 11/23

Themes: In class, preparing for CE Represented Through the Expressive Arts.  
Checking in on class and internship experiences.

Assignment: Continue to work on Community Engagement Represented Through the Expressive Arts

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### WEEK 14 – 11/30

Theme: Community Engagement Represented through the Expressive Arts. Presented to a panel of expressive arts practitioners.

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### WEEK 15 – 12/7

### LAST CLASS

Themes: Debrief on last week's presentations, Course Review and Recommendations, Closure and Evaluations

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WEEK 16 – 12/14

Assignment Due: Final Reflective Essay

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**GRADING PERCENTAGES**

**Internship = 30% Weekly Reflections = 25%**

**Course and Internship Experiences Represented through the Expressive Arts = 20%**

**Participation in Class and Final Self-Evaluative Essay = 25%**