

CO/LAB: MEDIATING PERFORMANCE

(FV 4325.02)

Meeting time and places:

Wednesday, 2:10 - 5:50 pm (second 7 weeks)

Dance Studio E303 / Lab Commons 327

Faculty: Mariam Ghani

Pronouns: she/her

Email: mariamghani@bennington.edu

Office hours: Wed 11 am – 12 pm, VAPA B207

Or remote by appointment

Technical Instructor (for project assistance if needed): John Crowe

Pronouns: he/him

Email: johncrowe@bennington.edu

Office hours: Wed 2-4 pm in VAPA P112 (The Cave)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This 7-week, intermediate-level course is designed to overlap with Dance in the Frame, taught by Dance MFA Erin Kelly, and to facilitate collaborations between performers and other makers, particularly moving image artists and creators interested in interactivity. Students will have the opportunity to work closely with dancers for the first half of class each week, staging and shooting material in weekly exercises and improvisations, and then will be able to use the second half of class to review, edit, discuss, and plan for subsequent weeks. The class will be built around the interests and skills of students who enroll, but possible avenues of exploration include: strategies for filming/transposing site-specific performance; creating immersive environments for performance; constructing scores around responsive/interactive structures and objects; editing for movement; and editing for multi-channel/spatialized installations. While we will be focusing on both the why and how of making, we may also spend some time looking at relevant work. Students will be expected to form their own collaborative constellations around a set of collectively generated concepts, and work semi-autonomously both inside and outside of class time to finish/test a piece by the end of term, for possible inclusion in a group showing on December 14th.

prerequisite: Previous coursework in video, animation, interactive performance, projection mapping, dance for camera, or similar

2 credits; 7 weeks; maximum enrollment: 15

in-person only

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Across this term, students will:

- Collaborate and share skills across disciplines;
- Improvise and experiment together;
- Develop techniques for shooting and editing movement;
- Develop strategies for incorporating media into performance;
- Become more comfortable working with performers and operating as a crew;
- Continue to build the vocabulary to critique each other's work.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Supplies - required

Notebook or note-taking app

Supplies - recommended

a 32-64 GB SDHC card

Personal headphones for viewing and editing (can also be borrowed through Cheqroom)

a Mac or ExFAT formatted portable USB-C drive, 1TB+ (for more complex projects, ask about recommended brands if you are planning to purchase)

EQUIPMENT CHECKOUT & LAB ACCESS

If you are enrolled in this class, but not any other production classes this term, we have access to a limited pool of equipment including the Dance cameras. We have the Dance studio reserved every Sunday afternoon from 2 to 5 pm, and can reserve Martha Hill. Other classes have priority for D204, which is a bit small for movement work. **Please review the online [Cave Hours and Policy](#), which also includes the form that you need to fill out EVERY TERM in order to use the Cheqroom equipment reservation system. And [read and bookmark the online Video and Animation Handbook](#), which will always contain links to the most current class schedule and the online Scheduler for reservations, as well as instructions on how to access both. It also includes links to pre-recorded tech demos and written materials that can be helpful to review if need a refresher on a specific piece of equipment.**

Please check all equipment BEFORE leaving the Cave. If a piece of equipment is found damaged upon its return, the last renter is held responsible – which may be you, if you don't catch existing damage when you check it out.

Report any technical problems you may encounter with Cave equipment to John Crowe as soon as you encounter them, and bring malfunctioning equipment into the Cave to be fixed. The sooner you report problems, the sooner they are fixed! Also, please report any lost or stolen items from the kit to John Crowe as soon as they are lost or stolen.

We strongly recommend buying your own SD card from the bookstore to minimize the chance of losing project material on a shared card. (Note that some of the more advanced cameras require higher-speed cards which will still be checked out with the cameras.) And a small flash drive is great to have just for backups of your Premiere projects, moving files from station to station, and final exports.

You have access to the POD and Edit Lab Annex, but IT has also installed the full Adobe Suite in Commons 327 this term, so that we can work there during class time if needed. **If you run into problems while using the lab, please report them to John immediately.** Again, the sooner you report problems, the sooner they are fixed.

SHARED COMPUTERS/MEMORY CARDS

You are responsible for backing up all your working and final files. Lost, corrupted, or overwritten files are not a valid excuse for late projects. Files are not guaranteed to remain on the networked server, the LaCie drives connected to lab computers, or on camera memory cards. The server and LaCies are wiped at the end of every semester and the cards are usually wiped by the next person to use them. **Always copy all your files off any shared memory card BEFORE handing it over.** (Again, buying your own card will help avoid this danger.) If you have an external drive, save to it early and often, and **be sure to back up your most important files, especially your Premiere project files** (save them in at least two places – they're tiny so you can just email them to yourself, or drop them in Google Drive, at the end of every session). If at all possible, keep ALL files for each project until after the end of the semester. You can, for example, use your Bennington Google Drive storage for this purpose – just make sure to keep your folder structures intact when you move/copy them.

TIP: Work directly from the local drive – use external drives and servers as backup and transfer only! This will speed up your work session considerably, while avoiding disastrous link glitches and total project meltdowns.

SYLLABUS, WEEKLY MATERIALS, CLASS DRIVE FOLDER

This syllabus is a [Google Doc](#) linked from the course page on Populi. **Please note that the course schedule is not completely fixed.** Elements of the course may be adjusted in response to the pace and dynamics of our interactions as a class. **If you miss a class, please check the syllabus for changes and check in with your collaborators BEFORE you start your homework for the week.** I will also usually update the syllabus with links to any material we looked at and listened to in class right after class ends.

Most of your work for this class is self-directed, but if there's anything due for the week besides work on your projects, it will be linked from the syllabus and/or posted to Populi. Please note that some reading/viewing links can only be opened on campus (for example ProQuest links, Docuseek links, or e-reserve library links) unless you log in with Bennington/Crossett credentials first.

You are also expected to keep a physical or digital course notebook or sketchbook to develop ideas, document experiments and results, and take notes during critiques and discussions.

There is a class Google Drive folder [here](#) that you can use to share materials with each other and with me, if needed.

ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, COLLABORATION

Video is a demanding medium. Our equipment is a shared resource, and has to be treated carefully. Studio courses are spaces where you can bring brand-new works, creative experiments, and as-yet-incomplete ideas to your peers, and develop them in a supportive environment. And this course in particular is based on collaboration, both as crews and across disciplines. As such, it is largely dependent on your participation and generosity with each other to create that environment.

If you don't show up for each other, and give each other honest but constructive critiques, you won't experience the free-flowing exchange of ideas that is fundamental to making art together. All of which means: **participation is even more important to your grade in this class than it normally would be.**

In order to evaluate your respective roles in your collaborative groups, I will ask each member of the group to write a brief statement at the end of term assessing their own and their peers' contributions to the group. **Please note that you will be asked to work together both inside and outside of class.** The dance studio is reserved every Sunday from 2-5 pm, if you need space to meet and work together.

We only meet six times (Plan Day and Thanksgiving intervening) so missing even one class may have a big impact on your ability to contribute effectively and equally. That said, I will not penalize you for situations where synchronous participation is made burdensome by factors out of your control (illness, quarantine, family emergencies). I do ask that you communicate the relevant details to me as soon as you can, and that **you propose to me and your collaborators a clear plan to make up for the work you missed.**

Please make sure to reach out to me if you are unable to attend class or are feeling overwhelmed.

ASSESSMENT & GRADING

Project	45%
In-class participation	20%
Collaboration participation	25%

Since this is a production lab, and more about process than anything else, I strongly encourage you to take this class Pass/Fail, if you are not doing that already.

With that caveat: all of your work in this course will be assessed for the following criteria: quality of ideas, quality of work executed and ability to articulate and explain your thought processes; understanding of any historical and theoretical material presented, and ability to relate that material to an overall understanding of the medium and other aspects of your own practice; willingness to explore and take genuine risks in your work as an artist; and the amount of time, effort, and thought given to coursework.

In-class participation includes participation in discussions, preparation for class and use of time in class, and effective balance of generosity of spirit, critical inquiry, and creative problem-solving in critiques, workshops of work in progress, and rehearsals.

Collaboration participation is, as noted above, evaluated through your individual statements evaluating your own and your peers' roles and responsibilities within the collaboration, and includes 5 points for submitting the statement.

Projects are evaluated along three axes: concept/content, form, and technique. A project that displays excellence in all three areas should meet the following criteria:

- 1) The project has an original, clearly communicated concept or an innovative, effective approach to an assigned or appropriated idea.
- 2) The project has the form most suited to its concept and content and vice versa.
- 3) The project has a well-defined structure and unified formal strategies.
- 4) The artist demonstrates an understanding of the medium and mastery of the techniques and tools employed.

I will not change any grades unless you hand in a substantially revised assignment. You can hand in a revised version of any assignment at any point, up to and including the final class of the semester. I am happy to meet with you to suggest revisions, but I will not, under any circumstances, argue with you about your grade.

GRADE	QUALITY	EXPLORATION	WORK	DISCUSSIONS	ATTENDANCE
A	Outstanding	Insightful, generous, energetic	Excellent form & content, consistently experimenting	Always prepared for class, makes intelligent & considered contributions	Always present (or equivalent), work in on time
B	Good	Inquisitive, engaged	Good form & content, takes some risks	Usually prepared for class, able to make interesting contributions	Always present (or equivalent), work in on time
C	Average	Just sufficient	Holds together, but unconvincing	Not always prepared, only able to make obligatory contributions	Misses some classes without making them up, work sometimes late
D	Poor	Limited, formulaic	Work thrown together just before class	Only makes very limited contributions	Excessive absences without equivalents, work late & incomplete
F	Unsatisfactory	Virtually none	Virtually none	Makes almost no contribution	Absent most of the time, no equivalents

COURSE POLICIES + PHILOSOPHY

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS + BASIC NEEDS

Bennington College provides reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities when such accommodations are requested and necessary to ensure equal access to College programs and facilities. If you believe you are entitled to an accommodation, speak with [Diana Petschauer](#), Director of Student Accessibility Services, about any disability-related needs. If approved, you will receive a memo detailing your specific accommodations. Please share this memo with me, so we can set up a meeting to discuss how best to implement the accommodations. **Please note that I will not be aware of your needs if you do not share the memo with me.** The sooner we meet to discuss your needs, the better. If you are experiencing new and/or newly significant challenges, please talk to me, reach out to your faculty advisor, visit [Academic Services](#), or connect with resources available through health and psychological services (440-4426 or 440-4451).

We also understand that basic needs (food, housing, and wellness) have a direct impact on the academic performance, health, development and success of our students. If you have a personal circumstance or need that will affect your learning or performance in this course, please let me or your faculty advisor know so that we can help find resources to support you during the term.

TECH NEEDS

If you are consistently experiencing technological barriers to accessing course content, please let me know so that I can work with you to find alternative solutions. **If you anticipate having specific tech needs for this class** – especially your final project -- that may be a particular challenge, **please reach out to me and John as soon as possible** so that we have some extra time to work with you to find creative ways to meet those challenges.

ETHICS + INCLUSIVITY

All students must adhere to college-wide policies regarding original work, academic integrity, and computer and network use. Academic and artistic integrity can be confusing in the age of appropriation, but please remember that if work is not your own, the source should be cited and documented appropriately. The general college policy can be found here: <https://www.bennington.edu/faculty/faculty-handbook/academic-policies-and-procedures/academic-and-artistic-ethics-policy>. We can have more in-depth discussions of fair use, appropriation, and the role/presentation of sources as part of our coursework.

Bennington College is committed to fostering the intellectual growth of all students, and to creating a learning environment where human cultural diversity is valued and respected. We are also looking at, thinking about, and making work that takes strong and sometimes provocative positions on difficult issues. For example, during the course of this semester we may look at artworks that include nudity, expressions of sexuality, strong language, violence, religious imagery, political controversy, contested histories, or other material that you may find personally difficult or offensive. This can be a difficult balancing act and if at any point you feel that the environment of the course has become less than respectful, welcoming and inclusive, please come to me to share your concerns. You can also reach out to the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion if you feel that you can't talk to me for any reason.

We may also look at some videos that include formal effects (for example, strobe effects), that can cause problems for people with photosensitivity or seizure disorders. **If you anticipate that any particular material will present a problem for you for any reason, please let me know** (in office hours, or by email) **at the beginning of the semester, and I will do my very best to notify you before such material is shown.** Every now and then something sneaks up on me too – if I haven't seen a film in several years, for example, and have forgotten that a particular scene or element was included. In that case, please feel free to leave class for as long as you need to, stop watching/participating until the film/discussion is over, or interrupt us if you feel it's important that we stop. **If you plan to present work of your own that may include difficult material, please let the class know beforehand** and give us some context for discussion. Try not to surprise us (even if you want a cold read).

Education is cooperation. In this classroom we are all responsible for each other, and all of us will be asked to both teach and learn from each other. In order to do that, we must respect each other's perspectives and contributions. You should feel free to bring your own thoughts and interests into the classroom, while understanding that others in the room may have very different thoughts and interests. Please think of this course as a flexible space that can adjust as we get to know each other's strengths and needs. And please remember that the space of the course is not static or closed: it should also be responsive to the urgencies and emergencies of the larger world.

COURSE SCHEDULE

*This is an even more than usually free-form schedule. If you are not in class, it is **your responsibility** to make sure you know whether changes have been made to the assignments for next week.

WED 10/25

CLASS 1

E303

Intros, skillshare, brainstorm, converge on some concepts/techniques, form working constellations around concepts, look at some possible references

Projection: Cloud Gate Dance Theatre, [Wind Shadow](#) & [13 Tongues & Dust](#); Pilobolus, [Shadowland](#); Isaac Julien & Russell Maliphant, [Cast No Shadow](#)

Projection mapping: ELEVENPLAY x Rhizomatiks, [cube](#); Adrien M & Claire B, [Le mouvement de l'air](#) & [Pixel](#); [Urbanscreen](#)

Installation w/ projection mapping: Klip Collective, [Vacant America](#)

Dance films: William Forsythe, [One flat thing](#); Botis Seva & Douglas Bernhardt, [Inside the Blind Iris](#)

Due next week: location scout, bring back phone pix/video; determine groups/concepts; start writing/storyboarding if possible

WED 11/1

CLASS 2

E303

Review location scouting material, determine locations (as a group) & finalize groups/concepts, start thinking about costume/production design, improvisations with phone cameras

Due in 2 weeks: costume/prop source/make; write/storyboard; shoot indoor improv w/ dancers and review footage together (note studio is reserved Sunday 2-5 pm)

WED 11/8

PLAN DAY, NO CLASS

WED 11/15

CLASS 3

COMMONS 327

look at most successful footage together; groups w/ outdoor shoots finalize plans, **all shoots must happen before end of November**

Due 11/29: shoot if outdoors, write/storyboard if indoors/sheltered

WED 11/22

THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS

WED 11/29

CLASS 4

COMMONS 327

look at any footage that's ready, talk about editing strategies; groups w/indoor /sheltered shoots
finalize plans

Due next week: all indoor/sheltered shoots finished, outdoor shoots assembled

WED 12/6

CLASS 5

COMMONS 237

editing intensive; thinking about presentation

Due next week: edits finished, ideas/sketches for presentation

WED 12/13

CLASS 6

E303/MARTHA HILL

testing presentation; make adjustments

THURS 12/14

FINAL SHOWING