

9-29-2016

Dance, Visual Art, and Theater Production Project

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Recommended Citation

Lonergan, Phil; Whitworth, Amanda; and Bruemmer, Bob, "Dance, Visual Art, and Theater Production Project" (2016). *Clusters*. 165.
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PSU Integrated Cluster Project Proposal Form

Title: Dance, Visual Art, and Theater Production Project

Project Leadership: Robert Bruemmer, Phil Loneragan, Amanda Whitworth

Project Description:

This is an interdisciplinary collaboration between three traditionally distinct disciplines: Dance, Visual Art, and Theater Production. The goal is to produce an evening length performance on the main stage at Hanaway Theater on December 2 that utilizes the Brechtian idea of breaking the fourth wall. DN 3010 - Contemporary Dance Ensemble (CDE) (Instructor: Amanda Whitworth) has been co-scheduled in D&M with AR 3940 - Advanced Multi-Disciplinary Studies (3D) (Instructor: Phil Loneragan). The classes will be joined by an upper-level student taking TH 3670 - Advanced Practicum in Production (Instructor: Bob Bruemmer). This is a semester-long project where Advanced Sculpture students (Advanced Multi-Disciplinary Studies), CDE, and Advanced Theater Production students learn the content, purpose, epistemologies, and methods involved with each other's disciplines. By thoroughly exploring each other's ways of working, they will find pathways to integrate knowledge and concepts in the service of the creation of the final performance and an accompanying public talk. Students will also travel to NYC to view current Art and Dance performances and attend a movement workshop given by contemporary practitioners in the field. The performance will be open to the public. On a separate day, the students will facilitate a panel discussion, also open to the public, which will focus on the purpose of the work and why it requires an interdisciplinary perspective; which disciplinary perspectives contributed to the work's overall meaning; where/how the disciplinary perspectives come together; the challenges of working across disciplines and the possibilities that it opened for the group, for art, for education, etc.

Project Goals and Outcomes:

1. Project Goals – Briefly identify and describe the objectives of this project

- Begin to integrate the knowledge and modes of thinking from two or more disciplines (Art, Dance and Theater Production) and work through the creative process in a way that would not have been possible through single disciplinary means.
- Project will demonstrate the centrality of the arts to the new PSU cluster initiative,
- Project will offer an additional cluster model for integrating knowledge (conceptualization, as opposed to problem-solving).
- Project will build relationships between overlapping departments who could become more aligned in the new PSU organizational structure.

2. Student Learning Outcomes – Outline the expected student learning outcomes

- Students will begin to demonstrate a *disciplinary understanding of the fields of Art, Dance and*

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Theater Production by using knowledge and modes of thinking as defined below:

Four dimensions of disciplinary understanding: **Knowledge, Methods, Purpose, Forms:**

- Knowledge: Ability to use key elements, concepts, relationships, theories, and schools of thought in the discipline.
 - Methods: Ability to engage in modes of inquiry that characterize the discipline, research methods, evidence, creation.
 - Purpose: An understanding of the goals that drive disciplinary inquiry and the ways in which knowledge can be used.
 - Forms: Ability to use the languages and forms of communication typical of the discipline (essays, artworks, scientific reports)
-
- Work collaboratively across disciplines.
 - Use diverse modes and mediums to tell stories (dance, sculpture, theatre technology, scenography).
 - Create a performance work for the public as part of the Contemporary Dance Ensemble Concert.

Rationale and Impact:

Considering the questions below, please write your project rationale and impact statement.

Project Rationale and Impact Statement:

The intent of this project is connected to many of the goals, guiding principles and core values within PSU's cluster vision language. One of the most persuasive arguments in favor of this cluster proposal is here in the [World Economic Forum's study of future jobs and skills](#), where "creativity," already considered a top-ten desired skill by employers, moves into the #3 spot by 2020.

Top 10 skills

in 2020

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Critical Thinking
3. Creativity
4. People Management
5. Coordinating with Others
6. Emotional Intelligence
7. Judgment and Decision Making
8. Service Orientation
9. Negotiation
10. Cognitive Flexibility

in 2015

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Coordinating with Others
3. People Management
4. Critical Thinking
5. Negotiation
6. Quality Control
7. Service Orientation
8. Judgment and Decision Making
9. Active Listening
10. Creativity

In Higher Ed, we often talk broadly of "critical thinking skills," and oftentimes we teach these skills as we work with students to solve specific, pre-determined problems. We weigh evidence together and evaluate research to put things together in new ways to find solutions to challenges that need attention. This is a helpful process, but the creative arts can offer us an additional pathway that can help us see and develop new questions, not just answer the ones in front of us. When we work on creative projects, we can focus on experimentation and risk-taking (part of the fourth goal of "innovation" in the cluster vision), on developing concepts and

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questions rather than solutions and answers. This not only produces art that enhances our culture and community, but also gives our students the ability to integrate knowledge and perspectives in a more conceptual, rather than problem-based, way. This kind of interdisciplinary practice will be helpful not only for future artists, but also for scientists and designers and writers and entrepreneurs—indeed for anyone who hopes not just to contribute to the world, but to shape it. In fact, many of the dance students involved are seeking Interdisciplinary degrees where they will use rigor, creativity and problem-solving gained in a project like this and in dance and apply it to alternate career paths. Most importantly, this project focuses on novel and adaptive thinking, and will help all participants gain proficiency at thinking beyond rote or rule-based frameworks.

Fostering collaboration across disciplines: this project represents a collaboration between two departments and three disciplines.

Making an impact: this project will demonstrate the centrality of the arts to the new PSU cluster initiative, offer an additional model for integrating knowledge (conceptualization, as opposed to problem-solving), and build relationships between overlapping departments who could become more aligned in the new PSU organizational structure.

Mission and vision: Our new vision explains that we are “an ever-growing creative community,” so we should expect to see some creativity-oriented projects in the founding cohort of cluster projects.

High impact teaching and learning and student engagement: students will use current digital technologies to record non-local performance, which will then be imported into the theater space to be workshopped and transformed. The use of technology, field-experiences (including individual filmmaking and a group field trip to NYC for movement workshops if funded), and peer-to-peer collaboration will make the project highly engaging for participants.

This project is an entirely new endeavor, but it stems from earlier partnerships across MTD such as *Brilliant Being*, and from sculpture projects related to digital video and site-specific performance art. We have shared our own successes, and are eager to begin this collaboration based on the best of what we have done in our own areas so far.

Project Team

PSU Project Participants (essential core team participants including faculty and staff)

Name	Position/ Title	Project Role	Discipline/ Specialty	Email
Robert Bruemmer	Instructor	Instructor	Theater Production	rbruemme@plymouth.edu

Phil Lonergan	Instructor	Instructor	Art	plonergan@plymouth.edu
Amanda Whitworth	Instructor	Instructor	Dance	awhitworth@plymouth.edu

Non-PSU Project Participants (stakeholders; partners; academic institution; etc.)

Name	Organization	Project Role	Discipline/ Specialty	Email
Sarah Donnelly: Architectural Movement Workshop Instructor	STREB Extreme Action Company	External Partner	Dance, Movement, Pop Action, Human Sculpture	info@streb.org

Student Participant Profile (Identify the student population/s to be engaged in the project.
Identify if this has been or is planned to be incorporated into curricula)

Class/ Student Organization/ Individuals	Role in Project	Academic Level (Undergraduate or Graduate)	Academic Discipline	Total Student Population
DN 3010 - Contemporary Dance Ensemble	Student	First Year-Senior	Dance	10
AR 3940 - Advanced Multi- Disciplinary Studies (3D)	Student	Junior-Senior	Art Sculpture	4
TH 3670 - Advanced Practicum in Production	Student	Senior	Theater Production	1

IRB (Institutional Review Board) Compliance

IRB Compliance: <http://www.plymouth.edu/office/institutional-review-board/>

- X This project DOES NOT require IRB compliance
- This project DOES require IRB compliance (*complete below*)

IRB Approval Status:

IRB Approval Date:

Any funding approvals of IRB-required projects are contingent on obtaining IRB approval.

Project Management: Timeline and Milestones

Identify the timeline for the project including start, completion, and major project milestones. A closing report will be required as a part of the project funding process.

Project Start Date: 9/2016

Project Complete Date: 12/4/2016

Project Milestone	Milestone Description	Target Completion Date
Workshop Ideas	Idea Development process completed and ideas to be workshopped	10/6/2016
Rough Preliminary Performance , Tech Sketched out	Main ideas solidified enough to for a rough preliminary performance	10/27/2016
Objects and Props	Objects, props, costumes, etc. finished	11/14/2016
New York City Workshop (if funded)	Field trip to NYC to engage in workshops on movement, design and performance.	11/22/2016
Performance Night Panel Discussion	Performance on the main stage in Hanaway	12/2/2016

Please identify any pre-project education or training for students, faculty, and staff that would be helpful for your project team to have in advance to begin work on a strong footing (e.g., skill training, concepts), and identify any training and education that you are willing to help provide during the preparatory period for the project team before team work formally begins.

Student Education/ Training Requirements: Dancers selected by audition for this section of Contemporary Dance Ensemble.

Dance, Visual Art, and Theater Production Project: Student Handout

“Making Art About Making Art”: Brechtian Alienation and Integrated Arts

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Overview:

This is an interdisciplinary collaboration between three traditionally distinct disciplines: Dance, Visual Art, and Theater Production. You are being asked to collaborate with one another, to bridge disciplines, and, through the creative process, develop a Production, Object, or Performance (let’s call it your “POP”). Each one of you will need to let go of the comfort of your own area and venture into new conceptual territory by gaining an understanding of the history, concepts, and methods of each discipline. This approach will be new to you and new to the instructors.

Why work in an interdisciplinary way?

Teaching and learning are changing: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qC_T9ePzANg

Project Description:

In collaboration with your classmates and instructors, you will create a Brechtian performance event to be viewed by the public. There will be more research for you to do but in short, German playwright Bertolt Brecht believed that traditional theater did a disservice to audiences by treating them like fools who could be easily tricked into thinking that the action on the stage was real. In order for an audience to critically engage with a performance, Brecht believed the “alienation effect” must be used to force the viewers to critically examine the performance, to see it *as a performance* and to think about it as such. This “alienation effect” could be achieved in any way that encourages the audience to pay attention to the show as a show, rather than as “real.” Brecht encouraged the use of media, projections and effects that are normally outside what is considered traditional theater in order to wake his audiences up and help them see the constructedness of the show they were watching, and in turn, allow them to think critically about the social implications of the performance.

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The alienation effect can make familiar things seem unfamiliar (check out this film of walking down a hallway: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcbkbovHLCg>), thereby making us think about them in a new way, from a new angle; or it can just make us see the performance in front of us as something we can think about and question (as in this clip, starting about halfway in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HslBqZGFIQ>)

Incorporating some use or thematization of the “alienation effect,” create a POP that integrates Dance, Visual Art, and Theater Production. You do not have to use every discipline equally, nor is there a prescribed way that you need to refer to the Brechtian ideas. Feel free to take things in an unexpected direction, and use Brecht as your jumping-off point.

You are only limited by the following:

- The performance must originate out of town (Yes, not in Plymouth!).
- The performance must travel into the performance space (you can not relocate the audience).
- The Performance duration TBD (an evening length performance is generally 15 – 30 minutes)
- Do not sit in front of oncoming traffic or have large scale fires that last more than two days.
- (Safety, working with dancers)

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Key Dates:

September 1: CDE Audition, Amanda comes to Sculpture Class

September 6: Readings due. All classes meet to go over project together.

September 8: Tour of Hanaway, Safety concerns

October 6 First run-through of Ideas

October 27: Main ideas solidified enough for a rough preliminary performance run-through. Theater Tech sketched out.(Somewhere)

November 14: Objects, props, costumes, etc. finished

November 22 Main theater available for rehearsal

December 2 CDE Performance on the main stage in Hanaway

Courses Involved:

- DN 3010 - Contemporary Dance Ensemble (Instructor: Amanda Whitworth) Open to all students. The audition is for class placement only. The study of contemporary movement/dance techniques resulting in presentations of dance works by various choreographers, when available, in workshop and concert performances.

- AR 3940 - Advanced Multi-Disciplinary Studies (3D) (Instructor: Phil Loneragan) Emphasizes idea development; the relationship between the Artist, the Art Object, and the Viewer within the context of contemporary culture; and finding one's own artistic voice. Students work intensively with peers across art disciplines. Projects are developed and adapted to fit specific students' chosen media. Additional course fee required. Falls. Prerequisite(s): (AR 3220 and AR 3230) or (AR 3060 and AR 3160)
- TH 3670 - Advanced Practicum in Production (Instructor: Bob Bruemmer) Practical applications and an extension of theory and technique covered in theatre courses in production. Experiences include technical and/or design work. Offered by individual enrollment.

Definitions (adapted from Veronica Boix-Mansilla, Harvard University):

- Interdisciplinary understanding: Individuals demonstrate *interdisciplinary understanding* when they integrate knowledge and modes of thinking from two or more disciplines (or well-established fields of study) in order to create products, raise questions, solve problems, and offer explanations of the world around them in ways that would not have been possible through single disciplinary means.
- Disciplinary understanding: Individuals demonstrate *disciplinary understanding* when they can use knowledge and modes of thinking developed by expert communities (e.g. in history, biology, mathematics, visual arts) in order to create products, raise questions, solve problems, and offer explanations of the world around them in ways that echo expert practices in the domain. Four dimensions are embodied in disciplinary understanding: **Knowledge, Methods, Purpose, Forms:**
 - Knowledge: Ability to use key elements, concepts, relationships, theories, and schools of thought in the discipline.
 - Methods: Ability to engage in modes of inquiry that characterize the discipline, research methods, evidence, creation.
 - Purpose: An understanding of the goals that drive disciplinary inquiry and the ways in which knowledge can be used.
 - Forms: Ability to use the languages and forms of communication typical of the discipline (essays, artworks, scientific reports)

Goals for this project:

- Create a performance event open to the community
- Begin to integrate the knowledge and modes of thinking from two or more disciplines (Art, Dance and Theater Production) and work through the creative process in a way that would not have been possible through single disciplinary means.
- Students will begin to demonstrate a *disciplinary understanding of the fields of Art, Dance and Theater Production* by using knowledge and modes of thinking as defined below:

Four dimensions of disciplinary understanding: **Knowledge, Methods, Purpose, Forms:**

- Knowledge: Ability to use key elements, concepts, relationships, theories, and schools of thought in the discipline.
- Methods: Ability to engage in modes of inquiry that characterize the discipline, research methods, evidence, creation.
- Purpose: An understanding of the goals that drive disciplinary inquiry and the ways in which knowledge can be used.

- Forms: Ability to use the languages and forms of communication typical of the discipline (essays, artworks, scientific reports)

Information on involved disciplines:

- Disciplines of Art and Art performance: <http://www.theartstory.org/movement-performance-art.htm>
- Discipline of dance
 - <http://www.contemporary-dance.org/contemporary-dance-history.html>
 - <http://www.physicallectures.com/-choreographing-objects-wiliam-forsythe.html>
 - <http://www.physicallectures.com/living-sculpture.html>
- Discipline of Theater
Production: <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/epic-theater/>

Helpful Assessment Starting Points (adapted from Veronica Boix-Mansilla, Harvard University):

60% Performance

- **Purpose:** Interdisciplinary work is often geared toward describing or explaining phenomena or events that are multidimensional, solving complex problems, proposing new interpretations, creating products. The purpose of a piece of work or interdisciplinary exploration drives the crafting of the work—what disciplinary insights are relevant, which disciplines should dominate, how disciplines could be combined to leverage or advance the goals of the work, how to decide when the work is “done” and its purpose accomplished. Is the purpose of the work clear (whether explicit or implicit)? Does the purpose invite/require an interdisciplinary approach?
- **Disciplinary grounding:** Are disciplinary perspectives selected in ways that fit the purpose of the piece? Are disciplinary insights—i.e. concepts, methods, languages, values—used in accurate, rich and effective ways? Interdisciplinary work takes advantage of insights, findings, methods, techniques, languages, and modes of thinking in two or more disciplines or areas of expertise to accomplish its goals. This dimension examines the degree to which students have taken advantage of the disciplinary learning opportunities offered in the course to advance the purpose of their work.
- **Leveraging Integrations:** What are the key points of integration proposed in the work—i.e., where are disciplinary perspectives clearly brought together in a phrase, metaphor, interpretation, or explanation? Are the integrations enabling students to advance their understanding effectively—to produce more comprehensive descriptions, multi-causal explanations, novel interpretations, or deeper explorations that benefit from the combination of perspectives?
- **Thoughtfulness:** Does the work indicate that the student has reflected about the learning challenges and possibilities of bringing disciplinary insights together to address her purposes? Do the student’s reflections about the process and outcome of the work reveal understanding of key aspects of doing interdisciplinary work— e.g., the possibilities opened by integrative work, the insights gained along the way, the challenges of bringing disciplines together, the tension of satisfying conflicting standards?

Assessment:

40% Panel discussion open to the University/Public. In your presentation address the following:

- **Purpose:** Explain the purpose of the work and why that requires an interdisciplinary perspective.
- **Disciplinary grounding:** Explain which disciplinary perspectives are involved in your work, and how they contribute to the work's overall meaning.
- **Leveraging Integrations:** Explain where/how the disciplinary perspectives come together. Describe the phrases, metaphors, or concepts in the work that illustrate the points of integration.
- **Thoughtfulness:** Talk about the challenges of working across disciplines and the possibilities that it opened for your group, for art, for education, etc.
- Make sure you don't just talk at the audience. Make your panel fun, lively, creative, and surprising; you can use images, movement...anything you like to help bring your audience to a fuller understanding of the ideas behind your work.