

SFU School for the Contemporary Arts
FPA 812: MFA Interdisciplinary Graduate Seminar II
FPA 822: MA Research Colloquium in Comparative Media Arts

Fall 2016, GCA 4390, Mondays 9:30 am-12:20 pm

Instructor: Dr. Peter Dickinson

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Office Hours: M 12:30-1:30 pm, or by appointment, GCA 2380

Course Description: FPA 812 continues the work begun in FPA 811, engaging in a critical discussion of contemporary issues relevant to the fine and performing arts, and with a focus on how those issues are taken up across different artistic disciplines and within MFA students' individual practices. Connecting theory to practice, we will use the weekly readings—and the ideas, histories and critical positions outlined therein—as touchstones to generate structured research questions that might then be applied to the specific artistic goals and processes of a final thesis project. We will also be concerned with developing students' critical reading, writing, and editing skills as preparation for composing the artist statement that will accompany this project.

In FPA 822 students enrolled in the MA in Comparative Media Arts develop an extended research essay and also present a conference-style version of the paper at an end-of-semester public colloquium. Submitting multiple drafts of their essays for peer review, the goal of this course is for students to produce work worthy of publication in an academic journal. To this end, students will receive constructive feedback on the framing of their research topics and problems; on the timeliness, originality, and appropriateness of their research methods; on the depth and rigour of their research inquiry; on the structure and persuasiveness of their argument; and on the felicity and effectiveness of their writing style. The weekly critical readings will provide additional models for scholarly research in comparative media arts and a discussion of these readings will enable students to further refine their public presentation skills.

While this merged course is an experiment, we will find common ground in the weekly readings, in our constructive critiques of each other's work, and in students' refining of the focus and application of their creative and scholarly research. Plus it makes sense that students in the School's two graduate programs talk to each other!

Course Readings: PDF documents of each of the readings listed below have been posted to a common course Canvas site (<http://canvas.sfu.ca>).

Course Requirements and Grading—FPA 812:

Attendance and participation, including posted comments on readings 10%

- You are expected to carefully prepare each week's readings and come to class ready to discuss them; to post regular comments or notes or questions or

- thought bubbles related to the readings on the relevant Discussion Thread on the course Canvas site; and to listen and respond to your peers and me.
- Presentation on readings 10%
- This should be a simple 5-7 minute opening salvo to animate discussion on a given reading. What were the salient or most provocative/contentious points of the reading for you? What questions were you left with? How does the reading relate to your own research practice, or to broader interdisciplinary inquiry in the fine, performing and media arts?
- Peer review notes 15%
- All students are required to provide written feedback on the work of their peers. This will take the form of 2-3 paragraphs of constructive critique on the focus, structure, argument and writing style of the paper drafts of 822 students. In order to ensure that this works effectively, students whose papers are being reviewed on a given week must post their latest draft to Google docs and inform their classmates that it is ready for review by noon on the Saturday before our Monday class (you can do this through the Collaboration function on Canvas). Peer reviews should then be posted to an assigned Discussion Thread on Canvas before we meet to discuss the paper on Monday. Additionally, everyone needs to submit a short written response on each of the 812 research presentations offering an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the project as currently conceived, what questions you are left with, and any suggestions for additional creative and critical avenues to explore.
- Paper proposal and annotated bibliography 15%
- This two-page proposal should outline the practical and theoretical focus of your research to date, the main research question you wish to explore moving forward with your MFA project, the relevance of this question to your artistic practice more generally, what additional research you propose to undertake in the coming year, and how this will all come together in terms of the content and structure of your final paper for this course. Additionally, you should list and annotate at least five bibliographic sources relevant to your research and/or your final paper.
- Research presentation 20%
- This should be a 15-minute presentation that maps an area of interest you are exploring in your creative work and academic reading and writing. The presentation should be focused around the central “research question” you propose to explore in your final project. Even if, at this stage, you don’t have an “answer” to that question (in terms of what your project might look like, or whom it might seek to engage), what, beyond just working in (or out) a particular “area of interest,” are you trying to get at? If you had to pose your interest as a question what would it be? What are some other artists/theorists/works that are relevant to your research? What exactly about these works is interesting/generative/instructive for your practice? Drawing on examples from past work, as well as your plans for future work, provide the class with an idea of how all of this relates to the specific decisions you have already made or will seek to make in pursuing your final project: e.g.,

space, timing, materials/equipment, scores, collaborators, audiences, etc. Feel free to invite your supervisor to attend this presentation.

Final paper 30%

- This document of approximately 3,500 words should summarize the research you have undertaken to date, as well your plans moving forward with your final project. Like the research presentation, it should be structured around a central question. Think of this paper as a test run for the artist statement that will accompany your final project, and that will be archived in the library. As such, it should be formatted according to library thesis conventions, using either the MLA or Chicago Manual of Style system of citation.

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Presentation on readings 10%

- This should be a simple 5-7 minute opening salvo to animate discussion on a given reading. What were the salient or most provocative/contentious points of the reading for you? What questions were you left with? How does the reading relate to your own research practice, or to broader interdisciplinary inquiry in the fine, performing and media arts?

Peer review notes 15%

- All students are required to provide written feedback on the work of their peers. This will take the form of 2-3 paragraphs of constructive critique on the focus, structure, argument and writing style of the paper drafts of 822 students. In order to ensure that this works effectively, students whose papers are being reviewed on a given week must post their latest draft to Google docs and inform their classmates that it is ready for review by noon on the Saturday before our Monday class (you can do this through the Collaboration function on Canvas). Peer reviews should then be posted to an assigned Discussion Thread on Canvas before we meet to discuss the paper on Monday. Additionally, everyone needs to submit a short written response on each of the 812 research presentations offering an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the project as currently conceived, what questions you are left with, and any suggestions for additional creative and critical avenues to explore.

Research plan 15%

- By the second week of the course, FPA 822 students need to submit a research plan for the semester that includes: a short abstract (100-200 words) of the paper they will be revising; additional avenues of research they need to pursue, along with relevant bibliographic sources to consult; a list of organizational and conceptual goals they wish to work through as part of

their revisions; any media they might want to include as part of their paper submission and/or symposium presentation; and the name of a scholarly journal, as well as its submission guidelines, that they will be targeting as a publication venue.

Symposium presentation 20%

- Coincident with the revisions on their papers, students will need to distil the substance, methodology, theoretical frame and main points of their research into a 15-20 minute symposium presentation (approximately 7-8 double-spaced pages). The symposium will take place during the last week of classes and will be open to the public. You are encouraged to invite your supervisors, other faculty, family, friends, and peers. Feel free to supplement your presentations with Powerpoint slides or any additional media as needed (so long as this is included in your allotted time). Your presentation will be assessed on the strength and professionalism of your delivery, your effectiveness at condensing and making broadly accessible the gist of your argument, and your ability to answer questions posed by the audience.

Final paper 30%

- Building on the additional research and revision undertaken over the semester, and responding to the notes from your peers, a final paper of 5000-6000 words is due the week after classes end. It should be double-spaced and formatted to the style conventions of the journal you are targeting for publication.

Weekly Syllabus:

Week 1 Sept 12 Introduction and setting of presentation schedules

Week 2 Sept 19 Time

Reading: Elizabeth Freeman, selections from *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (2010); video/photography/performance art/literature

FPA 822 research plans due

Week 3 Sept 26 Space

Reading: Laura Levin, "The Environmental Unconscious," from *Performing Ground: Space, Camouflage, and The Art of Blending In* (2014); site-specific performance

FPA 822: peer review of paper drafts #1 x 1

Week 4	Oct 3	<p>Events and Echoes</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> Brandon LaBelle, "Underground: Busking, Acousmatics, and the Echo," from <i>Acoustic Territories: Sound Culture and Everyday Life</i> (2010); sound/music</p> <p>FPA 822: peer review of paper drafts #1 x 2</p>
Week 5	Oct 10	Holiday: NO CLASS
Week 6	Oct 17	<p>Objects and Things</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> Robin Bernstein, "Dances with Things: Material Culture and the Performance of Race" (2009) and Marlis Schweitzer, "'Nothing but a string of beads': Maud Allen's Salomé Costume as a 'Choreographic Thing'" (2015); dance</p> <p><u>Optional reading:</u> Jane Bennett, "The Force of Things," from <i>Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things</i> (2010)</p> <p>FPA 812 proposals and annotated bibliographies due</p> <p>FPA 812: Research presentations 1 and 2</p>
Week 7	Oct 24	<p>Documentation</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> Amelia Jones, "'Presence' in Absentia" (1997); Philip Auslander, "The Performativity of Performance Documentation" (2012); Boris Groys, "Art in the Age of Biopolitics" (2012); performance and body art</p> <p>FPA 812: Research presentations 3 and 4</p>
Week 8	Oct 31	<p>Liveness and Realness</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> Rebecca Schneider, "Still Living," from <i>Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment</i> (2011); photography and visual art</p> <p>FPA 812: Research presentations 5 and 6</p>

Week 9	Nov 7	Practice and Technique
		<p><u>Readings:</u> Ben Spatz, "Introduction," from <i>What a Body Can Do: Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research</i> (2015); Judith Hamera, selections from <i>Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference and Connection in the Global City</i> (2007); dance</p> <p>FPA 822: peer review of paper drafts #2 x 1</p>
Week 10	Nov 14	Authorship
		<p><u>Readings:</u> Ellie During, "Appropriations: Deaths of the Author in Electronic Music" (2003); David Sanjek, "'Don't Have to DJ No More': Sampling and the Autonomous Creator" (1992); music</p> <p>FPA 822: peer review of paper drafts #2 x 2</p>
Week 11	Nov 21	Media Convergence and Media Communities
		<p><u>Reading:</u> Henry Jenkins, "Quentin Tarantino's <i>Star Wars</i>: Grassroots Creativity Meets the Media Industry," from <i>Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide</i> (2006); film</p> <p>FPA 812: Research presentations 7 and 8</p>
Week 12	Nov 28	Labour
		<p><u>Reading:</u> Jen Harvie, "Labour: Participation, Delegation, and Deregulation," from <i>Fair Play: Art, Performance and Neoliberalism</i> (2013); participatory performance</p> <p><u>Optional reading:</u> Claire Bishop, "Delegated Performance: Outsourcing Authenticity," from <i>Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship</i> (2012)</p> <p>FPA 812: Research presentations 9 and 10</p>
Week 13	Dec 5	FPA 822: Peer review of paper drafts #3 and preparations for public colloquium
	Dec 7	FPA 822 Public Research Colloquium: World Art Centre, 6-9 pm
	Dec 12	FPA 812 and 822: Final papers due

Additional Resources:

On Reserve at Belzberg Library:

Wendy Laura Belcher, *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success*. Los Angeles, London: Sage, 2009.

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Steven Pinker, *The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century*. NY: Penguin, 2014.

The Chicago Manual of Style. 16th edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. (Belzberg reference copy for use in Library only: Z 253 U69)

SFU Library Electronic Resources:

Susan M Bielstein, *Permissions: A Survival Guide. Blunt Talk About Art as Intellectual Property*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. (ebook SFU Library)

Angela Thody, *Writing and Presenting Research*. London: SAGE, 2006. (ebook SFU Library)

Other Electronic Resources:

MLA Style Guide. 8th edition (2016):

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

A guide to annotated bibliographies:

<http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography>.

Past MFA Theses Archived on SFU LIB:

Barbara Adler, [*Klasika*](#)

Yves Candau, [*Points de vue*](#)

David Chokroun, [*A hammer in perpetual motion/The keyboard is the world*](#)

Calla Churchward, [*The Impossible Project*](#)

Emmalena Fredriksson, [*Dance Work/Work Dance*](#)

Ryan Mathieson, [*Surface Production: The Replication and Display of Objects*](#)

Didier Morelli, [*Brutalist Leftovers: How I Survived Conceptualism*](#)

Juan Manuel Sepúlveda, [*Procedural residues after the shooting of The Ballad of Oppenheimer Park*](#)

Megan Stewart, [*The Builders*](#)

Nancy Tam, [*Some hallways lead to other hallways and some lead to dead ends*](#)

Abstracts of Past MA Colloquium Papers:

<http://cmajournal.ca/intersections/>