

Theater Arts 351: Field Internship in Community Arts

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Subject/Discipline: [Theater Arts](#)

School: [Temple University](#)

Project Area:

Spring 2002

FIELD INTERNSHIP IN COMMUNITY ARTS: Tyler 351,

Wednesdays, 1-3:30pm

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This course is an experiential introduction to Community Arts, focusing on artist/community collaborations and community-based art education. Community Arts projects bring artists together with people of a community of location, spirit, or tradition, to create art that is based in the life of that community. The project for this year will be the production of *Eminent Domain*, a community-based arts event focusing on the history of a neighborhood adjacent to Temple's main campus, centered around the Church of the Advocate. In this partnership-learning community arts course, students will help to create this production, working closely with community residents and organizations and with artists, gaining skills in hands-on community arts processes: local research, arts education, design and rehearsal, performance and installation. The course is grounded in Community Arts theory, growing out of the fields of Public Art and Performance Studies.

Eminent Domain will be produced by ARTWorks in Different Places, which has a 10-year history of commissioning artists to create works with community-based organizations, in collaboration with Art Sanctuary, which brings nationally-known African American artists to North Philadelphia for performances, readings, and residencies.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND PROJECTS

Course structure: Students attend the weekly seminar at the Main Campus (Wednesdays, 1-3:30pm) for discussion, planning, theory and supervision. Field work includes one 2-hour community session per week, January through mid-March, with a second weekly 2 hour session to be added in mid-March to prepare for the performances (May 3 and 4).

Community sessions include the Theater workshop - Tuesdays, 3:30 - 5:30 and Visual Arts workshop - Fridays, 3:30 - 5:30. In addition, field research will be individually scheduled.

Community Arts History and Theory: The course will begin with readings and discussion about the history and theory of community arts, and orienting information about the Church of the Advocate's neighborhood and issues of redevelopment. Issues of race, class and identity will also be examined, i.e. how each of our backgrounds impacts doing this work.

Internship Teams: Beginning in late January, students will be divided into 3 internship teams:

The Teaching team will assist in the planning and teaching of the arts workshops for the teenagers at the Church of the Advocate's afterschool programs. In addition to teaching, interns in the Theater workshop may also be involved in directing or scripting scenes and interns in the Visual Arts workshop may be involved in creating visual art which will be part of the exhibition/installation.

The Research team will conduct research on neighborhood/church history and be involved in conducting Oral History interviews with community residents. This will include collecting visual and archival materials on the community history, such as photographs, home movies, and other formats.

The Production team will be involved in design and construction of the video projection installation and other set pieces, the editing and design of the video projections, and the mounting of the visual art exhibit. Oral histories and historical research on the community will be used as source material for improvisation, scene and character work in the Theater workshop, and visual research and neighborhood mapping will be used for the design workshops. These materials, and the ways they are transformed in the arts workshops, will form the basis of the performance/visual installation for the production.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (roughly, and subject to change)

Jan. 23: Introduction to Community Arts, and to Eminent Domain project

Jan. 30: Community Arts Theory; North Philadelphia/Church of the Advocate History
Arts Workshop planning

Feb.6: North Philadelphia/Church of the Advocate History
Begin Arts Workshop internships; Workshop and Field Research Planning

Feb. 13: Community speaker - North Philadelphia/Church of the Advocate History

Feb. 20: North Philadelphia/Church of the Advocate History; Design/Script Development

Feb. 27: Workshop and Research updates; Community Arts Profile paper due

Mar. 6: Design/Script Development, Workshop and Research updates

Mar. 13 SPRING BREAK

Mar. 20: Design/Script Development, Workshop and Research updates; Community Contact journal due

Mar. 27: Design/Script Development, Workshop and Research updates

Apr.3: Design/Script Development, Workshop and Research updates

Apr. 10: Prep for Performance/Installation

Apr. 17: Prep for Performance/Installation

Apr. 24: Prep for Performance/Installation

May 1: Prep for Performance/Installation

May 8: Final Evaluation Session; Final Paper due

READINGS

The texts for the course are *The Citizen Artist*, edited by Linda Frye Burnham and Steven Durland, and *Other Sheep I have*, the autobiography of Father Paul M. Washington. Both are available from the Main Campus Bookstore. Other readings will be handouts on North Philadelphia history and pieces from the internet site, <http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/readingroom.html>, Community Arts Network (CAN). CAN is arranged with subject headings, i.e. Arts and Community, History/Theory.

For 1/30

Text:

Of the People, By the People, and For the People: The field of community performance. By Richard Owen Geer (1993)

The Citizen Artist. By Aida Mancillas (1997)
Washington: Chapters 3 - 8 (pages 25 - 85)
Readings, continued

For 2/6

Text:

The Selma Project. By Bob Leonard
Washington: Chapters 9 - 13 (pages 86 - 160)

Handouts:

Motion of the Ocean: The Shifting Face of U.S. Theater for Social Change since the 1960's

By Jan Cohen-Cruz

Set A on North Philadelphia history

For 2/13

Text:

CWT #3: Making City Water Tunnel #3. by Marty Pottenger
We Are All Connected: Elders Share the Arts. By Linda Frye Burnham, Susan Perlstein (1995)

Washington: Chapters 14-18 and Afterword (pages 161 - 236)

Handouts:

Set B on North Philadelphia history

For 2/20

Text:

Appalachia's Roadside Theater. By Donna Porterfield
CAN, Arts and Urban Communities

Witnessing a Drama of Soul, a theater program with inner-city youth. By Jan Cohen-Cruz (1997)

Steel Festival: Art of an Industry. By Linda Frye Burnham (1999)

Steelbound and Pouring the Sun. By Bob Leonard (1999)

I Can Write a River: An interview with Jo Carson. By Linda Frye Burnham (2000)

Yes in My Front Yard. By Marie Gee (1995)

Students will be asked to lead discussions on some of these readings. To prepare for leading discussion on these, take note of:

- key issues raised
- issues relevant to our project
- how the article resonates with you

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Community Arts Profile, due February 27, on a community arts project or artist, investigating the process by which community arts works are created. You may write about either a specific community-based artist, or on a particular project. Choose among artists and projects we have studied, or propose a topic. (For an excellent listing of community-based arts organizations you might consider profiling, check the CAN Reading room, see web address below, under Arts and Urban Communities, Outside Links.) If you are writing about an artist, you will want to give a picture of the artist's approach to doing community arts work, their philosophy and creative process, their goals. In order to get this larger picture of the artist's work, investigate at least two (2) community arts projects they have undertaken. If you are writing about a particular project, describe the community and relevant points of its history, how the partnership between the artist and the community came about, the working process, the art product, and the aftermath effects of the project upon the community and on the artist.

Consider the following:

- What is the community being engaged? Consider Geer's definitions - tradition, spirit, location.
- Is there a key community issue being addressed by the project? Are there goals set by the artist and/or community in relation to this issue?
- Relationship of artist(s) to the community - what knowledge and skills are being exchanged between artist(s) and community? Who leads the process? Do community members have a voice in the process? How? Check the table below for parameters for exchange.
- Do the planning process, creative process, and artistic product reflect this exchange? How?
- How does the project/artist affect the community? What is different in the community after the project is done? Does any "social change" occur? Does the process produce ongoing community arts activity?
- How is the product of the community arts project received by critics?
- How does the project affect the artist(s)?

To answer these questions, use a variety of sources. Include sources of at least two (2) different types from the below list. Cite at least four (4) sources.

- Primary sources, written by the artist(s) and /or community
- Secondary sources, written about the artist(s)/community and project(s)
- Interview with the artist(s), where possible
- Viewing of videotapes or slides of the community art work(s) created

Suggested length: 7 - 10 pages

Community Contact Journal, due March 20: You should make a journal entry each time you interact with people from the community, including speakers in

class, arts education workshops, oral history interviews, research visits, meetings. In these entries, you should note activities undertaken, dynamics of the group and between the Temple students, artists, administrators and the community residents, your thoughts about the artist's working process, impressions of the community and its organizations, progress of individuals and the entire project, your own feelings about the project and your developing role in it. Dynamics of race/class/culture may be important in these entries as well. Entries can be informal - immediate thoughts, impressions, feelings, listing of activities. This journal will be an important source for your Final Paper.

Research Briefing Papers on neighborhood issues, various due dates to be announced.

Oral History Transcriptions - Each student will transcribe an interview at in which they were involved, either an individual interview or a story circle. Various due dates to be announced.

Final Reflective Paper, due May 8. In this final paper, you will have the chance to reflect on the residency and evaluate your role in it, the work of your internship team, and your view of the entire project, in relation to Community Arts Theory. The primary points of reference for your reflection and evaluation should be your journal entries and notes on team meetings, as well as your community arts research paper and notes on community speakers. Compare our project to the project you wrote about in your Community Arts profile paper, or to a different project we've studied. Look specifically at the following issues: (1) Exchange - the dynamics of our partnership (2) issues of race and class. Consider the following:

1. Exchange

- How would you describe the exchange that was developed between the artist/Temple interns/community participants?
- Describe the artist's approach to working in this community setting. What did they bring to the project? How did this approach affect dynamics of exchange?
- Describe the community participants' role in the project - what leadership was provided to the project by community participants? What did they bring to the table in terms of skills, experience, artistic material, community knowledge?

2. Participant Profile

Profile one participant who you have developed a relationship with -

- What do you observe about their experience and progress in the project?
- What kind of exchange/relationship did you experience with this participant?

- What did you bring? What did he or she bring? How were you each affected by your work together? Consider development of arts skills, attitudes towards others, self-esteem, ability to participate in the community, etc.
- How does this person's story communicate something about the larger impact of the residency?

3. Art Project

How does the developing performance reflect the process of relationship building, community issues, participants' contributions?

4. Personal reflection/Self-Evaluation

Look back at your first journal entry on the community(s) you come from ?

- How did/didn't this affect your engagement with participants, with the community, with the project? Were there particular boundaries - race, class, gender, age - that you crossed? Did the art-making facilitate this boundary crossing? Were these boundaries difficult to navigate?

Self-evaluation:

- What were your strengths in the field internship? What did you do well?
- What were your challenges? How did you meet these challenges?
- How would you describe the role that you developed?
- What, if anything, changed for you as a result of the project?

GRADING

Class participation 25%

Field Internship participation - engagement in planning, implementation, reflection, problem solving, teaching, research 30%

Community Arts Profile Paper 15%

Community Journal 15%

Final Reflective Paper 15%

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all seminar meetings and internship sessions is, of course, mandatory. The course is a combination of academic and applied work. You and your classmates will need to count on one another; work at the field internship sites demands utter reliability. Any anticipated difficulties with attendance should be discussed with instructor before they occur. If you miss more than one class your grade will be reduced by one grade for each subsequent missed class. All missed class work must be completed.