

## **COMPOSITION SEMINAR (MUSIC 2632): INTERDISCIPLINARY PERFORMANCE LABORATORY**

Fall 2022 • Fridays, 10am-12:45pm (Bellefield Hall Auditorium)

Office: Music Building 208 (contact Dr. Williams to make an appointment)

[Dr. Amy Williams](#), Professor of Music <[amywill@pitt.edu](mailto:amywill@pitt.edu)> (she/her/hers)

With: [Staycee Pearl](#) <[staycee@staycee.com](mailto:staycee@staycee.com)>, [Staycee Pearl Dance Project](#) (she/her/hers)

Herman Pearl <[herman.pearl@gmail.com](mailto:herman.pearl@gmail.com)>, [Soy Sos](#) and [SPDP](#) (he/him/his)

### **DESCRIPTION:**

The Interdisciplinary Performance Laboratory is designed to inform and broaden the creative practice of students whose work is broadly defined as “performative.” The course brings together a group of performers/creators (writers, artists, actors, filmmakers, musicians) to explore interdisciplinary collaboration and to develop new work in close partnership with members of the Staycee Pearl Dance Project. In-class exercises on particular topics (space, communication, process, structure) are designed to apply the practice of other disciplines to one’s own work, to actively collaborate, and to provide productive feedback. We will become informed about the collaborative work of significant contemporary artists, including those from within our own university community through guest presentations. Students will workshop new ideas during the class sessions in the fall semester and then produce a public performance in March 2023 with members of the SPDP. The individual creative voices of the students will be activated by the shared purpose of developing something collectively that may be more impactful than the sum of its parts. The activities of the course will enable “thinking at the edges” of our disciplinary corners, which can lead to substantive artistic growth.

### **GUIDELINES:**

Wear comfortable clothes that you can move freely in.

Bring what you need to share and create work (musical instruments/sketchbook/computer/art supplies, etc.) and your journal to each class.

Always provide feedback that is productive, respectful and considerate of where that person is in their own artistic trajectory. We are critiquing work, not people.

Accept that there are no mistakes or failures in creating new work. We are always learning.

Understand that collaboration requires contribution, curiosity, communication, compromise and commitment.

### **MASK POLICY:**

We are requesting (not mandating) that everyone wear masks indoors. If you are experiencing COVID-like symptoms or have had a close exposure to someone with COVID, please take a rapid test before coming to class. If you test positive for COVID, please do not come to class and contact Dr. Williams about the next steps.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

We will meet in person each week in Bellefield Hall Auditorium (unless otherwise noted). You are expected to attend every class session. If you are unable to attend due to illness or for another reason, please contact Dr. Williams ahead of time by email. Participation is a large portion of your grade and you cannot participate if you are not present. Each voice is essential.

### **GRADING:**

Projects: 50%

Participation (in class and on shareboard): 35%

Journal: 15%

## CLASS MEETINGS:

**September 2:** introductions to each other and to collaboration

Assignment: bring in a piece of yours that represents your current artistic voice and give a 5-minute presentation. Talk a bit about your process and inspiration for this piece. Also be prepared to talk with the group about your past experiences with collaboration—successful or not!

**September 9:** Staycee Pearl/Herman Pearl/Barbara Weissberger discuss their collaborative work *sym*.

Assignment: watch [sym](#) and [sol](#). Read first chapter of Octavia Butler's "Fledgling." Watch Barbara Weissberger [interview](#) and check out her [work](#). Record responses in your journal.

**September 16: Found object project:** Complete during class and upload video documentation by the end of the day.

Assignment: watch Cage/Cunningham "[How to Kick, Pass, Run, Fall](#)" (excerpt) and Bill T. Jones "[Story/Time](#)" (excerpt). Also read "The Way of Merce" article and peruse Bill T. Jones' book "Story/Time: The Life of an Idea" (available online through Pittcat). Record responses in your journal. Bring your journal to class and also any instruments, art supplies, cameras, etc. that you might use to make work.

**September 23:** Amy Williams/Eric Moe/Aaron Henderson/Cynthia Croot discuss their collaborative work.

Assignment: watch everyone's found object projects and research the guest presenters. Record responses in journal. Watch Amy Williams/Aaron Henderson excerpts from [Clneshape](#) and Eric Moe/Angie Cruz/Aaron Henderson/Cynthia Croot "[We Crossed the River](#)" (text in google folder of articles).

**September 30: Communication** (vocabulary/notation/interpretation/transmission of information)

Assignment: Analyze a very small piece of a work of yours in as much technical detail as possible. Give a 5-minute presentation of this analysis.

**October 7: Voice** (actual voice through words, text, acting, singing/artistic voice/biography/memoir/personal narrative) and guest **Scott Andrew**

Assignment: continue to expand upon the movement phrase you learned in class and and sound (could be an existing or original piece of music that we play or perform live in class), research [Scott Andrew](#) works, plus watch works of Meredith Monk ("[Education of the Girlchild](#)" solo and "[Plateau](#)") and read "Four Decades" article/watch Ralph Lemon & Okwui Okpokwasili ("[Scaffold Room](#)" from 27:30-49:30). Plus Okwui Okpokwasili [excerpts](#) and [swallowthemoon](#) (optional) and Ralph Lemon's "[How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?](#)" (optional—available on Marquee.tv with free one-week trial).

**[SPECIAL EVENT \(REQUIRED\)](#):** Wednesday, October 12, Kelly Strayhorn Theater Alloy Studios (5530 Penn Avenue), 8pm

**October 14:** NO CLASS (FALL BREAK)

**October 21: Space** (off stage/on stage, inside/outside, theater/non-theater, open/contained, silence)

Assignment: **Space project:** Create an original piece (poem, short monologue, piece of music, painting, etc.) and have a partner from the class film you presenting this same object in different physical locations (i.e. on the bus, in your apartment, on a hilltop). Think about light, time of day, framing, background, camera angle, perspective, etc. Upload documentation to the google folder to show in class (up to 5 minutes).

Also watch Eiko & Koma ["Water"](#) with Robert Mirabal (excerpt) and ["A Body in Tokyo"](#) and read article.

**October 28: Process** (generating material/improvisation/canons)--WITH DANCERS (meet in Understory, CL B50)

Assignment: TBA

**November 4: Micro and Macro-structures** (traditional forms/physical vs perceptual frames/beginnings and endings/ short and long durations/phrase/gesture/repetition)

Assignment: Pitch several themes that you would like to see the final performance focus around.

**November 11:** Movement workshop--WITH DANCERS (staging, blocking, stage direction, following and leading, mirroring, foreground vs background) (meet in Understory, CL B50)

Assignment: **Movement scores:** everyone creates a "score" specifically for one or two dancers to interpret using graphic or text notation or instructions. Limit to one-minute or one-page or a few words.

**November 18: Coincidence** (meet in Understory, CL B50) (PUBLIC EVENT)

Assignment: Watch Cage/Cunningham ["Variations V"](#) (starts 5 minutes in) and bring in actions.

In-class: Create a multidisciplinary happening/circus/event in class. Everyone brings in 10 actions (movement gesture, poem, found object, text, sounds, etc.) directly responding to the theme for the final projects. You should be able to "perform" all your actions and in any order and for different durations.

**December 2:** Rehearsals for final projects (no dancers).

**December 9:** Workshop for final projects--WITH DANCERS

**[SPECIAL EVENT \(REQUIRED\)](#):** Wednesday, December 14, Kelly Strayhorn Theater Alloy Studios (5530 Penn Avenue), 8pm

**December 16:** final project showing--WITH DANCERS

## **POLICIES:**

### **Academic Integrity**

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators. To learn more about Academic Integrity, visit the [Academic Integrity](#)

[Guide](#) for an overview of the topic. For hands-on practice, complete the [Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism tutorial](#).

### **Disability Services**

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and [Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, [drsrecep@pitt.edu](mailto:drsrecep@pitt.edu), (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

### **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

The University of Pittsburgh does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity or other factors as stated in the University's Title IX policy. The University is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment that interferes with the University's mission. For more information about policies, procedures, and practices, visit the [Civil Rights & Title IX Compliance web page](#). We ask that everyone in the class strive to help ensure that other members of this class can learn in a supportive and respectful environment. If there are instances of the aforementioned issues, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, by calling 412-648-7860, or emailing [titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu). Reports can also be [filed online](#). You may also choose to report this to a faculty/staff member; they are required to communicate this to the University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. If you wish to maintain complete confidentiality, you may also contact the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930).

### **E-mail Communication**

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers. Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.