

Minneapolis Uprising 2020:
Lessons from the field & Practices for Solidarity-Building via Artistic Practice

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The urgent demands lifted up by the Uprising, in the wake of the police murder of George Floyd, are epic, yet require granular nuanced responsiveness. Where, for instance, does policing live in our bodies? How can we carefully distinguish this internal policing from the affirming practices of boundary-setting? How can we understand our place in the movement for Mutual Aid while separating it from surface volunteerism? How can we stay vigilant about *how* we show up in movement-building? How can we remember previous histories and alignments and remember our stake in each other's liberation?

This hybrid (part movement - part lecture) and blended (remote instruction with a few site-specific meetings) course invites students to investigate the intersecting energies of agile readiness and soft curiosity, of endurance and patience with courage to dismantle, that we are all called to at this moment.

Together, we will explore these questions through artistic processes to articulate multiple ways to rise to this moment and find emotional, intellectual, and creative alignment with this historic moment of the Uprising.

While we will work through embodied practices, this course is not designed for dancers only. Rather, it specifically invites in practitioners from multiple fields.

FRAMEWORK

This class was created on the Native grounds of Minnesota. As such, this framework and pedagogy, developed for students of the University of Minnesota, are specific to this place. Please adapt to connect to the ground on which you stand.

I acknowledge the location of the University of Minnesota on stolen Native land originally belonging to the Dakota and Ojibwe peoples of Mni Sota Makoce. I align myself with Native communities and commit myself to building relationships with indigenous relatives and to honor their land, on which we dance every day, and the original inhabitants of this land.

Additionally, I acknowledge that the University, as a Land Grant institution, has gained from the direct and indirect oppression of and theft from, Black peoples. Our pursuit of knowledge, research, and excellence, emerge from our recognition of these historic injustices.

In my pedagogy, I invite you to join me in acknowledging the injustices Native and Black peoples have historically and currently experience in our society, and to honor the many histories of resistance that bring us to this day.

This course is designed with the belief that we become the artists and thinkers the world needs when we are able to look at our universe through the eyes of oppressed peoples.

GROUND RULES

1. Please come to class with the assigned readings completed so we can move forward with our investigations.
2. Please come with the intention of building knowledge and compassion. Hate speech is disallowed and considered questions are encouraged.
3. Some of our investigations might become emotionally heavy: We are building capacity to hold these conversations. Please take responsibility for yourself and take a time out, or signal what support is needed, and take a break. Return when you are ready.
4. Please hold flexibility. I have some sessions scheduled to meet outside but I will be watching the weather and sometimes will need to switch out the schedule in case of rain/cold.

Materials

Most of the materials for this class are online (Links included). There is one required textbook: Adrienne Maree Brown: *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* (2017). AK Press.

WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

(* = in-class work. ++ = materials assigned for homework, in preparation for class that day)

Week one: State of the world

Opening Discussion: Where are we? What is the definition of uprising? What are the images and energies of Uprising that we retain in our bodies?

*Junauda Petrus: Give the Police Departments to the Grandmothers
(<https://vimeo.com/426276718>)

*I Love: TruthMaze

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9iELtCdmMiU&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR1ASz5sDaGBP-AEk_ShrlrsZ57J3lio8FmXj3o-tvCBY9QOqI-A2F0QzOE)

*Black MN Love Letter (https://docs.google.com/document/u/2/d/e/2PACX-1vRvFVFCECnBwhVXGW2DpViiMHuZy98fjvurvBCiGhn004qVef6ZttCgKalhOZrxnSbrN_IJEi2Xu48/pub)

*Movement Exploration: What happened this year? How can we trace the range of emotions we have traversed, both articulating these states of being What is the weight of angularity / curvilinearity in this situation? What kinds of choreographic devices are relevant?

Week 2 : Beginnings

++Assigned reading: Love History Hope (<https://www.startribune.com/3-black-twin-cities-authors-reflect-on-love-history-hope-after-george-floyd-killing/570671041/?refresh=true>)

*Sharon Day: What will you do for Love? (<https://www.wisdomdances.com/climate-water-and-healing-grace/>)

*Movement Exploration: What is Policing? What is a boundary vs a border? What are embodied responses to being policed?

Week 3: Holding Multiplicity & Healing

*Meditations on Triangle and Lotus

Movement Explorations: Boundary-setting vs border-dissolving

[Meet on site]

Week 4: Policing and Toxicity

++Assigned reading: MPD 150 Report (<https://www.mpd150.com/report/overview/>)

*Discussion and Movement Exploration: Who/what is/are policed in dance/theater/performance/art? What kinds of borders are transgressed every day? What kind of boundaries do we want to protect? How can we meet the moment of dismantling policing with clarity, so we do not internalize its structures?

Week 5: Difference and Multiple pandemics

++How do we understand Safety? How do embody internalized notions of protecting ourselves even as stretch ourselves in new and different ways?

<https://www.mpd150.com/report/alternatives/>

*Warrior practices: This is a movement practice that explores the principle of opposition in the yogic warrior series such that it combines fierce strength and nimble length. We will explore the notion of building in protection for the knees, the hip joints, such that the torso can find its maximum elongation without injury.

Week 6: Bringing the body into alignment: Moving into Heart-Healing

*Brave Space vs Safe Space: Mickey Scott-Bey Jones

<https://onbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/An-Invitation-to-Brave-Space.pdf>

++Assigned listening: Mickey Scott-Bey Jones

<https://www.ctznwell.org/ctznpodcast/brave-space-not-safe-space-micky-scottbey-jones>

*Balances: Nikki Giovanni <https://www.poetrynook.com/poem/balances>

*Creative Interventions Toolkit, sections Introduction, Taking Accountability, and Working Together: http://www.creative-interventions.org/tools/toolkit/?fbclid=IwAR1KFDa3P0sMSpoDcVoOeLpmGy3IkNVnXzYZi4v1vZFFVS9DpEv_ynUuV7M

++Street Somatics: Prentice Hemphill <https://soundcloud.com/bioneers/somatics-trauma-healing-and-social-change> (Links to an external site.)

++Prentice Hemphill: Contagion, Consent, and Connection <https://prentishemphill.com/blog> (Links to an external site.)

Week 7: Holding Care-Work with Revolution

Visit with Samantha Pree-Gonzalez

++Assigned reading (in preparation): Introduction from *Emergent Strategy*

Week 8: Investigating Self and preparing to move out

++Assigned reading: Moving from Race to Culture (Ramsey County Cultural Wellness Center)

Movement practice: Identifying centers so we can affirm and move in different directions.

Week 9: Safety Rituals

++Assigned reading: Mia Mingus: Pod-Mapping

https://batjc.wordpress.com/readings-media/?fbclid=IwAR0PoQkP89Nbz8A6s_lwAGDxXgCaThf4HzcUQt_4EAXPcpBqlj2KD H8TU7w (Links to an external site.)

*Movement exercise: Pod Mapping

*Circle practices: What is a circle practice? What is the kinesthetic experience of a circle? How do pods overlap with circles?

Week 10: Justice and Accountability

++Assigned Reading: Community

Accountability: <http://www.usprisonculture.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/commaccountabilityincite.pdf> (Links to an external site.)

*Fania Davis: What is Justice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhJU69bplYM>

*Dancing Accountability: what does it mean to you?

Week 11: Strategizing inside Movement Building

++Adrienne Maree Brown: Principles of Emergent Strategy, Elements of Emergent Strategy, Fractals, Intentional Adaptation

Movement explorations: Fractals and Adaptations

Week 12: Break

Week 13: Building movement stamina

++Adrienne Maree Brown: Interdependence and Decentralization, Non-linear and iterative, Resilience

Movement Explorations: 3 durational studies: Connectivity in Distance. Iteration vs Repetition in choreography, and Falling and Getting Up

Week 14: Generating healing practices

++Adrienne Maree Brown: Creating More Possibilities, Conversations, Spells and Practices

Movement Explorations: Creating recipes that intersect healing, accountability, safety.

Week 15: Closing the Circle

++Assigned study: Get Dis War Dance project

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bCMEnv5SIRWT6ukYEKQgWnzZKznsBCaZ/view>

*Prepare your own “war dance” exploring the connection between the opening theme of this class, love, and this war against injustice. Prepare a brief address sharing your understanding of “war dance,” crediting inspiration from those who created and popularized this concept, and extending it to work with your battles. What kind of dance is necessary for these times?