

*“Anthropology that doesn’t break your heart just isn’t worth doing anymore”  
Ruth Behar, The Vulnerable Observer*

**Arts-Based Inquiry in Diverse Learning Communities**  
\*\*\*ELAN 8590, *A syllabus and methodology in the making*\*\*\*  
Fall 2008

**Course Instructor: Dr. Melisa ("Misha") Cahnmann-Taylor**

Are you drawn to the arts? Do you want to exercise creativity in your methodological approach? Do you want to write a dissertation that is vibrant and engaging? Do you have experience in qualitative research and in the literary, visual, or performing arts? This course may be for you....

**Course Description:**

This course examines techniques of arts-based (visual, performance, & literary arts) scholarship to increase the value, validity, and impact of qualitative research for understanding culturally and linguistically diverse learning communities. Students will:

1. Explore the history and theory of arts-based and poetic approaches to educational research in culturally and linguistically diverse communities
2. Identify connections between arts-based research and other methods used in humanities-oriented empiricism (e.g. autoethnography, case study historical research, etc.)
3. Practice the techniques and craft involved in arts-based approaches to inquiry
4. Complete a pilot arts-based inquiry project among culturally and linguistically diverse learning communities and/or project of their own choosing
5. Create a critical community for arts-based research through readings, discussions, and practice.

*Permission of the Department (POD)*

*Prerequisites Include ERSH 7400, ERSH 8410, and/or Instructor approval*

Because of the individualized design of this course, each participant will “contract” her work expectations with the professor based on individual interest and syllabus outline. Class participants will be encouraged to carry out projects that expand their ongoing investigations in diverse learning communities. We will look at ways the arts function as inquiry methodologies, not merely as forms of representation. Our class will at times fit a studio apprentice model for doing research. In much the same way an artist develops her techniques as a painter, a poet develops an eye and ear for music and imagery in words, so too we will develop *critically-artistic* sensibilities to apply to educational research.

**Methods Topics**

The practice of arts-based inquiry in qualitative approaches, including: ethnographic, auto/biographical (e.g., life history, auto-ethnography), case study methods, narrative, content, and semiotic analysis. Although the practice of arts-based research tends toward vibrant reiteration between activities of information collection, interpretation, and

representation, for the purposes of discussion, we will address each of these activities of research both separately and in relation to other activities.

- Information Collection (e.g., field-notes, observations, recorded interviews, archives)
- Interpretation (e.g., interpretivist, constructivist, feminist, and critical approaches)
- Re (presentation) Narrative (e.g., ethnographic poetry, drama and fiction, as well as readers theater and other scripts), visual arts (e.g., painting, interactive computer technology, photography, and film), as well as dance and other explorations of embodied knowledge.

## Course Design

### Participation

The course is structured on the following assumptions:

- That participants will attend class and will engage actively in discussions and activities;
- That participants will read the required texts and will be able to reference the readings in their written and oral discussions;
- That participants will enlist in collaborations, mentorship activities, and constructive, collegial, and educative peer review;
- That participants will seek to build their inquiry skills with artful representations of their work.
- That challenges will be made to personally constructed comfort zones, and that each of us will be supportive of others as we try new and unusual ways of processing information and making meanings.

**Comment [MC1]:** Page: 2  
Attendance is of the utmost importance and will contribute to course grade.

The course will be conducted as a seminar, rather than a lecture. Elements of studio practice will shape class activities and as far as logistically possible we will engage in performances, exhibits, and readings of our work. In addition, we will maintain ongoing discussion on-line, using “webct” as technological wisdom allows.

### Course Texts (Avail. at **Bookstore**)

- Cahnmann & Siegesmund, Arts Based Research in Education \*COURSE TEXT
- Barone Touching Eternity
- Behar An Island Called Home
- Hankins, Teaching Through the Storm
- Richardson Fields of Play
- Kusserow, Hunting Down the Monk

**Comment [MC2]:** Page: 2  
If course texts are ordered online (e.g. from Amazon) please pay for expedited shipping so you have the course in hand when the reading is due. If you are unsure if the text will arrive on time, please purchase from the bookstore.

### Assignments and Grades

Grading will reward enthusiasm, risk-taking, exploration, creativity, and process as well as product (qualities of academic writing, rigorous approach, aesthetic considerations, and so on). Thoughtful & critical reflections of how and why arts-based research practices are appropriate to educational contexts will be highly regarded. Collaborations are strongly encouraged. Self and peer evaluations of work are also encouraged and will be considered in grading. Everyone will have the opportunity to earn an A and the expectation is that all will do so.

I will assess your final grade based on these factors: **I** an oral presentations/participation (response to invitations, responses to the readings as well as regular class attendance and participation (bring a hard copy of response to class for both you and I) **II** a midterm & final paper --or one draft and one final paper—that can either be a **critical review** or a **creative text** (15-20 pages and/or alternative format). This paper will be due on the last day of class (50% of the grade).

The Final Assignment may begin to take shape at the beginning of the course as you work with your obsessions on weekly assignments.

### **I. Weekly presentations/participation (50% of course grade)**

Each week you are responsible for readings and responses. Each class participant will produce a one page or less "response" which may consist of answers to discussion questions (found in readings), development of additional questions, and/or creative reactions to course material. One student each week will sign up as **Presenter** to share a selection of their work, 1-5 pages, sending this material to peers/instructor 1-5 days in advance of the session. Presenter work may develop thematically based on your identified "obsession" (see below), and may contribute to your midterm/final critical/creative project(s). Everyone is responsible for bringing written feedback to the weekly presenter. Grades will be based on weekly responses, presenter material, and feedback given to weekly presenters.

### **II. Midterm/Final Options (50% of course grade)**

**A Critical Review** Much of the Arts Based Research scholarship includes definitions (e.g. what is ABR?), histories (e.g. what are the origins of ABR?), theoretical frameworks (e.g. what does ABR help us to see differently and how?). Most of this work has been published in the field of Arts Education; very little has been applied to other fields of inquiry (e.g. *TESOL, Adult Education, English Education, Instructional Technology, Special Education*, etc.). Choosing to work on this assignment means you may work on a paper that synthesizes and adds to what has been done:

1. ABR methodologies as relevant to specific of inquiry (see above); histories and future directions
  2. New ABR scholarship, reviews, critiques and possibilities (choose one or more recently published texts and situate within the larger ABR discourses)
  3. An ABR literature review serving as a current or future foundation for your own research project
- *What has come before?*
  - *What does ABR do/offer? What are the limitations?*
  - *What next steps are needed? Where to go from here?*

Grades will be based on clarity of expression, accuracy and depth of cited work, creative extensions to ABR discussion.

**B. A Creative Text.** Due to the recent emergence of ABR as an accepted (in some circles) set of methodologies, there are still too few examples of how the arts can be used in the empirical process (e.g. planning a study, collecting data, analyzing data, writing up findings, and published/oral/visual/performative presentations). You can use this assignment to carry out a [pilot] study using ABER methods, aiming to help fill this gap.

This assignment assumes a thorough understanding of course literature and some background in (qualitative) research methodology. You may focus your efforts on designing an arts-informed study and writing up your design/methods and preliminary findings (if any). The creativity may be in the study design or in the products rendered through empirical work (e.g. interview data written up as poems; classroom observations rendered visually). Your work must be contextualized with a description of your methods and refer to literature that helped you make methodological decisions. Then you can showcase any part(s) of the study that reveal findings (using the visual, literary, and/or performing arts when possible).

- *Literature Review (what literature informs your creative work)?*
- *ABR Methods (What did you do creatively and empirically)?*
- *Findings (So what? Products, insights, new questions, etc.)?*

Grades will be based on appropriate selection of ABR methods, clarity and aesthetics of expression, accuracy and depth of cited work, artistic extensions to current understandings of a given phenomenon.

## WEEKLY AGENDA

### 1. 8/21 Overview of the Course, Poetic Introductions, Introductions to the field

**\*\*NOTE: Please come to class having reviewed the syllabus. Bring questions. We will have a shorter class session only on this date.**

Readings:

Syllabus

Arts-based action: Why are you interested in this course? What are your primary *obsessions/objects of inquiry* (meaning, what drives your passion/interest in your graduate program and professional pursuits)? How might you address these obsessions through ABR inquiry? See questions 1,2, and 6 on p. 13 of the Cahnmann/Siegesmund text and bring a response to class next week.

### 2. 8/28 Challenges to the definition and acceptance of arts-based inquiry as research

Readings to be discussed at this class session:

- Section 1, Cahnmann& Siegesmund (pp. 1-50)
- Barone & Eisner in Jaeger ABR pp73-114 (41pgs) (pdf)

**Comment [MC3]:** Page: 4  
Weekly assignments may change. Please check email/webct regularly for updates and remain in communication with at least one peer during the week.

**Comment [MC4]:** Page: 4  
from now on this will be "Readings"

Arts-based action: All bring/send 1/2-1pg "response" (see above) to weekly course material as a basis for discussion.

Weekly Presenter(s)

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### 3. 9/4 Poetry & Educational Inquiry

Readings:

- Section II, Cahnmann& Siegesmund (pp. 51-98)
- Cahnmann, M. (2003) "The Craft, practice and possibility of poetry in educational research." *Educational Researcher* 29-36 (7pgs)
- Cofer, J. O. *Silent Dancing* (selection)
- Kusserow, *Hunting Down the Monk* (optional)

Arts-based action: All bring/send 1/2-1pg "response" (see above) to weekly course material as a basis for discussion.

Weekly Presenter(s)

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### 4. 9/11 Autoethnography as Poetic Inquiry

Readings:

- Behar, Ruth (2007) *An Island Called Home*, ISBN-10: 0813541891
- Ellis, C. "*Heartful Autoethnography*" (15pgs)

Arts-based action: All bring/send 1/2-1pg "response" (see above) to weekly course material as a basis for discussion.

Weekly Presenter(s)

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**Comment [MC5]:** Page: 5  
See book review:  
<http://edrev.asu.edu/reviews/rev630.htm>

**Comment [MC6]:** Page: 5  
Depending on the group, books may be  
jigsaw-ed to insure close reading.

### 5. 9/18 Researching the Visual

Readings:

- Section III, Cahnmann& Siegesmund (pp. 99-150)

Arts-based action: All bring/send 1/2-1pg "response" (see above) to weekly course material as a basis for discussion.

Weekly Presenter(s)

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### 6. 9/25 Humanities Standards and (non)fictional inquiry

Readings:

- Barone, T. (2001) *Touching eternity*, ISBN 08077-4111-6
- *Humanities Standards Task Force .pdf*

Arts-based action: All bring/send 1/2-1pg "response" (see above) to weekly course material as a basis for discussion.

Weekly Presenter(s)

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### 7. 10/2 Performance Inquiry, Ethnodrama, and Ethnofiction

Readings:

- Section III, Cahnmann& Siegesmund (pp. 151-228)
- Cahnmann-Taylor, M. et. al. (In Press) *The Art & Science of Educational Inquiry: Analysis of Performance-Based Focus Groups with Novice Bilingual Teachers*. *Teachers College Record*.

Arts-based action: All bring/send 1/2-1pg "response" (see above) to weekly course material as a basis for discussion.  
Weekly Presenter(s)  
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**8. 10/7 MIDTERM RENDERING DUE; Multigenres in Fields of Play**  
Readings:

- Richardson, L. Fields of play, ISBN:0813523796

Arts-based action: All bring/send 1/2-1pg "response" (see above) to weekly course material as a basis for discussion.

**9. 10/16 Alternative Dissertations, In Process**

- Perry, Dell Unchartered Territory: An autoethnographic perspective on starting a dual immersion charter school. (Forthcoming on webct by 10/9)

Arts-based action: All bring/send 1/2-1pg "response" (see above) to weekly course material as a basis for discussion.

**10. 10/23 An Alternative Dissertation Complete - UGA**

- Hankins, K. Teaching through the storm ISBN 08077-4328-3

Arts-based action: All bring/send 1/2-1pg "response" (see above) to weekly course material as a basis for discussion.

*\*\*10/21 3:30- 4:45 Dr. Stephanie Springgay will be visiting Dr. Richard Siegesmund's class. To attend please email rsieg@uga.edu*

**11. 10/30 Sharing Works in Progress – Sign Up for Feedback [AS NEEDED]**

Presenter(s)  
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**12. 11/6 Sharing Works in Progress – Sign Up for Feedback (Class meeting time 11:30-2)**

Presenter(s)  
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**13. 11/13 Sharing Works in Progress – Sign Up for Feedback**

Presenter(s)  
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**14. 17-23 AAA in SF**

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**15. 11/27 Thanksgiving**

**16. 11/4 LAST CLASS; Showcase of Works in Progress; Celebrations**

**Comment [MC7]:** Page: 5  
Midterm renderings may be work in progress toward the final project (e.g. prose or aesthetic drafts, outline, annotated readings for critical paper, and so forth). approx. 3-8 pgs.

**Comment [MC8]:** Page: 6  
No class

**Comment [MC9]:** Page: 6  
No class

**Comment [MC10]:** Page: 6  
Format to be decided by group.

**Additional ABR books (recently published) to know/build upon:**

1. Motherhood, the elephant in the laboratory : women scientists speak out / edited by Emily Monosson.
2. Talk and social theory : ecologies of speaking and listening in everyday life / Frederick Erickson.
3. Standing Ovation: Performing Social Science Research About Cancer (Ethnographic Alternatives, 11) (Hardcover)
4. by Gray Ross (Author)
5. Rita Charon, narrative in medicine
6. Stories Matter: The Role of Narrative in Medical Ethics (Reflective Bioethics)
7. Seeing Red—A Pedagogy of Parallax: An Epistolary Bildungsroman on Artful Scholarly (we should have this)
8. Curriculum And the Cultural Body (Complicated Conversation: a Book Series of Curriculum Studies) by Stephanie Springgay and Debra Freedman (Paperback - Jan 2007)
9. Body Knowledge and Curriculum: Pedagogies of Touch in Youth and Visual Culture by Stephanie Springgay (Paperback - May 2008)
10. Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues by J . Gary Knowles and Ardra L. Cole (Hardcover - Nov 14, 2007)
11. International Handbook of Research in Arts Education (Springer International Handbooks of Education) by Liora Bresler (Hardcover - Mar 12, 2007)
12. Knowing Bodies, Moving Minds: Towards Embodied Teaching and Learning (Landscapes: the Arts, Aesthetics, and Education) (Paperback) by L. Bresler (Editor)
13. Studies in Art Education: a Journal of Issues and Research, 0039-3541, Vol. 48:No. 4 2007:Summer by Candace Jesse Stout, Doug Blandy, and Mindi Rhoades (Pamphlet - 2007)
14. Ethnodrama: An Anthology of Reality Theatre (Crossroads in Qualitative Inquiry) by Johnny Salda-a (Paperback - Feb 28, 2005)

15. *The Other Side of Nowhere: Jazz, Improvisation, and Communities in Dialogue (Music Culture)* by Ingrid Monson, Daniel Fischlin, and Ajay Heble (Paperback - Mar 30, 2004)
16. *Performance Ethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture* by Norman K. Denzin
17. *Searching for Yellowstone: Race, Gender, Family and Memory in the Postmodern West* by Norman K. Denzin (Paperback - May 31, 2008)
18. *Understanding Creativity* by Jane Piirto (Hardcover - Nov 2003)
19. *Researching the Vulnerable: A Guide to Sensitive Research Methods* by Pranee Liamputtong (Paperback - Dec 28, 2006)
20. *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology* by D. Jean Clandinin (Hardcover - Dec 28, 2006)
21. *Re-Imagining Schools: The Selected Works of Elliot Eisner (World Library of Educationalists)* by E. Eisner (Paperback - Nov 7, 2005)
22. *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts* by Graeme Sullivan (Hardcover - Dec 15, 2004)
23. *Artistic Inquiry in Dance/Movement Therapy: Creative Alternatives for Research* by Lenore Wadsworth Hervey (Hardcover - Sep 2000)
24. *A/R/Tography: Rendering Self Through Arts-Based Living Inquiry* by William F. Pinar, Rita L. Irwin, and Alex De Cosson (Paperback - Jan 15, 2004)
25. *Writing With, Through, and Beyond the Text: An Ecology of Language* by Rebecca Luce-Kapler

Special Arts based themed journal issues, on-line publications, and journals friendly to arts-informed inquiry:

Alberta Journal of Educational Research, *ajer*. xlviii (3), Fall 2002.

Qualitative Inquiry, 9 (2), 2003.

Curriculum Inquiry, 32 (2), 2002. and 32 (3).

Teacher Education Quarterly, Fall 2002, 29 (4).

There are a number of arts based papers at the e-journal Educational Insights at UBC. <http://www.csci.educ.ubc.ca/publication/insights/>

Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy <http://www.coe.tamu.edu/candp/>

Anthropology & Education Quarterly

Language Arts  
English Journal  
Journal of Latinos and Education  
Harvard Education Review  
Anthropology and Humanism

Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies  
<http://www.csse.ca/CACS/JCACS/index.html>

Educational Insights <http://ccfi.educ.ubc.ca/publication/insights>

International Journal for Education in the Arts <http://ijea.asu.edu>

Language and Literacy: A Canadian Educational E-Journal  
<http://www.langandlit.ualberta.ca>

Canadian Journal of Education (inaugural on-line article included)  
<http://www.csse.ca/CJE/Articles/CJE27-4.htm>

ArtsPraxis E-Journal <http://www.nyu.edu/education/music/artspraxis>

"ArtsInformed" Arts Informed is a newsletter publication from UofT. Newsletter publication from the Centre for Arts-Informed Research, OISE . Visit website:  
<http://home.oise.utoronto.ca/~aresearch/Newsletter.html>

The Canadian Creative Arts in Health, Training and Education, CCAHTE  
eNews/journal <http://www.cmclean.com>

Visual Culture & Gender <http://www.emitto.net/visualculturegender>

websites of interest:  
<http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca:16080/Artography/index.php>