

# FA305 Imagined Geographies: Redefining Nationhood through Artistic Practice

Seminar Leader: Heba Y. Amin  
Course Times: Wednesday, 15:45 – 19:00  
Location: P98A – Lecture Hall  
Email: h.amin@berlin.bard.edu  
Office Hours: by appointment

## Course Description

This hybrid studio/seminar course examines the wide range of artistic projects that propose new political imaginings of political geographies. Artists have founded micronations, proposed to colonize outer space, even attempted to move continents. The class will examine the role that technology has played in altering our relation to landscape, and how it can be used as a tool to rethink and reconfigure the global frameworks of nationhood. Through creative projects, readings, class exercises and field visits, we will explore alternative possibilities of belonging in the era of digitization. The class will reframe conventional parameters of citizenry within the construct of borders and migration. Can *critical geography* be used as a method to find alternative ways of organizing current political constructs? We will explore "imagined geographies" as an opportunity to rethink current political configurations.

## Requirements

Students are expected to:

- Turn off phones during the entire class time, including off-campus trips. They will be allowed to be used only during breaks.
- Be prepared to present artworks / assignments / presentations without reminder.
- Engage in critiques and discussions.
- Initiate appointments with Professor or arts staff outside of class time when assistance is necessary.
- Always allocate extra time for work preparation and clean-up for independent production.
- Respond to emails from Professor in a timely manner.
- Inform Professor at beginning of semester if photos of student, artwork, works in progress are NOT to be taken and / or used for Bard College Berlin.
- Remove all artworks, art materials, and any personal belongings before the final inspection of the arts spaces during completion week. Failure to remove works and / or clean spaces used will result in final grade penalization. Donating artworks or art

materials (unrequested) at any time is not permitted and will still be considered student's property that will be expected to be uninstalled and removed.

### Attendance

- Attendance of ALL classes is expected.
- More than one absence (that is, absence from one three-hour session per week) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course.
- Students are expected to attend all off-campus classes punctually, from start to finish. If there is a scheduling / travel conflict, Professor must be informed in advance.
- Tardiness after five minutes will be considered an absence.

### Assessment

Course work consists of four main components:

1. **Projects:** projects make up the bulk of your work for the class. You will have **2 PROJECTS** for the duration of the semester. They will be introduced in class and you will be given time in class to develop, discuss, and work on them. You are expected to work outside of class to complete your projects. A typical expectation for a project-based class is minimum 6 hours a week.  
=50% of final course grade (25% for each project)
2. **Class Sketches**  
=30% of final course grade
3. **Written response:** one page paper response to a public talk or exhibition relevant to the course  
=5% of final course grade
4. **Contribution to the class:** active class participation in class discussions, group critique, open-studios clean-up (\* If your work is not removed by the open studios inspection, your grade will be deducted 5% points)  
=10% of final course grade
5. **Sketchbook:** weekly progress in Sketchbook  
=5% of final course grade

### Grade Breakdown

Projects are graded according to the following criteria:

- **CONCEPT:** ideas behind work, creativity, problem solving
- **TECHNIQUE and PRESENTATION:** neatness, care in the making and execution of work. Was

it presented effectively?

- OBJECTIVES: does the project effectively relay the goals that it was set out to achieve?
- WRITING/RESEARCH: Is there sufficient research to support the idea? How well are the ideas expressed in writing?

Each criterion accounts for roughly a quarter of the grade for each project.

GRADE	CHARACTERISTICS
A	Exceptional. Student coherently integrates examples with explanations or analysis in both written and creative work. The work reflects in-depth engagement with the semester topic.
B	Satisfactory. Student is reasonably focused, and explanations or analysis in written and creative work are mostly based on examples or other evidence. Work reflects moderate engagement with the semester topic.
C	Underdeveloped. Student shows little consideration of alternative perspectives, and few connections are made between ideas. The work reflects passing engagement with the semester topic.
D	Limited. Student is unfocused, or simply rehashes previous ideas, and displays no evidence of engagement with the semester topic.
F	No Credit. Student is missing and shows no understanding or engagement with the course.

### Policy on Late Submission of Artworks / Presentations

Assignments (artworks, essays, performances, oral presentations) that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (Example: B+ becomes C+). Professor is not obliged to accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late. Where Professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

### Course Material

Sketchbook is **MANDATORY**. Other materials as determined by project proposals.

### Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be grounds for awarding a grade of “F” for the entire course.

Course Schedule

<p>WEEK 1 Jan 30</p>	<p><b>INTRODUCTION TO CLASS AND SYLLABUS</b></p> <p>Screening: “How to Start Your Own Country” Danny Wallace ----- HW: Readings for next week: Jonas Staal, Homi Bhabha Buy sketchbook, come up with two questions based on the texts</p>
<p>WEEK 2 Feb 06</p>	<p><b>Lecture: WHAT IS THE NATION STATE?</b></p> <p>6:00 – 7:00 *Facilities Orientation* ----- HW: Readings for next week: Rei Terada come up with two questions based on the texts</p>
<p>WEEK 3 Feb 13</p>	<p><b>Lecture: THEORY OF LANDSCAPE</b></p> <p>Screening: “The Anabasis of May and Fusako Shigenobu, Masao Adachi, and 27 Years without Images”, Eric Beaudelaire ----- HW: Fukeiron sketch</p> <p>Readings for next week: Nicola Perugini &amp; Francesco Zucconi, TJ Demos &amp; Hilde Van Gelder come up with two questions based on the texts</p>
<p>WEEK 4 Feb 20</p>	<p><b>Lecture: COLONIAL FANTASIES</b></p> <p>Class crit</p> <p>Screening: “Enjoy Poverty”, Renzo Martens ----- HW: ‘Visual Humanitarianism’ Sketch</p>
<p>WEEK 5 Feb 27</p>	<p><b>MILITANT CINEMA, GUERRILA TACTICS AND GEOGRAPHICAL SOVEREIGNTY</b></p> <p>Class crit</p> <p>Screening: “Spell Reel”, Filipa Cesar ----- HW: Project 1 Proposal</p>

WEEK 6 Mar 06	STUDIO ----- HW: Project One
WEEK 7 Mar 13	*****FIRST PROJECT DUE*****
WEEK 8 Mar 20	Artist Visit – TBD -----  Readings for next week: JG Ballard, Harun Farocki, Paul Virilio
WEEK 9 Mar 27	<b>LECTURE: THE AERIAL VIEW</b>  STUDIO TIME ----- HW: Propaganda Sketch  Readings for next week: Alexander Gall
WEEK 10 Apr 03	<b>LECTURE: TECHNO-UTOPIAS</b>  ----- HW: Project 2 Proposal  Reading for next week: Jussi Parikka, Sophia Al-Maria
WEEK 11 Apr 10	<b>Lecture: DIGITAL BORDERS AND ALGORITHMIC LANDSCAPES</b>  Class Exercise: Micronations – staging an intervention  ----- HW: Project 2 cont.
WEEK 12 Apr 17	*****SPRING BREAK*****
WEEK 13 Apr 24	<b>Lecture: SPACE COLONIZATION AND OTHER FUTURISMS</b>  Screening: “In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain”, Larissa Sansour “The Last Angel of History” John Akomfrah  ----- HW: Project 2 cont.

WEEK 14 May 01	*****NO CLASS*****
WEEK 15 May 08	*****FINAL PROJECT DUE*****
May 11	*****BARD OPEN STUDIOS 4-9pm*****
May 12	CLEAN UP/FINAL INSPECTION

**Reading Material:**

- Alexander Gall “Atlantropa: A Technological Vision of a United Europe”
- Harun Farocki “Phantom Images”
- Homi Bhabha “DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation”
- JG Ballard “The Concentration City” (The Complete Short Stories of J.G. Ballard)
- Jonas Staal “Assemblism”
- Jussi Parikka “Middle East and other futurisms: imaginary temporalities in contemporary art and visual culture”
- Nicola Perugini & Francesco Zucconi “Enjoy Poverty: humanitarianism and the testimonial function of images”
- Paul Virilio “War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception”
- Raffi Khatchadourian “World Without End: Creating a full-scale digital cosmos”
- Rei Terada “Repletion: Masao Adachi’s Totality”
- Sophia AL-Maria “The Gaze of Sci-Fi Wahabi: a theoretical pulp fiction and serialized videographic adventure in the Arabian Gulf”
- TJ Demos and Hilde Van Gelder “Figuring Postcolonial Africa and Europe in the Films of Herman Asselberghs, Sven Augustijnen, Renzo Martens, and Els Opsomer”

**Facility Policies:**

“The Factory” – Eichenstrasse 43

- The BCB “Factory” (main arts building) has space and facilities available to BCB students with an academic purpose for using the building. Any space in the building, private or shared, cannot be used unless permission has been granted. Any questions relating to this must be addressed to the Director of Studios Arts.
- Chip access to the building will only be granted to those students currently registered for classes using the factory (after add-drop), and that have been offered orientation.
- No smoking is allowed anywhere inside the building. There are to be no projects using open flames (such as candles, torches, lanterns, fireworks, etc.) inside any part of the building.
- Fire exits and lanes (black-taped areas) must be kept clear of any obstructions.

- No spray-painting inside of the building. This also includes any strong, odorous materials (with or without spray). All production involving odorous material is to be done outside the building.
- All work surfaces (table and floor) must always be protected with thick plastic or cardboard. If production is to happen outside, ground / concrete is also to be protected.
- Food must be always cleaned up and removed immediately. Any food used for an art project requiring refrigeration must be labeled with one's name, and disposed of after presentation. All food must be disposed of in lidded trash cans.
- All students are to always be respectful of other student artworks and personal property.
- No art projects may function as weapons, or potentially cause bodily harm.
- No sandals, flip-flops, or bare feet will be allowed inside or around the workshop areas, which includes walking through the workshop. This includes dance and theater students as well.
- Students should always wear adequate protection (goggles, gloves, dust masks, etc.) when needed. BCB will always try to provide these items.
- If you are uncertain how to use a tool or piece of equipment or require assistance, please ask for assistance (by appointment, if necessary).
- Students must be aware of who else is working in the building after dark. Any curfews established by Bard College Berlin must be respected. Finishing production and cleaning up must happen before the curfew time.
- Students must make sure all lights are turned off and doors are closed when leaving the building. No windows or doors are to be left opened or cracked. All electrical items must be unplugged when not in use.
- Any unidentified property left in any common space is subject to either be taken or thrown out, without restitution. All private property **MUST** be labeled and stored in its proper location.
- All workshop items must be returned to the workshop when not in use.
- Any items leaving the building without permission will be considered stolen, and access to the factory may be suspended for the rest of the semester. If an item must be borrowed for a purpose outside of the building, contact the arts staff, and be prepared to leave your Student ID as a deposit. Fines may be charged for late return.
- All students must respect signage posted in the factory that may involve rules that are not mentioned in this document. This includes signage indicating reserved spaces where communal use is restricted.
- There are to be no architectural changes to studios or any areas inside or outside of the building without first speaking with your Professor, Studio Arts Manager, or Director of Studio Arts. When repainting any walls that need restoration, please consult with arts staff beforehand.
- During completion week, any space used by a student must be returned empty with clean walls and floors. All garbage must be bagged (or boxed) and properly disposed of. All students must accept the penalty of grades being affected and / or fines imposed if items are left (or renovations unfinished) by the inspection deadline.
- Contact Studio Arts Manager (Joon Park) with any questions:

j.park@berlin.bard.edu

#### AV Facilities – Eichenstrasse 43 (upstairs)

- BCB's AV (Audio / Visual) facilities provide a limited quantity of AV equipment to support Admin, Faculty as well as those students enrolled in arts classes that require specific items. AV facilities do not include any black and white or color printing services for students.
- The opening times may change every semester to adapt to specific course times. Once these times are established they will stay consistent throughout the semester, with possible exceptions. AV facilities are ONLY available during days when classes are held (closed during official BCB holidays).
- All items checked out are due back during AV hours the following day, unless other arrangements have been made in advance directly with AV staff.
- Items to be reserved on a specific date should be requested at least one week in advance. Without reservation, availability is limited to a first-come, first-serve basis.
- The AV staff may exclude students from borrowing items at any time, if the student:
  - failed to return items in time
  - failed to return items in person (pick up and/ or return by friends is not allowed)
  - returned items with missing pieces
  - returned items damaged or in poor shape
- AV equipment will be given out only to those students responsible in organizing, picking up as well as returning their items IN PERSON. No exceptions.
- All items returned late, regardless of patron's position at BCB, will be subject to a 1 Euro fine, per day.
- Any item returned without accessories (such as cables, SD card, batteries, tripod head, lens cap, etc) will be subject to a 1 Euro fine, per day (the same as late returns).
- Any items missing will be subject to patron reimbursement for its value (or under special circumstances, replacement, at the discretion of AV staff).
- 10) Any items damaged or malfunctioning are expected to be reported to staff upon check-in.
- Please use the AV email to inquire about equipment or policy, as well as to reserve (av@berlin.bard.edu). Do not contact AV staff through their personal emails.
- We strongly suggest personally visiting the facilities to inquire and reserve before borrowing equipment!
- AV equipment is limited at BCB. Whenever possible students are encouraged to use their own devices (computers, cameras) for production purposes.
- Contact AV staff with any questions: av@berlin.bard.edu

#### MacLab and Photo Darkroom Facilities – Platanenstrasse 98 (downstairs)

\*\* Guidelines to be offered during orientation.