

# FA291

## "far feeling": Telepathic Improvisations and Expanded Cinema

Seminar Leader: Isabell Spengler

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Course Times: Thu 10-12 & 13:00-15:30 (this course will meet 10 times during the semester)

Room: performance space, factory and seminar room, factory

Office Hours: Thu 12-13:00 or by appointment

### Course Description

What does telepathy - the art of "far-feeling" - have to do with film? How can film, a perfect medium to reproduce the outer appearance of things, transmit inner worlds? And which alternative relations do works of "expanded cinema" set up between senders and receivers - between film-authors and viewers?

In this experimental film class, we will examine contemporary and classic works of expanded cinema (since 1960), which explore the concept of telepathy in a broader sense and propose new ways of relating in human and non-human worlds. Together, we will investigate how expanded-cinema works can be appropriated as models of thought.

In their film installation "Telepathic Improvisation" (2017) Berlin-based artists Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz interpret a performance-score of the same title by composer Pauline Oliveros from 1974. In the artists' words, "Telepathic Improvisation explores the ways in which others (including other objects) might become part of our striving for alternative political and sexual imaginations."

Starting with practical research, students will engage in a number of telepathic improvisations and performance experiments, and document them on video. In a second step, they will develop conceptual approaches to "transmit" their findings to an audience and create new works of expanded cinema. Students will work in teams and collaborate in the production of their final film project.

### Requirements

Students are expected to:

- Always allocate extra time for work preparation and clean-up for independent production.
- Handle all technical equipment and facilities of Bard College Berlin with care and responsibility during and outside class time. This includes independent check-out and return of technical equipment as needed for homework assignments.
- Respond to emails from Professor in a timely manner.

### Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

### Attendance

Attendance at all classes is expected. To account for minor circumstances, one absence (that is, absence from **one class meeting** (of either 4,5 or 3,5 hours) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Please note: **All absences or the need to take part online** due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic, absences due illness or other circumstances **have to be communicated** to Professor **before** the beginning of the missed class meeting. If the work (presentations or production) of your team mates in the class is effected by your absence, students have to actively seek to **reschedule missed group work** in communication with their team mates.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FALL 2021: Some students may need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Instructors should make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

### Assessment

“Far-feeling: Telepathic Improvisations and Expanded Cinema” is a course in which students will use performance exercises as a means to develop conceptual works of Expanded Cinema addressing the topic of “telepathy”. This course fuses theoretical and practical research: Homework and in class assignments include readings and short writing assignments, next to assignments working with video, performance and other media.

Students will be expected to do ALL assignments and participate actively in class, and to structure their time well for final Expanded Cinema work that require several stages of production. The student's own research, creative process and conceptual procedures building up toward the final work are part of the assessment, and shall be documented in the students' note books throughout the class.

For most exercises and during the final assignment students will work in teams of two, collaborating and switching the roles of directors and performers in rehearsals and in video production. Further class mates are expected to support the directing teams as crew members as needed.

Since team work and reliability amongst students, respectful conduct, fair distribution of labor and creative input in collaborations, as well as attention to the time frames and technical resources allotted to each project are essential to a successful participation in this video class, these aspects will be part of your grade.

Essentially the students entire process in all it's aspects is assessed: Participation in the assignments

and exercises toward the beginning of the course, class participation, responses to assigned readings, sketches, rough cuts of videos, and exercises across mediums are equally important as the final work and have to be handed in on time. This is especially important as your team-mates and the success of your collaborative projects depend upon your reliability and your continuous contributions.

If students fail to show earlier rough cuts and plans for their final project in class, and to support others in production, their final Expanded Cinema works will not be accepted for grading and cannot be shown in the final presentation.

Students are assessed on their ability to work independently and responsibly. They will be graded on their ability to communicate with Professor as well as amongst themselves.

#### Key Assignments:

1. DIY-Telepathic Improvisation01 (edited video sketch and notes) - Due Sept. 16th
2. Concept for an Expanded Cinema Installation - Due Sept. 23th
3. Score for a Telepathic Improvisation with x performers - Due Sept. 30th
4. Final Video/Expanded Cinema work: FAR-FEELING - TRANSMISSIONS, several stages and deadlines: Oct. 14th (storyboard, shooting plan), Nov. 4th (rough cut), Nov. 25th (final cut & installation concept)
5. Final written assignment: Contextualizing your work, Synopsis/text about your work & response to one film/video work or text presented in class (minimum 1000 words) - Due Dec. 2nd (first draft due on Nov. 25th)
6. Screening/presentation at the Open Studios during Completion Week, 6.-17. Dec (date t.b.a)

#### Policy on Late Submission of Artworks / Presentations / Papers

Assignments (artworks, sketches, storyboards, concepts, essays, performances, oral presentation etc.) that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (Example: B+ becomes C+). The Professor is not obliged to accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late. Where a Professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it must be submitted within two weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

## Grade Breakdown

Communication and Class participation: Communication includes communication habits with Professor, in class and via email, and among other students. Class Participation includes attendance, engagement in class workshops, in class work, critiques and conversations and maintenance of all common and private spaces used for production and rehearsals: % 30

Assignments and Project presentations for critiques includes: all assignments, sketches, homework and production phases, the students own ongoing research - alone and in collaboration with their team mates - as documented in note books, other media and presented in class, end of semester presentations / videos / performances: % 35

Final Video Assignment & Final Written Assignment (paper) % 35

## Schedule

Note: This course will take place in three 3.5 hour-sessions and seven 4.5-hour sessions as outlined in this schedule.

The duration of each class meeting as well as the specific dates may be changed. Therefore, students should be prepared to be available in the weeks, when no class meeting is scheduled. You will be informed of any schedule changes ahead of time in class.

On Nov. 11th and the afternoon of Oct. 7th there is no class scheduled with the professor, but students are required to work independently in their groups on these days as part of their homework.

- Please always come/be ready to move physically in this class; our weekly in class exercises incorporate physical movement, so make sure you wear warm enough and comfortable clothing. Some exercises may take place outdoors.

Materials: - Please bring your mobile phones and laptops to class on the days noted in the syllabus. Please also bring an empty note book to use for your notes throughout the class.

- All assigned readings will be shared as PDF in google class room. Some additional, voluntary readings will be on the reserve shelf for this course in the BCS library.

Scheduled class times will be available online under the relevant course heading:

<https://berlin.bard.edu/academics/courses/>

## COURSE STRUCTURE

### Class 1, September 2nd - Introduction

10:00 -12:00 & 13:00-14:30

#### **Introduction to class, working methods and theme.**

- Brainstorm and Overview: - What is telepathy? What do you know about telepathy, and what do you want to learn about it? / Which film and literature genres have shaped your conception of "telepathy"? What is the difference between a scientific and an artistic experiment? What is expanded cinema?
- A short look into art works by Alvin Lucier, Steffi Weismann, Michael Snow

13:00-14:30 **First in-class practical exercise: DIY-Telepathic Improvisation without research. - Please bring your mobile phones, laptops and an empty note book for this exercise.**

### Class 2, September 9th - FILM SCREENING & GUEST PRESENTATION by Lucile Desamory

10:00 -12:00 & 13:00-15:30

homework for Class 2:

research/preparation: <http://luciledesamory.net/>

readings:

- excerpt from *Expanded Cinema*, by Gene Youngblood, Introduction: R. Buckminster Fuller (pgs. tba)
- short excerpt from *City of Illusions*, by Ursula K. Le Guin, 1967 (pgs. 1-5) - Note: We will read and discuss short excerpts of this science fiction novel in this class. Voluntarily, you can read the entire novel throughout the semester.

10:00 -12:00

**FILM SCREENING: TÉLÉ REALITÉ** by Lucile Desamory, Gustave Fundi and Glodie Mubikay, 2020

13:00-15:30

**VISITING ARTIST: LUCILE DESAMORY** in person, discussion of TÉLÉ REALITÉ (2020), DARK MATTER (short, 2010) and other works

### Class 3, September 16th - selected works of Expanded Cinema (Cinema as Performance, as Object and as Idea)

10:00 -12:00 & 13:00-15:30

homework for Class 3:

- short assignment 01 due: Edited video sketch & notes of DIY-Telepathic Improvisation (from in class exercise on Sept. 2nd)

readings:

- excerpt from "*Cinema Expanded - Avant-Garde Film in the Age of Intermedia*" by Jonathan Walley, 2020
- Tony Conrad: "*Non-linguistic Extensions of Film and Video*" (1976), from "*Tony Conrad, Writings*", Edited by Constance DeJong and Andrew Lampert, 2019

10:00 -12:00

- presentation & discussion of video assignment 01

- discussion of readings

- a short introduction to Expanded Cinema by looking into works by Tony Conrad, Marie Losier, VALIE EXPORT and Isabell Spengler ("Telepathy Experiment I", 2007)

13:00-15:30

- **practical exercise:** Telepathic Improvisations based on Sonic Meditations\_01 by Pauline Oliveros
- in class **assignment 02** (to be completed as homework): Concept for an Expanded Cinema installation proposing a new relationship between film object and viewer(s)

**Class 4, September 23th - Working with Scores, Scores for Performance and Scores for Film, Modes of collaboration, a Queer Approach**

10:00 -12:00 & 13:00-15:30

homework for Class 4:

Due Date assignment02: Concept for an Expanded Cinema installation

readings:

www.boudry-lorenz.de, texts on "*Telepathic Improvisation*" and "*To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation*",

excerpt from "*Queer Art - A Freak Theory*", Renate Lorenz, 2012, pgs. 32-45, viewing: videos by Wu Tsang (5 Min.) and by Amanda Baggs (8 Min.)

10:00 -12:00

- viewing and discussion of two film installations by Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz: "*To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation*" (2013, 18 Min.) and "*Telepathic Improvisation*" (2017, 20 Min.)

- a look into performance scores by Pauline Oliveros, Antonia Baehr and by some Fluxus artists

13:00-15:30

- **practical exercises:** Sonic Meditations\_02

- in class **assignment 03** (to be completed as homework): Writing a score for a Telepathic Improvisation with X performers

**Class 5, September 30th - AV-Introduction: Cameras and Sound (Janina Schabig) & Practical Work**

10:00 -12:00 & 13:00-15:30

homework for Class 5:

Due date assignment 03: Score for a Telepathic Improvisation

readings: Excerpts from "*City of Illusions*", by Ursula K. Le Guin, 1967 (pgs. tba)

10:00 -12:00 **AV Introduction** - Cameras, sound equipment and lights; lead by Janina Schabig

13:00-15:30 **Practical Work:** Rehearsals with Scores for Telepathic Improvisations with 0-4 performers and 0-4 cameras. Students will work in teams of two directors on their final video projects, further class mates will participate as crew members and/or performers as needed.

- in class **assignment 04\_01** (to be completed as homework): Storyboard, shooting schedule, props and location scouting for the final video work - Due Oct. 14th

**Class 6, Oct. 7th. - AV-Introduction: Editing (Janina Schabig) & Preparation of Film shoot**

10:00 -12:00 **AV-Introduction** - Editing; lead by Janina Schabig

**Room:** Editing Introduction takes place in the **Computer Lab**

13:00-15:30 Preparation of Film shoot: Students work independently on assignment 4\_01:  
- technical equipment, cameras and the **theater space** in the Factory building will be reserved for the course participants on this day

voluntary homework (7.10. - 28.10., including Fall Break):  
independent field trip - visit exhibition "[A Fire in my Belly](#)" - Julia Stoschek Collection, Leipziger Str. 60, 10117 Berlin, [www.jsc.art](http://www.jsc.art)

**Class 7, October 14th - Film shoot (Final assignment) - Directing Teams 01 + 02**

10:00 -12:00 & 13:00-15:30

homework for Class 7:  
Due date assignment 04\_01: Prepare final film shoot with score, storyboard, location(s), floor plan, shooting schedule and if applicable props for final video work

10:00-12:00 - film shoot directing team 01, supported by x crew members and x performers

13:00-15:30 - film shoot directing team 02, supported by x crew members and x performers

**Class 8, October 28th - Film shoot (Final assignment) - Directing Teams 03 + 04**

10:00 -12:00 & 13:00-15:30

10:00-12:00 - film shoot directing team 03, supported by x crew members and x performers

13:00-15:30 - film shoot directing team 04, supported by x crew members and x performers

**Class 9, November 4th - Presentation and Discussion of Rough Cuts**

10:00 -12:00 & 13:00-14:30

homework for Class 9:  
Due date assignment 04\_02: Editing of rough cuts for final video works

- In class discussion, critique and constructive feedback on rough cuts, including all video and audio components of the work, as well as installation concepts. According to feedback, some reshoots or additional audio recordings might be necessary.

**November 11th - NO CLASS - students work independently on reshoots and editing as needed**

- Technical equipment, cameras and the theater space in the Factory building will be reserved for the course participants on this day. Groups are required to support each other as crew-members/performers as needed.

- Individual (online) appointments with Professor can be scheduled.

**Nov. 18th - No Class (individual meetings with professor can be scheduled)**

**Class 10, November 25th - Presentation of Final Cuts and Exhibition Concept**

10:00 -12:00 & 13:00-14:30

homework for Class 10:  
Due date assignment 04\_03: Editing of final videos for your Expanded Cinema works  
Due date assignment 5: First draft of final written assignment

- presentation and discussion of final video cuts and intended exhibition concept (as screening, installation or video-performance), feedback and planning of the exhibition
- presentation of the first draft of your final written assignment, presentations can involve elements of performance

**Dec. 2nd - No Class - final written assignment due (hand in online)**

**Dec. 6.-17. Dec. Presentations of Final Work at Open Studios (date to be announced)**

Please Note: This syllabus may be subject to changes in regard to content as well as dates!

All classes will be held on site in person as long as this is possible. In case of lockdowns or other restrictions some classes may be rescheduled and adapted to be held online over zoom.

If students cannot take part in any of the first three classes due to Covid-19 related restrictions - they have to notify Professor as last one week in advance to the missed class in order to receive class materials and instructions online, and to prepare for their participation in a blended learning format. If students miss classes due to Covid-19 related restrictions class materials, and video links can be provided to students online, as well as viewing of video works. Restricted video links will be substituted by alternative material. Critiques can also be held over zoom if needed. As this class will have a cap of only 8 students max., the class can when there are no larger restrictions take place in person at Bard.

If necessary, movement and collaborative exercises will be held outdoors as much as possible in order to allow for additional social distancing, these may also be adapted to be done over zoom if needed.

## **Library and Book Purchase Policies**

All mandatory readings for this class will be scanned and given to students as PDFs in Google Classroom.

Additionally, following books (one copy each) will be held on the reserve shelf for participants of the course in the BSC library:

- *Expanded Cinema: Fiftieth Anniversary Edition*, by Gene Youngblood, Introduction by R. Buckminster Fuller, Fordham University Press, 2020 (first edition: 1970)
- *Cinema Expanded - Avant-Garde Film in the Age of Intermedia*, by Jonathan Walley, Oxford University Press, 2020
- *Queer Art - A Freak Theory*, by Renate Lorenz, transcript Verlag, Queer Studies, Bielefeld, 2012

The following book is recommended for purchase by the students individually (voluntarily):



- *City of Illusions*, by Ursula K. Le Guin, 1967 (The science fiction novel can also be found as part of the 3-novels-collection "*Worlds of Exile and Illusion*", re-published by SF Masterworks in 2020 for a possibly lower price.)

## Facility Guidelines:

“The Factory” – Eichenstrasse 43

### The Factory Policy Agreement

- 1) “The Factory” at BCB (Eichenstrasse 43) has space and facilities available to BCB students with an academic purpose for using the building. Mandatory in-class orientations are required to retain chip access to the Factory. Chip access to The Factory is from 7am to 10pm everyday during the semester. At 10pm students will be asked to leave the building by BCB security personnel.
- 2) Students agree to only use the common spaces that are available for their needs, and must respect private spaces that are off-limits. For requesting to reserve the dance / theater space and / or Seminar Room 6, please fill out the online [Factory Reservation Form](#). The Factory Staff will get back to you within two weekdays. (Monday - Friday).
- 3) 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.
- 4) Fire exits and lanes must be kept clear of any obstructions.
- 5) Spray painting and handling of any hazardous (chemical or combustible) material is not allowed inside the building. Contact the Studio Arts Manager concerning working with these materials. All work surfaces (indoor and outdoor) must be properly protected with a drop cloth or a packing paper provided by the workshop.
- 6) No sandals, flip-flops, or bare feet will be allowed inside the workshop and studio 6.
- 7) 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.
- 8) If BCB workshop tools must be borrowed for a purpose outside of the building, please contact The Studio Arts Manager (by appointment).
- 9) There are to be no architectural changes to studios or any areas inside or outside of the building without first speaking with the Studio Arts Manager.
- 10) 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. Final grades may be penalized and / or fines imposed if items are left (or renovations unfinished) by the inspection deadline.
- 11) Contact Studio Arts Manager directly with any questions: [j.park@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:j.park@berlin.bard.edu)

### AV Facilities – Platanenstrasse 98 (downstairs)

- 1) 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.
- 2) The opening times may change every semester to adapt to specific course times and social

distancing conditions. Borrowing equipment is currently implemented by scheduling an advance appointment through this link: <https://janinaschabig.youcanbook.me/>  
AV facilities are ONLY available during days when classes are held (closed during official BCB holidays).

- 3) 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.
- 4) 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.
- 5) 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
- 6) 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.
- 7) All items returned late, regardless of patron's position at BCB, will be subject to a 1 Euro fine, per day.
- 8) 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).
- 9) Any items missing will be subject to patron reimbursement for its value (or under special circumstances, replacement, at the discretion of AV Staff). Any items damaged or malfunctioning are expected to be reported to Staff upon check-in.
- 10) 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.
- 11) We strongly suggest personally visiting the facilities to inquire and reserve before borrowing equipment!
- 12) AV equipment is limited at BCB. Whenever possible students are encouraged to use their own devices (computers, cameras) for production purposes.
- 13) Contact AV Staff directly with any questions: av@berlin.bard.edu

Photo Darkroom Facilities – Platanenstrasse 98 (downstairs)

Computer Pool and Media Lab – Kuckhoffstrasse 24 (first floor)

\*\* Guidelines to be offered during orientations.