

# TH245

## **From Streets to Stage: Experimenting with Rimini Protokoll's Approach to Documentary Theater**

Seminar Leader: Daniel Wetzel  
Co-Teacher (part time): Paula Holzhauer  
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Office Hours: by appointment

### **Course Description**

This course introduces the theater practice of Rimini Protokoll, the award-winning and internationally renowned Berlin-based group celebrated for its groundbreaking documentary approaches. For over 20 years, Rimini Protokoll has been redefining the boundaries of theater. Taught by Daniel Wetzel, a member of Rimini Protokoll, this course invites students to use specific urban infrastructures and their communities as a springboard for artistic research and performance practice. Potential starting-points could include the fast-food stand at the bus station or the cinema across the street from Rewe. These locations will serve as catalysts for encounters, research, drafting performative scenes, try-outs, and, ultimately, the development of a project. Urban spaces will become laboratories for experimental exploration, delving into the biographies and perspectives of individuals who grant us a glimpse into their worlds. In addition to developing concrete techniques for translating these experiences into performative works, the course will emphasize the concept of projections—not merely as visual images on a screen but as a method for sharing thoughts, stories, and perspectives. This course also introduces the art of forging unexpected social connections as a foundation for creativity while exploring how theater can unite people to share meaningful experiences.

### **Requirements**

Regular and reliable participation, a collaborative spirit, and a commitment to working between sessions will be essential for a dynamic artistic process and a rewarding outcome

Students are expected to:

- Turn off phones during class time.
- Initiate appointments with the Professor or arts staff outside of class time.
- Always allocate extra time for work preparation and clean-up for independent production.

- Respond to emails from their professors in a timely manner.
- Inform their professors at the beginning of the semester if photos of the student's identity, artwork, works in progress are NOT to be taken and / or used for Bard College Berlin.
- Remove all artworks, art materials, and / or any personal belongings before the end of the semester. Failure to remove works or return spaces clean and empty may result in final grade penalization. Donating unrequested artworks and / or art materials is not permitted and will still be considered student property, expected to be removed by your inspection deadline. Please contact Studio Arts Manager Joon Park for more information: [j.park@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:j.park@berlin.bard.edu)

### **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.

### **Accommodations**

Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, ([accommodations@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:accommodations@berlin.bard.edu)) to request an official accommodation.

Requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement.

If you have already been approved for accommodations with the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, please arrange to meet with me outside of class so that we can develop an implementation plan.

Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support is needed, please visit the [Bard College Berlin Accessibility page](#). Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker ([j.harker@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:j.harker@berlin.bard.edu)) or Maria Anderson-Long ([m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu)).

### **Attendance**

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, one absence should not affect the participation grade or require documentation. There is no option for remote participation in classes.

Bard College Berlin may 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.

### **Assessment**

The course organizes the outcomes of creative and research-based work that participants pursue individually and in teams between sessions.

Between classes, a minimum of 90 minutes of preparation in individual or team work will be required; from November onwards, this may increase depending on the tasks undertaken.

The central aim of the course is a **collective creative process** shared by all participants.

The final goal is a joint presentation in the last week as part of *The Performance Factory*. Preparing for this presentation will, like any performative undertaking, require a heightened level of commitment in the final phase. This effort cannot be fully pre-structured or described in the syllabus. It will therefore be essential that participants **take ownership of the project** in such a way that these extra efforts feel necessary and meaningful to them.

### **Requirements**

Participants will individually and collaboratively develop the components of a shared scenic-performative, likely participatory, presentation. They will be free in their choice of media and methods.

However, they are expected to **develop and submit weekly drafts, interim results, and later final, presentable products**—whether in the form of texts, audio or video files, or other formats of their choice.

Accord that the **artistic direction** of the overall project lies with **Daniel Wetzel**.

### **Preparation**

Please prepare by engaging with the following sources:

#### ***Mandatory for September 1:***

Think of an experience with theatre, performance, or another form of art that has been meaningful to you, and write one sentence about it to share as part of your motivation for this course.

#### ***Mandatory before September 8:***

#### **Reading:**

- Project description and video documentation of *Conference of the Absent*:  
<https://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project/konferenz-der-abwesenden>

**Viewing (full length, 1 hr 41 min):**

- Documentation of the project *Conference of the Absent*:  
<https://vimeo.com/riminiprotokoll/konferenzderabwesenden?share=copy>

**Exploring**

- the Rimini Protokoll website. Bring two notes to class on which other projects raise questions for you, and which you find inspiring or unsettling.

<https://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en>

**Optional: Exploring**

- the Programme Book of *Conference of the Absent* (download PDF on the Rimini Website):  
[https://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/media/Konferenz%20der%20Abwesenden/Programmheft\\_Konferenz%20der%20Abwesenden\[1\].pdf](https://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/media/Konferenz%20der%20Abwesenden/Programmheft_Konferenz%20der%20Abwesenden[1].pdf)

**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+). 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 should be submitted by the new deadline agreed upon by both parties. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students may make an appointment to discuss assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive 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**

**Class participation**

(includes attendance, maintenance of all common and private spaces used for production / rehearsal, communication with Professor and other students): 30%

Homework and in-class work: 50%

**Project presentations for critiques**

(includes end of semester presentations / performances): 20%

**Schedule**

### **01.09. 2PM-3PM Introduction via Zoom.**

#### **Participation mandatory.**

**Preparation:** Think of an experience with theatre, performance, or another form of art that has been meaningful to you, and write one sentence about it to share as part of your motivation for this course.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2085992377?omn=89306091589>

Meeting-ID: 208 599 2377

### **08.09.**

- Introduction to the project
- Expert theatre based on *Conference of the Absent* (viewed by students)
- Practical exercise on developing themes through dialogue
- Outlook and assignments for the interim period

### **15.09.**

- Class partly outside the building: exploration of the surrounding area, presentation of discovered sites
- Evaluation in the classroom
- Examples of Rimini Protokoll's site-specific works
- Outlook for the following session

### **22.09.**

- Development of themes and conceptual work
- Team formation, if not yet completed
- If needed/wanted: discussion of further Rimini Protokoll projects
- Outlook for the following week

### **29.09.**

- Presentation of conceptual drafts for further work

### **06.10.**

- Presentations of work-in-progress

- Continued conceptual development
- Outlook for the following week

**05.10.**

- 5PM-8PM Attendance at Rimini Protokoll's performance *Futur 4*, (students purchase tickets individually)
- 7:30 PM: discussion with Daniel Wetzel, the two performers, and co-teacher/artistic collaborator Paula Holzauer

**11./12.10. OPTIONAL**

- Attendance at the concert *SWEAT the SET* at the temporary club Alte Feuerwache Tempelhof (club adaptation of *SWEAT. Songs of Push and Pull* by Daniel Wetzel).. Times t.b.c. / guest list registration via Daniel.
- Description of the original project:  
<https://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project/sweat-a-musclical>

**13.10.**

- Tryout: status of current work
- Continued conceptual development
- Outlook for next unit

**20.10.**

Fall break

**27.10.**

- Rehearsals and media production
- Continued conceptual development
- Outlook

**03.11.**

- Rehearsals and media production

**10.11.**

- Rehearsals and media production
- Introduction of co-teacher Paula Holzauer (artist experienced in collaborating with Rimini Protokoll)

**17.11.**

- Rehearsals and media production
- Development of contributions in collaboration with Paula Holzhauer (Daniel Wetzel absent)

**24.11.**

- Rehearsals and media production
- Development of contributions in collaboration with Paula Holzhauer (Daniel Wetzel absent)

**01.12.**

- Final submission of all contributions
- Internal review/rehearsal, discussion, and agreement on necessary revisions

**08.12.**

- Internal review of each team's progress
- Depending on progress: tryout with invited guests and feedback session
- The work status presented on this day will be graded

**ATTENTION: At the end of week 14 will be the Performance Factory / Open Studios. Additional rehearsals will be necessary in that week to prepare.**

**Policy on the use of facilities:**

1. The Factory (Eichenstrasse 43) and Monopol (Provinzstr 40-44) at BCB offer space and facilities to BCB art students. Chip access is from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day, including the weekends during the semester. The buildings cannot be used outside these hours.
2. Fire exits and lanes must be kept clear of any obstructions.
3. Students agree only to use the designated class spaces or communal workshops. Respecting the building and its facilities is crucial, as they are shared resources that need to be preserved for the benefit of all.
4. For your safety and the safety of others, smoking and drinking alcohol are strictly prohibited anywhere inside the building.

5. Unauthorized events and/or parties are not permitted. Projects using open flames (such as candles, torches, lanterns, fireworks, etc.) are not permitted inside the building.
6. Spray painting and handling any hazardous (chemical or combustible) material is not permitted inside the building.
7. All work surfaces (indoor and outdoor) must be adequately protected with the workshop's drop cloth before spray painting or working with plaster.
8. During completion week, any space used by a student must be emptied, with clean walls and floors. All garbage must be adequately disposed of. Final grades may be affected or withheld if any item remains by the inspection deadline.
9. When leaving the building, students must ensure all lights are turned off, all electrical items must be unplugged, and doors must be closed.
10. Contact the Studio art manager directly with any questions: [j.park@berlin.bard.edu](mailto:j.park@berlin.bard.edu)

Emergency phone numbers:

Police (calling from a German landline or cellphone): 110

Fire (calling from a German landline or cellphone): 112

Ambulance and Paramedics (calling from a German landline or cellphone): 112

Out-of-Hours Medical Care (calling from a German landline or cellphone) : 116 117