

ART FOR EARTHLY SURVIVAL:

IMAGINING COLLECTIVE LIBERATION, CREATING CULTURES OF CARE

Instructor: Eva Peskin

email me: epeskin@umd.edu

schedule a meeting with me: calendly.com/epeskin

Scheduled Meeting Time: Tues/Thurs, 3:30pm-4:45pm

[Course Schedule](#)

Zoom Meeting ID: 774 775 1724

CONTEXT

position, invitation, intention

I am living and learning on the land of the Ləkʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ people as I convene this class online, for an institution located on the traditional lands of Piscataway and Nacotchtank/Anacostan people. [\[more information on land acknowledgements\]](#)

I am making the following offerings and requests to you as a class community:

- I'm offering a space, a process, and resources for artistic practice.
- I'm offering to share what I have learned as an artist and from artists.
- I'm offering to listen to you and provide feedback on the work you create.
- I'm offering to host and facilitate opportunities for you to learn about art and yourself as an artist.
- I request that we honor the sovereignty of our own bodyminds -- ie, you are in charge of your body and experience, do what feels right and good to you.
- I request that we respect that others are in charge of their bodies and their experiences and are doing what feels right and good to them, and that we communicate with each other accordingly.
- I request that we support and honor each other's integrity as we open ourselves to our own curiosities and creativities.
- I request that we receive each other with openness, humility, and generosity.
- I request that you communicate with me about your experience, so I may do my best to make good on my offers.
- I request that you hold me accountable to affirm and uphold the [DCC Statement of Values](#) & [DCC Teaching Philosophy](#).

COVID CONSIDERATIONS

ethics & responsibilities

As our understanding of COVID-19 and its effects on our lives continues to change, we must be flexible with ourselves and each other. This course has been designed to accommodate change and make space for the uncertainty we are all experiencing, and surely I have not imagined for all possible scenarios. As your instructor, my responsibilities are to create a supportive learning environment and to navigate University compliance as your advocate. As circumstances change, I promise to respond to your needs as best I am able. As students, your responsibilities are to have a deep learning experience and to take care of yourselves as best you are able.

Please let me know if you encounter obstacles to your responsibilities, and I promise to do my best to make necessary changes.

In the event that you or someone you care for is diagnosed with COVID-19, you are released from responsibility to this class, although you will have full access to the materials to complete on your own time, and I will gladly work with you providing mentorship and feedback in whatever ways I can, if you choose to continue. If I or someone I care for is diagnosed with COVID-19, the course will pause and you will be released from responsibility as well, with no impact on your overall assessment. DCC staff will support access to online materials so you may continue work on your own, or in collaboration with each other, if you so choose. If it is possible, I will resume class after recovery.

At no time will you be required to present a doctor's note or official documentation to prove your diagnosis or the diagnosis of a loved one, or any official documentation of any other kind to prove that you need accommodations. All that is required is that you let me know that you need them. In the case you or I need to pause or end coursework due to COVID-19 or other extenuating life circumstances, your grade will remain as it is at the time of that pause.

GOALS

goal = dream+commitment

My dream for this class is that we all grow as artists in our capacity to craft and materialize our deepest and most aspirational visions, questions, and desires. I dream we all come to better understand the connections among oppressions; and that we imagine how the world works where no one is oppressed, where abundance is shared, where all life is appreciated and respected. I dream that we notice our creative processes and shape them according to our values, and that we bring awareness/sensitivity to the ways we pursue our curiosity. I dream that we enjoy ourselves as we learn.

I am giving this class my life energy because sharing what I have learned to nurture and nourish my vitality, my receptivity, and my curiosity connects me to a sense of purpose. I am giving this class my life energy because it is an honor and delight for me to keep learning as an artist/thinker/teacher by witnessing and supporting your creative processes. I am giving this class my life energy because it is a contribution I can make to creating more liveable worlds for all beings.

These are my aspirations as this course's facilitator. Students will collectively articulate and share individual/collective goals, so we may consider [what we want and need from this course](#).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class, we look to artists for ways to unlearn, dismantle, reimagine, and create alternatives to the powers that be. Artists are our teachers for imagining with resourcefulness, care, and generosity. Fundamentally, we are learning how art allows us to read and respond to power, in order to create more liveable worlds.

This is an art class. You are an artist. I invite you to explore Being An Artist with me. I am an artist AND a queer naturelover jewish white settler anti-racist graduate student instructor

pursuing a PhD in Women's Studies at UMD. I have designed this course to support the conceptualization of an ambitious and thoughtful creative project by offering strategies, examples, and exercises from artists who are working on what might make life/earth survivable, liveable, and flourishing. Climate activists, anarchists, abolitionists, and liberation workers across a wide range of social movements often rally around a shared sentiment: Another World Is Possible. Perhaps a world of sustainable ecological and social relations, where living beings are free and cared for, where creative and generative gifts are shared abundantly. But what makes these other worlds possible?

This class engages art as a crucial site for envisioning, incubating, and enacting worlds that adhere to the wildest capacities of our liberatory imagination and the greatest depth of our care. How can all people be free? How can harm caused to each other and to our living companions be repaired? How can we move at the speed of trust as we dismantle oppression, domination, inequity? "Move at the speed of trust" is one of adrienne maree brown's principles of Emergent Strategy, a framework that will guide our exploration of creative practice this semester ([Click here to learn more about Emergent Strategy](#)). Our actions and questions will also be guided by frameworks of abolition, decolonization, and environmental justice.

We are learning to read the languages of power carefully: how are destructive hierarchies such as patriarchy and white supremacy and colonialism upheld through cultural institutions and their normative practices? What resources, tools, and processes are used to keep in place these operating logics of domination? What relationships to resources and value are enacted through the structures and arrangements of our social worlds? These questions invite inquiry into practice – how do we learn to be in the world, how do we know how the world works? And they are compositional questions, too – how do pieces and threads arrange to express meaning and create an impact? As such, we will hone in on and train compositional sensibilities in units of practice: Process, Value, Relation, Form, Movement, and Storytelling.

Our practice will be anchored by: 1. exposure to artists/thinkers/world-makers who have something to show & tell us about freedom, care, repair; and 2. a structured creative process wherein you are invited to encounter and befriend yourself as an artist. The process involves:

- *weekly creative exercises*
- *4 compositional assignments*
- *collaborative group activities*
- *engagement with critical art and ideas through discussion, practice, and reflection*
- *self-assessment and self-evaluation*

On Monday of each week, I will send out a Featured Artist for you to get to know, and an assignment or exercise for you to do. These artistic prompts are paired with reading/viewing materials to support and nuance our inquiry, expected to be engaged prior to synchronous meetings, or in advance of completing assignments/exercises asynchronously. The work we do in synchronous meetings will be made available online, so you may access the material even if you cannot zoom in. *Assignments* will be shared with the class, and have particular due dates ([click here to view list](#)). *Exercises* are expected to be completed by the end of the week, and will not be shared with the class, although you will document your process/experience of completing them. Throughout the semester, you will curate elements from your process documentation in a portfolio that is shared with the class. [Click here to view the full course schedule](#).

[Click here to view UMD's official policies for academic integrity and student conduct](#)

TO START

[Click here to access the Pre-Class Exercise](#)

[Click here to view the Schedule](#)