

## APPLIED ARTS FOR WELLBEING AND SOCIAL CHANGE

**Course contact hours:** 45

**Recommended credits:** 6 ECTS – 3 US

**Language:** English

### Prerequisites

Students from any academic background are welcome to enrol in the course, as it is designed to equip them with the essential tools for a comprehensive understanding and application of the arts across other disciplines. Previous experience in the different art forms is not required.

### Objectives and Contextualisation

The course aims to harness the transformative power of the arts for personal and societal development. The primary objective is to introduce students to diverse art forms such as theatre, dance, music, visual arts and creative writing and their application in several contexts of practice. The intention is to enhance their understanding of art as embodied knowledge and experience, and apply reflective and art-based practices to improve soft skills such as self-awareness, interpersonal communication, confidence, trust, team work and leadership. By fostering creativity, innovative and critical thinking, the course encourages students to view the arts as a method for expressing complex emotions and diversity of social narratives.

The course empowers students to use art as a tool for promoting equality, advocating for inclusion, accessibility, and cohesion among groups. By connecting to the power of the arts, students learn to see beyond the surface of beauty of artistic expressions, recognizing their potential for healing, to evoke empathy, engage and motivate, inspire change, and build bridges across diverse communities.

In the wider context of study, this course integrates elements of psychology, communication, and social sciences, making it relevant for students from various backgrounds who are interested in the intersection of art, health, creativity, communication, leadership and social change. It prepares students to apply artistic methods for personal and professional growth, equipping them with practical skills that can be used in different contexts, and a deep appreciation for the multifaceted role of the arts in fostering wellbeing and societal transformation.

### Objectives

1. To introduce students to various art forms and their roles in expressing emotions and cultural narratives beyond its aesthetic value
2. To experience diverse art-based strategies to practise and develop soft skills to promote wellbeing and mental health

3. To cultivate creativity, innovative and critical thinking through hands-on artistic activities and collective group work
4. To use art to advocate for group and community inclusion, accessibility and cultural rights, focusing on ethical practices
5. To learn about real case study applications of the arts in different contexts and for several purposes
6. To equip students with leadership, collaboration, project development, and presentation skills through practical projects

### Competences

1. To acquire a critical understanding and practice of various art forms and to analyse how they express emotions, convey social narratives, and embody knowledge
2. To apply reflective techniques and art-based practices to enhance personal growth, fostering self-esteem, identity and belonging
3. To foster creativity, innovative and critical thinking through hands-on experiences with diverse art languages
4. To promote inclusion and accessibility through the arts, as well as using art as a tool for advocating equality and social justice
5. To cultivate leadership skills and facilitate relational dynamics through art-based strategies, focusing on collaboration, empathy, and ethical practice<sup>[L]<sub>SEP</sub>]</sup>
6. To achieve practical experience in developing, implementing, and presenting art-based projects aimed at wellbeing and social change, enhancing critical reflection, providing feedback, public speaking, and group facilitation skills

### Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate knowledge of various art forms, analyse how art embodies knowledge, and reflects cultural identities and values
2. Apply reflective practices and utilize art to improve mental health, communication skills, and emotional wellbeing
3. Recognize and articulate the mental and physical health benefits of engaging in artistic activities, including enhanced self-esteem and identity formation
4. Develop increased creativity and innovative thinking through participation in various art forms
5. Advocate for inclusion, accessibility, and use art to promote equality and social justice, adhering to ethical considerations
6. Exhibit leadership skills, manage relational dynamics in community settings, and design, implement, and present an art session aimed at wellbeing or social change

## Content

### Unit 1: Understanding Art as a Language of Emotions and Embodied Knowledge

- Delve into the diverse art forms such as theatre, dance, music, visual arts, and creative writing; analysing how they communicate emotions and create new narratives
- Understand how art serves as a repository of embodied knowledge, reflecting collective and individual experiences and histories
- Examine the role of art-based strategies as a method to contribute to human wellbeing and to facilitate social change

### Unit 2: Art for Wellbeing I - Reflective Practice and Personal Growth

- Develop reflective practice in art to enhance self-awareness and personal insight, critical thinking and creative growth
- Investigate the substantial health benefits of engaging in the arts, including improving self-esteem and confidence
- Explore how art helps individuals explore and affirm their identities, fostering a sense of belonging and community connection

### Unit 3: Art for Wellbeing II - Therapeutic Practices and Creativity Development

- Study the therapeutic applications of various art forms, understanding their impact on mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Learn how artistic practices can enhance soft skills, promoting better interpersonal interactions, communication and trust
- Examine methods to develop and nurture creativity through art, understanding its role in problem-solving and innovation

### Unit 4: Art for Social Change I - Addressing Inclusion, Accessibility, and Ethics

- Analyse the uses of applied art to become inclusive and accessible, addressing barriers faced by marginalized groups
- Explore the role of art in advocating for cultural rights and equality, emphasizing the need for diverse voices and perspectives in artistic expression
- Discuss the ethical implications of working with vulnerable groups through art, ensuring respectful and empowering engagement

### Unit 5: Art for Social Change II – Social Transformation and Community Cohesion

- Investigate how art can drive social transformation, challenging and reshaping societal norms and values

- Understand the relational dynamics within community-based art projects, focusing on collaboration, empathy, and mutual respect
- Analyse the roles of power and leadership in art for social change, and how to navigate these dynamics to build stronger, more connected, and resilient communities

#### Unit 6: Written Project and Feedback

- Guide students through the development of a final group project that integrates the concepts and practices learned throughout the course, focusing on a specific aspect of art for wellbeing or social change
- Learn to effectively present a project in writing, articulating the process, findings, and the impact of the work
- Design and facilitate a session of 20 minutes for peer review, encouraging collaborative learning and constructive feedback to enhance the final outputs

### Methodology

The methodology for the course combines theoretical context with experiential learning to create a dynamic and student-centred approach. Students will engage with case studies from Barcelona, Spain, Europe, and around the world to understand how art can improve wellbeing and drive social change. The course includes practical application of the arts through participatory activities, ensuring students can directly experience and implement the concepts they learn. The learning methods will include body expression, gamification, drama strategies, creative coaching and reflective discussion of recommended readings. Cultural visits to organizations such as Fundació Carulla in Poblenou, Xamfrà in Raval, Mercat de les Flors, and the Greek Theatre in Montjuïc will provide real-world insights into the vibrant applied arts scene and its social impact. This comprehensive methodology fosters a deep connection between theoretical knowledge and practical application, empowering students to investigate and utilize the arts as a powerful transformational tool.

### Activities

Directed (45 hours):

Class sessions (practice)	24 hours
Class sessions (theory)	15 hours
Assessment	6 hours

Supervised (15 hours):

Group Practical and Written Project	1h tutorial per group + 14 hours
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Autonomous (90 hours):

Comprehensive study of materials	35 hours
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Exercises and activities	30 hours
Team project	25 hours

### Assessment

The student's individual progress in the capacity for personal analysis of the applied arts for wellbeing and social change will be taken into account, as well as their critical thinking, creativity, capacity to work collectively, ability for reflexion, observation and expression, as well as individual evolution in their individual outcomes throughout the course. A rubric for each assignment will be issued stating the targeted learning outcomes.

1. Class participation in class activities, reflective practice and discussions. Continuous evaluation. There is a minimum attendance requirement of 80% and 20% of the final grade is dedicated to participation.
2. Personal journals with thoughts and writings, drawings and images that shows the student's work in progress and comprehension about the experience and diverse topics.
3. Mid-term Paper: one essay of between 1,000 and 2,000 words to explore and analyse their personal experience in engaging in several art forms throughout the course, and their potential application to their personal and professional growth. No citation pre-determined style is required.
4. Written project: one group essay of minimum 1,000 words and maximum 2,000, to explore and analyse an art form to be applied to a specific topic for wellbeing or social change. This will include the written design of a hands-on session to work on the chosen topic.
5. Group practical: students will facilitate the previously designed art-based session of 20 minutes to work on a topic of their choice such as inclusion, diversity, mental health, etc. The groups will receive constructive feedback from their peers that will also be taken into account for their assessment.

One to two tutorials will be held with each group to ascertain their preferences and needs, and to ensure that they get the most out of the subject and the group work.

### Assessment Activities

Title	weighting	hours	learning outcomes
Class participation	20%	29	2,4
Personal Journal	15%	5	3
Mid Term paper	20%	8	1,3
Group practical	20%	4	2,5,6
Written project	25%	15	3,5

## Bibliography

Recommended readings for the course:

**1. On the Role of Art in Wellbeing**

Alain de Botton, John Armstrong. *Art as Therapy*. 2013, Phaidon Press.  
Samuel T. Gladding. *The Creative Arts in Counselling*. 5th edition, 2016, American  
Counselling Association.

**2. On Art and Social Change**

Eleonora Belfiore, Oliver Bennett. *The Social Impact of the Arts: An Intellectual History*.  
2010, Palgrave Macmillan.  
Don Adams, Arlene Goldbard. *Community, Culture, and Globalization*. 2002, Rockefeller  
Foundation.

**3. On Reflective Practice and Personal Development**

Julia Cameron. *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*. 1992, Jeremy P.  
Tarcher/Putnam.

**4. On Ethics and Inclusivity in Art**

Guy Cools, Pascal Gielen (Editors). *The Ethics of Art: Ecological Turns in the Performing  
Arts*. 2014, Valiz.

**5. On Creativity and Innovation**

Ed Catmull. *Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces That Stand in the Way of True  
Inspiration*. 2014, Random House.

Further recommended readings:

1. Augusto Boal. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Updated edition, 2000, Pluto Press, London.
2. Alain de Botton, John Armstrong. *Art as Therapy*. 2013, Phaidon Press.
3. Carol Brennan. *Dance and the Body in Social Work: Embodied Practice for Wellbeing and Healing*. 2024, Springer, New York.
4. Samuel T. Gladding. *The Creative Arts in Counselling*. 5th edition, 2016, American Counselling Association.
5. Steven L. Jackson (Editor). *Performing Arts and Therapeutic Impacts: Studies in Dance, Music, and Theatre*. 2023, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, Switzerland.
6. Phil Jones. *Drama as Therapy: Theory, Practice and Research*. 2nd edition, 2007, Routledge, London.
7. Robert Landy, David T. Montgomery. *Theatre for Change: Education, Social Action and Therapy*. 2012, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
8. Laura Mitaroff (Editor). *Music, Health, and Wellbeing: Emerging Perspectives*. 2024, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
9. Helen Nicholson. *Theatre and Community: Creating Social Change through Drama*. 2024, Methuen Drama, London.
10. Caroline Miller (Editor). *Creative Arts Therapies and Psychosocial Wellbeing: International Perspectives*. 2023, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London.
11. Karen Bond (Editor). *Dance and the Quality of Life*. 2019, Springer, Cham, Switzerland.
12. Tim Prentki, Sheila Preston. *Applied Theatre: Development*. 2009, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
13. Sheila Preston (Editor). *Applied Theatre: Wellbeing, Community, and Social Justice*. 2023, Routledge, London.

14. Carol Power. *The Arts for Wellbeing: A Framework for Practice*. 2023, Routledge, London.
15. Jonathan Shailor (Editor). *Performing New Lives: Prison Theatre*. 2010, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London.
16. Jo Salas (Editor). *Playback Theatre: A Frame for Healing*. 2015, Centre for Playback Theatre, New Paltz, NY.
17. Anna Halprin. *Dance as a Healing Art: Returning to Health with Movement and Imagery*. 2000, LifeRhythm Books, Kentfield, CA.
18. Jessica Hays. *Embodied Performance: The Body in Applied Theatre and Social Change*. 2023, Bloomsbury Academic, London.

## Recommended websites:

### Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance (CHWA)

**Website:** <https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk>

**Description:** CHWA connects practitioners and advocates for culture and the arts in healthcare. It provides case studies, research, and best practices for integrating the arts into health and well-being initiatives.

### Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing)

**Website:** <https://www.artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk>

**Description:** This UK-based website showcases the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group, which promotes the value of the arts in healthcare. It includes research reports and policy recommendations.

### The Global Alliance for Arts & Health

**Website:** <https://www.thesah.org>

**Description:** The alliance promotes the use of the arts in enhancing health and well-being across various populations. They offer resources for healthcare providers, artists, and community organizers.

### The Wellbeing Project

**Website:** <https://wellbeing-project.org>

**Description:** This global initiative focuses on individual and societal well-being through a combination of art, science, and social change projects. They aim to create systemic change by integrating well-being into various sectors.

### Fundació Carulla - Spain

**Website:** <https://fundaciocarulla.cat>

**Description:** This foundation in Barcelona supports art projects that promote cultural and social transformation, with a focus on inclusion and well-being. It funds initiatives that use the arts for educational and social purposes.

### Les Rencontres – France (Network of European Cities and Regions for Culture)

**Website:** <https://www.lesrencontres.eu>

**Description:** Based in France, this network brings together local and regional representatives to promote cultural policies and the arts as a tool for social inclusion and transformation across Europe.

### ENCACT - European Network on Cultural Management and Policy

**Website:** <https://www.encatc.org>

**Description:** ENCATC is a European network dedicated to advancing education, research, and practice in cultural management and policy. It supports the use of culture and the arts for social change across Europe.

### Xamfrà - Spain

**Website:** <http://www.xamfra.net>

**Description:** Based in Barcelona, Xamfrà is a center for music and performing arts focused on fostering social inclusion. They provide artistic programs that promote community well-being and social cohesion.

### International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA)

**Website:** <https://ieata.org>

**Description:** This global association supports the expressive arts as a transformative tool for personal, community, and societal well-being. It offers resources, training, and professional development for those interested in integrating the arts with healing and social justice.

**Community Arts Network (CAN)**

**Website:** <http://www.communityarts.net>

**Description:** CAN is a network of artists and organizations using the arts for community building and social change. It offers project directories, articles, and best practices for applied arts in social contexts.