CRITICAL STUDIES IN IMPROVISATION

The MA and PhD programs in Critical Studies in Improvisation investigate the dynamic relationships between improvised creative practices and broader social relations in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Coordinated by the International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation at the University of Guelph, the programs offer a collaborative intellectual environment where scholars in the field of improvisation studies activate new social and creative configurations of power, new strategies for facilitating social justice, and new tactics to interpret and address the ever-changing world around us. Crucially, this work is enacted through students’ critical, practical, rigorous investigation of the processes and impacts of improvised creative practices.

Administrative Staff

Chair
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Graduate Faculty

This list may include Regular Graduate Faculty, Associated Graduate Faculty and/or Graduate Faculty from other universities.

Madhur Anand
B.Sc., PhD Western Ontario - Professor Graduate Faculty

Frédérique Arroyas
BA, MA, PhD Western Ontario - Associate Professor Graduate Faculty

William J. Bettger
BS, PhD Missouri - Associate Professor Graduate Faculty

Diane Borsato
BFA York, MFA Concordia - Associate Professor Graduate Faculty

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BA, PhD New South Wales - Associate Professor, Media, Art, and Performance, University of Regina Graduate Faculty Other University

Rumina Dhalla
MBA, PhD York - Associate Professor Graduate Faculty

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BFA, MA Concordia, PhD York - Professor Graduate Faculty

B.Mus. Western Washington, D.Mus. McGill - Professor Graduate Faculty

Ajay Heble
BA Toronto, MA Dalhousie, PhD Toronto - Professor Graduate Faculty

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BA, MA National University of Ireland, PhD York - Associate Professor Graduate Faculty

Karen L. Houle
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BA Manitoba, MFA Massachusetts, MA Central School of Speech and Drama - Assistant Professor Graduate Faculty

Leah Levac
BA Acadia, MA, PhD New Brunswick - Associate Professor Graduate Faculty

Eric Lewis
Associate Professor, Philosophy, McGill University Graduate Faculty Other University

George Lipsitz
Professor, Black Studies and Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara Graduate Faculty Other University

Marta McCarthy
Mus.Bac. Toronto, MMUS Westminster Choir College (Princeton), B.Ed., PhD Toronto, ARCT (RCMT) - Associate Professor Graduate Faculty

Kimberley McLeod
BA Queen’s, MA Alberta, PhD York - Assistant Professor Graduate Faculty

Kevin McNeilly
BA, MA, Western Ontario, PhD Queen’s - Associate Professor, English, University of British Columbia Graduate Faculty Other University

Carla Rice
BA Harvard, M.Ed. Toronto, PhD York - Professor Graduate Faculty

Howard Spring
BFA, MFA York, PhD Illinois - Associate Professor Graduate Faculty

Ellen Waterman
B.Mus. Manitoba, MA, PhD U. California, San Diego - Professor, Music, Carleton University Graduate Faculty Other University

Alyssa Woods
BMUS, MA Ottawa, PhD Michigan - Assistant Professor Graduate Faculty
**MA Program**

The MA program draws on faculty expertise at the University of Guelph, as we all five partner sites across Canada and the USA (UBC, Regina, McGill, Memorial, and University of California, Santa Barbara), and focuses on developing broad-level skills (e.g., collaboration across multiple institutions/organizations and disciplines; internships/community placements; partnership development opportunities; intercultural engagement) with an eye to forming and deploying the skills that lead to both academic and non-academic employment.

The interdisciplinary curriculum will build competencies in research and practice across the following areas: the critical historicisation of improvised art and practice; research methods and core concepts in Critical Studies in Improvisation; the development of ethical frameworks for collaborative, community-engaged initiatives; and the development and implementation of practice-based research projects.

**Admission Requirements**

Applicants to the MA must hold a four-year Honours Bachelor’s degree or equivalent with a minimum GPA of 75%, in a field related to their proposed study. Applicants must provide two letters of reference and will be required to submit a portfolio with a representative sampling of their best and most relevant creative, professional, and/or research practice, in relationship to the field of Critical Studies and Improvisation and to their proposed area of research. Applicants will submit a 2 page research proposal outlining their critical orientation and proposed research activity for the program of study.

**Program Requirements**

Students must complete 3.5 credits.

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<th>Credits</th>
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<td>IMPR*6010</td>
<td>Core Concepts in Critical Studies in Improvisation</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMPR*6020</td>
<td>Arts-Based Community Making</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMPR*6030</td>
<td>Foundational Research Methods in Critical Studies in Improvisation</td>
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Select one Elective

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<tr>
<td>IMPR*6800</td>
<td>Major Research Project in Critical Studies in Improvisation</td>
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**PhD Program**

The PhD program draws on faculty expertise at the University of Guelph, as we all five partner sites across Canada and the USA (UBC, Regina, McGill, Memorial, and University of California, Santa Barbara), and focuses on developing broad-level skills (e.g., collaboration across multiple institutions/organizations and disciplines; internships/community placements; partnership development opportunities; intercultural engagement) with an eye to forming and deploying the skills that lead to both academic and non-academic employment.

The interdisciplinary curriculum will enhance competencies in research, practice, and teaching across the following areas: the critical historicisation of improvised art and practice; research methods and core concepts in Critical Studies in Improvisation; the development of ethical frameworks for collaborative, community-engaged initiatives; and the development and implementation of practice-based research projects. Students are required to successfully complete two qualifying examinations and a research proposal before producing and orally defending a dissertation reflecting original research on a topic that has been approved by the advisory committee.

**Admission Requirements**

Applicants must have achieved a grade average of at least 75% (B) in the Master’s degree program. Under exceptional circumstances admission directly to a PhD program with an appropriate Honours degree alone may be granted. Applicants must provide two letters of reference and will be required to submit a portfolio with a representative sampling of their best and most relevant creative, professional, and/or research practice, in relationship to the field of CSI and to their proposed area of research. Applicants will submit a 3 page research proposal outlining their critical orientation and proposed research activity for the program of study.

**Program Requirements**

Students must complete 3.0 credits and successfully defend their thesis project.

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<td>IMPR*6410</td>
<td>Pedagogy Lab: Critical Improvisation</td>
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Thesis Defence
## Courses

**IMPR*6010 Core Concepts in Critical Studies in Improvisation**  **Fall and Winter Reg Required**  **[1.00]**

This required two-term course is based on seminal works that introduce the field of critical studies in improvisation. It is designed to expose students to core concepts and key readings in critical studies in improvisation, with especial attention to the historical, theoretical, and critical literature in the field.

**Department(s):** School of English and Theatre Studies  
**Location(s):** Guelph

**IMPR*6020 Arts-Based Community Making**  **Fall and Winter Reg**  **Required**  **[1.00]**

This required two-term course emphasizes the links between improvisation and social practices, and the connections between principles of improvised artistic practices and those of ethical community-engaged collaboration.

**Department(s):** School of English and Theatre Studies  
**Location(s):** Guelph

**IMPR*6030 Foundational Research Methods in Critical Studies in Improvisation**  **Fall Only**  **[0.50]**

This required course provides an overview of a range of research methodologies pertinent to the field of Critical Studies in Improvisation. These include: critical thinking and writing strategies; discursive and qualitative research practices; community literacy and outreach; research ethics; grant-writing and research funding practices and possibilities; practicum-based learning issues and contexts; and knowledge mobilization strategies.

**Department(s):** School of English and Theatre Studies  
**Location(s):** Guelph

**IMPR*6040 Summer Institute in Critical Studies in Improvisation**  **Summer Only**  **[0.50]**

This interdisciplinary course provides a summer institute forum for students to investigate the possibilities of improvised artistic practices to inform community-building models and to shape public debate and policy decisions regarding the role of the arts in society.

**Equate(s):** UNIV*6040  
**Department(s):** School of English and Theatre Studies  
**Location(s):** Guelph

**IMPR*6410 Pedagogy Lab: Critical Improvisation**  **Winter Only**  **[0.50]**

This practicum experience, required for PhD students, is a closely mentored opportunity to develop the pedagogical skills and mindsets necessary to support learner-centered, improvisation-based, teaching and course design.

**Department(s):** School of English and Theatre Studies  
**Location(s):** Guelph

**IMPR*6800 Major Research Project in Critical Studies in Improvisation**  **Fall and Winter**  **[0.50]**

An independent study course, the content of which is agreed upon between the individual MA student and their supervisor. The student will conduct an extended research project that provides them with training in research methodology, culminating in a major project or paper. Subject to the approval of the student’s advisory committee and the Graduate Program Committee.

**Prerequisite(s):** IMPR*6010, IMPR*6020, IMPR*6030  
**Department(s):** School of English and Theatre Studies  
**Location(s):** Guelph