

F25.042 A Study of Wellbeing through the Arts and Nature

Overview

This interdisciplinary creative initiative seeks students from all academic fields for the development of a novel and socially relevant approach to understand wellbeing. Working with faculty from the School of Music, Honors College, School of Forestry, and Department of Health Sciences, the research involves design, implementation, and documentation of music and dance outdoor performance events to take place early fall 2024 over an eight-week timeframe. Data collection includes the use of physiological measures, psychosocial scales, surveys, and interviews. Researchers also will monitor soil and tree perception and transfer of sound during the performances. Additionally, students will assist in compiling a comprehensive literature review of arts-health and nature-health theories and practices to inform the investigation. A 15-20-minute documentary film of the initiative will be produced and premiered at the College of Arts and Letters in Action Showcase spring 2025. Both the film and publications generated from the study will be submitted for presentation in national and international festivals, conferences, and academic journals.

What the student will DO and LEARN

Students work directly with faculty to collect and analyze data using a variety of tools. They will increase knowledge of the research process and develop skills to measure wellbeing that may include taking the musicians' and dancers' heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration as well as using the 4-item perceived stress scale, wellbeing measures, and other validated and reliable psychosocial scales. They also may help conduct interviews, design surveys, and support monitoring of soil and tree perception and the transfer of sound during performances. Another knowledge-skill set that students may acquire is learning about how to navigate scholarly databases to identify published research studies focused on strategies for wellness informed by the arts and natural world. Further, students may serve as facilitators during the performances to support the dancers and musicians and/or guide audiences to and from the performance venue. If students have an advanced cinematography, editing, and sound design background, they may also be assigned to contribute to the documentary film production.

Additional benefits

As research interns, students will be directly engaged with highly experienced faculty scholars and artists, participating through active listening, detailed observation, and critical discussion of all activities related to the study from inception to completion. This experience will significantly heighten student awareness of mixed-methods research and help them become more prepared for academic and professional careers in the arts, wellness, and the biological, environmental, and health sciences.

Additional qualifications

This project demands that participants demonstrate the ability to be organized, systematic, focused, and highly effective verbal and written communicators. As researchers, the investigators also expect interns to be responsible, resourceful, adaptable, mindful, and able to solve mundane and complex problems. Finally, the collaboration requires cooperation, respect, and trust to achieve the goals of the study.

Time commitment

6 hrs/week for 15 weeks