COM 118 ~ WEEK 1
20 - 24 February 2006

Preparation for Week 1:

- **Readings**: All readings will be made available via the Electronic Reserve. I will provide you with hard copy in advance.
- **Please feel at liberty to alter the warm-up activities to suit yourself**... these, in particular, are offered only as suggestions. The important thing is that we begin the workshop with a warm-up that will clear peoples’ minds, literally warm-up their bodies, in order to facilitate readiness to commit themselves to the improvisations.
- The “vocal work” and the “improvisations” represent the activities that should unite each of our different workshop efforts and create a somewhat coherent experience for the 200+ students who are distributed amongst our ten workshop groups. The vocal work does not begin until after the Lip Syncs are completed.
- Many of the improvisations that we will be doing with them derive from the work of Augusto Boal. It is essential that you acquaint yourself with “The Great Game of Power”, “Newspaper Theatre” and his approaches to Image Theatre and Forum Theatre. This improvisational work carries the “meaning” of our workshops. They are meant to help the groups engage issues embedded within the learning tasks, the readings, and the production activities in ways that encourage depth learning as praxis.
- In this sense, the Boal-styled improvisations represent the outward form that unites our workshops - whereas the learning content will be generated through the uniqueness of the way that you teach, together with the inputs of the participants as action and reflection. In this, our efforts are directed toward building a learning environment based upon mutual trust and an erasure of the contradiction that students often feel to exist between their reality/role and the teacher’s reality/role. The participants in COM118 should definitely feel that this was a very different learning experience in relation to their other units of study... if they don’t, then something is amiss.
- I will provide a blank electronic and hardcopy templates for you to keep track of student attendance and to plot their assessment results on a spreadsheet. This will follow under separate cover as hardcopy and via email.
- **Please see me if the spreadsheet file is a mystery to you.** It is important that we have uniformity in this matter because it causes massive headaches for me at the end of the session if the returns from each workshop are differently organised and formatted.

---

**Housekeeping Matters with your Workshop**:

- **Who is present? Take the role.** Let people know that all shifting of workshop preferences need to be confirmed ASAP. i.e., by the end of the week. I suggest that you get them to arrange themselves in alphabetical order by SURNAME and then PRINT THEIR NAMES ON THE BACK of the workshop sign-up sheets (from outside my office). This will help you develop your class lists from the 200+ list of people enrolled. More on that later.
- **We need to ensure that workshops have no more than twenty-five (25) people in them.** First preference will go to those who signed-up within the spaces provided on the sheet for your workshop that is outside of my office. **Do not**
accept more than 25 people in your workshop. There are plenty of alternative times. Expect that there will be a few “floaters” who will shift around… the main thing is that everyone gets into a workshop and into a Lip Sync group during Week 1. If they must change their workshop time, then they must do so AFTER the Lip Syncs are finished. Try and help them solve their organisational problems (sympathetically)... send the terminally bewildered to me.

• Please explain that workshops are practical affairs and that appropriate clothing is essential for their comfort. No bare feet in the work areas – this included the loading dock during breaks - so runners are advised. The first few weeks will be sweaty.

• Get them to self-select into groups of no more 5 people for Lip Syncs. This group will disband after the Lip Syncs in Week 3. In the meantime, they will be spending a lot of time together and they need to understand what that means in terms of group work! Planning for who does what, and distributing allocated group marks according individual input over the course of the project. I will cover these matters in the Lecture on Thursday.

• The Lip Sync is the first task requiring additional rehearsal time on the part of the participants. They will present their Lip Syncs for assessment in your workshop during Week 3. Be sure to foreshadow the presentation of their work-in-progress in Week 2… that’s next week. Emphasise the need to get down to work THIS WEEK! They should have at least three (3) good rehearsals before next week. Show them where they can sign-up for evening rehearsal time in W9 in the hallway.

• You should explain that each Lip Sync will be presented in the workshop - with one chosen (possibly two in exceptional cases) by the workshop group to go forward into the Wednesday night presentation in the Revellers Bar during Week 5. For now, please discuss what Lip Syncs are all about and invite them to form groups of 4-5 and get to work. It is hard for everyone to meet if there are more than 5 people.

• It is very important that you stop your workshop in time for the participants to clean and straighten-up the studio, while you strike and store the audio, visual, and computer equipment that we use on a weekly basis. The studio is a high use area that must be left in clean, clear, and safe condition at the end of each of your classes. Plan for students to take responsibility and clean up any mess… this is a studio, and the people who follow us have a right to expect a clean, clear, and safe area in which to work.

• Make sure you have time for them to see you outside class – either or both of you present for a couple of scheduled hours sometime during the week. Think of this office time as time for class preparation.

• Let them know that the workshop goes for 110 minutes without a break on the hour. It finishes at ten minutes to fifteen minutes before the next class.

• Show/Tell workshop group where the toilets, booking sheets, and fire exits are (e.g., take them on a quick tour the building). Let them know that they should just get up and go if they have to use the toilet or are about to barf.
Focus Issues:

Primary Objectives:
Demonstrating how housekeeping organisation can be dealt with swiftly... taking focus, speaking your words, inviting dialogue, and then moving into physical action quickly...

Introducing:
- The group to itself through physical activity.
- The need for the body/mind to warm-up as a preparation for further work, especially ensemble activities and in-role enactments.
- Awareness that body/mind tension can be “sourced” & released.
- Group patience and co-operation.
- The need for individuals to make considered and sensitive contributions to the work of the group, as well as zany and spontaneous “adds” and investigations.
- The concept that we can think critically - and act collaboratively - to enhance the participation of all... a way of publicly practicing democratic values.

List of Participants: 10 - 15 min.
- Get them to line-up by Surnames in Alphabetical Order, then they should print their names on the back of the sign-up sheet.
- Remind them that the subject outline is available electronically.

Warm-up/Beat Work: 15 - 20 min.
Clap/Turn beat work to recorded music
- Truckin’
- Short Skirt/Long Jacket

Arm Work/Undulations/Rotations
- Black Stick

Four-Count Circling Fountain Formations
- Purple Haze
- Gypse Eyes

Dance/Movement Impro: 50 - 40 min.
- Soldiers’ Joy (instrumental x4)
- Rock That Cradle Julie/Soldiers’ Joy (same tune with lyrics)

Experiment with Forming Groups Quickly: 10 - 15 min
- Enrolment: Advertising, Journalism, Org Comm/PR, Theatre/Media, Commercial Radio
- Months
- Star Signs
- Elemental Signs: Earth (Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn), Air (Gemini, Libra, Aquarius), Fire (Aries, Leo, Sagittarius), Water (Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces).

Self-select into Lip Sync Groups: 15 min.
They need to:
• Create Contact Sheet with names, addresses, phone numbers
• Define first rehearse time, place, duration (must be within next 48 hours)

You need to:
• Emphasise the need to rehearse at least 3-4 times before next week.
• Remind them that next week = they will show their Lip Sync as a work-in-progress (they record song on CD and bring to class – they can record them using iTunes in the Mac Lab).
• Make sure they understand that they need to have at least 3 meeting/rehearsals between now and showing their work in progress next week. Give them time to schedule one Lip Sync rehearsal time in W9. Show them the floor space that they can use 4m X 4m maximum (size of space that will be used in the Reveller’s Bar in Week 5)

Warm-up/Beat Work - Dance/Movement Improvisations:

Group exercise: (approx. 30 min.)

As you would be aware, I use music in my warm-ups… you may like to consider the possibilities that this offers for you as well. You don’t have to use the music that I do – but if you choose not to do so you will need to find music that offers a similar beat to the songs that I use.

My music is recorded on a CD that is in your office in RM 22 in W9.

On this occasion please spend about 30 min. warming-up their bodies using the “whistle/turn” exercise that you will remember from working with me. The song on the CD for this is “Truckin’”. This is played twice. On the second time emphasise the need to look-up (see the horizon) and appear as if they are enjoying themselves (as if an audience was watching them). Emphasise the “beat in the feet” and the need to connect/commit their mind & body to serving the group.

Listen to the CD that I have included and see if it makes any sense for you in relation to what follows.

LETTING GO/BEAT WORK:

Clap/Turn:

Follow one another, single file. Turn (on the beat) to the sound of a drum, hand clap, whistle. Find focus through being available to stimulous, almost as a “nervous system” response (rapid, no thought)... inner silence, turn-off the chattering or whinging mind.. Relaxed, open, mind.

After they get the hang of it, use CD of Cake “Short Skirt./Long Jacket”
Use a whistle or drum. Snare or tom, you decide. You can keep it in your office along with Voice Booklets.

Consider:
- **rotations** of ankles, knees, hips, chest, shoulders, neck/head... explore dimension ~ small, ordinary, large (extensions)
- Forward and Reverse **Undulations**; also side undulations with the head leading and head following.
- **Experiment:** Stand on one foot: place other foot on standing thigh; Reach your arms over your head, lock thumbs; Stretch ~ Breath ~ Resolve body/mind tension ~ Grow! Slowly drop your arms, stretching/growing Breathe ~ Relax ~ Resolve tension. Repeat on other foot.

**Extensions – Undulations – Held Attitudes – Concluded Physical Effort:**
- The exploration of the body in space – especially as we move away from “normal” gesture is particularly important for Lip Syncs.
- Work on **Large/Small**... in the **body** and in the **face**.
- Also, **movement/stillness** and **working to a beat**.

**Arm Co-ordination:**
Do both types
Use JB CD – *The Cruel Sea* – “Black Stick”

**Four Count Circle Fountain:**
Use JB CD – “Purple Haze”, “Gypse Eyes”

Two lines meet in a “V” in the corner of the room.
To a FOUR-COUNT Partners hold hands and walk (4 steps), turn circles to the outside (4 steps), rejoin hands and repeat.

Start on the left foot.

Work on co-ordination of partnership & getting the steps down.
Drill – steps, saying of the beat,
Eye Contact - with partner & out to audience (see horizon, body up or down)
Polish – precision, calm mind behind the activity.

Find variety by playing with levels... start low, body held high while executing circle... reverse

**Make-up Dance Moves:** (random groups of 5)

Use repeats of “Soldiers’ Joy” it repeats at least three times as an instrumental and then there are three repeats of the same song with sung lyrics.

Each group has 15 mins to devise five dance moves that experiment with diagonals, levels, framing one person with the rest of the group... stage crosses,
throwing focus, impulses of the beat revealed in body movement.

All groups show what they’ve got. Discuss briefly. Use Lip Sync marking sheet to remind yourself and them about what to think about.

Then, 

**Experiment with Forming Groups Quickly:** 10 - 15 min

**Self-select into Lip Sync Groups:** 15 min.
Studio Workshop Sequence for Week 9:

**Sign-in/Attendance:** 5 min.

**Seminar Discussion/Brainstorm/Impro:** 40 min.

**Production Work on Newspaper Theatre:** 50 min.

- Use some style of “Forum Theatre” and “Image of the Images” to investigate the participants’ conceptualisation/understanding of the topics embedded in pp. 53-100 of *Do Not Disturb* re: News Corporation and the issues examined in *OutFoxed - Rupert Murdoch’s War on Journalism*.

Issues and Preparation for Week 9:

- I have placed a fair bit of support information on the Data Server and duplicated this on New Resources
- All readings (.pdf files) mentioned in these notes are available via Electronic Reserve on the Library Website. Eg: [http://csu.edu.au/division/library/eservices/ereserve.htm](http://csu.edu.au/division/library/eservices/ereserve.htm)

Focus Issues:

**Primary Objectives:**

- Identify key themes of *OutFoxed* and the two chapters on News Corporation (pp.53-100) in *Do Not Disturb*
- Use elements of the “Image of the Images” improvisations to explore the participants’ take on the myths and contradictions that Fox and News Corporation promote through their public relations messages.

**Sign-in:** 5 min.

Get straight into it again this week.

**OutFoxed:** 40 min.

You-all will have noticed that the creators of *OutFoxed* have, as Paulo Freire advises, zeroed-in on the myths and contradictions that Fox and News Corporation promote through their public relations messages.

**Improvisation - “Image of the Images” re OutFoxed:**

Conduct a rapid brainstorm to investigate and externalise what the participants identify as some of the myths and contradictions that Fox News promotes, as developed in this documentary.

Focus discussion on the myths and contradictions that Fox News and News Corporation promote through their public relations messages.
Activities Proposed for: COM118 Studio Workshops - Autumn 2006

What are the contradictions that the creators of *OutFoxed* and the two chapters on News Corporation (pp.53-100) in *Do Not Disturb* suggest lie at the heart of the dissonance between what Fox News and News Corporation say they promote and what they present on television?

Image of the Images: Give each group ten-fifteen minutes to develop this improvisation re: *myths* and *contradictions* that Fox and News Corporation promote through their public relations messages.

So all students and tutors need to:

- Read the discussion about the impos called, “Image of the Images” on pp. 77-90 of the reading from *The Rainbow of Desire*. This is in a file called, `<Boal_improv.pdf>`.

- You might also want to read the discussion about the impro called, “Image of the Word” that follows on from the discussion of “Image of the Images”...

I think that these improvisations and the perspectives that they promote will translate well in terms of addressing issues arising from thinking about *OutFoxed* and the two chapters on News Corporation (pp.53-100) in *Do Not Disturb*.

It is the job of the tutors to be ready to ask problem-posing questions that promote further dialogue about the topics that the groups present via the improvisations that they develop in class. So everyone needs to be on top of these Boal readings, *OutFoxed* and the two chapters on News Corporation (pp.53-100) in *Do Not Disturb*.

As you get people to look at each other’s images ask each group in turn, how their image depicts a situation that prevents people/viewers/media consumers from “becoming more fully human”? Freire says that this represents an act of oppression and dehumanisation.

Ask everyone how this week’s work contributes to their understanding of how they might develop the topics that they are thinking of using for their Newspaper Theatre presentations.

**Re: Thematic Content:**

How are the concepts developed in *OutFoxed* and the two chapters on News Corporation (pp.53-100) in *Do Not Disturb* related to the issues embedded in the topic that your group has chosen for your Newspaper Theatre presentation?

**Get each group to announce their chosen topic for Newspaper Theatre.** There is no dodging this issue this week (Week 9). If they delay any longer they will be severely compromising their capacity to make mature, informed decisions about the shape that their presentation will take. Remind them that they are expected - NEXT WEEK - to brief everyone on the choices they have made, and the conventions that they are using, to create their newspaper theatre presentation. Take note any group that cannot announce the topic that they have chosen.

**Re: Production Processes:**

What is the connection between what you are reading and what you are doing to research the topic that you have chosen to examine in your Newspaper Theatre presentation? Is there a connection? If so, how so? If not, why not?
Production Work on Newspaper Theatre:  50 min.

Now: about the multi-media part of this assignment. Everyone is meant to use images, audio inputs, and text in ways that counterpoint your main theme. You will notice that you can control PowerPoint using a range of builds and transitions between slides - you can even control the timing of each slide so that it advances itself automatically.

Builds, transitions, and timings are all decisions that you can make. But try to do more with less... use images, words (text) in symbolic or problem-posing ways that contribute to the problem-posing dimension of your live performance rather than in ways that tend to over-power your live performance. Reread Boal's detailed discussion on the different techniques...

Likewise, you should be aiming to blend the different conventions that Boal discusses... eg it is not that you use one convention and then another, often they occur simultaneously! Split focus is not a bad thing in Newspaper Theatre.

The multi-media dimension of your Newspaper Theatre presentation can function like a "joker" (you will have come across this concept in the Boal readings).

Your theme and the point of view that you are attempting to put across is serious, but don't take yourselves too seriously... be creative, inventive, lateral thinkers... this is your opportunity to have your say about issues that matter to you! You should be attempting to get your audience to "wake up" to the issues that you present - even as you "take the power away" (as in the Great Game of Power) from the printed newspaper communication that serves as the impetus/inspiration for your work.

Have you used De Bono's "Six Thinking Hats" to review/take stock of where you are at in your rehearsal process? Perhaps that could help you focus on your priorities between now and the briefing/work-in-progress that you present next week (Week 10), and then the performance in Week 11.

Next week, in the Late-Rehearsal Briefing you should be ready to show the people in your Studio Workshop groups:

1. a scanned image of the newspaper article that provided your inspiration,
2. your early concept mapping & brainstorming ideas to develop the themes that you want to explore that arise from the myths and contradictions embedded in the original newspaper article (you might experiment with using "call outs" and the drawing functions available in PowerPoint to present a concept map of your brainstorming ideas),
3. then explain why this topic is/should be a matter of concern to your audience,
4. what counterpoint ideas you have discovered in your research and present within the performance,
5. and which combination of Boal's newspaper theatre techniques you will be using in your presentation.

Remember, the actual presentation needs to be well-rehearsed so that you introduce the topic, develop the counter-voices through the Boal techniques you select to use, and make sure that your group's point-of-view is very clear... this is what Baz Kershaw calls your "ideological transaction" with the audience.

Your briefings next week should be direct and to the point... they shouldn't take any more than 10-12 minutes maximum to cover the five (5) issues (detailed above) re your briefing on what you've been trying to develop.

Then you go straight into showing your work-in-progress...
No Newspaper Theatre performance should take more than 10 minutes! That is plenty of time!

Keep it pithy, pointed, pertinent, and pacey!

You will note from the Study Schedule that you are expected to show your work-in-progress in your Studio Workshop class during Week 10 (next week). There will then an additional 5 minutes or so for questions and suggestions from the rest of the Studio Workshop group.

So: each group will have the opportunity to explain how they selected their topic and developed their performance concept... then perform it as a work-in-progress... and receive some feedback from your peers and tutor.

Note that you are expected to have a DRAFT of your script when you show your work-in-progress next week. You'll have time to develop the final version, based on the adjustments you make between now and Week 11. You hand in your FINAL PROMPT SCRIPT to your Studio Workshop tutor in Week 11.

That's the game plan for next two weeks. Now it's up to you to project manage this assignment (in the time that remains) in a way that enables you to collaborate efficiently and cooperatively.

You will need to spend extra time in the Mac Labs to complete your preparations for Week 11 and Week 12. The Mac Lab tutors are there to look at what you have developed... so get the most from this opportunity by having your multi-media inputs ready to show them when you walk into your Mac Lab classes.

Paulo Freire says that we “transform the world” only when we speak “true words”... I look forward to seeing what's on your minds at Newspaper Theatre Night when, like Lip Syncs, we see the “best of the best” in the Ponton Theatre during Week 12.

Those groups who are chosen to go forward into Newspaper Theatre Night will receive some assistance from volunteer Theatre/Media students who will help you to enlarge and tighten your performance so that you gain the full benefit and glory that your intelligence and hard work deserves.

All the best... everything depends on you. Properly speaking, only you can make this happen. Pull together and help each other be the best that you and your partners can be as a team that has something to say.

Encourage one another. Work with determination and dedication - and make a point of having some fun together outside of rehearsal... share a meal, do some partying together... whatever it takes to “keep it real” in terms of decent but meaningful human interaction and communication.

Get some...