

# 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

Ajay Heble (406 MacKinnon, Ext. 53445)  
aheble@uoguelph.ca

### Graduate Program Coordinator

Daniel Fischlin (439 MacKinnon, Ext. 53267)  
dfischli@uoguelph.ca

### Graduate Program Assistant

Pamela Keegan (427 MacKinnon, Ext. 56315)  
setsgrad@uoguelph.ca (petriko@uoguelph.ca)

## 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

### Rebecca Caines

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

### Daniel Fischlin

BFA, MA Concordia, PhD York - Professor  
Graduate Faculty

### James Harley

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

### Ajay Heble

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

### Mervyn Horgan

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

### Karen L. Houle

B.Sc., MA, PhD Guelph - Professor  
Graduate Faculty

### Troy Hourie

B.I.D. Manitoba, MFA Massachusetts, MA Royal 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.

Code	Title	Credits
IMPR*6010	Core Concepts in Critical Studies in Improvisation	1.00
IMPR*6020	Arts-Based Community Making	1.00
IMPR*6030	Foundational Research Methods in Critical Studies in Improvisation	0.50
Select one Elective		0.50
IMPR*6800	Major Research Project in Critical Studies in Improvisation	0.50

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Year 1</b>		
<i>Semester 1</i>		
IMPR*6010	Core Concepts in Critical Studies in Improvisation	1.00
IMPR*6030	Foundational Research Methods in Critical Studies in Improvisation	0.50
Optional Elective, Directed Reading or Internship		
<i>Semester 2</i>		
IMPR*6010	Core Concepts in Critical Studies in Improvisation	1.00
Optional Elective, Directed Reading or Internship		
<i>Semester 3</i>		
Optional Elective, Directed Reading or Internship		
Presentation at Graduate Colloquium		
<b>Year 2</b>		
<i>Semester 1</i>		

IMPR*6020	Arts-Based Community Making	1.00
Optional Elective, Directed Reading or Internship		
<i>Semester 2</i>		
IMPR*6020	Arts-Based Community Making	1.00
Optional Elective, Directed Reading or Internship		
Students may transfer to the PhD program or continue MA		
<i>Semester 3</i>		
IMPR*6800	Major Research Project in Critical Studies in Improvisation	0.50
Optional Elective, Directed Reading or Internship		
Presentation at Graduate Colloquium		

## 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.

Code	Title	Credits
IMPR*6010	Core Concepts in Critical Studies in Improvisation	1.00
IMPR*6020	Arts-Based Community Making	1.00
IMPR*6030	Foundational Research Methods in Critical Studies in Improvisation	0.50
IMPR*6410	Pedagogy Lab: Critical Improvisation	0.50
Thesis Defence		

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Year 1</b>		
<i>Semester 1</i>		
IMPR*6010	Core Concepts in Critical Studies in Improvisation	1.00
IMPR*6030	Foundational Research Methods in Critical Studies in Improvisation	0.50
<i>Semester 2</i>		
IMPR*6010	Core Concepts in Critical Studies in Improvisation	1.00
IMPR*6410	Pedagogy Lab: Critical Improvisation	0.50
<i>Semester 3</i>		
Qualifying Exam Preparation: Secondary Area		
<b>Year 2</b>		
<i>Semester 1</i>		
IMPR*6020	Arts-Based Community Making	1.00
Qualifying Exam Preparation: Primary Area		
<i>Semester 2</i>		
IMPR*6020	Arts-Based Community Making	1.00
Qualifying Examination Presentation		
<i>Semester 3</i>		
Optional Practicum		
Presentation at Graduate Colloquium		
<b>Year 3</b>		
<i>Semester 1</i>		
Optional Elective, Directed Reading or Internship		
Research/Writing		
<i>Semester 2</i>		
Optional Elective, Directed Reading or Internship		
Research/Writing		
<i>Semester 3</i>		
Research/Writing		
<b>Year 4</b>		
<i>Semester 1</i>		
Research/Writing		
<i>Semester 2</i>		
Research/Writing		
<i>Semester 3</i>		
Research/Writing		
Thesis Defence		

## Collaborative Specializations

### International Development Studies

The PhD in Critical Studies in Improvisation participates in the collaborative specialization in International Development Studies (IDS). Consult the International Development Studies (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/collaborative-specializations/international-development-studies/>) listing for a detailed description of the requirements of the collaborative specialization.

## 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.

**Offering(s):** Annually

**Department(s):** Dean's Office, College of Arts

**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.

**Offering(s):** Annually

**Department(s):** Dean's Office, College of Arts

**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.

**Offering(s):** Annually

**Department(s):** Dean's Office, College of Arts

**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.

**Offering(s):** Annually

**Equate(s):** UNIV\*6040

**Department(s):** Dean's Office, College of Arts

**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.

**Offering(s):** Annually

**Department(s):** Dean's Office, College of Arts

**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.

**Offering(s):** Annually

**Prerequisite(s):** IMPR\*6010, IMPR\*6020, IMPR\*6030

**Department(s):** Dean's Office, College of Arts

**Location(s):** Guelph