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Extreme Creativity

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EXTREME CREATIVITY

by Erin Murphy, Video Production Specialist



I don't know where I'm going to be next year, but I assume it won't be in an environment like this, and I don't think I will have a chance to do something like this again." These are the reflections of a senior enrolled in Professor Carmen Gillespie's course, "Extreme Creativity," which was offered for the first time at Bucknell in Fall 2011. Working with Professor Gillespie, ITEC (Instructional Technology Enhancing the Curriculum) produced a documentary, "Experiencing Extreme Creativity," which charted the experiences of the students and faculty participating in this innovative course.

The course was the first of its kind at Bucknell. Gillespie staged the class in the Samek Art Gallery and used photographic exhibitions from Timothy Greenfield-Sanders and Myra Greene as jumping off points for discussions on race, gender, class, and the creative process. The five-week course—a sponsored partnership between the Griot Institute for Africana Studies, the Samek Art Gallery and the Presidential Arts Initiative—brought together several faculty members and artists for individual class sessions on sociology, photography, poetry, performance art, music, and dance. Professor Gillespie wanted students to understand "the ways in which art is created, the social significances of it, and the intersections between questions of self-identity and art history.

[In this course], we are examining all these ideas broadly and then asking them to engage specifically and self-reflexively during the class on the creative process."

Instructional Technologist Erin Murphy worked with Professor Gillespie to assemble a production team—undergraduates Diego Chiri and Jose Valdivia and graduate student Anikke Myers—who developed the 28 minute documentary from over 25 hours of filmed footage of class sessions and interviews with participating faculty and artists. Gillespie's students used this footage in their final installation piece. The process was an enlightening one for Diego Chiri, who recalls, "I wasn't enrolled in the class, but from working on the video I might as well have been. I learned a lot about the importance of applying creativity in everyday activities, and I think it actually made me a better filmmaker and person."

The collaboration between the course and ITEC speaks to the different ways video can play a role in the process of curriculum development. The documentary will be used to start discussions about class design and to inspire others to rethink their courses and the possibilities of collaborative teaching. "I hope we have been an ice breaker, ground breaker, trail blazers in that respect," Gillespie says.

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Link to film: <http://tinyurl.com/extremecreativity>