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Office Hours: after class and by appointment

Theatre 7899.04
Drake 2068
Thursdays 3-6 pm

Introduction to Performance Studies

Performance Studies has been described as a marriage of Theater and Anthropology, yet it is both more and less than those two disciplines. To get a handle on this exciting new field, we will read foundational texts by its major figures, including Richard Schechner, Joseph Roach, Diana Taylor, Dwight Conquergood, and Judith Butler, as well as familiarize ourselves with some of its newer voices. Besides reading and analyzing the works of others, students will create a practical project that allows them to apply the methodologies we study, including participant-observation ethnography.

Goals:

Get to know many of the key ideas and methodologies in the field.
Figure out how to “do” performance studies for ourselves.
Do it.

Required Books (available at Barnes & Noble):

Performance Studies: An Introduction, edited by Richard Schechner

The Performance Studies Reader, edited by Henry Bial

Writing Ethnographic Field Notes, Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz,
and Linda L. Shaw

All readings not in the texts listed above will be posted on CARMEN. Please print them out and bring them to class with you.

Assignments:

- Ethnographic field notes journal – by end of your fieldwork, should total 10-20 double-spaced pages
- 5-minute presentation on potential subject of study; 15-minute oral presentation on your final paper topic
- 15-page final paper (10 pages for undergrads) that combines research with results of your ethnographic study
- Lead class once during the quarter – pose advance discussion questions when you lead class

- Response papers due almost every week – two-three pages max, including at least one discussion question on each reading. Present at some point during the class. Turn in at the end of class.

Each of the above counts for 20 percent of your grade on a 100-point scale.

Grading Scale: A – 90 points or above; B – 80 points or above; C – 70 points or above

CALENDAR

August 23: Introductions

August 30: Performance Studies: “All the World’s a Stage”

Readings: Richard Schechner, 1-44

Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* 1-51

Victor Turner, “Are There Universals of Performance?” from *By Means of Performance*, eds. Schechner and Willa Appel, 8-18

Clifford Geertz, “Blurred Genres” 66-69 [Bial]

Get started on ethnographic project -- find something and/or some people to study!

September 6: Why/How Ethnography?

Assignment Due: Give a five-minute presentation on a phenomenon that interests you as a possible subject of study for final project. After explaining what attracts you about the project, briefly consider, in outline form, everything that you fear might go wrong. Instead of a response paper, this week, turn in a three-page paper proposing your project.

Readings: D. Soyini Madison, “Introduction to Critical Ethnography” 1-17, “Ethics” 95-126, “Methods and Ethics” 127-146, from *Critical Ethnography*

Laura Edmondson, “‘Saving Whiteface’ in Tanzania,” *Theatre Topics* 9.1 (1999) 31-49

Robert M. Emerson et al., *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* 1-65

September 13: Ritual

Readings: Schechner, “Ritual” 45-78

Deborah Paredez, “Colonial Past, Tejano Present, from *Selenidad*,” 56-94

Dwight Conquergood, "Lethal Theatre," *Theatre Journal* 54.3 (2002) 464-488

Elaine Peña, "Devotion in the City," from *Performing Piety*, 115-144

September 20: Affect at Play and Work

Readings: Schechner, "Play," 79-109

Sara Ahmed, "Affective Economies," *Social Text* 22.2 (2004) 117-139

Jon Mackenzie, "Performance and Globalization," from *The SAGE Handbook of Performance Studies*, eds. D. Soyini Madison and Judith Hamera, 33-45

Emerson, *Fieldnotes*, 66-107

September 27: Performativity

Readings: Schechner, "Performativity," 110-142

Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" 154-166 [Bial]

Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" 167-174 [Bial]

October 4: Political Protest

Readings: Diana Taylor, "Making a Spectacle: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo," from *Radical Street Performance*, ed. Jan Cohen-Cruz, 74-85

Melissa W. Wright, "Femicide, Mother-Activism and the Geography of Protest in Northern Mexico," *Urban Geography* 28.5 (2007) 401-425

Guillermo Gómez-Peña, "Culturas-in-Extremis," 345-356 [Bial]

October 11: Spectacle, Commodification, and Children

Readings: Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 1-46

Maurya Wickstrom, "Making Americans," from *Performing Consumers* 96-153

Wendy S. Hesford, "Spectacular Childhoods," from *Spectacular Rhetorics* 151-187

October 18: Performance and Display (in the museum)

guest speakers: Scott Magelssen and Harvey Young

Readings: Scott Magelssen, book chapter, from work-in-progress, *Simming: The Performance of Meaning in Live Immersive Environments*

Harvey Young, "Housing the Memory of Racial Violence: The Black Body as a Souvenir, Museum, and Living Remain," from *Embodying Black Experience*, 167-208

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Objects of Ethnography" from *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*, 17-78

October 25: Political Protest in Performance Art and Dance

(breaking out of the museum)

Readings: Shannon Jackson, "When 'Everything Counts:' Experimental Performance and Performance Historiography" from *Representing the Past*, eds. Charlotte Canning and Thomas Postlewait, 240-260

Peggy Phelan, Marina Abramović: Witnessing Shadows, *Theatre Journal* 56.4 (2004): 569-577

Claire Bishop, "Delegating Performance: Outsourcing Authenticity," from *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, 219-239

November 1 No class. I will be presenting at the American Society for Theatre Research – keep reading and conducting ethnography!

November 8 Performance and Interculturality

Readings: Judith Hamera, " 'Saving' Kmer Classical Dance in Long Beach," from *Dancing Communities* , 138-220

Priya Srinivasan, "A 'Material'-ist Reading of the Bharata Natyam Dancing Body: The Possibility of the 'Unruly Spectator,'" from *Worlding Dance*, ed. Susan Leigh Foster, 53-74

November 15 Memory and Historiography, Re-performance and Re-construction

Readings: Canning and Postlewait, introduction to *Representing the Past*, 1-35

Joseph Roach, "History, Memory, and Performance," from *Cities of the Dead*, 1-31

Rebecca Schneider, "Forward" & "Reenactment and Relative Pain," from
Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment,
14-60

Emerson, *Fieldnotes* 108-141

November 22 No class, Thanksgiving

November 29 Presentations on your work. Field notes due.

Last class meeting at my home, dinner included.

Final papers are due by email on midnight on December 9, 2012.