

PERFORMANCE STUDIES

BASIC INFORMATION

Professor: Daniel H. Foster, 213 Bivins Building

Email: dhfoster@duke.edu

Office Hours: Tue/Th 9:25-10:05; 11:20-11:40 in office; or by appointment

Class Times and Location: Tue/Th 10:05-11:20, 214 Bivins Building

COURSE DESCRIPTION

From Richard Wagner's operatic unification of music, poetry, and dance to Laurie Anderson's multi-media performance art, the theater has increasingly diversified its mimetic resources, transforming a more traditional notion of drama into the broader category of performance. In order to keep pace with this transformation, the field of performance studies has emerged as an all-inclusive way of theorizing across institutional and artistic boundaries. This course introduces students to these theatrical transformations and the performative field that seeks to understand them. We will not only employ the idea of performance as it relates to theatrical practices, but also as it relates to the social sciences, exploring its usefulness through such authors as Richard Schechner and his conception of identity as performance. Given the nature of the subject, classes will be highly interdisciplinary, including both original theoretical works and performances by those who have reshaped the mimetic techniques, particularly in the fields of film, music, and theater. Topics include the crossing of formal boundaries, the development of new technical possibilities, and the purposes of performance, which range from the social to the spiritual and from the political to the personal.

READING LIST

Required Text: Huxley and Witts, eds. *The Twentieth-Century Performance Reader*

Required Text: Aeschylus, *Oresteia*, David Greene and Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (trans.)

Required Text: Molière, *The Miser*

All other texts will be made available on Blackboard, at the library reserve, and through handouts

PERFORMANCES

Theater

Farber Foundry, *MaLoRa*

March 19-20 Reynolds Theater

Molière, *The Miser*

April 8-10, April 15-17 Sheaffer Theater

Film

D. W. Griffith, *Birth of a Nation*

Available at Lilly reserve

Visual Arts

Andy Warhol, "Big Shots: Andy Warhol Polaroids"

February 16 at the Nasher

Music

Dean and Britta, *13 Most Beautiful...Songs* February

18 Reynolds Theater

For Andy Warhol's "Screen Tests"

REQUIREMENTS

Research Essay

Students will be required to complete one 20-25 page research essay.

Class Participation

Students are expected to participate in class discussions and to complete reading assignments, viewings, etc. on a regular basis.

Interpret/Exemplify/Question

Four times during the semester each student will be required to interpret a passage from one of our texts (essays, films, performances, etc.), give an example that helps one understand that passage, and ask at least one question about the passage. You'll be asked to do this with four different texts. By 5pm on the day before we talk about that reading, you will have to post a 250-500 word interpretation, your question(s), and enough information about your example so that people could acquaint themselves with it before class.

GRADES

Interpret/Exemplify/Question: 25%

Class Participation: 25%

Research Essay: 50%

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Thu. Jan. 14 Discuss Course Goals

Tue. Jan. 19 Marvin Carlson, "Introduction: What is Performance?" 146-53

Thu. Jan. 21 Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution," 120-34

Tue. Jan. 26 NO CLASS
 Thu. Jan 28 NO CLASS

D. W. GRIFFITH, *BIRTH OF A NATION* AVAILABLE AT LILLY RESERVE

Tue. Feb. 2 Discuss film of D. W. Griffith, *Birth of a Nation* (available on reserve at Lilly Library)
 Thu. Feb. 4 Discuss film of D. W. Griffith, *Birth of a Nation* (available on reserve at Lilly Library)
 Tue. Feb. 9 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"
 Thu. Feb.11 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"

TUE. FEB. 16 "BIG SHOTS: ANDY WARHOL POLAROIDS"-CLASS MEETS AT THE NASHER

Thu. Feb. 18 Discuss exhibit of "Big Shots: Andy Warhol Polaroids" at the Nasher

FEB. 18 DEAN AND BRITTA, *13 MOST BEAUTIFUL...SONGS FOR ANDY WARHOL'S "SCREEN TESTS"* REYNOLDS THEATER

Tue. Feb. 23 Discuss performance of Dean and Britta, *13 Most Beautiful...Songs for Andy Warhol's "Screen Tests"*
 Thu. Feb. 25 Theodor Adorno, "On Popular Music" (handout)
 Tue. Feb. 24 Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," 44-52
 Thu. Feb. 26 Discuss script for Aeschylus, *Oresteia*
 Tue. Mar. 2 Discuss script for Aeschylus, *Oresteia*
 Thu. Mar. 4 Discuss script for Aeschylus, *Oresteia*
 Tue. Mar. 16 Discuss Richard Schechner, "Approaches" from *Performance Theory*, 1-34 (handout)
 Thu. Mar. 18 Discuss script for Farber Foundry, *MaLoRa*

MAR. 19, 20 FARBER FOUNDRY, *MaLoRa*

Tue. Mar. 23 Discuss performance of Farber Foundry, *MaLoRa*
 Thu. Mar. 25 Discuss performance of Farber Foundry, *MaLoRa*
 Tue. Mar. 30 Wole Soyinka, "Theatre in African Traditional Cultures: Survival Patterns," 372-85
 Thu. Apr. 1 Augusto Boal, "The Theatre as Discourse," 85-98
 Tue. Apr. 6 Discuss script for Molière, *The Miser*
 Thu. Apr. 8 Discuss script for Molière, *The Miser*

APR. 8-10, 15-17 MOLIÈRE, *THE MISER*, SHEAFER THEATER

Tue. Apr. 13 Discuss performance of Molière, *The Miser*
 Thu. Apr. 15 Walter Benjamin "What is Epic Theatre?" 73-79
 Tue. Apr.20 Bertolt Brecht, "Short Description of a New Technique in Acting Which Produces an Alienation Effect," 93-104
 Thu. Apr. 22 Tadeusz Kantor, "The Theatre of Death: A Manifesto," 249-59
 Edward Gordon Craig, "The Actor and the Über-Marionette," 159-66
 Tue. Apr. 27 Conclusions-**research essay due in class**

TUE. DEC. 4

Final chance to work on podcast in class

Completed podcast files posted to Blackboard by 11:59pm, Tuesday December 4

THU. DEC. 6

Conclusions and Class Demonstrations

Due in class: Self-evaluation sheets for blog and podcast