

CMST 7945: Performance, Beauty and Justice

Spring 2015, TR 3:00-5:50, 153 Coates Hall

This willingness continually to revise one's own location in order to place oneself in the path of beauty is the basic impulse underlying education. One submits oneself to other minds (teachers) in order to increase the chance that one will be looking in the right direction when a comet suddenly cuts through a certain patch of sky. – Elaine Scarry

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Office Hours: TR 2:00-3:00 pm & by appointment

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(Always e-mail me through Moodle first. Allow 24 hours for a response/ 48 hours on weekends)

Catalog Description: Explores the relationship between aesthetics and beauty in performance. The roles that performances play in creating belonging, the types of belonging created by performances and the possibility of using performance to create alternative modes of belonging.

Course Objectives: After successful completion of this course you should be able to:

LO1. Write essays explicating key claims in performance scholarship

LO2. Be conversant in the theories that have given shape to and emerged from presentational performance.

LO3. Have a working practical knowledge of how to write, direct, and act in small-scale presentational performances.

LO4. Stage a significant and sustained piece of presentational performance OR write a thorough research paper supported by performance theory analyzing some aspect of the course content.

Required Reading

Bial, H *The Performance Studies Reader* 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 2006).

Bogart A. *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre* (New York, Routledge, 2001)

ISBN: 9780415238328 (\$20 used)

Bogart A *The Viewpoints Book*. (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2005) ISBN:

9781559362412 (\$12 used)

Carlson, M. *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2003) ISBN:

9780415299275 (\$23 used)

Davis, T. *Cambridge Companion to Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge 2008) ISBN:

9780521696265 (\$15 used)

Kershaw, B. *The Politics of Performance* 9780415057639 (\$43 new)

Moten, F *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minnesota, 2003)

9780816641000 (used \$10.80)

Muzoz JE. *Disidentification: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis:

Minnesota, 1999) 9780816630158

Sedgwick, EK *Touching Feeling* (Duke, 2003) 9780822330158 (used \$10)

Scarry E *On Beauty and Being Just* (Princeton: Princeton, 2001) ISBN: 9780691089591 **(also available as a free PDF)**

Sayre, HM *Object of Performance* (Chicago) ISBN 9780226735580

I will post other readings on Moodle during the course of the semester.

Assignments and Grading Policy

Assignment	General Description	points
	<i>More specific instructions for each assignment will be available on Canvas</i>	
Discussions and Reading Responses	<i>Each week there is a reading assignment you will be expected to write a 100-500 word response that explicates key claims in the reading. You may upload your reading response to our online discussion and/or read your response in class. You will be graded on the thoughtfulness with which you engage theory, the succinctness with which you can summarize, and your ability to connect readings with our ongoing class discussions.</i>	250
Leading Discussion	<i>Once during the semester you will lead a discussion of the readings. You will be graded on your knowledge of the content, your organization of ideas, and your ability to guide discussion while giving space for differing points of view.</i>	250
Mini Performances	<i>Almost every week you will be asked to present a mini performance (30 seconds to 1 minute long) that will inform our discussion. You will be graded on the energy and commitment that you bring to the performances and the specificity of your performance choices.</i>	250
Mid Term Performance	<i>In the middle of the semester you will present a 5-10 minute presentational performance that engages with course theory and uses one or more of the course methodologies.</i>	100
Artist's Statement	<i>Your performance should also include a 500-750 word artists statement connecting key performance choices with course theory.</i>	50
Final Project Proposal	<i>A 1-2 page summary of what you propose to do for your culminating project.</i>	50
Final Performance OR Final Paper	<i>Your final project can either be a fully rehearsed 10-15 minute presentational performance or a 20-25 page research report supported by performance theory and analyzing some aspect of the course content. I will grade these based on your ability to use course methods effectively and/or synthesize and apply course content. You may also choose to do a shorter performance AND a shorter paper</i>	100
<i>Total</i>		1000

Course Grading Scale

Grade	What it means	How to earn it
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Grade	What it means	How to earn it
A	Excellent Exceeds expectations in multiple ways, is creative, intelligent, committed and prepared.	Make the performance/paper your own. An A performance is fully embodied, committed, full of energy, and it leaves the audience seeing the world just a little bit differently than they did before they encountered it. An A paper is thoughtful, well organized, and considers counter arguments. It builds an idea that leaves the reader seeing the world just a bit differently than she or he did before reading the paper.
B	Very Good Demonstrates work beyond the expected level of competence and preparation	Thoroughly cover everything the assignment asks you to do as competently as possible. Dot your i's, cross your t's. Make sure that you hit every element of the performance or paper assignment guideline and that you clearly demonstrate your understanding of the concepts and ability in the skills asked for. Make sure to point your reader/audience in the right direction every step of the way so that they have a good idea where you are taking them and how all the pieces fit together.
C	Satisfactory Fulfills requirements with average competence and preparation.	Address almost everything on the assignment guidelines. Make sure that you have a working knowledge of the concepts and/or skills involved. In performance: Be memorized. Rehearse enough that you can get through the piece without blanking. Hit every single thing on the assignment list in at least a minimal way. Make at least a couple of strong committed choices. In writing: basically cover the idea asked for. Proofread for errors.
D	Needs Improvement Falls short of several criteria and/or presents major deviation from assignment.	Make an attempt to fulfill the assignment, but do your work at the last minute when you don't have enough time to cover everything the assignment asks for. Don't proofread. Don't rehearse (or if you do, make sure to do it alone and not with someone to watch and give you feedback). In performance: Have a general idea of what you want to do, but make weak choices and don't commit to them. In Writing: Have a general idea of what you want to say, but make sure that your writing meanders and leaves the reader unsure what you are saying.
F	Failing/Unsatisfactory Does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.	Do nothing at all or do work that does not meet the minimum requirements for the assignment.

Course Expectations:

The following is a list of what I expect from students in my courses. They are policies based on years of experience in the classroom. I believe that they reflect my commitment to creating an equitable, engaging, and safe learning environment for all students. If you have questions about any of these policies please see me within the first two weeks of the course so that we can discuss them in greater detail.

Cultivate a positive attitude: Embrace this class or drop it. I want us all to have fun and get as much as we can out of our time together. I try and make my courses engaging and avoid "busy work." For your own (and your classmates') mental health, make it the best experience you can or find another course that better meets your needs. If you choose to stay I expect that you will engage the class in a mature way, demonstrate commitment to the learning goals, contribute your thoughts and insights, ask questions, work hard, and challenge yourselves.

Participate with respect: This is a highly participatory course in which you will learn collectively (together and from each other) and kinesthetically (with your whole body, not just your mind). Performance requires that we take risks. Therefore, this course requires an ethical commitment to

approach one another with care and respect so that we can collectively create a safe and supportive learning environment. Provide constructive comments for your fellow classmates. Respect diversity and each other. Challenging ideas is encouraged. Challenging people is not.

Be on time: Being late will hurt your ability to learn and is disrespectful to everyone else's time. If you are late for some reason beyond your control, make sure not to interrupt anything as you come in (especially not someone else's performance).

Use technology appropriately: If some piece of technology is helping you to learn and not distracting your classmates you are welcome to use it. Monitor yourself to make sure that your ipad/iphone/laptop/ kindle/ thingamajig is not getting in the way of your or someone else's ability to learn. Unless you NEED it to help you learn what you need to learn for THIS class, turn it off.

Manage your time: Success in a three-unit college course is based on the expectation that students will spend, on average, three hours per week in class and **6 hours per week outside of class** reading, writing, preparing, studying, rehearsing, discussing and otherwise engaging with course materials. If you find that you are spending significantly more time than this on the course, please come and see me as early as possible to discuss better study strategies. If you choose to spend significantly less time than this on the course, please adjust your expectations for your final grade accordingly.

The Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act of 1973: If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a Coordinator in the Office of Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, please meet with me at some point during the first two weeks of class to discuss the provisions of those accommodations. See LSU PS-26 for details.

Do not ask for special deals: In order to maintain a fair and equitable learning environment all students must take the same course. Any opportunities to earn points, or retake or make-up or take late quizzes and assignments must be available to all students in the class (see LSU PS-44). Adding extra credit and other accommodations thus adds significantly to my workload and limits my ability to teach the class as designed. Accordingly:

- Please do not ask for special accommodation for assignments (excluding those requested through the Office of Disability Affairs covered above).
- Please do not ask for extra personalized credit assignments. I will say no (no matter how much I like may like/dislike you personally).
- Please do not invoke "special" cases or circumstances. It is unfair to other students for me to take into account whether or not the grade you earn will prevent you from graduating, maintaining eligibility for sports or other activities, getting financial aide, becoming disqualified, etc.
- Please remember that your actions and decisions have consequences. This isn't personal. I don't grade your life choices, I grade you as I grade everyone else, as fairly as possible within the confines of the course.

Do not plagiarize: unless you put something in quotation marks and cite where you got it from I will assume that you are presenting all work you turn in for this course as your own original work. If you try to pass off work done by others as if it is your own work this is grounds for serious repercussions. I will report all suspected cases of academic dishonesty to the office of Student Advocacy and Accountability. For more details see saa.lsu.edu/plagiarism/html.

Discuss grades respectfully: My primary motivation is to help you meet the course learning objectives. I understand that it can be very disappointing to not receive the grade that you desire or feel you deserve. I do not want such disappointment to inhibit your learning. I also know that I do, sometimes make mistakes. Accordingly, I am happy to discuss your grades with you. Please come to see me in person after you've had at least 24 hours to consider your response but within two weeks of the grade posting to discuss your grade on any assignment. If you believe you deserve a higher grade than you have received please bring a written statement with you that explains why you think your work on a given assignment is deserving of a higher grade based on the criteria above (e.g. if you believe you deserve an "A" be prepared to help me see how your paper "exceeds expectations in multiple ways").

Turn in your work when it is due: No late papers. No exceptions. Know when assignments are due and plan ahead. I will NOT extend the deadline for written work for any reason. All papers are turned in to Moodle in electronic form with deadlines announced significantly in advance. In the rare event that Moodle is down during the time frame that the paper is due I will accept a paper copy of the assignment (during the next class period after the due date ONLY) as a temporary stand in until you can upload the paper online. Fried hard drives and the like are no excuse. I expect that you have a redundant back up system for your files (e.g. save them to more than one of the following: Google docs, on your hard drive, in a dropbox, on a flash drive, e-mail it to yourself). I expect that you will plan ahead and have the bulk of your paper done the day before it is due and use those last few hours to proofread and copy edit. That way if something does arise at the last minute you will still have something to turn in for the bulk of the points. You are strongly encouraged to upload early drafts of your major assignments early and then replace them with a more complete versions later. If you turn in a partial assignment by the time the assignment is due I *may* give you (and all other students) the opportunity to revise the paper for additional points, but I will NOT extend the deadline for written work for any student for any reason.

Be present for in-class exams: As a general policy, I do not give make-up tests. If a make-up is necessary because of an extenuating circumstance, it will be in essay format.

Plan to perform on your assigned dates: There will be NO make-ups for any in class quizzes or performances worth less than 5% of your final grade. In rare circumstances (e.g. university excused absence, communicable illnesses, earthquakes, death in the immediate family), I may offer you the opportunity to reschedule a **major** performance or in class presentation if doing so does not disrupt the schedule for the rest of the class but my priority will always be to provide the best learning opportunity for the entire class, even if doing so inconveniences you personally. If such a situation arises please let me know as soon as possible so that I can make appropriate modifications to the schedule. (HINT: If you know you will be missing class your best bet in preserving both your own sanity and the integrity of the course schedule is to find another student who is presenting on a different day who is willing to switch with you well ahead of time.)

Remember it is your responsibility to be at all class sessions: PS-22 "Student Absence from Class" defines attendance as "the responsibility of the student" and an expectation that if unfulfilled requires the student to not only contact the professor beforehand (if applicable) but also to "[compensate] for what may have been missed." I expect you to come to class. Period. If you do have to miss a meeting because of a "valid reason for absence" (also defined in the policy) such as a communicable illness or death in the immediate family, please recognize that it is **YOUR responsibility** to obtain the day's notes and announcements both from Moodle and from communication with another student **before** making an appointment to meet with me. I am glad to

help you clarify things that you might have trouble with, but I will not re-teach material I already covered in class until you have shown this good faith effort and communicated with me about your absence in an honest, upfront and conciliatory tone (i.e. make it clear you understand that, even when life events are out of your control, course work is your primary responsibility as a student). Any e-mail asking me "what did I miss in class?" that does not follow these guidelines and does not begin with a summary of what you learned from your conversation(s) with your classmate(s) and your consultation of Moodle will not receive a reply.

Beware the end of semester temporary empathy lapse The last few days of the session are stressful for us all. While I will always do my best to help you learn, please keep in mind that I am significantly more able to help you raise your grade early in the semester than later on. ***A lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine.***

Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change with fair notice) **Tentative Class Schedule** (subject to change with fair notice. See Moodle)

Week		What we will do		What you should have read	What is due
1	J 15	Introduction to the Course.	Why take this course?		
2	J 22	Aesthetics and Politics	What is the relationship between beauty and justice?	Scarry (PDF),	Mini Performance Reading Response and Discussion
3	J 29	Performance and Presence	What makes a "present" moment beautiful and/or just?	Gumbrecht (PDF) WATCH: Adrian Piper: Deconstructing Race in the Indexical Present: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKPtKrKvXyo	Mini Performance Reading Response and Discussion
4	F 5	Performance and Identity	What injustices are created by beauty?	Carlson Intro and Chapters 5-7, Butler (in Bial) Goffman (in Bial)	Mini Performance Reading Response and Discussion
5	F 12	Presentational Aesthetics	Does showing the seams of beauty increase justice?	Barba (chapter in Bial) Brecht (in Bial) Harding (in Bial) Bogart Viewpoints (entire book) Carlson Chapter 4	Mini Performance Reading Response and Discussion

Week		What we will do		What you should have read	What is due
6	F 19	Performance and power	When is (injustice) mundane? When is it beautiful?	Jill Lane (in Bial) Parker and Sedgwick (in Bial) JL Austin (In Bial) Ridout (in Davis) Carlson Chapter 8 OR Kershaw (entire book)	
7	F 26	Queering Performance	How is beauty mobilized by those who have experienced injustice	Johnson in Davis Terry (pdf) Gingrich-Philbrook (pdf) OR Munoz (entire book) OR Motten (entire book)	
8	M 5				Midterm Performances
9	M 12	Gray Lecture			Carole Blair Gray Lecture
10	M 19	TBA		TBA	Performance Response to Blair
11	M 26	Performance and Play	How does beauty put (in) justice into play?	Bogart A Director Prepares (entire book) Bial Part 4 Play (all essays in this section)	Mini Performance Reading Response and Discussion
12	A 2	Writing About Performance	How can writing <i>about</i> beauty describe (in) justice?	Kershaw (in Davis) Goldman (pdf) Hamera (pdf) OR Sayre (entire book)	Mini Performance Reading Response and Discussion
	A9	Spring Break/SSCA			
13	A 16	Writing AS performance	How can beautiful writing increase (in)justice?	Auslander (in Davis) Conquergood (in Bial) Geertz (in Bial) Pollock “performing writing” (pdf)	Mini Performance Reading Response and Discussion

Week		What we will do		What you should have read	What is due
14	A 23	Performing Academe	What are the roles of beauty and justice in academe?	Carlson Part 1 Performance and the Social Sciences Jackson in Bial Jackson in Davis	Final Project Proposals
15	A 30	Final performances			
	M 6				Final Papers Due (via Moodle)