

## CMST 3041: *PERFORMANCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE*\*

Fall 2015      MWF 10:30-11:20am      212 Coates

CMST 3041 is a primarily online course with occasional physical meetings. Please see the course schedule for **mandatory** physical meeting times and plan accordingly.

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*\*Syllabus language borrowed or inspired in large part from Dr. Rachel Hall.*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The view of life as theater is an ancient and enduring metaphor for human reality. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in the perspective of life as theater and in performance-centered approaches to communication, daily life and culture.

This course will explore the relations between performance and everyday life in a variety of social, cultural, and historical contexts. We will examine the performative elements in "ordinary" speech and behavior, in aspects of selfhood, identity, and personality, and in a variety of communication contexts. We will also look at such everyday performance genres as conversations and personal narratives, folklore and oral traditions, festivals and celebrations, ceremonies and rituals, media events and politics.

The goals of the course are:

1. To broaden and deepen an understanding of performance as communication (and vice-versa), and of performance's various forms and functions in society and culture;
2. To enhance intercultural and historical awareness and sensitivity by examining some beliefs about and practices of communication/performance quite different from our own; and
3. To explore the use of performance as both a metaphor and a method of understanding the communication and behavior of others.

**RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITE:** CMST 2040 Introduction to Performing Literature.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Elizabeth Bell, *Theories of Performance*.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** This course is listed as a 75-99% online course. We will have 7 class meetings in-person on campus: four for direct instruction and 3 near the end of the semester for student performances. Each student is expected to attend scheduled class meetings; participate in class discussions, exercises, and workshop activities; and read the assigned materials. Beyond these minimum expectations, each student will be responsible for two short analytical response papers, one solo and one duet video performance, one live group performance project, and one

exam. For the purpose of calculating final grades, the course requirements shall bear the following weights:

|                                       |        |                |
|---------------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| 2 short responses                     | 2 @ 50 | 100 +          |
| 1 solo video performance              |        | 50 +           |
| 1 duet video performance              |        | 75 +           |
| 1 group performance                   |        | 150 +          |
| 3 unit quizzes                        | 3 @ 25 | 75 +           |
| 1 performance response forum          |        | 25 +           |
| Attendance & participation            |        | 25 +           |
| 1 final exam                          |        | 100 =          |
| Total possible points                 |        | 600            |
| *Everyday Life Performance challenges |        | (Extra credit) |

A = 600-540    B= 599-480    C= 479-420    D=419-360    F= 359-0

A+ = 100-98% / A = 97-93 / A- = 92-90%    →    The same pattern will apply for B, C, and D

***Attendance and Participation (25 points):*** Both the University and the Department expect you to attend class every day. Because you will be tested on material presented in class lectures, discussions, and performances, and because much of that material will not be found in the textbook, it would be to your advantage to attend class. If you miss class, for whatever reason, you are still responsible for any material covered or assignments given during your absence, and you will still be held to the stipulations regarding make-up work and due dates for the various assignments and exams that are detailed below.

You will lose 5 points for each in-class day you miss, and 10 points for each in-class performance day you miss. You will be asked to write several forums in response to student performances during the last three meetings of class. There will not be alternative assignments to those who miss performances. Missing peers' performance days results in a 10 point deduction per day as well as a zero on the corresponding 25 point Forum post. If you lose more than 30 points for lack of attendance on performance days, the additional points will come out of your individual performance grade (part of performing is audiencing!).

If you know in advance you cannot attend the in-class meetings, and in particular the performance dates in-class meetings, *you should drop this class.*

**Everyday Life Performance Challenges** (15 bonus pts possible): Before each of our first three class meetings, I will send out an everyday life performance challenge via email. These challenges will ask you to stretch outside of your social performance comfort zones in various ways. The extent of your participation will be assessed in class and points will be awarded accordingly, at a maximum of 5 points per challenge. This should enable good discussion on the topic at hand as well as encourage you to check your email regularly!

**Short Responses** (2 @ 50 pts): Descriptive and analytical account of peer video performances, focusing on the theatrical underpinnings of a selected social or cultural performances. The paper should be based on your own participant-observations of and reflections on the type of performance in question, and the analysis should be grounded in the theories, concepts, and terminology introduced in each unit of the course. Detailed assignments for each paper will be posted on Moodle. While only 2-3 pages, the short response should pack a lot of punch. I expect the writing to be concise—I hate fluff!

**Unit quizzes** (3 @25 pts): A very objective measure as to whether you are doing the readings, these unit quizzes will be multiple choice and true/false. While the focus will be major concepts, the nature of such a test is detail-oriented, so be sure to thoroughly familiarize yourself with the material before each quiz.

**Final Exam** (100 pts): There will be one final exam given at the end of the semester. The exam will be composed of objective questions (T/F, multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank, short answer/identification). You will need to bring a small Scantron form with you to class on the exam day. The exam will be cumulative, focusing on major concepts from the text, lecture, and student forums, videos, and performances. No “make-up” exams will be given.

**Video performance projects** (125 pts) One solo video performance and one duet video performance in response to readings and class discussion to be posted on the class’s Youtube page. Students will be divided into two groups (A and B). One half of the class will make a video in response to the first unit, and one half will respond in writing to those videos, and vice versa for the second unit. For the third unit, all students will will make duet videos and everyone will write responses.

**Group performance projects** (150 pts): The class will divide again into small groups of 4-6 students and be assigned dates for performance projects. Each group will select a performances project to work on together outside of class, and then present them to us on the assigned dates. You will be expected to meet with Nicole Constantini to work on this project at least once before the performance date.

**Performance response forum** (25 pts): Peer response to live group performances posted on Moodle. Group members respond to one set of performances in a rotation. A post should be either an original thread or a reply of at least 250 words that draws on language from the appropriate chapters of the Bell text to comment on peers’ work.

*A Note on performance projects:* The video and live performance projects are designed to complement the lecture and reading material to give you some experiential knowledge of abstract terms and concepts, and to illustrate issues and problems we’ll be covering. By way of analogy, you can think of these projects as the performance studies equivalent of a “lab experiment” in one of the “hard” sciences, where you are asked to perform certain tasks so that you can see and experience for

yourself some of the things you read about or hear about in the course. Although the instructions for each project will be fairly simple and straightforward, in order to do them well, you will need to have a good understanding of the conceptual material, too. Given the number of students in the course and the nature of these exercises, there will be no “make-up” opportunities for you: “the show must go on,” as they say—and it must go on at the appointed date.

*A note on grading performance work:* Performance efficacy is subjective to a degree – but on the other hand, you don’t have to be an expert to tell the difference between hastily prepared, sloppy work and carefully prepared, inspired work. You will be graded first and foremost on meeting all the requirements of the assignment in your performance. But you will also be graded on making something worth watching, something interesting, engaging, energetic, and well-rehearsed. A ‘C’ performance meets requirements in a rote way, leaving us thinking, “Well they got the idea but that was just OK.” A ‘B’ performance will leave us thinking, “That was good I see what they were up to, cool.” An ‘A’ performance will have everyone thinking, “Wow. That was awesome.”

*Disabilities:* The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states: “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 can be arranged. After you receive the accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

*Sexual Harassment/Misconduct:* LSU’s TITLE IX policy makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here for defining, reporting, and resolving sexual misconduct cases here: [http://www.lsu.edu/hrm/policies\\_and\\_procedures/Title\\_IX\\_item71081.php](http://www.lsu.edu/hrm/policies_and_procedures/Title_IX_item71081.php) and here: [http://www.lsu.edu/hrm/policies\\_and\\_procedures/Title\\_IX\\_Resources\\_item71342.php](http://www.lsu.edu/hrm/policies_and_procedures/Title_IX_Resources_item71342.php)

## COURSE SCHEDULE

| Date     | Due by 9am before class  |
|----------|--|
| M Aug 24 | READ: course syllabus; Read Bell Ch. 1                               |
| M Aug 31 | MEET IN CLASSROOM: Unit 1 ~ Text and Performance<br>READ: Bell Ch. 2 |
| M Sep 7  | READ: Bell Ch. 3<br><a href="#">UNIT 1 QUIZ MOODLE</a>               |
| M Sep 14 | DUE: Group A Unit 1 VIDEO ASSIGNMENT                                 |

- M Sep 21                    **MEET IN CLASSROOM: Unit 2 – Culture and Performance**  
 DUE: Group B SHORT RESPONSE to Group A video  
 READ: Bell Ch. 4 and 5
- M Sep 28                    READ: Bell Ch. 6  
**UNIT QUIZ 2 MOODLE**
- M Oct 5                      DUE: Group B Unit 2 VIDEO ASSIGNMENT
- M Oct 12                    **MEET IN CLASSROOM: Unit 3 – Identity, Resistance, and Technology**  
 DUE: Group A Unit 2 SHORT RESPONSE to Group B video  
 READ: Bell Ch. 7 and 8
- M Oct 19                    READ: Bell Ch. 9  
**UNIT QUIZ 3 ON MOODLE**
- M Oct 26                    DUE: VIDEO ASSIGNMENT 2 – All groups.
- M Nov 2                      **MEET IN CLASSROOM: WORKSHOP**  
 DUE: Both Groups SHORT RESPONSES 2
- M Nov 9                     Prepare group performances
- M Nov 16                    **MEET IN CLASSROOM: GROUP PERFORMANCES A**  
 Group C writes performance responses for FORUM A by Friday
- \*F Nov 20                    DUE: FORUM A
- M Nov 23                    **MEET IN CLASSROOM: GROUP PERFORMANCES B**  
 Group A writes performance response for FORUM B by **Wednesday**
- \*W Nov 25                    DUE: FORUM B
- M Nov 30                    **MEET IN CLASSROOM: GROUP PERFORMANCES C**  
 Group B writes performance response for FORUM C by **Wednesday**
- \*W Dec 2                    DUE: FORUM C
- T Dec 8                      **MEET IN CLASSROOM: FINAL EXAM**  
 DUE: Scantron form

