

CMST 2040 Performance of Literature

Fall 2017 Section 3

Tuesday/Thursday 9:00-10:20am

Coates 137

Key wording, assignments, and general notions in this syllabus have been modeled after or borrowed from Stephanie Heath, Cynthia Sampson, Chris Collins, and Melinda Nelson-Hurst.



Office: Coates 321

Office Hours: Tue/Thu 10:45-11:45am

Instructor: Naomi Bennett

Email: nbenn11@lsu.edu

Course Description:

CMST 2040 is an introductory level communication course designed to familiarize students with the study of literature through performance. This class is based in the assumption that performance is a method of understanding and enjoying literature as an expression of profound human experience. We will explore different methods of performing texts as well as learning to write about literary texts, performances and the act of performing.



Learning Objectives (Students will):

As a General Education Humanities Course, CMST 2040 will teach students an awareness of, and the ability to formulate, rational interpretations of human experience AND enrich their competency in written and oral communication.

Through the semester we hope to:

- Embody imaginative and intellectual responses to imaginary worlds, literary texts, and language.
- Stimulate an awareness of the dramatic potential of all literature.
- Deepen appreciation of and empathy toward self and other as they interact via performance and text.
- Activate a flexible, responsive, and expressive voice and body in the performance of literature.
- Consider the body as key site of culture, politics, and transformation.
- Sharpen written and oral communication skills.



“When I believe in my ability to do something, there is no such word as no.”
— Max Brooks, *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War*.

Assignments

There will be three performances, three papers, and various other activities done in class. Each performance and paper will have its own assignment sheet posted on Moodle and will be discussed in class. Other assignments include readers notes and workshopping performances (with feedback).

Reader's Notes:

For each chapter, you will be required to prepare 'reader's notes.' These are intended to jump-start in-class discussions and encourage you to ask questions and engage with your classmates – and to keep me from lecturing on the text and put you to sleep.

Reader's notes (for each chapter) should consist of:

- Definition of one term you did not previously know.
- One question about the text, asked to the class.

Readers notes should be hard-copy (either neatly handwritten or printed) and handed in immediately after our discussion period.

Black Box Response Papers:

As performance students, it is important to see performance. The HopKins Black Box (HBB) serves not only as your classroom, but as an experimental laboratory theatre space for faculty, graduate students, and guest artist to create performances and present workshops. As students of performance you will be required to attend two HBB productions (and encouraged to see all of them!) and write a 1-2 page written response for each. Guidelines for responses will be posted on Moodle. I encourage you to plan ahead and reserve tickets early, as seating is often extremely limited.

Dramatic Analysis:

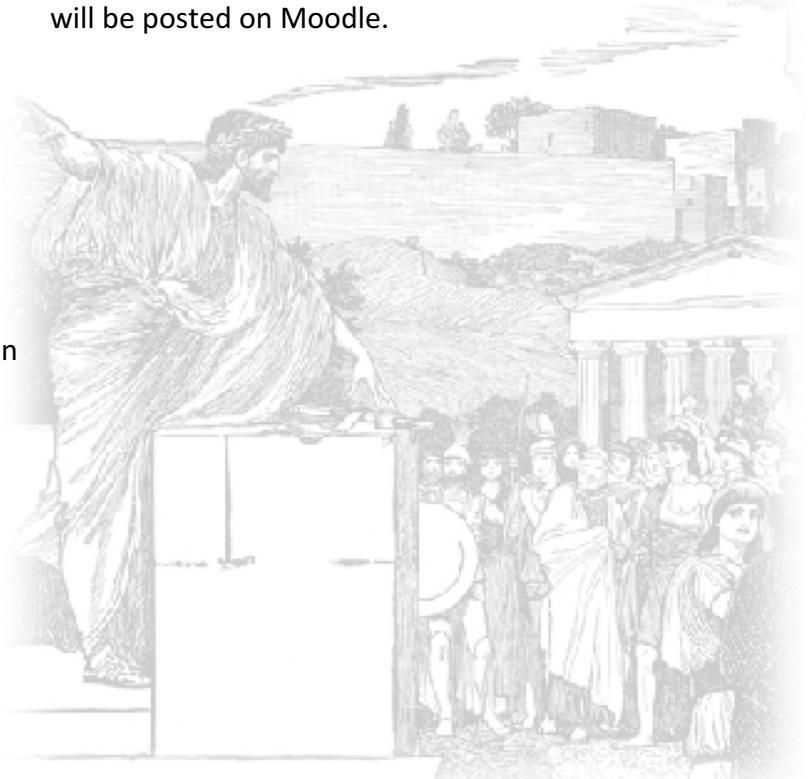
Though we will employ dramatic analysis of your chosen text for each of the three performances, the second, prose performance will require you do turn in a written dramatic analysis using Kenneth Burke's pentad as a tool for understanding and interpreting your chosen text. The pentad is useful in helping break down literature so that you can better understand the material you are performing. Being able to interpret the message of the author is important, both in everyday life, and as a performer who is staging another person's intended message. More details on the assignment will be posted on Moodle.

Workshops:

Each of the three performances will be 'workshopped' in class prior to the final showing. When developing a performance, it is important to have a practice run that allows you to get feedback from myself and your classmates, who can offer valuable insight and critique that you might not see on your own. These workshop performances should be fully memorized and you should have already made at least two strong performance choices. How you use the feedback offered by myself and your classmates in the development of your final performance will be factored into your final performance grade. A detailed rubric will be posted on Moodle.

Giving Feedback (Critiquing):

Part of learning to be an effective performer is learning to be a good (and critical) member of the audience. So, part of this class will be learning how to give (and take) constructive criticism. We will learn two methods: the "Sandwich" method – for workshop performances, and the D.I.E.T. method – for final performances. More information on each of these will be posted on Moodle.

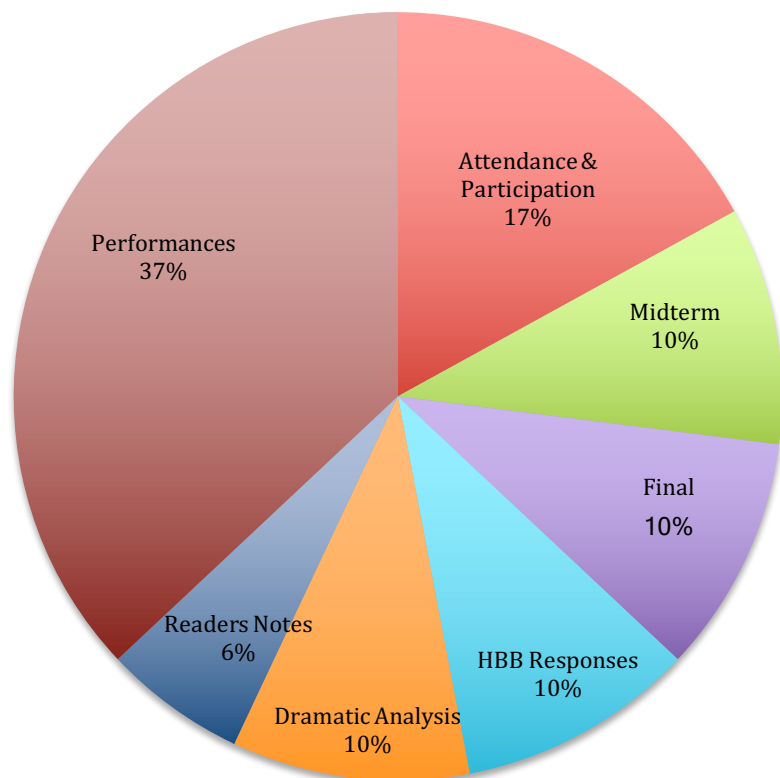


Evaluation & Grading

Final grades will be determined based on scores earned in the following assignments. All work must be done during the semester and not made up after the fact. The class assignments will be calculated as follows:

Assignment	Grade Breakdown	Due Date
Poetry Performance	100pts	Tue Oct 3 & Thu Oct 5
Prose Performance	120pts	Thu Nov 2 & Tue Nov 7
"Compiled" Performance	150pts	Tue Nov 28 & Thu No 30
HBB Responses (x2)	100pts (50pts each)	Tue Nov 19, Tue Oct 31, Tue Oct 28 (*see page 2)
Dramatic Analysis	100pts	Thu Nov 2
Readers Notes (x12)	60pts (5pts each)	(*see page 2)
Attendance & Participation	170pts	(*see page 4)
Midterm Exam	100pts	Tue Oct 3, in class
Final Exam	100pts	Thu Dec 7, 12:30 – 2:30

A full schedule will be posted separately on Moodle



Grade Scale:

A+ 100-98
 A 97-93
 A- 92-90
 B+ 89-87
 B 86-83
 B- 82-80
 C+ 79-77
 C 76-73
 C- 72-70
 D+ 69-67
 D 66-63
 D- 62-60
 F 59-0

Attendance & Participation:

As a performance class attendance is required. Period. You'll be engaging in discussion, participating in activities, presenting work, and providing feedback to others. This means that in order to get points, you must be present and engaged. Participation refers to how prepared you are to engage in classroom activities; it requires that you do your readings and you come to class prepared to discuss the assignment. Any in-class activities fall into this category. If you are engaged in both discussions and activities it should be easy to earn these points.

Classroom Electronics Policy:

In this course, no electronic devices (laptops, phones, iPads, other tablets, etc.) may be used. These devices may seem helpful for note-taking, but in reality they are distracting to both their users and any students around their users (not to mention to the instructor). Studies over the past several years have consistently shown that laptop use in class is detrimental to learning for multiple reasons. In addition, taking notes by hand has been shown to increase understanding and retention of topics discussed in class.

In addition: *all cell-phones should be put on silent or turned off during class.* Vibrate is not acceptable. If I see you checking your phone, texting, or your phone vibrates or rings during an in-class performance your participation grade will be automatically reduced by one letter grade. If you have an extenuating circumstance and you need to keep your phone on for some reason, you must let me know ahead of time.

Classroom Dress Policy:

You need to come prepared to be participate in physical activities. Wear clothes that allow for a full range of physical movement. Please no jeans or skirts, and be prepared to take your shoes and socks off (yes, you need to feel the floor!).

Classroom Behavior:

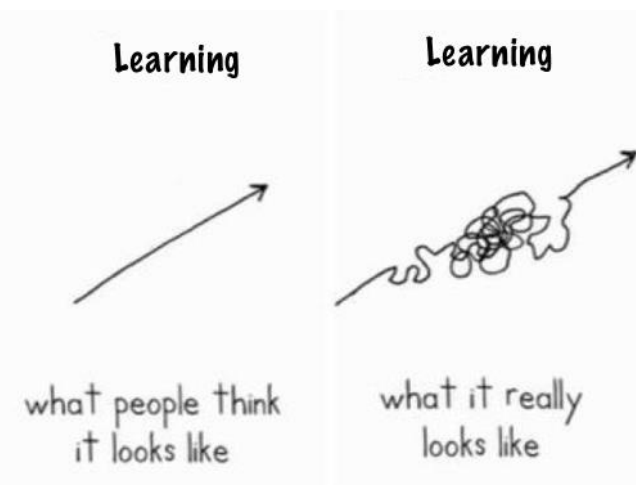
This classroom is our space. We need to respect each other at all times. I do not tolerate racist, sexist, heterosexist, or discriminatory language of any kind. It is important to remember we are here to learn from each other, and to do so requires us to be open to new concepts and different ways of being than we may be used to. This might also mean that when giving a performance on sensitive subject, you'll want to be intentional and careful in the choices you make. And as audiences to performances you may or may not agree with, you'll want to be open-minded to audiencing what your classmates have to share.

Late Work:

While I really dislike late work, I would rather you do it late than not at all. However, you need to talk with me if you need an extension – some assignments, such as performances, will not be able to be rescheduled. I will give make-up assignments for absences that are the result of a documented university excuse, provided you inform me immediately and provide documentation within one calendar week from the original due date. Missed assignments for any other reason will be taken on a case-by-case basis and will generally involve a serious point reduction.

Communication:

You can reach me at nbenn11@lsu.edu any time. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours, though on weekends or when I am away at a conference may take longer. I also expect you to check your email and Moodle regularly, in case there are updates about the class. If you need to contact me or your classmates, you have access to the emailing system in Moodle. If you have missed a class and are emailing to find out what we covered or to get class notes, please email one of your classmates, not me.



Available Help:

Please come talk to me. My job is to help you learn. If you have not taken a performance class before, this class may seem harder than you might expect. Remember that this is a different way of learning, based as much on skill and knowledge that can be learned as any other introductory class. If you feel like you are having difficulty or something comes up, let me know as soon possible. The sooner I'm aware of any issue, the more likely I am to be able to help. There are also several resources available on campus.

[Communication across the Curriculum](#) (CxC) offers writing support that can assist you in the development of your essays. The [Shell Tutorial Center](#) housed in Middleton Library also offers services that can help. There are counseling services available through the [Student Health Center](#) that are great for helping you process any of the things going on in your life. [LSU Cares](#) is a university initiative that is available to both students and instructors to helping students find resources and develop realistic plans dealing with a variety of life, school, and personal stressors. The [Food Pantry](#) is available to provide supplemental food to students in need who may experience hunger or food insecurity. School is only one part of your life, so please take care of you.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism is a complicated issue. We will discuss plagiarism (what it is, how to avoid it) as a class. You can read the LSU policies on plagiarism to better understand how the school feels about it. In short, any time you present other people's work as your own without properly citing the source, you're committing plagiarism. With proper citation, any of these issues can be avoided.

ADA Accommodations:

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitations 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 letter, please meet with me privately to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

Inclement Weather:

Unless the University is closed, we will have class. This means even if there is an early morning downpour, we will be meeting. I hate coming to school in rain as much as anyone else, but we simply do not have time in the schedule to miss days because of rain.

**Title IX & Sexual Misconduct Policy:**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination based on the gender of students and employees of educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance. In accordance with Title IX and other applicable law, Louisiana State University (LSU) is committed to providing a learning, working, and living environment that promotes integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual misconduct which includes sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and retaliation. LSU prohibits sex discrimination and sexual misconduct. This policy applies to all persons without regard to sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression. Sex discrimination and sexual misconduct violate an individual's fundamental rights and personal dignity. LSU considers sex discrimination and sexual misconduct in all of its forms to be serious offenses. This policy has been developed to reaffirm these principles and to provide recourse for individuals whose rights have been violated. This policy establishes a mechanism for determining when rights have been violated in employment, student life, campus support services, LSU programs and/or an academic environment.

Required Texts:

Collins, Billy, ed. *Poetry 180: A Turning Back to Poetry*. Random House, 2003.

Available at: <http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/p180-list.html>

Pelias, Ronald J. and Tracy Stephenson Shaffer. *Performance Studies: The Interpretation of Aesthetic Texts* (2nd Edition). Kendall/Hunt, 2007.

Shapard, Robert and James Thomas. *New Sudden Fiction: Short-short Stories from America and Beyond*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.

Stern, Jerome, ed. *Microfiction: An Anthology of Really Short Stories*. W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.

**[incomplete] List of Poets / Authors**

Douglas Adams	Marilyn Hacker	Catherine Sasanov
U-Meleni Mhlaba Adebo	Langston Hughes	George Saunders
Sherman Alexie	A.E. Housman	Cheryl Savageau
Maya Angelou	Erica Jong	Robert Service
Margaret Atwood	James Joyce	Dr. Seuss (Theodor Geisel)
Hugo Ball	Sor Juana	Anne Sexton
Russel Banks	John Keats	Ntozake Shange
Djuna Barnes	Jack Kerouac	Robert Shearman
Charles Baudelaire	Stanislaw Lem	Percy Bysshe Shelley
Matsuo Bashō	Audre Lorde	Leslie Marmon Silko
Perer S. Beagle	Robert Lowell	Shel Silverstein
Aimee Bender	Mina Loy	Charles Simic
Elizabeth Bishop	Naguib Mahfouz	Gary Snyder
David Blair	Carlo Matos	Wallace Stevens
William Blake	Wallace McRae	Robert Louis Stevenson
Anthony Bourdain	A.A. Milne	Janaka Stucky
Richard Brautigan	Lorrie Moore	Algernon Charles Swineburne
Charles Bukowski	Toni Morrison	Wisława Szymborska
William S. Burroughs	Eileen Myles	James Tate
Lord Byron	Ogden Nash	Dylan Thomas
E.E. Cummings	Pablo Neruda	Hunter S. Thompson
Diane di Prima	Flannery O'Connor	Leo Tolstoy
Junot Diaz	Sharon Olds	Yamamoto Tsunetomo
Emily Dickinson	Mary Oliver	Tristan Tzara
T.S. Eliot	Chuck Palahniuk	Kurt Vonnegut
Paul Eluard	Dorothy Parker	Dara Weir
Eugene Field	Marge Piercy	John Wieners
F. Scott Fitzgerald	Sylvia Plath	Saul Williams
Elsa von Feytag-Lorinoven	Edgar Allan Poe	Edith Wharton
Robert Frost	Adrienne Rich	Colson Whitehead
Neil Gaiman	Rainer Maria Rilke	Walt Whitman
Gabriel Garcia-Marquez	Arthur Rimbaud	William Wordsworth
Charlotte Perkins Gilman	David Rivard	W.B. Yeats
Allan Ginsberg	Tom Robbins	Yevgeny Yevtushenko
Louise Gluck	Rumi	Tom Yuill
Melissa Goodrum	Salman Rushdie	Adam Zagajewski

