

CMST 2040: Performance of Literature

Coates Hall 137

Section 004: T/Th 10:30 am – 12 pm

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“[Art is] not to bring order out of chaos, nor to suggest improvements in creation, but simply to wake [us] up to the very life we are living.” – John Cage

Required Texts:

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

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

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

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

Catalog Description:

The study of literature through performance; reading, analysis, and performance of prose, poetry, and drama.

Course Description/Goals:

CMST 2040 is a *General Education Humanities Course* designed to familiarize students with the study of literature through performance. Based on 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 performing.

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:

- 1) Ignite, engage and embody imaginative and intellectual responses to imaginary worlds, literary texts and language.
- 2) Stimulate an awareness of the dramatistic potential of all literature.

- 3) Deepen appreciation of self and other through the interaction with and engagement of the human experience.
- 4) Activate a flexible, effective, and expressive voice in the performance of literature.
- 5) Develop a responsive and expressive body in the performance of literature.
- 6) Sharpen basic communication skills.

Course Requirements and Expectations:

Attendance: It is important that you attend all classes, since participation will make up a portion of your grade in this class. Missing a class will result in a complete forfeiture of participation points awarded that day. In class assignments or activities may be given and, in the event of absence, cannot be made up for points. In addition to these activities, your participation grade will be derived from a record of how actively you participate in workshops, both as a well-rehearsed performer and as an audience member offering thoughtful and constructive feedback to the performer(s). I define active participation as follows: responding to instructor questions or otherwise contributing to class discussion, offering constructive suggestions or asking thoughtful questions after presentations/performances and during workshops, and participating fully in group activities and in-class assignments. *If you simply attend, but do not actively participate, you will not do well in this class.*

If you are absent, it is your responsibility to keep up with the assignments in the course.

A Note About Class Philosophy: Learning can be a very uncomfortable process, as it requires integrating the unknown with the safe and familiar. Add to that the fact that this class requires letting people see you in the middle of this learning process, and we have the potential for a daunting experience. Our job is to help each other make this class as comfortable as possible in order to facilitate the learning process. Please show your peers the respect and the support that you would want for yourself.

Workshops: Workshops are a mandatory part of this class, and are a necessary part of building a successful final performance. A workshop is, in essence, a full practice run of your upcoming performance. It enables you to receive thoughtful feedback from your peers, which you can implement to improve upon your performance. To receive FULL workshop points, you must have your chosen text fully memorized, you must have made at least two choices regarding your performance, and you must actively participate in discussions of your fellow classmates' workshop performances and offer suggestions to aid them in their processes. If you show up on the day of your workshop and are not memorized and/or have not made two performance choices, I will ask you to sit down and you will not be allowed to do your workshop performance. You will receive a zero. If you do not show up to class on the day of your workshop and cannot provide me with a university excused absence, you will receive a zero for your workshop.

Performances: The focus of this class is well established: live performance. *You must deliver all four assigned performances in order to receive a passing grade in the course.* It is imperative, due to the time constraints of each semester, for performances to be given on the days that they are assigned. The penalties for missing a performance are severe as a result. If you are absent or tardy on a performance day, causing you to miss your assigned slot, you will only be allowed to make up your performance for 75% of the grade you receive on the assigned make up day. This means that even if you give the performance of your life, the highest grade you can receive is 75%. All make-ups will be scheduled on a case by case basis and **MUST** be accompanied by a note (emergency = university excused absence only). If you are late on a performance day, please wait for applause before entering the room so that you do not disrupt someone else's performance. This is a matter of showing the proper amount of respect to your peers.

Quizzes and Exams: Over the course of the semester you will take six quizzes and two major exams (a midterm and a final). The dates and content of each quiz are listed on the tentative course schedule. **I do not offer make-up quizzes should you be absent on the day of a scheduled quiz or exam.** However, I do drop your lowest quiz grade. If you know you are going to miss class for a university excused absence, it is your responsibility to meet with me to take that quiz early.

HopKins Black Box Shows: The Hopkins Black Box theatre serves not only as a classroom space for students of performance studies, but it is also an experimental laboratory theatre space where faculty and graduate students produce and direct full-length performance productions, and where guest artists perform and/or host workshops. For students of performance, these productions provide an invaluable opportunity to broaden their understanding of performance as object of analysis and an epistemological method for approaching a wide variety of cultural texts. Thus, you are required to attend two black box productions over the course of the semester and turn in a 2 page written response to each production. Shows dates and times are listed on the tentative course schedule as well as on the departmental website. All written work must be in Times New Roman font, sized to 12 pt., double spaced, with 1" margins, with absolutely no unnecessary/extra spacing between sentences or paragraphs.

Critique Paper: In November, I will ask you to write a five page paper critiquing a fellow classmate's performance. The classmate you critique will be chosen at random by me. Based on the analysis of your classmate's text, your observation and participation in their workshop, and your observations of their final performance of this text, I will ask you to critique your classmate's adaptation of their text, using Burke's Pentad as a frame. This paper will count for 150 points, which is 15% of your final grade. The paper **MUST** be written in Times New Roman 12-point font, with 1" margins, double spaced, with no unnecessary or extra spacing between paragraphs or sentences. It should be clear and concise with concrete examples. Make sure you have an introduction, body, and a conclusion. If you need help with your writing, please make an appointment to see a writing tutor in the CxC Studio 151 in Coates Hall. If you fail to turn in this paper on its due date, you will receive a zero and will not be allowed to make it up or turn it in late.

To achieve the goals of the General Education Requirement for this class, this paper should illustrate much of what you have learned over the semester: that you can identify

larger themes, structures, literary devices, and rhetorical patterns in the text/performance and that you can communicate those findings in an organized , clear, and concise manner.

Email: I do not accept emailed submissions of written work. Hard copies of all work must be submitted in person, or placed in my mailbox in 136 Coates Hall. Also, understand that I only conduct email correspondence on a regular basis with students during normal business hours (Tuesdays - Friday 9 am -5 pm). If you email me in the middle of the night, over the weekend, or early in the morning, I may see and read your email, but responses will be made at my discretion. Additionally, please allow adequate time for a response to be made before sending a follow up email to me.

Cellphones and Computers: The HopKins Black Box is a cellphone and laptop free zone. All cell phones and laptops must be turned **OFF** at the beginning of every class. Do not keep your phone on vibrate or silent. If you are caught texting at any point during this class, you will be asked to leave. If your phone goes off during a peer's performance or your own performance, your performance grade will be penalized by 50%, resulting in a failing grade. The same goes for surfing the web, facebooking, instagramming, and using other forms of social media during class. **DO NOT DO IT.** The only exception to this rule is if you are using your laptop to generate some sort of media for a performance, and if this is the case, you must discuss your choice to do this with me prior to your performance workshop date.

Moodle: I will post assignments, rubrics, and other important documents on Moodle, so please make sure that you check Moodle regularly. However, I do not use the grade book on Moodle. All grades will be recorded on an excel spreadsheet in my office. I will return all graded assignments in a timely fashion, and it is your responsibility to keep track of your grades. If you have questions about the grade that you earned on an assignment/performance you must bring that graded assignment with you when discussing it with me. If you have a question about your overall grade in the class, please bring hardcopies of all graded assignments with you so that we can compare the grades listed in my spreadsheet with the grades listed on the returned assignments.

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitations 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 for Disability Affairs (115 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive the accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

Grading

Performances:

Introductory Auto-Performance	50
Poetry Performance	100
Prose Performance	100
Compiled Performance	100

Tests:

Midterm	150
Final	150

Written Work:

Critique Paper	150
Black Box Paper 1	50
Black Box Paper 2	50

Participation:

Participation (class activities, etc.)	50
Reading Check Quizzes	50

Total Points Available

1000

A=1000-900 B=899-800 C=799-700 D=699-600 F= 600-0

“A” does not mean you have simply successfully completed all assignments. It means you have been consistent and have excelled in performances and written work. An “A” student makes me say, “Wow!” on a regular basis.

“B” means you have completed all assignments and have gone the extra step beyond. A “B” indicates you have thoroughly prepared, followed the assignment requirements, and made the audience/reader interested in your work.

“C” means you have successfully accomplished the assignments and are able to construct and deliver strong performances or written assignments.

“D” and “F” indicate you have not met the basic criteria of assignments and/or you have turned in or presented deficient work.

Tentative Schedule

Tuesday, August 26th:	Introduction to the class and each other and Introduction to Performance Studies lecture (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 1)
Thursday, August 28th:	Definition & History of Performance lecture (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 2 & 3) and movement workshop
Tuesday, September 2nd:	Introduction to Storytelling lecture (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 4); Introduction to Automatic Writing and in-class activity
Thursday, September 4th:	Audiencing Performance lecture (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch 10 & 12)
Tuesday, September 9th:	Performance Day – Introductory Auto-Performance
Thursday, September 11th:	Drawing Images from Poetry; Introduction to Voice and Body lecture (Pelias and Shaffer: DVD) and Performance: Translating into Voice and Body lecture (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 6); and props workshop
Tuesday, September 16th:	Poetry Performance Workshop day one
Thursday, September 18th:	Poetry Performance Workshop day two
Tuesday, September 23rd:	Poetry Performance day one
Thursday, September 25th:	Poetry Performance day two
Tuesday, September 30th:	Guest Lecture by Raquel Polanco
Thursday, October 2nd:	FALL BREAK (no class)
Tuesday, October 7th:	Guest Lecture T.B.D.
Thursday, October 9th:	The Dramatistic Approach to Analysis lecture (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 5) and in-class activity
Tuesday, October 14th:	Midterm Exam
Thursday, October 16th:	Empathy lecture (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 7)
Tuesday, October 21st:	Aesthetic Texts: Translating Prose to Performance lecture (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 8 & 9)
Thursday, October 23rd:	Prose Workshop
Tuesday, October 28th:	Prose Workshop
Thursday, October 30th:	Prose Workshop
Tuesday, November 4th:	Prose Performances
Thursday, November 6th:	Prose Performances
Tuesday, November 11th:	Prose Performances
Thursday, November 13th:	Introduction to Performance Art lecture (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 11); What is a Compiled Performance?
Tuesday, November 18th:	Working with texts; Critique Papers due
Thursday, November 20th:	Working with texts
Tuesday, November 25th:	Compiled Performances Workshop
Tuesday, December 2nd:	Compiled Performances
Thursday, December 4th:	Review for the Final Exam and course wrap-up
Tuesday, December 9th:	Final exam (5:30-7:30 pm)

Contract
CMST 2040 section 004
Fall 2014

I have read the syllabus and I agree to adhere to all of the terms and conditions laid out within this document. I understand that the syllabus is a contract between my professor, Savannah Ganster, and I, in which it is outlined that we hold a responsibility to one another as professor and student. I understand that I am responsible for the completion of all course materials in a timely fashion and that there will be no make-up assignments offered in the event of an absence that is not university excused. I understand and agree to adhere to my professor's grading policy as outlined within the syllabus. Finally, in signing this contract, I am in agreement with all of the terms, conditions, materials, and time frames for learning that are laid out within the syllabus.

(signature)

(date)

(printed name)