

CMST 2040 Performance of Literature
Fall 2016 Section 1 & 2
MWF 830-920 & 930-1020
Coates 137

Instructor: Cynthia Sampson
Email: csamps7@lsu.edu
Office: Coates 318
Office Hours: MWF 1030-1230

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.

Course Objectives: 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.

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.

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 reading quizzes, poem-a-day, mini performances, and class notes.

1. **Class Notes.** Each class period we have assigned reading, we will have an assigned note taker. Their job will be to keep a record of what we discuss and what activities (including their instructions and the final products) we do. After class, the student will need to post their notes on the class wiki on Moodle within 48 hours, so everyone will be able to share them. Just to say it: this does not mean no one else needs to take notes. This is merely a supplement to individual notes, and so there is a record of what we've done together.
2. **Reading Leader.** Each day of assigned reading, there will be ~three people responsible for running point. They will spearhead the discussion and the activities. Everyone is required to read, but on the day you are reading leader, you will need to come in with questions about the reading, its application or implications. If anyone else has a question about the reading, the reading leaders will answer first.
3. **Poem-a-Day.** Each day someone will be tasked with bringing in a poem to share with the class. The student will need to select a poem not from the text book and have a reason for selecting their poem (e.g. it's related to the assigned reading, it has good examples of figurative language &c, it's moving for a particular reason). After the performance of the poem, the class will reflect on what they just heard, and the reader will offer their insights as to why they wanted to share the poem. Caveat: Because we will also be performing prose, a student may bring in a piece of micro-fiction or *with a clear rationale* a cutting from a longer piece of prose.
4. **Mini Performances.** For each of the three "units" we will spend time on short in-class, often group performances that relate to the larger performance piece you will be preparing mainly out of class. These performances will have specific criteria discussed before assigned and will be useful in practicing the skills you will use in the larger performances.

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:

Poetry Performance 100pts
 Prose Performance 120pts
 "Compiled" Performance 150pts

Midterm Exam 100pts
 Final Exam 100pts

Black Box Response 1 50pts
 Black Box Response 2 50pts
 Dramatistic Analysis 100pts

Grade Scale:
 A+ 100-98 D+ 69-67
 A 97-93 D 66-63
 A- 92-90 D- 62-60
 B+ 89-87 F 59-0

Class Notes 20pts
 Reading Leader 20pts
 Poem-a-Day 30pts
 Mini-Performances 60pts
 Participation 100pts

B 86-83
 B- 82-80
 C+ 79-77
 C 76-73
 C- 72-70

Participation and Attendance. 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. It should be easy to earn these points. Because of the nature of this class, attendance is required. You'll be giving speeches and providing feedback to others. This means that in order to get points, you must be present. It's pretty simple.

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. I really dislike late work, so please be in class or talk to me about needing an extension. If you miss a reading quiz or mini performance for an excused absence, you can make it up for full credit the next class period. If you miss work for any other reason, talk to me, and we'll work out something, probably a reduction of some points. Either way, if you miss an assignment and take more than two class periods to request to make it up, you will be unable to. If you miss a performance day, you will not be able to make it up the next class period. You will need to contact me to schedule a new performance time, outside of class and with a reduction of points. Late written work will be docked a letter grade per class period late.

Cell Phones & Technology. We will decide these rules as a community. Laptops can be used to take notes as easily as they can be used to surf the web. Cell phones can also serve as distraction or a resource. I want us to decide together what appropriate usage is. I'll post the guidelines we agree upon on Moodle. Speaking of Moodle, the course site will have all the documents for the semester. I will keep it updated with copies of the assignments and rubrics. Please check it frequently.

Communication. You can reach me at csamsp7@lsu.edu any time. It is the most effective way to contact me. I tend to respond between 9-6 on weekdays and when I can on the weekend. I will do my best to be prompt and useful in my responses. I expect you to check your email regularly in case there are updates about the class. I will be using the emailing system in Moodle to contact y'all. I recommend y'all do the same should you need to contact other class members. That said, if you email the class via Moodle, please remember to remove me from the list of recipients. I don't need to read y'all's pleas for missing notes or whatnot.

Inclement Weather. Unless the University is closed, we will have class. This means even if there is a midmorning monsoon, we will be meeting. I hate rain as much as the next Wicked Witch of the West, but we simply don't have the wiggle room in the schedule to miss days because of rain.

Available Help. I cannot stress this enough: if you are having trouble in the class, talk to me. I want to help you. If you aren't having trouble but have questions, come see me. I want to help you. It bears repeating. Let me know as soon as something comes up. The sooner I'm aware of an 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. And of course, 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. 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 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 letter, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

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.