# Spring 2017 Graduate Course Bulletin

New York University / Tisch School of the Arts / 721 Broadway, 6th fl
212-998-1620 / performance.studies@nyu.edu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Class #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Meeting Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>PERF-GT 2000</td>
<td>6576</td>
<td>MA Final Projects in Performance Studies</td>
<td>12:30pm - 1:15pm</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>B. Browning</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERF-GT 2420</td>
<td>22266</td>
<td>Memoir and Ethnography: A PS Approach</td>
<td>9:30am - 12:15pm</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>D. Kapchan</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday</strong></td>
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<td>PERF-GT 2002</td>
<td>22267</td>
<td>Neoliberalism and its Performances</td>
<td>9:30am - 12:15pm</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>A. Lepecki</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERF-GT 2661</td>
<td>23193</td>
<td>Landscape and Cinema (xlisted w/ CINE)</td>
<td>1:00pm - 5:00pm</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>A. Weiss</td>
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<td><strong>Wednesday</strong></td>
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<td>PERF-GT 2218</td>
<td>6831</td>
<td>Listening Acts</td>
<td>9:30am - 12:15pm</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>D. Kapchan</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERF-GT 2228</td>
<td>22268</td>
<td>Black Performance: Virtuosity</td>
<td>12:30pm - 3:15pm</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>M. Gaines</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERF-GT 2214</td>
<td>6826</td>
<td>Hybrid Genres: Curating, Collecting &amp; Categorizing</td>
<td>3:30pm - 6:15pm</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>A. Weiss</td>
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<td><strong>Thursday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>PERF-GT 2219</td>
<td>6830</td>
<td>Special Topics: How to Write about Performance</td>
<td>10:00am – 12:45pm</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>A. Vazquez</td>
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<td>PERF-GT 2386</td>
<td>22269</td>
<td>Affect, Media, and Measure</td>
<td>1:00pm – 3:50pm</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>P. Clough</td>
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</tbody>
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## KEY DATES 2016-2017

- **November 2016**
  - 14 Registration for spring begins at 9:00am
- **January 2017**
  - 23 Spring classes begin
- **February 2017**
  - 3 Last day to apply for graduation
  - 5 Last day to register/drop/add course
  - 7 Graduate tuition due
  - 20 University Holiday-No classes
- **March 2017**
  - 13-19 Spring Break-No classes
- **May 2017**
  - 8 Last day of spring classes
  - 11 MA Final Projects Conference Day 1
  - 12 MA Final Projects Conference Day 2
  - 17 University Commencement Ceremony
  - 19 TSOA Salute @ Madison Square Garden

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Check for registration holds. **All holds must be resolved and removed in order to enroll in classes for the spring semester.** Go to the Student Center in Albert and look at the "Holds" section on the right hand side of the page.

Update your contact information. Go to the Student Center in Albert and click on "Personal Information." All students are required to have an "NYU Emergency Alert" cellular phone number and emergency contact information to register for Spring 2017.

**NON-MAJORS:** Must submit an External Student Registration form. You can pick up a form at the department for click the link below:

[Click here for External Form](#)

## APPLY FOR GRADUATION:

*In order to graduate in May 2017, you must apply for graduation between October 10, 2016 and February 3, 2017.*

[http://www.nyu.edu/registrar/graduation/apply.html](http://www.nyu.edu/registrar/graduation/apply.html)
MA Final Projects in Performance Studies (Required Core for all MAs)*
Barbara Browning, barbara.browning@nyu.edu
PERF-GT 2000.001 (Albert #6576)
Mondays, 12:30 – 3:15 pm, 4 points
721 Broadway, Room 612

*PS Administration will register MA students for Projects lecture and discussion section.

This course will run primarily as a workshop in which current MA students will begin with a paper or performance piece begun in a previous PS course and develop that project into a fuller research project. Part of the time will be spent in small (TA-led) workshops; the rest of the time will be spent en masse, where we will discuss strategies for revision, publication, and/or production. The course culminates in a symposium in which graduating MA students present an excerpt or précis of that research to the department.

Projects in Performance Studies: Discussion Sections all sections meet on alternate Mondays and NOT on Fridays as listed on Albert

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mondays</th>
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<tr>
<td>PERF-GT 2000.002</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>12:30 to 1:45pm</td>
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<td>PERF-GT 2000.003</td>
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<td>PERF-GT 2000.004</td>
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<td>12:30 to 1:45pm</td>
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<td>PERF-GT 2000.005</td>
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<td>2:00 to 3:15pm</td>
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Memoir and Ethnography: A Performance Studies Approach
Deborah Kapchan, dk52@nyu.edu
PERF-GT 2420.001 (Albert #22266)
Mondays, 9:30 am – 12:15 pm, 4 points
721 Broadway, Room 613

“A pale reflection of myself wavers in my consciousness...and suddenly the “I” pales, pales, and fades out.”
— Jean-Paul Sartre, Nausea

Memoir is the best-selling genre in contemporary literature. Indeed, our fascination with all things autobiographical – memoir, auto-fiction, auto-ethnography and other first-person accounts – attests to the importance of examining one particular life in understanding larger questions concerning culture, community and even social and global transformations. And yet using the first-person in any scholarly writing is often problematic, risking accusations of self-indulgence as well as a radical particularism unsuited to theoretical investigation. What work does the use of the first-person, singular and plural perform? How does the auto-referential challenge other modes of knowledge production? How might memoir be used to make political interventions that move beyond the pronoun “I”? In this course we explore the role of first-person narrative in performative writing. Drawing upon the memoirs of theorists, as well as the theories implicit in memoir, we will examine the political potential of this genre, as well as its rhetorical and aesthetic orientations.

REQUIREMENTS: This class will be run as a writing workshop. Students will be expected to write at least four pages every week and to read their writing aloud to the class.
**TUESDAY**

**Neo-Liberalism and its Performances: A Seminar on Resistance**  
*André Lepecki, atl1@nyu.edu*  
**PERF-GT 2002.001 (Albert #22267)**  
*Tuesdays, 9:30am – 12:15pm, 4 points*  
*721 Broadway, 613*

In the early 2000s, Jon McKenzie identified how “performance” could be seen as operating at two simultaneous and parallel levels: on one hand, as an artistic practice of resistance, related to experimentation and orientated towards ongoing critiques of power; on the other hand, as an order-word expressing the single most important imperative uttered by capitalist power itself: its demand for the subject to constantly perform or else be rendered useless. More than a decade after McKenzie’s diagnosis, we can see how the ongoing production of a relentless performing subjectivity has become a central feature of what political theorist Wendy Brown has recently called neoliberalism’s “stealth revolution.” This seminar will examine, interrogate, and critique the ways the concept and practices of “performance” is infused with this double nature: as resistant line of flight as well as neoliberalism’s life-line. Through series of close readings drawing heavily from political theory (Wendy Brown, Maurizio Lazzarato, David Harvey, Deleuze and Guattari), critical theory (Teresa Brennan, Fred Moten and Stefano Harney), speculative pragmatism (Brian Massumi, Patricia Clough) and performance and dance studies (Shannon Jackson, Randy Martin, Claire Bishop), we will examine the ways neoliberalism is much more than yet another economic doctrine but a modality of performance that aims at permeating molecularly the very basis of desire and of subject-formation. We will also look at ways performance (performance art, theater, dance, music, etc.) has worked to map neoliberalism’s insidious colonization of life and living, and has created acts of significant critical and political resistance against neoliberalism's many fronts. We will work simultaneously in two approaches: heavy theoretical analysis (note, there will be a high volume of readings); and practical development of performative actions of resistance (note, we will aim at creating actions, not just interpreting them).

**Landscape and Cinema (xlisted w/ CINE)**  
*Allen Weiss, allen.weiss@nyu.edu*  
**PERF-GT 2661.001 (Albert #23193)**  
*Tuesdays, 1:00pm – 5:00pm, 4 points*  
*721 Broadway, Room 677*

As an elemental articulation of the symbolic, the landscape has always been a primary site of performance: it has served for centuries as the background for popular festivals and courtly extravaganzas; it has functioned as the mythic ground of painting and appeared among the first subjects of photography, and it has more recently been transmuted into the background of most films. Paying special attention to the contemporary hybridization of the arts, this seminar will investigate the following topics in relation to both avant-garde and popular cinema: anguish, Eros and the landscape as symbolic form; landscape, film and the Gesamtkunstwerk; imaginary landscapes and alternate worlds; ecological and technological soundscapes; the aesthetics of dilapidation.
Wednesday

Listening Acts
Deborah Kapchan, dk52@nyu.edu
PERF-GT 2218.001 (Albert #6831)
Wednesdays, 9:30am – 12:15pm, 4 points
721 Broadway, Room 613

What is listening? It would seem that listening is inextricable from the ear, its turns and furrows, its tympani and dancing cilia. Listening is something that earth animals do, and do together. It is a faculty possessed by fish, by birds, by dogs, cats and humans.

In evolutionary terms, listening is connected to our sense of safety. Before language, there were cries of warning or celebration. Our parasympathetic nervous systems – their fight or flight mechanisms – are intricately connected to the ear.

Indeed, listening is an activity that cannot be extracted from the machinery of the body. We h/ear because we have an instrument, with all its listening devices and apparatuses. And even when the ear as such is not functioning, the body senses rhythm. The deaf can dance.

Like all perceptual faculties, listening is a sense that is not limited to the human, but that we only know because we are human. We extend our experience of sound to other species, imagining they hear what we do. And insofar as listening can be measured, such assumptions are not far off the mark. If the tool is functioning, and the sound waves are verifiable, then we probably hear similar things – we can identify jackhammers, baby cries, wind through tree branches and leaves. These are sounds humans at least can recognize and agree upon. In this, listening is unavoidably correlationist – that is, we cannot think it apart from our human experience.

And yet listening is not limited to the human. Nor do humans necessarily hear the same thing. This is because listening is also a process of translation – sounds come in through the ear of the body, traverse thresholds of skin, bones and connective tissue and make liquid being vibrate. This vibration “makes sense”; that is, it is both material and ideational; it is a matter of translation. It is matter for translation. It is matter translated. As Karen Barad reminds us, matter and meaning are inextricably linked. Like taste, the thing tasted and the taster become one.

In this class we take up listening as a phenomenon of magnitude and as a method. We explore listening acts – listening that does something in the world – from the microscopic, to the botanical, to animals, to humans and beyond to the cosmos. We do this through the lens of philosophies of listening, and other theories, such as the new materialism, object-oriented ontology, and sound studies, finally examining listening as a political and performative intervention.

Black Performance: Virtuosity
Malik Gaines, mgaines@nyu.edu
PERF-GT 2228.001 (Albert #22268)
Wednesdays, 12:30pm – 3:15pm, 4 points
721 Broadway, Room 613

This course traces the demand for virtuosity in black performances. Following a critical interest in failure as a resistant performance mode, articulated by scholars including José E. Muñoz, our course readings and discussions will consider the dialectic of failure and excellence through which blackness maneuvers. The exceedingly productive body is a stereotype of American blackness that is as historically durable as criminality,
and these modes, virtuosity and deficiency, work as counterforces in important black production of our time. Their tension can be identified in works such as William Pope L.’s “Trinket” (2015), Kara Walker’s “A Subtlety” (2014), or in examples such as the public performance of Barack Obama’s presidency, or the spectacular lives and deaths of performers Whitney Houston and Michael Jackson. Readings in Black Studies and Performance Theory will help articulate the sources of this demand, and its possible misuses.

**Hybrid Genres: Curating, Collecting, Categorizing (limited enrollment)**

*Allen Weiss, allen.weiss@nyu.edu*

**PERF-GT 2214.001 (Albert #6826)**

*Wednesdays, 3:30pm – 6:15pm, 4 points*

*721 Broadway, Room 611*

**Limited Enrollment (12 students).** This course requires an application to the instructor. Please prepare a one page double-spaced statement, which includes the following information: 1. Student status: MA/PhD 2. Department/program where you are enrolled, 3. Background in theory and background (both practical and intellectual) in curating, 4. How you see this course fitting into your own intellectual project(s). Please email this statement to allen.weiss@nyu.edu no later than Thursday, December 1, 2016.

The reasons for collecting are as complex as the lineaments of the mind, and collectible objects are infinitely diverse. One may collect to relive the joys and mysteries of childhood, to connect to preferred epochs in history, to exercise absolute control over a small portion of the world, to create an aesthetic environment, to further knowledge, to ease anxiety, or to fill a void, whether the lack be an empty room, an unrequited love, or an existential emptiness. Walter Benjamin, in Berlin Childhood around 1900, suggests how collecting can pertain to anything and everything: “Every stone I discovered, every flower I picked, every butterfly I captured was for me the beginning of a collection, and, in my eyes, all that I owned made for one unique collection.” To collect is to categorize, to categorize is to think. In these matters, it is necessary to assay the rhetorical distinctions between anecdote, polemic, critique, and theory, and to consequently distinguish the discursive differentiations between the analytic, the descriptive, the prescriptive, and the proscriptive. Topics will include: monsters and monstrosity; dolls, marionettes and performative objects; temporality and materiality; technology and novelty; passion and erudition; enumeration and accumulation; recipes and menus. Readings will include Walter Benjamin, Pierre Bourdieu, Umberto Eco, Michel Foucault, Hollis Frampton, Orhan Pamuk, Susan Stewart.

**THURSDAY**

**Special Topics: How to Write about Performance**

*Alex Vazquez, atv202@nyu.edu*

**PERF-GT 2219.001 (Albert #6830)**

*Thursdays, 10:00am – 12:45pm, 4 points*

*721 Broadway, Room 613*

The premise of this course involves a twofold question: how does performance enter the scene of writing? And, how can performance move our writings about it? While performance resists any prescriptive function for scholarship, it pushes writers to their imaginative limits—and tests the limits of their patience. Models for how one might find the words and the way to talk about performance—what it does to an audience of one or many—are bountiful across literary and critical genres. And yet we often turn to these models for their content (what they are about) rather than the effects of their composition. The course will lean on these readings (essays, songs, criticism) as guides for involving, and not avoiding, performance in our scholarly work. Performance, often cast as a deferred or secondary support for an argument, carries the lush potential to unsteady any decisive
We will explore inventive ways to introduce performances in writing by challenging the dependable (and often limiting) coordinates of “context,” through experimenting with research methods and descriptive play, and most importantly, by discovering the joy and difficulty of revision. As we will also study-to-resist journalistic protocols and the temporality of social media, students can take the opportunity of the seminar to stretch out their analysis in the ways that performance demands.

**Affect, Media, and Measure**

*Patricia Clough, pclough@gc.cuny.edu*

PERF-GT 2386.001 (Albert #22269)

*Thursdays, 1:00pm – 3:50pm, 4 points*

721 Broadway, Room 613

This course takes up the affective turn, tracing its various instantiations over the past fifteen years. We will explore the relationship of affect to the various turns, in critical philosophical and theoretical thought, to experience that is not only human experience, to a body that is not only the autopoietic organism, and to a time span that is not only the past-present-future of human subjectivity—a turning from the phenomenological to the post-phenomenological. We will finally consider the relationship of affect to the datafication of twenty-first century media. We will register the implications for subjectivity, media and measure from both a phenomenological and a post-phenomenological perspective and evaluate the political, economic and cultural conditions that have given affect its vitality in intellectual life.