Performance Studies

FALL 2022 UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

Majors-only registration found in notes in Albert. Write to nr22@nyu.edu to register for majors-only courses with limited seats.

Introduction to Performance Studies
A. Lepecki
PERF-UT 101.001 (14327) – Tuesdays, 9:00am to 11:15am
4 pts – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 612

Recitation Sections
- PERF-UT 101.002 (14396) – Thursdays, 9:30am – 10:45am, 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 612, Staff
- PERF-UT 101.003 (14397) – Thursdays, 11:00am – 12:15pm, 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 612, Staff

To enter the field of Performance Studies is to proceed with a willingness to forgo strict definitions of art “objects” and “events.” The field encourages engagement with everyday life, performers from a variety of media, things inside and outside cultural institutions, and an expansive sense of the stage to reflect on how performance impacts our sense of the world. Music, theater, visual art, dance, and film are not divided into separate areas of study, but are necessarily engaged all together. While the question, “what is performance?” has mystified the minds of many, this course moves beyond this question to investigate: what does performance do? And how does performance help us to ask questions about aesthetics, politics, and the social world? The question “what does performance do?,” opens the line between theory and practice; a line that falsely separates the performer from the critic. Students will work together across these divides. In addition to deepening an understanding of the field of Performance Studies, students read texts that vitalize critical thinking in the humanities. The course engages theories of the field as they emerge from performances themselves, especially from the robust creative repertoires of New York City.

Performance Theory
Staff
PERF-UT 102.001 (14378) – Wednesdays, 1:15pm to 4:00pm
4 pts – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 612

This course examines the diverse issues and methodological questions raised by different kinds of performance. Where “Introduction to Performance Studies” asks, “What is performance? What counts as performance, and what is its cultural significance?” this course asks, “How can we interpret and analyze performance? What is ‘theory’ in this context, and how do theory and practice inform each other?” Readings introduce students to key concepts in the field such as “ritual,” “performativity,” “liveness,” and “affect.” Material for the course (readings, videos, and other media) exemplify the interdisciplinary nature of performance studies by drawing from work in aesthetics, anthropology, architecture studies, ethnic/area studies, queer studies, religious studies, legal studies, literary studies, etc.

Performance Studies trains students to document, theorize, and analyze embodied practices and events. Areas of concentration include: contemporary performance, dance, movement analysis, folk and popular performance, postcolonial theory, feminist and queer theory and performance theory.

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Interested in a Double Major or Minor in Performance Studies?
Email Laura Fortes at lf65@nyu.edu for more information.

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Performance Composition
M. Casteñeda
PERF-UT 201.001 (20793) – Wednesdays, 10:00am to 12:45pm
4 pts – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 612

This course focuses on performance as a mode of research/investigation: how can engaging in a performance or practice (rather than simply reading about/observing it) illuminate in ways that may be otherwise inaccessible to the researcher? What knowledges does the doing of performance produce? Students in this class will be asked to develop a research questions (in consultation with the instructor), design and engage in a performance project aimed at answering (or at least investigating) that questions, and then produce a final project (written or performed) that illustrates her/his research findings.

Performance of Everyday Life
B. Browning
PERF-UT 206.001 (14508) – Tuesdays, 3:30pm to 6:15pm
4 pts – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 612

This course focuses in depth on “everyday” versions of performance (as opposed to theatrical or formal performances). Drawing from anthropology, affect studies, social psychology, sociology, architecture studies, etc. the course invites students to view seemingly non-theatrical social interaction as performance, and to consider the significance of the seeming “normal” and inconsequential nature of such performances. What happens when what is “second nature” becomes the focus of our attention? The course will also place particular emphasis on writing as a mode of illuminating and interrogating the “everyday,” as well as considering it as performance practice in and of itself.

Queer Politics and Performance
Staff
PERF-UT 302.001 (20791) – Mondays, 2:00pm to 4:45pm
4 pts – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 612

This course takes sexuality as its lens through which to consider performance, and vice versa. Much of the current vitality of the concept of “performance” has come through the study of gender and sexuality -- the political impact and social legibility of performances of gender and sexuality in daily life, art practices, and elsewhere -- and this course examines and applies these theories of gender/sexuality performance to a wide range of examples. Students will read both new and canonical work in the field of gender studies with an eye toward the specific impact of performance in this work, as well as examine performance examples in order to analyze the ways gender and sexuality are produced within them.

Topics in Performance Studies
Staff
PERF-UT 305.002 (14509) – Tuesdays, 12:00pm to 2:45pm
4 pts – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 612

“Topics in Performance Studies” is a course that allows for an in-depth exploration of a particular kind of performance practice. For example, in a given iteration, the subtitle might be “Voice and Performance.” In such a course, vocal technique could be examined in the context of a larger consideration of philosophical approaches to the significance of the voice. Or, in an iteration subtitled “Ritual Dance,” the use of movement and choreography for the purposes of worship could be explored from the perspective of diverse belief systems. Students in these “Topics” courses are not expected to be proficient performers themselves of the performance styles under consideration, although some instructors may choose to make practical work an option.
Race and Performance
Staff
PERF-UT 306.001 (20792) – Thursdays, 12:30pm to 3:15pm
4 pts – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 613
In this course, students will consider both the ways race and ethnicity have been deployed historically in performances (theatrical and otherwise), as well as how “race” or “ethnicity” might be understood as a performative identity in itself.