PERFORMANCE STUDIES
UNDERGRADUATE
SPRING 2020 COURSES

Performance Studies: An Introduction, PERF-UT 200.001 (15424)
E. Mee – Thursdays, 2:00pm – 3:15pm
4 pts. – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 612

The course is taught using a blended learning approach. Guided online by Richard Schechner, a founder of the field of performance studies, and in person by an instructor, students explore the performances in the Americas, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Australia, and the Pacific islands. Performance Studies: An Introduction puts students in interactive dialogue with the most important events, people, theories, and questions of the dynamic, emerging field of performance studies.

Performance & Politics, PERF-UT 104.001 (15529)
A. Pellegrini – Thursdays, 3:30pm – 6:15pm
4 pts. – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 612
*Please contact Laura Fortes at lf65@nyu.edu to register.

This course focuses specifically on the political aspects of performance -- how it reflects, enacts, and shifts political discourse and practices. Beginning with a broad construction of “politics” -- that “the personal is political, and vice versa” -- the course encourages students to study events and practices that produce political effects. How can performance and performance theory be applied usefully to understand how, why, and where political dialogue takes place, and where it fails to do so?

Performative Writing Workshop, PERF-UT 204.001 (15563)
B. Browning – Tuesdays, 3:30pm – 6:15pm
4 pts. – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 612
*Please contact Laura Fortes at lf65@nyu.edu to register.

This course will invite students to read about, discuss, and produce performative writing. By performative writing, we refer both to writing that compellingly addresses, conveys and analyses performance practices, and also writing that performs in the world: that is, writing that makes something happen. This latter concept was, of course, articulated by the linguistic philosopher J.L. Austin and has been developed and critiqued by subsequent theorists – though as we’ll also see, it’s arguably been both practiced and theorized in other cultural contexts. Through readings and performance/writing exercises, students will explore various formal techniques for writing in a compelling way about the aesthetic features of given performance practice; identify some of the specific possibilities and challenges afforded by the current historical moment (including new technologies and the politics of representation) in taking up the question of writing about performance; and define several notions of the performative capacities of writing itself, including spells, poetry, fiction and correspondence.

Performance Histories, PERF-UT 205.001 (22087)
L. Brawner – Tuesdays, 3:30pm – 6:15pm
4 pts. – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 613

Countering the “presentist” critique of performance studies as a field (i.e., that its emphasis on “liveness” limits it to analysis of contemporary practices), this course will examine both the long history of performance (and the specific research methodologies that are required for that examination), and the history of performance studies as a mode of social inquiry. How have performance, and the writing about performance, been deployed historically, and to what ends? How can contemporary researches access the archives that house answers to these questions, and how do archives in themselves constitute an historiographic
“performance”? Students will consider the impact of performance in the contexts of (post-)colonial history, aesthetic genealogies, and other historiographic projects.

**Queer Politics & Performance, PERF-UT 302.001 (15530)**
T. Carr – Tuesdays, 9:30am – 12:15pm
4 pts. – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 613
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: The realistic spot (free jazz), PERF-UT 305.001 (15421)**
F. Moten – Mondays, 9:30am – 12:15am
4 pts. – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 613
*OPEN TO PS MAJORS ONLY* Please contact Laura Fortes at lf65@nyu.edu to register.
This class will be concerned with the past and the ongoing presence and the future of an important moment and element in the history of performance in our neighborhood: free jazz. We will consider the irruption of black experimental music in downtown Manhattan in the late 1950s. We will both honor the name “free jazz” and interrogate it, by way of practitioners of the music who resist the word “jazz” even as they study and extend the jazz tradition and who call into question in their theory and practice everything we think we know about freedom even as they practice freedom’s most radical possibilities. We will explore the history of jazz, the theory of freedom while carefully and soulfully and fleshly listening to some music, reading some texts, and exploring our surroundings, all in search of the traces of a social and aesthetic insurgency whose significance we hope to come to understand and whose example we might learn to want to follow.

**Topics in Performance Studies: Radically Curating Performance, PERF-UT 305.002 (22577)**
J. Wegman & B. Woolf – Thursdays, 11:00am – 1:45pm
4 pts. – TBD
Debates and dialogues are raging around the “curatorial turn” in theatre and performance. As a result, the performance curator has emerged as a pivotal figure who works to navigate and re-articulate this evolving interdisciplinary arts environment at both the artistic and institutional levels. How might the curator help us to imagine alternative organizational structures in the arts and beyond based on camaraderie, empathy, and love? Or on uncertainty, ephemerality, and chaos? In this course, we will examine performance curation through the curator’s role as researcher, interpreter, commissioner, collaborator, and producer. We will take on a range of theories and performance practices, and invite special guests – curators, artistic directors, theatre makers – to help us think in different ways about the relations between theatre/performance and the institutions that support them. Topics addressed will include: histories of radical performance, contemporary aesthetics, festivals, new forms of experimental organization, and hands-on practical engagement with the nitty-gritty realities of curatorial practice. This course will be co-taught by Jay Wegman, the new director of NYU’s Skirball Center, and Brandon Woolf, the director of the Program in Dramatic Literature.

**Performance & Technology, PERF-UT 304.001 (15420)**
N. Bazzano – Wednesdays, 12:30pm – 3:15pm
4 pts. – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 612
This course considers the concept of technology as a way of thinking about performance generally, and then focuses specifically on the role of various technologies in performance – historically as well as in contemporary practices. How do technical innovations, new knowledge, etc. make new forms of performance possible? The course will consider both technology in (aesthetic) performance and the performance of technology in extra-theatrical settings.

**Capstone: Final Projects**
M. Gaines
Lecture: PERF-UT 401.001 (15628) – Mondays, 1:00pm – 2:30pm &
Recitation: PERF-UT 401.002 (15629) – Mondays, 2:30pm – 4:00pm, 613; 4 pts – 721 Broadway, 6th Floor, Room 612
*OPEN TO PS MAJORS ONLY* Please contact Laura Fortes at lf65@nyu.edu to register. Students in this course will build on a research paper/project that they originated in another PS course, with the goal of extending, refining, and further developing it in order to synthesize what they have learned, as well as further hone their research, analysis, and writing skills.