Institute of Performing Arts
Performance Studies

Spring 2023 Graduate Course Bulletin
New York University / Tisch School of the Arts / 721 Broadway, 6th fl
212-998-1620 / performance.studies@nyu.edu

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KEY DATES  2022-23

November 2022
14  Spring registration begins on Albert
December 2022
14  Last Day Fall semester
January 2023
16  Graduate Tuition Due
23  Spring classes begin
February 2023
5   Last day to register/drop/add course @ 100% refund
20  University Holiday-No classes
March 2023
13-19, Spring Break-No classes
May 2023
8   Last day of spring 2023 classes
17  University Commencement Ceremony
22  Intensive PS Summer term begins
June 2023
30  PS Summer Term ends

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 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 2023.

NON-MAJORS: Must submit an External Student Registration form. You can access the form by clicking the link below:

Click here for External Form
This seminar begins with a reading of Hannah Arendt, Frantz Fanon and Emmanuel Levinas on violence. Their work will be seen against the backdrop of work by Allen Feldman, Denise Ferreira da Silva and Hortense Spillers. The lens, and the general question of attitude through which this focus is to be achieved, is provided by Walter Benjamin’s *Kritik der Gewalt* (*Critique of Violence*) and a selection of the vast criticism of that work beginning with Werner Hamacher’s indispensable text, “Afformative, Strike.” But what if the lens itself comes most clearly into focus when it is framed by some work of W. E. B. Du Bois that anticipates (*John Brown*), accompanies (*Darkwater*) and follows (*Black Reconstruction in America*) Benjamin’s text. This palimpsestic approach will require some considerations of angles and angels. We’ll attempt to keep topographical faith with the texts, reading closely and slowly in concert, so that we can see if the preformative force of black study makes precise (lyrical, analytical, phenomenological, sociological, physical) descriptions of violence a bit more possible. We’ll talk a little about the discourse of violence in black popular music, especially blues and trap music, which allows us to begin to try to sharpen a distinction between violence and brutality. We might talk about the entanglement of violence and love (we could begin, for instance, with thinking through the character Viole[n]t in Morrison’s *Jazz*). We might talk about violence, love and jazz. We’ll think about violence as something like an "anthological" condition. (Imagine "anthological" being said by my friend and mentor from Marseille, Marielle Pelisséro, so that it all but sounds like “ontological,” thereby resonating an alternative both to ontological and to "para-ontological" as Nahum Chandler uses it, perhaps both in and against and independent of the grain of a certain infamous German philosopher named Oskar Becker. Maybe we can work through all that in a way that tries to understand the irreducible "relation," as we see it, of being and individuation). We might also look at certain brutal uses/reductions of violence in black studies, and to think, in a way that isn’t directed towards indicting anybody, about what it means when the murder and premature death that is visited upon working class black people is treated by bourgeois academics, such as ourselves, as if they were microaggressions directed against us. Maybe we can talk about the difference between black artists and thinkers being tired of seeing images of the execution of black people and working-class black people being tired of being executed. Maybe we can speak about this in terms of the problematic of unrest and to consider unrest, which is blackness as the anthological condition, as a response to the brutality that responds to it. What’s at stake when the lumpen intellectuality of black study is folded into the academic enterprise of black studies? We should ask this question not from outside of black studies, and not against any of its practitioners but from within it, as a loving and devoted violation of it by its practitioners.

**Special Project: On Craft**
Barbara Browning, barbara.browning@nyu.edu
PERF-GT 2216.001 (Albert # 7241)
Mondays, 3:45 pm – 6:45 pm, 4 points
721 Broadway, 6th floor Classroom 613

Scholars have given considerable attention to the increasing integration of performance into the visual art world. But there’s an argument to be made that *craft*, with its inherent focus on process, was always already, in the words of curator Valerie Cassel Oliver, "inextricably linked to performance." There’s an extensive
bibliography on the politics of craft (much of it focusing on the ways in which gender, race, nation and class determine how cultural production is determined to be “art” or “mere craft”), and in recent years, some academic and para-academic scholars have explored the surge in “craftivism” – the mobilizing of craft practices toward ostensibly radical political ends. Students of affect have probed the significance of hapticality in relation to handmade objects. And the fiber arts in particular are often invoked in discussions of writerly technique (encapsulated in the etymological link between text and textiles). We will explore together political, affective and writerly questions raised by the category of craft - and perhaps most importantly, we will use our own craft practices to derive new understandings of the relationship between labor, identity, feeling and writing. Readings will range from Gandhi and Marx to Parker, Kondo, Sedgwick, hooks, Vaccaro, Bryan-Wilson, Adamson, Wiggers, Vinebaum and Aram Han Sifuentes, among others. Practice will involve our hands.

TUESDAY

**Topics in Perf Studies: Devised Performance**
Michelle Castaneda
PERF-GT 2122.001 (Albert # 23109)
Tuesdays, 9:15 am – 12:15pm, 4 points
721 Broadway, Studio 612

Devised Performance is a process-driven, collaborative practice of performance composition. This means cultivating our responsiveness to the inspiration that flows in common. In devising, we are also responsive to the real needs that surface in our lives and the lives of those around us. In this class, we study the histories of revolutionary theater groups who employed devising methods, and undertake our own devised performance project. Conceived in response to our local political context—and guided by several performance artists who will advise us throughout the semester—the class will create and perform an original work.

**Sounds and Image (xlisted w/ CINE)**
Allen Weiss, allen.weiss@nyu.edu
PERF-GT 2505.001 (Albert # 22265)
Tuesdays, 1:00pm – 5:00pm, 4 points
721 Broadway, Room 677

This interdisciplinary course will investigate the relations between experimental film, radio, music, and sound art in modernism and postmodernism. The inventions of photography, cinema and sound recording radically altered the 19th century consciousness of perception, temporality, selfhood, and death. The newfound role of the voice — depersonalized, disembodied, eternalized — appeared in poetic and literary phantasms of that epoch, and offered models of future (and futuristic) art forms. This course will study the aesthetic and ideological effects of this epochal shift, especially as it concerns the subsequent practice of avant-garde art and aesthetics. It will specifically focus on the re-contextualization of the history of avant-garde film in the broader context of the sound arts and their discursive practices, from Dada and Surrealism through Lettrism, Situationism, Fluxus and the American Independent Cinema. Special attention will be paid to the transformations of the 1950s and 1960s, the moment when the arts moved toward a more performative mode, entailing the dematerialization and decommodification of the aesthetic domain.
Graduate Seminar: Foucault
Ann Pellegrini, ann.pellegrini@nyu.edu
PERF-GT 2745.001, (Albert #20986), (w/ American Studies)
Tuesdays, 3:45pm – 6:45pm, 4 points
721 Broadway, 6th floor, Classroom 613
*Limited enrollment (15): This class is writing-intensive, and the permission of the instructor is required to enroll.

On August 26, 1974 - the same day that Foucault completed Discipline and Punish - he began work on the first volume of the History of Sexuality, drafting that book’s famous final section on the “Right of Death and Power over Life.” This is the section where he first explicitly names and introduces the concept of “bio-power” and also indicates the fatal entanglement of discourses of sexuality in state racism. This seminar is organized around close patient readings of both Discipline and Punish and History of Sexuality, Volume I, both of which we will read in their entirety. We will supplement our engagement of these texts with additional readings from the large and still-emerging inventory of Foucault’s interviews, public lectures, and activisms around questions of confinement and exclusion. We will pay particular attention to his work with the collective Groupe d’Information sur les Prisons (Prison Information Group), which he helped found.

WEDNESDAY

Artaud and the Psychopathology of Expression
Allen S. Weiss, allen.weiss@nyu.edu
PERF-GT 2217.001 (Albert #22246) (w/ Cinema Studies)
Wednesdays, 12:30pm – 3:30pm, 4 points
721 Broadway, 6th floor Classroom 613

By Application Only: Please send an email to allen.weiss@nyu.edu include the following: department; MA or PhD; theoretical background; reason for wishing to join seminar. (Sorry but no Auditors/Undergrad students) Deadline December 1st.

Antonin Artaud’s The Theater and Its Double is among the foundational texts of Performance Studies. Its influence has been inestimable, and it continues to inform contemporary theory and practice across the arts. This work takes on all the more urgency as it resonates with our current situation of contagion, confinement, violence, revolt. Its most celebrated chapter, “The Theater and the Plague,” proposes an aesthetic of suffering with the epidemic as its central metaphor: a “theater of cruelty” that prefigures the privation, isolation and incarceration of his last years, from which arose his most extraordinary works. Yet The Theater and Its Double is usually read without a broader context, or more recently – given the current wave of interest in the sound arts – along with his radio piece, To Have Done with the Judgment of God. The other thirty volumes of his complete works are generally ignored by all but specialists, yet the earliest writings composed at the moment of his association with the Surrealists offer a prefiguration of his mature work, while the last pieces (diaries, poems, drawings, radio) are tantamount to a radical transformation of modernist French poetry and poetics.

THURSDAY

The Lyric: the aesthetic 'sonicality' of blackness
‘...the aesthetic sociality of blackness is extended...through the conflicts, erotics and generativity of interclass and interracial and queer collaboration.’ Echoing Laura Harris’ beautiful formulation in her study of the ‘experiments in exile’ of C.L.R. James and Brazilian visual artist Hélio Oiticica, this seminar explores the aesthetic sonicality of blackness in lyric, lyrics, lyricality. Writing about James Baldwin as lyricist, Ed Pavlic defines the lyric as ‘a generally disruptive propensity of language... the lyrical mode bridges the distinction between discourse and experience by becoming an experience itself. A song is discourse as experience, interrupting the boomerang from word to referent.’ Such sung moments make a gap, a gap that holds ‘our attention to physical and emotional textures woven in the rhythms of the utterance itself’ (Who Can Afford to Improvise?: James Baldwin and Black Music, the Lyric and the Listeners).

This seminar will work in/with/upon such gaps, leaping across discourse and experience in a variety of lyric modes taken from our own artist research practices – writing, speak/singing, performing, etc. Might the lyric mode give life to our enthusiasm, our invested, rich critical enthusiasm, in sound, in heat and in vibrance. Traditional academic theory shies away from – often tries to disguise – its fandom tendencies. Yet outsized love propels us to do the everyday work of study: Duke Ellington was a fan of Shakespeare, Shakespeare was a fan of Billie Holiday in a parallel universe, ‘don’t explain.’

The seminar time travels-- imagine a broadsheet with weekly liner notes on the sound event that was a new Shakespeare play at The Globe. How might listening with an ear pressed to the score of the performance create new understandings of how the play as music orchestrates a way to hear the more that is the story plus the sonic invention? Does the method of abbreviation in spoken lyric prompt the listener to fill in the blank, open the door marked 'alluded to but not elaborated upon,' thus creating a give and take of the sonic? Questions we might consider multiply, for example, what is the sound of practice as theory that sings? Can acts of speaking towards singing, singing towards speaking work as affective diagnostic tools for decoding the willed obfuscation of the over simple or the vaguely articulated in public discourse? Might reinventing voice in song or gesture annunciate a pathway towards voice in collective decision making?

Sylvia Wynter exhorts us to use ‘dazzling creativity’ in order to be both ‘bios’ and ‘mythos,’ bodies and tellers of story against the grain of fixed categories of identity: the very categories Baldwin argues ‘are always commercial.’ In this study, we will be listening to/reading across Daphne Brooks’ ‘intellectual life of black feminist sound’ alongside Jennifer Nash’s ‘black feminist love politics.’ In this seminar theoretical work is corporeal work on the floor of a studio as easily as at a desk while thinking lyric excess and its revolutionary possibilities from Shakespeare to Strayhorn, from Adrienne Kennedy to Ashon Crawley’s black Pentecostal, from Gladys Knight to Taylor Mac.

**Theories of Spectatorship**

Ethan Philbrick, ep1241@nyu.edu  
PERF-GT 2746.001 (Albert#22248)  
Thursdays, 3:45 pm – 6:45 pm, 4 points  
721 Broadway, 6th floor Classroom 613

Theory and theater share an etymological origin in Greek -- *theoria*, meaning to look at, to contemplate. Departing from this etymological resonance, this course guides students through a rigorous theoretical excavation of the politics of spectatorship and knowledge production. Lines of inquiry will include: spectatorial anxiety and anti-theatricality (Plato, Brecht, Puchner), fantasies of the audience (Blau, Metz), recognition and misrecognition (Lacan), scopic regimes and scopophila (Fanon, Mulvey), witnessing and testimony (Laub,
Felmam), racial surveillance and surveillance capitalism (Browne, Zublof), feminist spectatorship and the promise of critical viewing (Dolan, hooks), pathos and pathetic audiences (Koestenbaum, Myles), participation and the death of the spectator (Boal, Bishop, Bourriard, Groys), active passivity and passive activity (Ranciere, Zizek), ideology and mass culture (Jameson, Debord), listening with eyes and touching with ears (Robinson, Vazquez, Campt), new technologies and new sensoriums (Chun, Nakamura), boredom and zoning out (Doyle, Berlanl).