

Performance Studies

SPRING 2021 UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

Majors-only registration found in notes in Albert. Write to lf65@nyu.edu to register for majors-only courses with limited seats.

Performance of the City

A. Sansonetti

PERF-UT 103.001 (20996) – Tuesdays, 9:30am to 12:15pm EST

4 pts – Online/Synchronous

A founding tenet of the Performance Studies field is the significance of the *site* where performance takes place – including its metropolitan environment. This course serves to introduce students to the performance culture of a given city (whether New York or one of the other Global sites), and to the ways in which any urban environment is staged by its residents and visitors. The class will take the city itself as its “text,” exploring its history, its significant performance venues, and the public spaces where the population gathers in a collective spectacle of social relations. Readings in urban performance studies will be supplemented by class trips to performances, from the opera to skateboarding ramps to public parades.

Performance and Politics

M. Castañeda

PERF-UT 104.001 (15585) – Wednesdays, 12:30pm to 3:15pm EST

4 pts – Online/Synchronous

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?

Performance Studies: An Introduction with Richard Schechner

E. Mee

PERF-UT 200.001 (15510) – Thursdays, 2:00pm to 3:15pm EST

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 Professor Erin Mee, students explore the performances in the Americas, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Australia, and the Pacific islands. Students delve back in time to ask what kind of performances took place in the caves of paleolithic Europe? How do these ancient shamanic and initiatory practices relate to Burning Man, YouTube, and today's avant garde? How do people perform their professions, their genders, their races and nations, their identities, their social lives, and their daily rituals? 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 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: Creating Documentary Performance

K. Holfeuer

PERF-UT 201.001 (20998) – Mondays, 12:30pm to 3:15pm EST

The term documentary theatre is often used interchangeably with verbatim theatre. Theatre scholar Carol Martin would advise us to beware and keep tabs on Documentary Theatre, a slippery little devil which claims to present the truth. Yet, in truth, the world of Documentary Theatre (and Art) seems to be expanding. New works of live Documentary Art challenge the documentary form by loosening the grip of journalistic objectivity and responsibility. Documentary performance now takes on a variety of forms which we will examine in this course.

The creation of documentary performance relies on observation. This course will begin with ways of observing a range of performances (live, filmed, quotidian, and archival). We will then integrate this heightened awareness into an hybridized archival call-and-response. We will have daily in-class creation workshops designed to respond to research and performance materials. Through this process students will learn to integrate research questions and aesthetic performance elements. Our class sessions will unfold in a pursuit of new modes of reality-inspired artistic production. Participants will engage in documentary writing techniques, performance techniques such as vocal duplication and movement vocabularies, creation of composition scores, and docu-fantasia (a methodology pioneered by Guy Maddin in his film “My Winnipeg” combining personal history, civic tragedy, and mystical hypothesizing), among others. The result of these searches will be cumulative. At the end of this course, students will have created several short-form documentaries.

Performative Writing Workshop

B. Browning

PERF-GT 2618 (7263) – Tuesdays, 3:30pm to 6:15pm EST

4 pts – Online/Synchronous

***Students who wish to enroll in this course must contact Laura Fortes at lf65@nyu.edu**

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 diverse 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 a 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.

Queer Politics and Performance

A. Hafez

PERF-UT 302.001 (15586) – Thursdays, 9:30am to 12:15pm EST

4 pts – Online/Synchronous

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.

Critical Approaches to Race and Ethnicity in Performance: Octavia Butler, The Otolith Group, Nicole Mitchel

F. Moten

PERF-UT 306.001 (20997) – Mondays, 9:30am to 12:15pm EST

4 pts – Online/Synchronous

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.

Capstone: Final Projects

M. Gaines

PERF-UT 401.001 (15629) – Mondays, 1:00pm – 2:30pm EST

4 pts – Online/Synchronous

Recitation Sections

PERF-UT 401.002 (15630) – Mondays, 2:35pm – 4:05pm EST, Y. Chism

PERF-UT 401.003 (26676) – Mondays, 2:35pm – 4:05pm EST, I. Silber

***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.