Performance Studies

SPRING 2022 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
I. Silber
PERF-UT 103.001 (14964) – Tuesdays, 9:30am to 12:15pm
4 pts – In-Person
721 Broadway, 6th Fl., Room 612
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
A. Katsof
PERF-UT 104.001 (14850) – Wednesdays, 12:30pm to 3:15pm
4 pts – In-Person
721 Broadway, 6th Fl., Room 612
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?

Performatve Writing
B. Browning
PERF-UT 204.001 (20627) – Tuesdays, 3:30pm to 6:15pm
4 pts – In-Person
721 Broadway, 6th Fl., Room 612
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.

Performance and Technology
T. Black
PERF-UT 302.001 (20626) – Thursdays, 3:30pm to 6:15pm
4 pts – In-Person
721 Broadway, 6th Fl., 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.

Studies in Dance: Denaturalizing Choreography
N. Solomon
PERF-GT 2504.001 (20623) – Wednesdays, 9:15am – 12:15pm
4 points – In-Person
721 Broadway, 6th Fl., Room 612
*Limited seats. OPEN TO PS MAJOR Juniors and Seniors ONLY. Enrollment in this course will satisfy Upper Division Elective Credit. Please email Laura Fortes (lf65@nyu.edu) to inquire about enrollment in this course.*
This course proposes a political history of the field of choreography through its layered intersections with nature and sex. We examine the close affiliation between the choreographic subject and issues of the body, movement, and empathy along tightly gendered and racialized lines; the ways in which somatic gestures can store and score histories of subjection and dissidence. We ask, how are the excesses of nature and sex disciplined – organized and made legible – across the modern history of choreography? How do a range of somato-discursive technologies – movement techniques, corporeal formations, kinesthetic empathies – domesticate sexuality and anthropomorphize nature? How might insurgent practices breach the fabric of sexed nature to enable radical subjectivities and account for alternative modes of composing, seeing, and feeling dance? We read texts by dance studies scholars, critical theorists, and philosophers including Karen Barad, Georges Canguilhem, Clare Croft, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Susan Leigh Foster, Donna Haraway, Anthea Kraut, André Lepecki, Paul B. Preciado, and Leanne Simpson. We will discuss and watch works by choreographic artists ranging from Isadora Duncan and Josephine Baker to Anna Halprin and boychild, Miguel Gutierrez, Maria Hassabi, Mette Ingvartsen, Jamila Johnson-Small, Ligia Lewis, Tanya Lukin Linklater, Dana Michel, Eiko Otake, and others.

Documenting Performance: Experiments in Curation
N. Solomon
PERF-GT 2709.001 (7439) – Thursdays, 9:15am – 12:15pm
4 points – In-Person
721 Broadway, 6th Fl., Room 613
*Limited seats. OPEN TO PS MAJOR Juniors and Seniors ONLY. Enrollment in this course will satisfy Upper Division Elective Credit. Please email Laura Fortes (lf65@nyu.edu) to inquire about enrollment in this course.*
This course explores the correspondences and frictions between the fields of performance and curation. We study some key histories, theories, and practices of performance curation while developing together radical methods for researching and curating time-based art. Drawing on interdisciplinary and experimental artistic practices – spanning body and performance art, happenings, contemporary dance, visual theater, experimental sound, visual art performance – the course examines diverse case studies across a range of cultural and institutional frameworks. We discuss the critical issues these works raise around affect and temporality; labor and economy; conditions of knowledge production and cultural visibility; skill, technique, and virtuosity; modes of assembly and power relations. We ask, how might performance have become a vital paradigm for making, researching, and curating artworks? How might we take cues from experimental practices to imagine necessary spaces of collectivity; curate sites that foster a decolonial, feminist, and anti-fascist ethos? We meet a series of guest artists and curators who present projects taking place online globally and in various locations in New York City, including MoMA, the Whitney, Performance Space New York, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Amant, Recess, and the Chocolate Factory. Participants can choose to work on a research paper or develop a curatorial project to be presented in a class colloquium at the end of the semester.
Capstone: Final Projects
K. Shimakawa
PERF-UT 401.001 (14877) – Mondays, 1:00pm – 2:30pm
4 pts – In-Person
721 Broadway, 6th Fl., Room 612
*OPEN TO PS MAJORS ONLY. Majors should check with Laura Fortes (lf65@nyu.edu) before enrolling in this course.*

Recitation Section
K. Holfeuer
PERF-UT 401.002 (14878) – Mondays, 2:35pm – 4:05pm
721 Broadway, 6th Fl., Room 612
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.