Performance of the City

J. Evans
PERF-UT 103.001 (14300) – Thursdays, 9:30am to 12:15pm
4 pts – In-Person
721 Broadway, 6th Fl., Room 613

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. Al Sabi
PERF-UT 104.001 (14213) – 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?

Performative Writing

A. Sansonetti
PERF-UT 204.001 (14380) – Mondays, 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 Histories
A. Rakhimzhanova
PERF-UT 205.001 (22253) – Thursdays, 12:30-3:15pm
4 pts – In-Person
721 Broadway, 6th Fl., Room 612
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.

Theories of Movement
M. Castañeda
PERF-UT 303.001 (22252) – Wednesdays, 9:30am - 12:15pm
4 pts – In-Person
721 Broadway, 6th Fl., Room 612
This course will explore the rich history of experimental dance and movement-based performance, and the possibility of a movement-based analysis of performativity. While dominant theories of “performativity” (the doing that performance does) emerge from linguistic theories and/or text-based accounts (ethnographic descriptions of ritual, etc.), the direct impact of movement has garnered less scholarly attention (with the exception of dance studies). How does movement (not only in dance, but in performance more generally) enact social/aesthetic theory, and how might movement itself theorize social relations?

Theories of Spectatorship
E. Philbrick
PERF-GT 2746.001 (22248) – Thursdays, 3:45 pm – 6:45 pm
4 pts – In-Person
721 Broadway, 6th Fl., Room 613
Note: This course will satisfy upper division elective credit. Students must have junior or senior standing and write to Laura Fortes (lf65@nyu.edu) to register for this course.

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 scopophilia (Fanon, Mulvey), witnessing and testimony (Laub, Felmam), racial surveillance and surveillance capitalism (Browne, Zuboff), 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, Berlan).

Capstone: Final Projects
B. Browning
PERF-UT 401.001 (14233) – Tuesdays, 3:30pm – 5:00pm
4 pts – In-Person | 721 Broadway, 6th Fl., Room 612
Note: OPEN TO PS MAJORS ONLY. Majors should check with Laura Fortes (lf65@nyu.edu) before enrolling in this course.*

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.

Capstone Recitation Section
TBA, PERF-UT 401.002 (14234) – Tuesdays, 5:05pm – 6:35pm