

Performance Studies

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COURSE BULLETIN: *FALL 2007* ALL SCHEDULE INFORMATION SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Trauma, Loss and the Performance of Witness

Ann Pellegrini

H42.2035-001 (Albert #76418)

Mondays 9:30 am – 12:15 pm, 4 points

721 Broadway, Room 613

Limited Enrollment. This course requires and application to the instructor. Please prepare a one-page statement which includes the following: 1. Your reason(s) for applying to the class, 2. Your expectations for the class, 3. Your theoretical background, 4. Your home department, and 5. Whether you are an MA or PhD student (undergrads not eligible for this course).

Please email this statement to jason.beckerman@nyu.edu no later than Friday, AUGUST 17.

Is trauma always or only the exceptional event? What does it mean to bear witness to an event that you in some way never even experienced? Through close analysis of selected psychoanalytic texts (such as Freud, Klein, Fanon) alongside selected cultural texts (including theatre, performance, film, monuments), we will ask into the social context of loss and the ethical urgency of attending to it. Units of the course will focus on such questions as how to narrate history in the wake of catastrophe, "wounded attachments," the relationship between trauma and the everyday, reparation and the politics of memory. Throughout this course we will give special attention to the question of the "live": live performances, living bodies of witness, psychic remainders.

Issues in Arts Politics

Randy Martin

H42.2312-001 (Albert #76562) cross listed with Art and Public Policy

Mondays 9:30 am – 12:15 pm, 4 points

721 Broadway, 12th Fl, Room 1202

For a biography of Randy Martin, please visit the following web site:

<http://admin.tisch.nyu.edu/object/MartinR.html>

This seminar aims to give students both a conceptual and practical grounding in the range of issues and approaches by which arts politics can be understood.

The course will be framed by the following considerations: What are the institutional, discursive, and ideological contexts that shape the objects, images, sounds or texts we call "art?" What are the links between cultural spaces-- the museum, the movie-theater, the gallery, the music/dance hall, the bookstore, the fashion runway, the public street, television, cyber space-- and the larger realm of politics? And how do these relationships impact, implicitly or explicitly, the ways we create, curate, or study the arts? How do consumers play an active role in the reception of cultural products? What is the relation between formally promulgated cultural policy and the tacit knowledge that artists call upon

to get their work into the world? What dimensions of the broader cultural terrain are made legible through artistic practice? What are the means through which art intervenes in the political arena? "Art" will be studied as a site of contested representations and visions, embedded in power formations--themselves shaped by specific historical moments and geographical locations. Given contemporary global technologies, cultural practices will also be studied within the transnational "travel" of ideas and people. Such germane issues as the legal and constitutional dimensions of censorship, the social formation of taste, the consumption of stars, the bio-politics of the body, transnational copyrights law--will all pass through an intersectional analyses of gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, and nation, incorporating the insights of such areas of inquiry as multiculturalism, feminism, postcolonialism, and queer studies.

The first half of the course is explores certain key conceptual issues and the second half examines practical applications. Specific examples are provided through student presentations.

World's Fairs

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

H42.2109-001 (Albert #76419)

Mondays 12:30 – 3:15 pm, 4 points

721 Broadway, Room 613

Performance analysis of international expositions and "exhibition" more generally. Seminar will work towards theorizing the political economy of spectacle. The first half of the course will be devoted to discussion of readings and establishing the issues that might inform a performance analysis of such events, seen in relation to Olympics, international art fairs and festivals, and trade fairs and theme parks. The second half of the course will be devoted to presentations of students' research in progress. Projects will be based on primary research in archives and museums in the metropolitan area and, in the case of more recent fairs, interviews and oral history with those who produced exhibits and those who visited them. Projects will focus on one aspect of a single world's fair (or related event) or trace a topic through more than one fair. Historical and intercultural perspectives are encouraged. For a listing of the books required for this course, please visit the following web site:

http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/wf/WF_books_2007.rtf

Performance in New York: Watching the Next Wave

Barbara Browning

H42.1016-001 (Albert #70599)

Mondays, 3:30 pm – 6:15 pm & according to performance schedule times, 4 points

721 Broadway, Room 611

Limited Enrollment. Access codes required for registration. This course requires an application to the instructor. Please write a one-page statement (as a Word attachment) with the following information contained in the attachment: 1. Your name, email address and phone number, 2. Your degree status (MA or PhD), 3. how this course pertains to your course of study, and send it to jason.beckerman@nyu.edu no later than FRIDAY, AUGUST 17.

This course will use the BAM Next Wave festival as a laboratory for thinking about critical writing on performance. Participants in this limited-enrollment seminar will attend the Next Wave series, and each student will be responsible for writing a critical analysis of one performance. We will workshop these analyses as a group, and seek to produce a publishable set of responses by the end of the semester. The seminar will begin with a discussion of the challenges of critical writing on contemporary performance. We will examine some exemplary writings, and formulate our own goals as performance analysts.

Performance Composition: A Magnificent Obsession

Karen Finley

H42.2730-001 (Albert #70613)

Mondays, 6:30 pm – 9:15 pm, 4 points

721 Broadway, Room 612

Limited Enrollment.

PLEASE NOTE: For Performance Studies students, this course counts as a practical course.

The class will be conducted as a workshop for creating performance. There will be in-class exercises to facilitate the translation of free floating symbolism into meaningful content. We will consider applying our performance practice within a relationship to the field and to contemporary culture. The professor will focus on the individual unique assignment to motivate the process of performance development into performance invention.

The concept and execution of performance beyond the proscenium will be included in the trajectory. Some of the performance platforms to choose from: site specific, installation, conceptual performance, time based, new media, street, show and tell, lip synch, drag, fetish, spoken word, demonstrations, debate, political speech, pranks, direct action and activism, mail art, spiritual practice, rites, pageants, party and cabaret. Of course, performing in terms of race, gender, identity and sexuality will be within the critical framework of the class. Students are required to create performances. This is a studio workshop. Students are required to create a midterm draft of a work in progress and a final public event. To be discussed. This class will have readings, critique, and discussion. Students are required to keep a sketch book for ideas, plans of pieces to be executed.

The sub title – *The Magnificent Obsession*, appropriating the film title, is in reference to a series of curated performances, in the New York night club Area, in the summer of 1984 by Finley and 2 other curators. Here a series of weekly themed Obsession Nights were mounted with durational performances and films with a wide array of audience and performers. The Obsession Nights included: Food, Sex, Pets, Love, Money, and Religion. Finley will introduce tableaux vivant and some of these obsessions as a theme for the class to consider within the chosen theme of EVENT for the Performance Studies international Conference. After we work together we can decide if we are interested in creating an evening group public work either in an outside venue as a final project or within the studio provided, or, if time and the department permits, to be part of the Performance Studies Conference.

The Performance Studies international 13 conference will be hosted by the Performance Studies Department in November and the class will be required to attend.

Karen Finley is a New York based artist whose raw and transgressive performances have long provoked controversy and debate. She has appeared and exhibited internationally her visual art, performances and plays. Her performances have been presented at Lincoln Center, New York City, The Guthrie, Minneapolis, American Repertory Theatre, The ICA in London, Harvard, The Steppenwolf in Chicago, and The Bobino in Paris. Her artworks are in numerous collections and museums including the Pompidou in Paris and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. . Finley attended the San Francisco Art Institute receiving an MFA and honorary PHD. She has received numerous awards and fellowships including a Guggenheim, 2 Obies, 2 Bessies, MS. Magazine Woman Of The Year, NARAL Person of the Year(which she shared with Anna Quindlen and Walter Cronkite), NYSCA and NEA Fellowships

. Finley was one of four artists whose NEA grant applications were vetoed due to content considered “indecent”. Finley and the other three artists sued for reinstatement and won the case in 1993 in the ninth circuit court in Los Angeles. The ruling was appealed and the case went to the Supreme Court and lost, in a decision that allowed the government to place restrictions on funding based on “decency standards”.

Besides her numerous performances, plays, installations and artworks Finley has made numerous dance and spoken word recordings on various labels alone and in collaboration with various artists including Jerry Hunt and Sinead O’Connor.

. She has appeared in many independent films and appeared in the film Philadelphia.

She has authored and or edited seven books including Shock Treatment (City Lights 1990), Enough is Enough (Poseidon, Simon and Schuster 1993), Living It Up (Doubleday 1996), Pooh Unplugged (Smart Art Books 1999), A Different Kind Of Intimacy: The Collected Writings of Karen Finley (Thunders Mouth Press 2000), she edited and contributed to Aroused” A Collection of Erotic Writings (Thunders Mouth Press 2001) and George and Martha (Verso 2006).

She has been on television, radio, print and electronic media for her opinions and reflections on contemporary culture. She writes for Huffington Post.

Besides her performances Finley has continued to create public sculptures and installations such as Black Sheep at Houston and First Avenue in 1990-91, Memento Mori 1992-94, and creates site specific art works, public images and events. In 2003 she created SCREAM OUT a political action group work where women spoke out against The Patriot Act and the government and then screamed out. This public performance was done with WAC and presented at St. Mark's Church, NYC. Make Love is a performance in a post 911 world channeling Liza Minnelli, using drag and the persona of Liza to interpret and access a post 911 New York. A DVD was released of Make Love with Shut Up and Love Me., filmed by Timothy Greenfield Sanders. Finley also creates one on one intuitive drawing sessions in a project called Psychic Portraits which are intuitive automatic portraits. They have traveled to the Boulder Museum Of Contemporary Art, The Kitchen in New York City, Marfa Ballroom Museum in Texas. and to Baltic Art Centre in Newcastle, England.

*For the 2004 election she created **George and Martha** a parody about an affair between George Bush and Martha Stewart. The story was illustrated and made into a novella, **George and Martha**, published by Verso in 2006. Her new performance work, *The Dreams of Laura Bush/The Passion of Terri Schiavo* will be companion performances. Finley creates and narrates the dream journals of Laura Bush. In Schiavo she examines the diverse emotional opinions of the complex issue of life support.*

*In 2007 Finley created an installation, **Nation Building** which explores America's history of racism and violence as a repeated approach in America's occupation and war with Iraq. The installation includes the saturation of violent imagery such as the hanging of Sadaam Hussein and America's history of lynching. She creates a series of drawings that considers Condoleeza Rice and her own experience of growing up in the violent era of the civil rights era, Birmingham (Bombingham) and now being the secretary of defense.*

Ms. Finley is active in freedom of expression issues. She currently is an Arts Professor in Art and Public Policy at Tisch School of the Arts, New York University.

Advanced Readings in Performance Studies

André Lepecki

H42.2201-001 (Albert #70604)

Tuesdays 9:30 am – 12:15 pm, 4 points

721 Broadway, Room 611

Access codes required for registration. This course is required of and only open to all first year PhD students.

We will depart from the following working hypothesis: that Performance Studies, as field of critical inquiry, has a privileged relationship with the following keywords and concepts: performativity and performance; law and sovereignty; event and violence; colonization and interpellation; presence and representation; embodiment and subjectivity; art and objecthood. Throughout the semester, we will read closely from a diversity of disciplines (psychoanalysis, cultural studies, gender studies, post-colonial studies, critical theory, philosophy, anthropology, art history) and see how each has approached these concepts and keywords -- and how each has contributed (or may contribute) to the development of Performance Studies.

Topics in Politics and Performance: Globalization and Performance

Deborah Kapchan

H42.2406-001 (Albert #70609)

Tuesdays 9:30 am – 12:15 pm; 4 points

721 Broadway, Room 613

What does it mean to understand history and power through the lens of artistic performance and aesthetic expression? This course draws on contemporary social theory and ethnography to explore the politics of performance in a global context.

Beginning with theories of globalization, we will move on to look at particular political and politicized performances. (We will read Anna Tsing's *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, Appadurai's *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*; Abu-Lughod's *Dramas of nationhood: the politics of television in Egypt*; Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's *Destination Culture*; Adam Frank's *Taijiquan and the Search for the Little Old Chinese Man*; Mahmood's *Politics*

of Piety, Stein and Swedenburg (eds.). Palestine, Israel, and the Politics of Popular Culture; Silverstein's Algeria in France : transpolitics, race, and nation; Slyomovics' The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco; Hammoudi's A Season in Mecca, as well as other works.)

Marxism and Performance

José Muñoz

H42.2214-001 (Albert #70605)

Tuesdays 3:30 pm – 6:15 pm; 4 points

721 Broadway, Room 613

This course offers students an introduction to Marxist methodologies. The first half of the seminar will be devoted to close readings of Marx. The second half of the course will be a survey that focuses on key figures and texts in marxist critical theory including: the Frankfurt School (especially Adorno, Bloch, Benjamin), Gramsci, Althusser, Williams, Spivak, Hall and Jameson.

Performing Post/Colonial Memory

Deborah Kapchan and Ella Shohat

H42.2122-001 (Albert #76420) cross-listed with Art & Public Policy

Wednesdays 9:30 am – 12:15 pm, 4 points

721 Broadway, Room 613

How is marginalized identity performed in colonial and post-colonial contexts? How do we read history through the lens of memoir? This course examines different narrative forms of memory-making. Examining voices at the margins, we focus on how intimacy is performed in the public sphere.

Studies in Dance: Choreography, Modernity and Mobilization

André Lepecki

H42.2504-001 (Albert #76421)

Wednesdays, 12:30 pm – 3:15 pm, 4 points

721 Broadway, Room 613

In this course, we will take to task Peter Sloterdijk's observation that critical theory will not fulfill its epistemological and political project until it creates a "kinetic theory of modernity." We will investigate how the creation of a critical movement theory is that fundamental step required for the political theorization of the modern subject as a subject ready for total mobilization. Thus, we will establish a close dialogue between critical theory (Jürgen Habermas, Walter Benjamin, Peter Sloterdijk) and several foundational texts in Western theatrical choreography -- from Arbeau's *Orchesography* (1589), to William Forsythe's CD-ROM project *Improvisation Technologies* (1999); from the courtly dances of Luis XIV, to the synchronized steps of The Rockettes. We will approach Western choreography not just as a "body technique" but as one of modernity's main technologies of inventing and implementing mobilization as a force of subjectivation. Thus, we will read key texts on subjectivity and modernity (by Harry Fergusson, Elizabeth Grosz, Susan Buck-Morss, Theresa Brennan, Paul Carter, Franz Fanon) and on subjectivity and dance (by Randy Martin, Susan Foster, Mark Franko).

Performance and Activism in the Americas

Diana Taylor

H42.2407-001 (Albert #74847) cross listed with Spanish & Portuguese

Wednesdays, 3:30 pm – 6:15 pm, 4 points

721 Broadway, Room 613

This course explores the many ways in which artists and activists use performance to make a social intervention in the Americas. We begin the course examining several theories about performance and activism (Brecht, Boal, Ngugi wa Thiong'o among others) and then focus on issues of agency,

space, event, and audience in relation to major political movements (revolution, dictatorship, democracy, globalization, and human rights) as seen in the work of major practitioners: CADA, Reverend Billy, Mapa Teatro, Jesusa Rodriguez, and others. Video screenings and guest lectures will provide an additional dimension for the course. Students are encouraged to develop their own sites of investigation and present their work as a final presentation and paper.

One unit of this course—Art and Dictatorship in Chile—will be taught in conjunction with a course taught at the Diego Portales University in Santiago de Chile with Professor Raúl Zurita, “Arte y Dictadura en Chile.” As part of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, this unit will follow a similarly structured syllabus, and share a list of essential readings. The unit will be coordinated through a shared website, which will house course readings, web resources, forums for student work and discussion as well as images and short video clips related to the course.

Course will be taught in English. Final projects in Spanish will be accepted.

"Bring the Pain": Performing Black Satire & Critical Humor—from Williams & Walker to Wanda Sykes

Daphne Brooks

H42.2228-001 (Albert #76413)

Thursdays, 12:30 pm – 3:15 pm, 4 points

721 Broadway, Room 613

This seminar examines the politics of black satire as a performative medium, and it traces a genealogy of black comedic performance practices in the tradition of African-American satire and politically insurgent humor. Course participants will explore multiple modes of satirical performance in relation to critical aesthetic movements and historical periods from the 19th century to the present day. Special emphasis will be placed on interrogating the politics of African-American blackface minstrelsy as satire. The seminar will also emphasize an examination of post-Civil Rights black satire in theatre, film, sketch comedy programs, visual art, political cartoons, novels, and popular music culture. Course participants will place theories of humor and signifying (by Ellison, Gates, Watkins, Freud and others) in conversation with the performances of Williams and Walker, Nina Simone, Richard Pryor, Kara Walker, Paul Beatty, Suzan-Lori Parks, Chris Rock and others.

*Daphne A. Brooks is an associate professor of English and African-American Literature at Princeton University where she teaches courses on 19th and 20th African-American literature and culture, performance studies, critical gender studies, and popular music culture. She is the author of two books: *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006) and *Jeff Buckley's Grace* (New York: Continuum, 2005). She is also developing new projects on the politics of black feminist performance and satire and a short history of race, gender, sexuality and rock music criticism. Brooks is the author of various articles which explore the intersections of race and gender in popular culture such as "Burnt Sugar: Post-Soul Satire and Rock Memory in This is Pop: Critical Essays from the First Annual Experience Music Project Conference on Popular Music, ed. Eric Weisbard (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2004); "'It's Not Right But It's Okay': Contemporary Black Women's R&B and the House that Terry McMillan Built" in *SOULS: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* (5:1), Winter 2003; and "'The Deeds Done in My Body': Black Feminist Theory, Performance, and the Truth About Adah Isaacs Menken" in *Recovering the Body: Self Representations by African American Women Writers*, eds. Michael Bennett and Vanessa Dickerson (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000). She is the editor of *The Great Escapes: The Narratives of William Wells Brown, Henry Box Brown, and William Craft*, (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, forthcoming) and the "Performance Arts" volume in the Schomburg Library's *The Black Experience in the Western Hemisphere*, series eds. Howard Dodson and Colin Palmer (New York: Pro-Quest Information & Learning, 2005). Brooks is currently the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Center for African-American Studies at Princeton University.*

Verbal Art as Performance: The Performed Story in Culture

Kay Turner

H42.0302-001 (Albert #76422)

Thursdays 3:30 pm – 6:15 pm, 4 points

721 Broadway, Room 613

A recent popular resurgence in interest concerning the art of storytelling and of spoken word serves as impetus for this course on the cultural histories, uses and meanings of oral narrative performance in various social settings here in the United States and around the world. Anthropology and folklore based collections and interpretations of the content and performance of myths, folktales, fairy tales, fables, urban legends and personal experience narratives provide resources for our discussion of how different types of stories and the contexts of their telling shape peoples identities and worldviews. This course invites students to discover ways in which important social concerns--among them gender construction, sexuality, marriage, family, status, ethnicity, and religious belief--are raised and appraised through the occasion of traditional storytelling performances. Stories, especially those told repeatedly and handed down from generation to generation, are repositories of cultural values and ideologies. The process of dissemination and the creation and meaning of "versions" will be also be discussed, as well as the evolution of story genres as they are reformulated in other performance media: film, theater, performance art, and so on. A portion of this course is field-based: students collect stories within their families or other social groups, and we also visit a few New York City venues that feature stories in actual performance. The willingness of students to perform (e.g. impromptu readings) is desired, but not required.

Course Format: Seminar/workshop exploration of oral narrative in the context of performance with focused reading, collaborative discussion, and analytical writing required of all participants. Some familiarity with basic concepts in folklore and performance studies is helpful but not required.

***Kay Turner** has taught courses in the NYU Performance Studies Department including "Deciphering Gender," on women's performances in traditional culture and "Fast, Cheap and Out of Control," on the meanings and interpretation of ephemeral performances of gender and sexuality. She holds a Ph.D. in folklore and anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin. Her areas of specialization are in women's performed folklore (especially in the arenas of oral narrative, folk religion, and material culture) and feminist and lesbian/gay/queer interpretations of folklore and popular culture. Kay's dissertation concerned Mexican-American women's home altars interpreted from a feminist perspective. She completed an expanded version of her dissertation called Beautiful Necessity: The Art and Meaning of Women's Altars (NY: Thames and Hudson, 1999). Kay is considered an authority on women's devotional arts and practices and has lectured and written widely on this subject in both academic and popular contexts. In 1999, she also published Baby Precious Always Shines (St. Martin's Press), an edited selection of love notes between Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas. Currently, she is working on a long essay concerning ephemerality and September 11th and a new book Transgressive Tales: Rethinking the Grimms' Fairy Tales from Feminist and Queer Perspectives. Based at the Brooklyn Arts Council, Kay also work as the folklorist for the Borough of Brooklyn, researching and presenting the diverse folk arts and artists of Brooklyn. Recently, she curated "Local Eyes: Folk Photography in Brooklyn" and engaged in a project for the Smithsonian Institution concerning the folklore and traditions of Wall Street. Kay produced and directed fieldwork for a major festival celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Williamsburg Bridge. In January 2004, she will produced a first-ever festival with workshops and panels on folk dance in Brooklyn.*