

Performance Studies

New York University • Tisch School of the Arts • 721 Broadway, 6th Floor • New York, NY 10003 • 212-998-1620
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COURSE BULLETIN: *SUMMER 2007*

ALL SCHEDULE INFORMATION IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE CHECK WITH
THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION

SESSION I (June 18 – July 13)

Introduction to Performance Studies

José Muñoz

H42.1000-001 (Albert # 70119)

Monday – Wednesday, 9:30 am – 12:15 pm, 4 points

Location TBA

All Incoming MA students must register for this course

For a bio of Professor Muñoz, please visit the following web site:

<http://www.performance.tisch.nyu.edu/page/faculty.html>

*IN ADDITION TO SECTION 001, ALL STUDENTS MUST REGISTER FOR ONE OF THE
FOLLOWING DISCUSSION SECTIONS:*

- ❖ **H42.1000-002** (*Albert # 70120*)
Thursday 9:30 – 10:45 am – Location TBA
- ❖ **H42.1000-003** (*Albert # 70121*)
Thursday 9:30 – 10:45 am – Location TBA
- ❖ **H42.1000-004** (*Albert # 70122*)
Thursday 11:00 – 12:15 pm – Location TBA
- ❖ **H42.1000-005** (*Albert # 70123*)
Thursday 11:00 – 12:15 pm – Location TBA

This course is designed to introduce students to the field of performance studies. The history of the field and its connections to other disciplines (anthropology, theatre studies, philosophy, dance studies, feminism, critical race theory, queer theory, etc.) are reviewed. Major themes such as performance historiography, questions of liveness, the performance of objects, performance of everyday life, the performativity of race and gender, technology and performance, and the performance of politics are considered. Theoretical information is grounded through analysis of performances in New York City. Emphasis is applied to approaches regarding the writing about performance.

SESSION II (July 16 – August 3)

Ritual, Play & Performance

Richard Schechner

H42.1024-001 (Albert #71408)

Monday – Thursday 10 a.m.- 1 p.m., 4 points

Location TBA

For a bio of Professor Schechner, please visit the following web site:

<http://www.performance.tisch.nyu.edu/page/faculty.html>

The underlying grounds of performance -- aesthetic performances, performance in everyday life, sports performances, performativity -- are "ritual" and "play." These are categories, tropes, genres, structures, systems not easily defined. They must be grasped from multiple, sometimes contradictory, perspectives. During the course, ritual and play will be investigated from a variety of these perspectives including the ethological, anthropological, historical, intercultural, and theoretical. In addition to reading and classroom discussion, we will view films, visit performance venues, and perhaps conduct a one session workshop. Readings include Bell, Csikszentmihalyi, Carse, Caillois, Durkheim, Eibl-Eibesfeldt, Geertz, Goffman, Grimes, Schechner, Spariosu, Sutton-Smith, Tambiah, Turner, Wilson, and Winnicott. Grades will be based on a final paper and participation in class activities.

Fetish and Performance: How to Do Things With Objects

Barbara Browning

H42.2647-001 (Albert #71409)

Monday – Thursday, 3:30 – 6:15 p.m. 4 points

Location TBA

For a bio of Professor Browning, please visit the following web site:

<http://www.performance.tisch.nyu.edu/page/faculty.html>

This course will explore the notion of fetish in the three ways in which it is most typically invoked: to refer to an object with performative power, be it through magic, through commodification, or through sexual displacement. In an ethnographic context, the term fetish is often understood as a derogatory one, indicating a naïve belief in the animation of objects. But it was precisely the model of animated objects which allowed for Marx and Freud to elaborate theories of the role of objects which we often take for granted. Rather than "applying" Marxist and psychoanalytic theory to objects often examined in an ethnographic context, we will go in the other direction, looking at the objects themselves as theoretical lenses through which to reconsider Marx and Freud, and the later theoretical extensions they generated. Specifically, we'll look at *minkisi*, central African object poems, and their diasporic reformations (particularly "voodoo dolls") in order to rearticulate, with as much specificity as we can, how it is that objects actually can, and do, make things happen.

Aside from close readings of objects, we'll also be reading: Pietz, MacGaffey, Thompson, Hurston, Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Freud, Lacan, Grosz, McCallum, Winnicott, Marx, Baudrillard, Taussig, Appadurai, Pels, Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, Nyong'o, and Mercer.

Black Womanist Spirituality in Popular American Music

Judith Casselberry

H42.2228-001 (Albert # 70128)

Monday – Thursday 9:30 am – 12:15 pm, 4 points

Location TBA

This seminar will examine the expressions of spirituality in the works of various black women singer-songwriters. We will focus primarily on work generated from a womanist (black feminist) perspective with African diasporic/Black Atlantic spiritual roots, independent of religious institutions. We will take an interdisciplinary approach to exploring black women's spirituality, incorporating literature, history, social theory, and film, in addition to music.

Judith Casselberry's research interests include the anthropology of black Americans in the United States, ethnomusicology, gender and feminist studies, religion, and contemporary social movements. Her current research is on black American Holiness-Pentecostal women in the New York metropolitan and Mid-Hudson Valley areas. Casselberry, as a vocalist/guitarist, performs nationally and internationally. Her most recent performances include the summer 2003 European tour of The Temptation of Saint Anthony, directed by Robert Wilson with book and libretto by Bernice Johnson Reagon and Evening Song, the 2003-2004 thirtieth anniversary celebration tour of Sweet Honey in the Rock, with Toshi Reagon and Big Lovely.

Performance Workshop with East Coast Artists

Michele Minnick

H42.2760-001 (Albert #70134)

Monday-Friday 6:00 – 11:00 pm, 4 points

Abe Burrows Theatre, 721 Broadway, 1st Floor

Limited Enrollment. This course requires an application to the instructor. Please prepare a one-page statement outlining your interest and qualifications for enrolling in this course and email the statement to jason.beckerman@nyu.edu by no later than May 25, 2007. For more information on the class, please contact Michele Minnick at mm144@nyu.edu.

ECA's training is based on the principle that performers and directors should share a language of the body that not only bonds the group through the creation of ensemble, but that also provides specific tools for rehearsal and composition. In this vein, training, in which those tools are developed and shared, and workshop, in which those tools are used to begin to shape performance, are built into the early phases of ECA productions. An important aspect of the work is concerned not only with how "actors" act, but also with how people perform, and with deep questions about self, identity and one's participation in groups. This is the model we offer to directors, performers, choreographers, performance artists, theater teachers and others in our performance workshops each summer.

At our annual summer residency at NYU, ECA offers an intense, physically rigorous workshop focusing on training and performance techniques developed by Richard Schechner with the dual purpose of developing skills in individual performers and directors and creating ensemble through an exploration of physical and vocal group work. Daily training includes yoga and vocal exercises, and employs classic texts, personal material, and movement as points of initiation for composition. The workshop provides a break from the canonical, Western "psychological" approach to acting and theatre-making by focusing on processes such as the creation of personae, environmental staging, and other techniques. A significant portion of the workshop is dedicated to the RasaBoxes™, a psychophysical approach to the development of emotional depth, agility, and expressiveness onstage. Based on the rasa theory and practice of classical Indian performance, Artaud's idea of the actor as "athlete of the emotions," and the emotion and brain research of psychologists and neurobiologists such as Paul Ekman and Michael Gershon, the RasaBoxes™ train actors to embody

specific emotional states, and to develop character and score performance with emotion as a primary structure. Students work closely with East Coast Artists' accomplished performers and directors to create solo performances and group compositions. For more information, contact Michele Minnick at (212) 998-1630 or eca@nyu.edu.

Associate artistic director and co-director of education for East Cost Artists(ECA) Michele Minnick is a director, performer, teacher, translator and certified Laban movement analyst. She has directed plays at the Kitchen Theatre Company in Ithaca, New York, where she served as resident director 1998-99, and co-created original performance works at HERE in New York City. She has been a resident artist with Mabou Mines at PS 122, and participated in a research project called "Thought, Poetry and the Body in Action" with Portuguese Choreographer Vera Mantero in Berlin. Her work with ECA began ten years ago with a new translation of Chekhov's Three Sisters, for Schechner's production, in which she subsequently played the role of Anfisa. Since then, she has performed in and directed productions (La Mama, HERE, The Performing Garage and Dartmouth and Trinity Colleges), and has been teaching performance and RasaBoxes™ workshops at NYU and at other colleges and universities in the US and abroad. Michele is now developing a teacher training program with co-director of education, Paula Murray Cole. With Cole she wrote "The Actor As Athlete of the Emotions: The Rasaboxes Exercise," published in Movement For Actors, by Allworth Press (2002). In recent years Michele has been developing an application of the principles of Laban movement analysis to the RasaBoxes™. Called the "Emotional Body," or "O Corpo Emocional," this project has been taking shape at the Laban Center and UniRio in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies in NYC. Michele is currently on the faculty of the Laban Certification Program in New York City and is an associate member of the International Society for Research on Emotion. Currently, Michele is developing ECA's first solo works project, which in its inauguration next year will focus on the work of performance artist and teacher Leeny Sack.

SESSION III (August 6 – August 31)

Performance and the Law

Karen Shimakawa

H42.2602-001 (Albert # 70132)

Monday-Thursday 3:30 pm – 6:15 pm, 4 points

Location TBA

COURSE MEETING DATES: August 6 – August 23

For a bio of Professor Shimakawa, please visit the following web site:

<http://www.performance.tisch.nyu.edu/page/faculty.html>

This course will consider the exercise of state power through the judicial system in terms of performance. What are the means (linguistic, spatial, embodied) by which law is performed? How might we understand the legal system (law enforcement, courts, prisons, social and probation mechanisms, etc.) as performative? We will read various legal and theoretical texts on law and/as performance (Cover, Butler, Cornell, etc.), pairing them with our own investigation of legal performance (which may include observing trials/courtroom proceedings, prisons, other sites of state regulation), as well as "theatrical" renderings of the exercise of legal authority.

Requirements: regular postings to online class form; in-class discussion facilitation; research proposal & presentation.

Theater/Politics/Memory: Performance and Cultural Politics in Peru

Jill Lane

H42.2407-001 (Albert # 70958)

Schedule TBA, 4 points

COURSE MEETING DATES: August 6 – August 23

This course is offered through the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics. For more info on the Institute, please visit their website at <http://hemi.nyu.edu>. For more information on this course, including a bio for Professor Jill Lane, please visit the following URL: <http://www.hemisphericinstitute.org/course-nyu/summer07/>

PLEASE NOTE: This course meets in Peru. In addition to the regular NYU tuition, students must pay a \$600 lab fee. Airfare, room and board are also at an additional cost.

This course requires an application to the instructor. Access codes are required for registration. If interested, please submit an application, which includes: 1. Contact information, including email and phone, valid through the summer; 2. Your current degree program, if applicable, including field and level of study (PhD, M.A., or advanced undergraduate); 3. A one-page personal statement in which you discuss your interests in the program, and its relevance to your studies and/or training; 4. A list of your performance experience (if any; prior experience not required). 4. A summary of any prior educational or other travel experience; 5. Your level of Spanish (Spanish is desirable, but not required for participation). Please email your application to Jason Beckerman, Administrative Director of Performance Studies, at jason.beckerman@nyu.edu by no later than Monday, May 14, 2007.

Active citizens are resourceful and creative subjects. They consider issues from several points of view and know that there is usually more than one right answer for serious challenges. In other words, citizenship is an art. Another name for this creative practice is “cultural agency”; it works within limited material and political conditions in order to stretch existing rights and resources. This course will feature exemplary artist-agents in Lima and learn from them how performance and politics engage one another. Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani, a major theatre collective known for its innovative combination of Andean and European theatrical forms, and its strong commitment to grass-roots community issues, mobilization, and advocacy, will be our primary model and trainer through intensive workshops and discussion. Studio classes with Yuyachkani focus on the use of voice, body, masks, and objects in performance composition. Readings, other workshops with distinguished anthropologists and artists, lectures and site visits will round out this extraordinary experience.

Knowledge of Spanish is desirable but not required. No previous performance experience necessary.

*Peru's most important theatre collective, **Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani** has been working since 1971 at the forefront of theatrical experimentation, political performance, and collective creation. “Yuyachkani” is a Quechua word that means “I am thinking, I am remembering”; under this name, the theatre group has devoted itself to the collective exploration of embodied social memory, particularly in relation to questions of ethnicity, violence, and memory in Peru. Their work has been among the most important in Latin America's so called “New Popular Theatre,” with a strong commitment to grass-roots community issues, mobilization, and advocacy. Yuyachkani won Peru's National Human Rights Award in 2000. Known for its creative embrace of both indigenous performance forms as well as cosmopolitan theatrical forms, Yuyachkani offers insight into Peruvian and Latin American theatre, and to broader issues of postcolonial social aesthetics.*

Theatre and Performance in New York

Mark Sussman

H42.1016-001 (Albert # 70124)

Monday - Thursday, 12:30 – 3:15 pm & according to performance schedule times, 4 points

Location TBA

COURSE MEETING DATES: August 6 – August 23

This course asks students to consider a wide variety of performances in New York – theatrical, choreographic, spontaneous, religious, erotic, and political. Through theoretical readings and close analyses of performances attended, we ask not only how the metropolis makes possible such a diverse performance culture, but also how these performances help to constitute our understanding of the city's identity. We are particularly attentive to the relation of performance to communities for and by whom they are staged. With an eye to the civic and ritual calendar of the city's life, the August session will focus on festival arts, outdoor and participatory performances, as well as on gallery and museum exhibitions displaying objects and artifacts relevant to the field of Performance Studies.

Mark Sussman directs, designs, teaches and writes. Since 1985, he has worked in New York and on tour with Mabou Mines, Antenna Theater, Janie Geiser, Circus Amok, Paul Zaloom, Bread & Puppet Theater, and his OBIE-winning New York-based collective, Great Small Works. He holds a Ph.D. from New York University's Department of Performance Studies, where he received the Michael Kirby Memorial Award for Distinguished Doctoral Dissertation. His essays on performance and culture have appeared in *The Drama Review*, (ai) *performance for the planet*, *Connect*, *Stagebill*, *Cabinet*, *Radical Street Performance* (Routledge, 1999), and *Puppets, Masks, and Performing Objects* (MIT, 2001). He has taught at Barnard College/Columbia University, CalArts, Wesleyan University, the Parsons School of Design, and Undergraduate Drama at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. A native New Yorker, he is currently working as Assistant Professor of Theatre at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec.

Performance and Technology

Chris McGahan

H42.2770-001 (Albert #70135)

Monday - Wednesday 9:30 am – 12:15 pm, 4 points

Location TBA

The course will serve as an overview of some of the most important critical and theoretical perspectives on the implications of the incorporation of new media technologies into genres of performance like music, theater, performance art, and dance. Among the issues we will address are the status of 'liveness' and immediacy in performance, the representation of the body in the age of 'biocybernetic' reproduction, and the role of cultural identity in both technological innovation and critique of the technoculture. Sites to be investigated include a work by the Wooster Group, certain sonic explorations in hip hop and trip hop, and various Web-based performance art experiments.

Chris McGahan has a Master's degree from the University of Toronto in Comparative Literature and a Ph.D. from NYU in Performance Studies. He is currently Visiting Assistant Professor of English at Yeshiva University. His revised dissertation, entitled *Racing Cybercultures: Minoritarian Art and Cultural Politics on the Internet*, will be published by Routledge. His research interests include digital cultures and aesthetics, racial politics in the U.S. and Europe, contemporary fiction, and the re-packaging of national identities in the era of globalization.