

Performance Studies

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COURSE BULLETIN: *SPRING 2007*

ALL SCHEDULE INFORMATION SUBJECT TO CHANGE

PLEASE NOTE: THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE IN SWING SPACE DURING THE SPRING SEMESTER. AS OF 11/7/2006, MOST SPRING CLASSES WILL TAKE PLACE AT 719 BROADWAY, ROOM 606. PLEASE REVIEW ALL COURSE INFORMATION FOR INFORMATION ON LOCATION.

History of the Body

Tavia Nyong'o

H42.1095-001 (Albert #75689)

Mondays, 9:30 am – 12:15 pm, 4 points

719 Broadway, Room 606

A rhetoric of embodiment has arisen in many contemporary discourses and practices seeking leverage against the abstracting, totalizing, and idealizing tendencies of theory. Performative investments in “The Body,” however, risk repeating the very process of abstraction they seek to counter, particularly when a unitary “Body” with no further specification is called upon to do all the heavy lifting. Can we produce a rhetoric of embodiment that does not immediately reinvest itself, through such lack of specification, in the aporia of humanism? This course will take a historical route to answering that question, examining the emergence of the body as a site of knowledge, while at the same time attending carefully to its gendered and racialized presuppositions. Part of our course objective will be to explore three major theoretical frameworks within which the body as constructed within humanism has been prominently critiqued: Marxism (in terms of labor), Psychoanalysis (in terms of desire and drive), and Foucauldianism (in terms of subjectification and governmentality). We will explore how these and other disciplines show how the humanist body can produce hierarchizing and marginalizing effects, in terms of which flesh can and cannot access its pains and privileges. We will explore how sentience and affect are figured through shifting layers of historical knowledge that unsettle any unitary or stable concept of ‘the human.’ And we will conclude with a consideration of the range of claims — technical, philosophical, and political — that have been made recently on behalf of “posthuman” bodies.

Tourist Productions

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

H42.1041-001 (Albert #75688)

Mondays 12:30 – 3:15 pm, 4 points

719 Broadway, Room 606

A booming multinational industry, tourism is a powerful medium of transnational encounter. There is hardly a place on earth not part of the recreational geography of tourism. An engine for moving people from one place to another, tourism produces itself with ever greater complexity. This course will undertake a performance analysis of tourist productions, including tourist discourse, settings, events, experiences, and artifacts from an ethnographic perspective. An exemplary case of cultural

invention and commodification, tourism is implicated in the histories of pilgrimage, travel, colonialism, and ethnography, retracing their itineraries and replicating their discourse. As a result, tourism offers some of the richest material for exploring the semiosis of cultural production on a global scale. We will pay special attention to the political economy of tourism as seen through a close analysis of actual sites.

Sound & Image in the Avant Garde

Allen Weiss

H42.2754-001 (Albert #74499) cross listed with Cinema Studies

Mondays 12:30pm –4:30pm, 4 points

721 Broadway, Room 651

Access codes required for registration

This interdisciplinary course will investigate the relations between experimental film, radio, music, and sound art in modernism and postmodernism. The inventions of photography, cinema and sound recording radically altered the 19th century consciousness of perception, temporality, selfhood, and death. The newfound role of the voice—depersonalized, disembodied, eternalized—appeared in poetic and literary phantasms of that epoch, and offered models of future (and futuristic) art forms. This course will study the aesthetic and ideological effects of this epochal shift, especially as it concerns the subsequent practice of avant-garde art and aesthetics. It will specifically focus on the recontextualization of the history of avant-garde film in the broader context of the sound arts and their discursive practices, from Dada and Surrealism through Lettrism, Situationism, Fluxus and the American Independent Cinema. Special attention will be paid to the transformations of the 1950s and the 1960s, the moment when the arts moved toward a more performative mode, entailing the dematerialization and decommmodification of the aesthetic domain.

Methods in Performance Studies

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

H42.2616-001 (Albert #70588)

Mondays 4:45 pm – 7:00 pm; 4 points

719 Broadway, Room 606

Required for first year Ph.D. students. Access codes required for registration.

The course will work towards the development of Performance Studies methodologies based upon interdisciplinary research paradigms (movement analysis, ethnomusicology, ethnography, history, oral history, orature, visual studies, ethnomethodology, among others) and the close reading and analysis of exemplary studies. We will consider the conceptualization and design of research projects in the context of theoretical and ethical issues and in relation to particular research methods and writing strategies. You will develop practical skills related to archival and library research, ethnographic approaches, including participant observation and interviewing, documentation and analysis of live performance, and analysis of documents of various kinds, including visual material. Readings will address the history of ideas, practices, and images of objectivity, as well as of reflexive and interpretive approaches, relationships between science and art, and research perspectives arising from minoritarian and postcolonial experiences. Work for the course will include weekly readings, written responses to the readings, and exercises. Students are encouraged to bring projects to the course, especially ones that might develop into dissertations.

Experimental Performance

Richard Schechner

H42.2402-001 (Albert #75690)

Mondays 7:15 pm – 10:15 pm; 4 points

719 Broadway, Room 606

PLEASE NOTE: Required performances outside of class meetings are at the student's expense. Please be prepared for an additional \$300-500 cost for tickets to these required performances. Failure to attend performances will result in a failing grade for the class.

From the late 1950s forward to the present, New York has been a center of experimental performance. Only a fraction of that energy can be sampled and analyzed in this course. We will concentrate mostly on experimental theatre and performance art, but with some references to dance, music, and media.

The course begins with discussions of the basic theories of the avant garde; and with a review of Dada and Surrealism. Next, we will consider some "experimental classics" (pardon the oxymoron) – selected works of Richard Foreman, Robert Wilson, Marina Abramovic, Lee Breuer, and the Wooster Group. The core of the course is what's going on now in New York, from new productions of Foreman and the Wooster Group to Radiohole, Elevator Repair Service, Skewed Visions, Pig Iron, Collapsible Giraffe, Riot Group, North American Cultural Laboratory, Builders Association, Big Dance Theatre, and so on. Students are required to go to performances once and sometimes twice a week. In class, the works that we see will be discussed – frequently with the artists who made those works presenting their ideas and engaging in discussion with the class. Readings will range from the theoretical and historical to the journalistic.

Course requirements: Weekly and sometimes twice weekly attendance at performances. A scholarly paper (15-20 pages) on a group, artist, or theory of experimental performance **or** a final performance project based on what you have seen and/or read about/discussed during the term.

Absences from either the performances or the Monday night class are not acceptable. Two or more absences will result in a C grade. No exceptions. So unless you are prepared to invest time and effort, do not register for this course.

Trauma, Memory & Performance

Diana Taylor and Marianne Hirsch

H42.2216-001 (Albert #75685)

Tuesdays, 3:30 – 6:15 pm, 4 points

PLEASE NOTE: Location for this class will alternate between NYU Washington Sq. and Columbia. When the class meets at NYU, the location will be 719 Broadway, Room 606. Limited Enrollment. Access codes required for registration. This course requires an application to the instructor. If you wish to apply for the course, please send a one-page (maximum) statement indicating why you are interested in taking the course and how you plan to benefit from taking this course. Please submit your statement by email to jason.beckerman@nyu.edu no later than Friday, November 17, 2006.

This course explores the interconnections between trauma, memory, and performance through two major 20th c. events, the Holocaust and Argentina's 'Dirty War,' and the theoretical questions they raise. Do they each have their own unique structure and idiom, or can we think about individual and collective trauma through a translocal, cosmopolitan lens? Topics include: the performance of state power and state sponsored terror; the individual and collective nature of trauma; the study of embodied practices such as testimony and witnessing; the construction of archives of testimony; testimony, its use in literature, museums, and pedagogy, its the dramatizations by others, its archivization; the social role of sites of memory (Auschwitz, Club Atlético, etc.); theaters of justice such as trials, tribunals and truth commissions; performances of protest and resistance.

This course draws from classic and recent readings at the juncture of trauma, memory, and performance studies. To build on the paradigms suggested by the Holocaust and Argentina's 'Dirty War,' students will be encouraged to extend the topics explored in class to other sites—slavery, the Gulag, Hiroshima, 9/11, TRC, Tlatelolco, etc.

Subcultural Performance

Tavia Nyong'o

H42.2122-001 (Albert #76027)

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

719 Broadway, Room 606

The “liminal norm” of Performance Studies recurrently privileges the marginal, the underground, the outsider, and the queer. This course places that liminal norm into conversation with the ‘sociology of deviance’ that developed at the University of Chicago in the 1920s, particularly in terms of its study of “delinquent” groups. Linking that early articulation with subsequent revivals of deviancy theory, in particular with the ‘subculture’ studies of radical sociology and cultural studies in 1970s Britain, we will assess the relevance of this literature to the analysis of dissident and outsider cultures today. After pursuing a genealogy of the concept of “subculture,” which will involve unpacking its implicit hierarchical connotations, we will consider the prominent role of behaviorism in the study of cultural dissidence, and ask how the ethnographic and psychiatric study of marginal groups have become modes of power/knowledge, forming a template for subsequent policy interventions and political scapegoating. We will pay particular attention to the prominence of music, fashion, and community in subcultures. We will also consider the factors of race, age, and gender that structure the classic subcultural icon, the working class white male, whose alignment with display, excess, and performance renders him both feminized and potentially monstrous in relation to normative masculinity. At the same time we will examine the appeal of subcultural performance to queer, female, and non-white youth cultures.

Antonin Artaud and the Psychopathology of Expression

Allen Weiss

H42.2217-001 (Albert #74493)

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

721 Broadway, Room 760

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, November 17.

With the recent publication of thousands of pages of Artaud's private journal—written during his incarceration at the psychiatric hospital of Rodez and afterwards in Paris during the final and perhaps most creative years of his life—as well as with several exhibitions of his drawings, a vast reassessment of his life work is underway, calling into question many previous readings of his most influential work, *The Theater and Its Double*. This seminar will consider all aspects of Artaud's production—theory, theater, poetry, cinema, radio, performance, drawings, letters—following the conviction that the early, more famous work must be reinterpreted, as he himself suggests, in light of its ultimate, often hermetic and incendiary, artistic efforts. Furthermore, as Artaud's work spanned precisely the decades of the modernist discovery of the art of the insane—from Hans Prinzhorn's 1922 publication of *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* through Jean Dubuffet's postwar formulation of the notion of "art brut"—Artaud's work will be contextualized within the modern history of the psychopathology of expression.

Critical Race Theory

José Muñoz

H42.2100-001 (Albert #75686)

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

719 Broadway, Room 606

This course will offer students methodologies to think critically about race and ethnicity. Fundamental phenomenological questions about the relationship between "self" and "other" will launch our inquiry. Early materialist and psychological investigations into the nature of racialization will also be pursued. Readings and lectures will challenge ontological claims about the nature of race and ethnicity by proposing theories of racial and ethnic performativity. Readings and discussions will also address the relationship between racialization and other major rubrics of particularity like class, gender and sexuality. This section of the course bibliography will include essays and books by Freud, Marx, Fanon, Spillers, Spivak, Alarcon, Moten, Chow, Sandoval, Hartman, Chuh, Prashad and others. Theoretical readings will often be read in conjunction with performances as well as literary and cinematic texts.

Religious and Secular Modernities

Deborah Kapchan

H42.2320-001 (Albert #76026)

Wednesdays 6:30 pm – 9:15 pm, 4 points

719 Broadway, Room 606

At the beginning of the 20th century, Durkheim noted that all societies have categories for the "sacred" and the "profane." Whereas religion is the domain most often associated with the sacred, it is also found in the realm of the State, in ideologies of the secular, in artistic production, and in a "return" of enactments associated with the "less-than-modern" -- namely magic and mysticism. This course analyzes the shape of the sacred in modernity (and post-modernity, when the designation

applies), including the rising prominence of religious performances in the public sphere. While much of the readings provide the theoretical tools for analyzing these enactments, we also examine particular ethnographic case studies.

Performance Composition: Sentimentality in Performance

Carmelita Tropicana

H42.2730-001 (Albert #70592)

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

719 Broadway, Room 606

Limited Enrollment. This course counts as a practical course.

To be Sentimental or not, that is the question. This course is a writing and performance studio course led by performance artist Carmelita Tropicana that explores the use and/or exclusion of sentimentality in work. The class will look at the work of Kiki Smith, Joseph Cornell, Douglas Sirk, Wong War Kai, and Kiki and Herb. Students will be given writing exercises based on those of Maria Irene Fornes to create and develop original performance pieces.

Carmelita Tropicana, the Cuban-born writer/performance artist and actress received an Obie award in 1999 for "Sustained Excellence in Performance" and was named "One of the Most Notable Women of 1998" by the Spanish-language daily, *El Diario*. She and director Ela Troyano won the best short at the Berlin Film Festival in 1994 for their collaboration on *Carmelita Tropicana: Your Kunst is Your Waffeln*. Most recently, her collaboration with Marga Gomez, *Single Wet Female*, earned a 2002 nomination for the GLAAD Award in Outstanding Theater.

Her latest solo *With What Ass Does the Cockroach Sit* hit the Off Broadway Intar Theater in 2004. In 2000, Beacon Press published the first comprehensive collection of plays and scripts *I, Carmelita Tropicana--Performing Between Cultures*, a Lambda Award nominee in theatre.

As a veteran performer her work has been presented at venues including the ICA in London, Centre de Cultura Contemporanea in Barcelona, Thalia Theater in Hamburg. In the U.S. she has been seen at Joe's Pub in New York City, the Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis, the Brava Theater in San Francisco. She translated as well as starred (in Spanish) in the critically acclaimed Off Broadway solo *Late Nite Catechism*.

Ms. Tropicana has received numerous writing and performance awards from groups including the New York Foundation for the Arts, and the Mark Taper Forum's Latino Initiative.

Performing Bodies of Feminist Theory: Political Economy and the State

Patricia Ticineto Clough

H42.2404 -001 (Albert #75687)

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

719 Broadway, Room 606

This course looks at certain threads in feminist theorizing of the present and over the past thirty years of the twentieth century and the way they have performed in the context of the changing relationship of political economy and the state. Certain theoretico-political rearrangements will be considered: production of unconscious desire and circulation of affect; human motives and inhuman forces; bodies and assemblages; progress and artificial selection; language and code; sexed/gendered/racial identifications and biomolecular transmutation; systemic and metastability; recovered memory and mnemonic control.

Patricia Ticineto Clough is professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at the Graduate Center and Queens College of the City University of New York. She is author of *Autoaffection: Unconscious Thought in the Age of Teletechnology* (2000); *Feminist Thought: Desire, Power and Academic Discourse* (1994) and *The End(s) of Ethnography: From Realism to Social Criticism* (second edition, 1998). She has recently edited a collection of essays entitled, *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*, (forthcoming, May 2007). Clough's work draws both on theoretical traditions concerned with technology, affect and unconscious desire and is informed by her engagement with human rights in a global context and with formerly imprisoned populations in the U.S.

Performances of Great Magnitude

Richard Schechner

H42.2214-001 (Albert #75683)

Thursdays 3:30 pm – 6:30 pm, 4 points

719 Broadway, Room 606

Most orthodox theatrical performances last 2 to 4 hours and take place in a single venue. Performances of great magnitude extend for weeks or months and take place in large spaces and often multiple locations. Some performances of great magnitude are rituals, some are artworks, some are sports, some are political, some are warfare. Examples of performances of great magnitude are the medieval cycle plays of Europe, Carnivals in Trinidad, Rio, Rome, and New Orleans, the monumental works of Cristo and Jean-Claude, the Burning Man gathering in Nevada, the One Year Performances of Tehching Hsieh, Dance Marathons, the Olympic Games, the Lent-to-Easter Waehma of the Yaquis of Mexico and the American Southwest, the Ramlila of Ramnagar, north India ... and many more.

In this course, we will concentrate on representative examples. We will focus on: the Ramlila of Ramnagar; Carnival; the "Home, New Orleans?" project; Yaqui Waehma; Dance Marathons; Tehching Hsieh; Burning Man; Cristo and Jeanne-Claude; the Olympics; Political Campaigns; War. These performances will be examined in their ritual, social, historical, aesthetic, and performative contexts. Readings will be of primary texts and Western and non-Western scholarship.

Students are required to give classroom reports and to write a final paper.

Verbal Art as Performance: The Performed Story in Culture

Kay Turner

H42.0302.001 (Albert #76025)

Thursdays 6:45 pm – 9:30 pm, 4 points

719 Broadway, Room 606

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.*

Projects in Performance Studies

Karen Shimakawa

H42.2000-001 (Albert #70575)

Fridays 9:30 - 12:15pm, 4 points

719 Broadway, Room 606

This course is required of all MA students. This course requires an access codes for registration. Please see Jason Beckerman for access codes.

Students must also register for one of the following discussion sections (locations are listed next to each section):

Section 2 - (Albert #70576) – Silver Center Room 721

Section 3 - (Albert #70577) – Silver Center Room 718

Section 4 - (Albert #70578) – Silver Center Room 702

Section 5 - (Albert #70579) – Silver Center Room 505

Section 6 - (Albert #76024) – 721 Broadway, Room 606

This course will run primarily as a workshop in which current MA students will begin with a paper or performance piece begun in a previous PS course and develop that project into a fuller research project. Part of the time will be spent in small (TA-led) workshops; the rest of the time will be spent en masse, where we will discuss strategies for revision, publication, and/or production. The course culminates in a symposium in which graduating MA students present an excerpt or precis of that research to the department.