**PERFORMING PROTEST**

Performance Studies Serap Erincin Department of Communication seraperincin@lsu.edu

Louisiana State University Office Hours: Wed 2.30pm – 3.30pm

Wed: 3.30pm – 6.20pm Office: 227 Coates

137 Coates (225) 578-4172

In this course you will conceptualize, devise, direct, and perform solo or collaborative pieces that we will broadly consider as protest performance. We will experiment with how individual experiences and imagination can become material for works of art while maintaining broader social and political themes.

Through works of dance, theatre, performative writing, media and performance art and public demonstrations, artists and activists theorize and practice performance (broadly construed) as a means for protest and social justice. Artistic and social performances about racial, ethnic, and gender inequalities and conflict, state oppression and violence, and other injustices bring visibility to the issues they address.

In this course, we will also engage with critical and philosophical texts that deal with protest performances, especially those concerning disenfranchised populations. We will read authors who provide theoretical frameworks, authors who pose global questions through case studies, and authors who pursue thematic approaches at the intersection of social justice and performance studies scholarship.

We will also discuss protest performances, especially those by or that advocate for minorities and women. We will emphasize the transnational and cross-cultural politics of such praxis as well as the relationship between social media, technology, and communication.

Finally, participants will critically and artistically inquire into philosophical, political, or cultural questions of individual issues through their own performance. You may create a live, visual, literary, or media performance and write an artist’s statement. Alternatively, you may write a 12-15 page research paper on a work or event of your choosing.

You will develop several pieces of live, visual, or media art pieces throughout the semester, contribute to the class blog, and write in other capacities. This course emphasizes the relationship between theory and practice. Class meetings will be composed of a combination of lecture, discussion, in-class viewings, and

student presentations/performances.

**Required Books**

I will make all required reading available through a shared (digital) Dropbox folder, moodle, or email. I highly recommend you have the books we’ll read in hard copy.

I highly

recommend you have the following book in hard copy.

Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida. (NY: Hill and Wang), 1981

I may make adjustments to the syllabus depending on the students’ interests and the current events in the next couple of weeks.

**Class Blog URL: http://performingprotest.blogspot.com/**

**Course Schedule**

**In addition to the below each week we will view works and discuss previous week’s practices.**

**Introduction**

August 23rd Introductions

Performance exercise: the Bag

Discuss the assignments for the semester.

**Week 1**

Aug 30th Response 1

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), 1984.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CAT.aspx>

Performance exercise

In-class reading: Richard Schechner “Performance Studies: the broad

spectrum approach”

Due: See Handout

**Week 2**

Sep. 6th Response/ Presentation 1

Peggy Phelan, “The Ontology of Performance,” in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, p. 146-66 (notes 191-92)

“Passing for White, Passing for Black” by Adrian Piper

<http://www.adrianpiper.com/docs/Passing.pdf>

Performance exercise

Due: See Handout

**Week 3**

Sep. 13th Response/ Presentation 2

Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution,” Theatre Journal 40.4 (December 1988): 519-531

Richard Schechner "What is Performance Studies" and "What is

Performance?" Performance Studies: An Introduction London; New York:

Routledge, 2007 1-52

Performance exercise

Due: See Handout

**Week 4**

Sep. 20th Field Trip

Response

*Taking it to the Streets: The Social Protest Theater of Luiz Valdez and Amiri Baraka* by Harry J. Elam, Jr.

**Week 5**

Sep. 27th Response/ Presentation 3 and Presentation 4

“The White to be Angry: Vaginal Creme Davis’s Terrorist Drag” *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. 1999

You should decide which performance you will see at the end of October.

Performance Exercise

Due: See Handout

**Week 6**

Oct. 4th Response/ Presentation 5

*Cultural Heritage in Transit: Intangible Rights as Human Rights* ed. Deborah Kapchan

J.L. Austin, Lectures 1-3 in How To Do Things With Words, p. 1-38

Performance exercise

Due: See Handout

**Week 7**

Oct. 11th Response/ Presentation 6

Diana Taylor, “Trapped in Bad Scripts: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo” in *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina’s ‘Dirty War’*  pp. 183-222.

Barthes, Roland. Camera Lucida. (NY: Hill and Wang), 1981

Performance exercise

Due: See Handout

**Week 8**

Oct. 18 Response/ Presentation 7

Douglas Crimp, “Mourning and Militancy,” *October* 51 (Winter 1989): pp. 3-18

In class viewing and discussion: *Stop the Church* by Act Up

Performance exercise

Due: See Handout

**Week 9**

Oct. 25th Response/ Presentation 8

*Cultural Struggles: Performance, Ethnography, Praxis* by Dwight Conquergood.

In class viewing and discussion: Walid Raad and the Atlas Group

Due: Final Project: Outline

Performance exercise

**Week 10**

Nov. 1st Response/ Presentation 9

*Engaged Resistance: American Indian Art, Literature, and Film from Alcatraz to the NMAI* by Dean Reader

Performance exercise

**Week 11**

Nov. 8th Response/ Presentation 11

*Acts of Activism: Human Rights as Radical Performance* by Soyini Madison

Due: Final Project: Rough Draft

Rehearsal—Workshop—Rewrite—Discuss Final Projects

Performance Seeing Assignment

Assignment Due: Performance Review (3 double spaced pages).

**Week 12**

Nov. 15th Field Trip

Response

*The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco* by Susan Slyomovics

**Week 13**

Thanksgiving

**Week 14**

Nov. 29th Final Performance Rehearsals

**Final Projects/Performances: Artist’s Statements Due in Hard Copy**

**Tentative: Nov. 29th evening: Performance Night/ Conference, open to public:**

**As artist scholars you will first present your artist’s statement (5 mins) and then perform your projects. Party follows.**

**Performance Assignment**

You are all expected to see a performance during the last week of October. You will decide in September which performance you want to see. The choice will be conferred with me. Each of you will write your own performance analysis. The nature of the assignment will be discussed in further detail in class. The review will be 3-4 (double-spaced) pages.

**Presentations**

Each week a participant will give a ten to fifteen minute presentation on that week’s reading/viewing. You are expected to think critically on the readings and prepare for a conversation.

**Final Project**

Ideally, you will start thinking about your final project immediately. Your final project may be a 5-10 minute performance/an installation/video art/media art accompanied by a 4-5 page artist’s statement or a lecture performance. You may also write a 12-15 page research paper.

**Blog**

**Before 11pm every Tuesday** you will post seven to ten points from the reading and viewing due that week that seem significant to you and that outline the material (we’ll call this a map of the material).

At the end of each week, **before Friday at 8 pm**, you are all expected to post at least one response (between one to three paragraphs) to the previous week’s readings, presentation, class discussion, and the viewings. Think of this as a space where the conversation continues after class.

**Office Hour**

Each of you will sign up for a 15 minute appointment to meet with me during my office hours during September so we can discuss your ideas for the final project and any other concerns.

Always feel free to talk to me during my office hours. Also, feel free to contact me on email for any questions you might have.

Only in an emergency and during class time, call the office phone to leave a message.

**Academic Integrity**

I fully support LSU Academic Integrity Policy.

Please visit the website and read this policy:

<https://www.lsu.edu/lsuonline/docs/Academic-Integrity-Orientation-Moodle-Module.pdf>

I also suggest this tutorial:

<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/services/copyright/tutorials/plagiarism>

**Grading**

This is a participatory and interactive course. You are all expected to attend each session. If you are ill or experiencing another emergency that is preventing you from attending class please email me in advance as your absence will effect the planned activities.

Performance Review 10%

Presentation 10%

Final Performance and Artist’s Statement 35%

Participation 25%

Blog 20%

I will welcome any positive attempt from participants to learn better and get a higher grade. This means that I will give you a chance to rewrite/redo your assignments if you can make an argument for it. I will take an average of the two grades. If your grade is higher, your conclusive grade will be higher.

Students in need of academic accommodations for a disability may consult with Students with Disabilities Services to arrange appropriate accommodations. Students are required to give reasonable notice prior to requesting an accommodation.