CMST 2040: INTRODUCTION TO PERFORMING LITERATURE

Coates Hall 137 (HopKins Black Box Theatre)
Section 01 meets MWF 8:30-9:20am; Section 02 meets MWF 9:30-10:20am

Instructor: Bonny McDonald  
Office: 311 Coates
Email: bmcdo21@lsu.edu  
Office Hours: MW 10:30-12:30pm
Mailbox: 136 Coates Hall

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Assignment sheets will be available on Moodle.

COURSE DESCRIPTION/GOALS

CMST 2040 is a General Education Humanities Course designed to familiarize students with the study of literature through performance. Based on the assumption that performance is a method of understanding and enjoying literature as an expression of profound human experience, we will explore different methods of performing texts as well as learning to write about literary texts, performances, and performing.

As a General Education Humanities Course, CMST 2040 will teach students an awareness of, and the ability to formulate, rational interpretations of human experience, and enrich their competency in written and oral communication.

Through the semester we hope to:

• Ignite, engage, and embody imaginative and intellectual responses to imaginary worlds, literary texts, and language.
• Stimulate an awareness of the dramatistic potential of all literature.
• Deepen appreciation of and empathy toward self and other as they interact in engaging human experience.
• Activate a flexible, effective, and expressive voice in the performance of literature.
• Develop a responsive and expressive body in the performance of literature.
• Sharpen written and oral communication skills.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

Social Contract: As members of a learning community, instructors and students agree to a tacit social contract. That contract ensures that all participants will attend every class meeting, engage one another in an informed, spirited, and respectful manner, and complete all assigned responsibilities on time. In other words, when you signed up for this course, participation became one of your major assigned responsibilities. Since I will ask you to take personal and academic risks in this class, you and others benefit by preparing for every class, by offering honest and kind feedback, and by entering the black box space with full energy and attention.
Active Participation: One way to confront communication, public speaking, and/or performance anxiety is by practicing in less formal settings, and active class participation is a great way to do this. I define active participation as follows: responding to instructor questions or otherwise contributing to class discussions, offering constructive suggestions or asking thoughtful questions after performances and during workshops, participating fully in group activities and in-class assignments. **If you simply attend class but do not actively participate, you will not receive full credit for class participation.** Each class day, I will evaluate your participation and record it with a ++ (best), + (good), 0 neutral, -(lackluster), -(poor) on the attendance sheet, making a final tally at the end of the semester worth 50% of your participation grade. Participation in class activities will also help you prepare for and perform in your three in-class workshops and three major performances. **Participation points may not be made up outside of class.**

Attendance Policy: You are allowed 3 no-questions-asked unexcused absences throughout the semester; additional absences will result in a full letter grade deduction from your final grade. This includes doctor appointments, sicknesses, funerals, and flat tires. The only absences excused from this policy are university-sponsored events, with full documentation, preferably before the date of the absence. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to keep up with the assignments in the course. Please do not ask me to sit down with you to go over what you have missed—it is your responsibility to catch up.

**MAJOR PERFORMANCES**

- All performances must be **completely memorized.**
- All performances will include a written component (e.g. written script and/or character work), which will be counted as part of the performance grade.
- It is imperative (due to the time constraints of the semester) that **performances are given on the days they are scheduled.** You will have ample time to check your personal schedule and request or sign up for specific performance days before the schedule is posted. Please plan ahead. **Once workshop and performance schedules are finalized, and I have posted scheduled dates, it will be up to you to initiate a date switch with one of your classmates.** Please DO NOT ask me to change your performance date after it has been posted. The answer is no.
- Failure to perform on an assigned day will result in the reduction of one letter grade for each class period missed until the performance is completed.
- If you are absent or tardy on a performance day, and you miss your assigned slot, you will NOT automatically be granted a make-up slot. Make-ups will be scheduled on a case-by-case basis, and absences MUST be accompanied by a note stating the date and reason for your absence (i.e. verifiable emergencies & university excused absences). Whether you will be able to make up your performance for full or partial credit will be at my discretion, and determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Please make every effort to be on time to class on all performance and workshop days. If you are late to class on a performance day, please wait in the hallway and listen for applause before entering the room so that you do not disrupt someone else’s performance.
- A large part of performance is having an audience to perform for, and learning how to be an engaged audience member. If you miss any performance day without a university excused absence (even if you are not scheduled to perform that day), your own performance grade will be penalized by 20%.
  o Please speak to me at the beginning of the semester about any university excused sports-related travel so we can schedule your performances and workshops accordingly.
  o If you notice a conflict at the beginning of the semester regarding a specific performance or workshop date, speak to me ahead of time and I can try to make arrangements for you to perform on another
date. Again, this is only if you speak to me within a reasonable amount of time, which is at least two weeks before the performance or workshop date. Whether I accept your reason for needing to change the date is at my discretion.

**PERFORMANCE WORKSHOPS**

- Workshops are a mandatory part of this class, and a necessary part of building a successful final performance. Come to each workshop with an open mind and a willingness to experiment with the input of your peers. During workshops, we will work with students to develop and refine their ideas about staging and performing the material they have chosen.
- To receive FULL workshop points, you must be fully memorized on the day of your workshop, have made the required number of staging/character choices, and actively participate in discussing your fellow classmates’ workshop performances by offering thoughts or suggestions.
- If you are not fully memorized or have not made the required performance choices on the day of your workshop, you will only be able to earn up to 50% of the possible points for that session.
- If it is clear that you have not attempted to memorize your performance or make any performance choices prior to class, on your workshop day, you will be asked to sit down and you will receive a zero for your workshop. Also, if you do not show up to class on the day of your workshop and cannot provide me with a university excused absence, you will receive a zero for your workshop.
- Workshop points are included as 50% your class participation grade.

**WRITTEN WORK**

Part of understanding performance is learning how to articulate your response to performance. You will be expected to produce two written responses to performances, a 5 page paper, and less than one page for each performance explaining your text and performance choices. For this reason, the quality of your writing matters and is part of the content of this course. I will evaluate your writing in terms of both content and style. Style includes components such as paper organization, sentence structure, accurate word choice, typographical mistakes, spelling, and basic grammar errors.

**PERFORMANCE SELECTIONS:** For the prose and poetry performances, you will be required to turn in a typed sheet that includes the title of your selection, the author's name, the page number of the text, and 1-2 paragraphs as to what drew you to the text/why you chose to explore it via performance. For the final compiled performance, you will include your name, a title for your performance, and a brief artist statement addressing the compilation.

**CRITIQUE PAPER**

Toward the middle of the semester, I will ask you to write a five-page paper analyzing and critiquing a fellow classmate’s performance. The classmate you will critique will be chosen at random by me. Based on the analysis of your classmate's texts, your observation and participation in their workshop, and their final performance, you will critique your classmates adaptation of their text, using Burke’s Pentad as a frame. The paper MUST be written in Goudy Old Style or Times New Roman 12-point font, with one-inch margins, double-spaced, with no unnecessary or extra spacing between paragraphs. It should be clear and concise, with concrete examples. Make sure you have an introduction, body, and a conclusion. If you fail to turn in this paper on or before its due date, I will deduct one letter grade per day overdue. A detailed assignment sheet will be posted on Moodle.
HBB PERFORMANCE RESPONSES

The Black Box theatre serves not only as a classroom space, but also as an experimental laboratory theatre space where faculty and graduate students produce and direct full-length performance productions and guest artists perform and/or host workshops. For students of performance, these productions provide an invaluable opportunity to broaden their understanding of performance as object of analysis and a method for approaching a wide variety of cultural texts. Thus, you are required to attend two black box productions over the course of the semester and turn in a 1 to 2 page written response.

Responses are due in class on the Wednesday following the performance (unless otherwise noted) and guidelines for these responses will be posted to Moodle. HBB performances take place on Wed.–Sat. evenings and on some Sun. afternoons throughout the semester. Please look at the HBB schedule carefully and plan accordingly. I also highly suggest that you call the HBB (225-578-4172) to reserve tickets before the performance you plan to attend, as seating is generally limited. There are no make up options for these responses, as you will have a number of opportunities over the course of the semester to attend HBB performances.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

Cellphones and Computers: All cellphones should be turned OFF and put away upon entering the Black Box. Vibrate isn’t an acceptable option. If you’re caught texting at any point during class, you will be asked to leave. If your phone makes any sort of noise whatsoever during a performance or workshop, be it a ring or a vibration, you will be docked 50% of your performance or workshop grade. Same goes for checking email, Facebook, surfing the web, etc. Computers should be turned off/kept out of sight, particularly on all workshop and performance days.

Email: I often use email to maintain communication with the class, post workshop and performance dates, and/or send updated class schedules. Please check your email regularly for announcements. It is your responsibility to remain aware of all emailed comments, announcements, notes, and changes.

The end of semester temporary empathy lapse: The last two weeks of the semester are stressful for everyone. Please keep in mind that I am significantly more able to help you raise your grade early in the semester than later on. A lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine.

Know thine honor code: Particularly as it relates to plagiarism. If you are caught plagiarizing a paper, or cheating on a quiz or exam, it is ground for FAILING the assignment, and possibly the course. Just don’t do it. If you’re not sure how to properly cite something, look it up in a style manual or ask a librarian. They are experts and extremely helpful. Consult your student handbook for further guidelines about academic misconduct.

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office for Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive the accommodation letters, please make an appointment to meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

GRADES
If you wish to discuss your grade on a particular assignment or in the course overall:

- Grades will not be discussed via email or telephone (this is a university-wide policy, to protect your privacy). Please do not email me with specific questions about your grades.
- Additionally, please don’t approach me with questions about your grades right before or after class in the Black Box. Instead, come to my office hours or contact me for an appointment. If possible, stop by or request a meeting within a week of getting your grade.
- Grades will not be discussed within the first 24 hours after you have received your grade, or if it has been more than two weeks since the grade was posted to Moodle.
- Feel free to make an appointment to discuss your work before the assignment is due. I am more than happy to help you create your best work!

### Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Points possible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performances:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Poetry Performance</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prose Performance</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Compiled Performance</td>
<td>125</td>
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<tr>
<td>Test</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written work:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HopKins Black Box response #1</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>HopKins Black Box response #2</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five-Page Critique Paper</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compiled Performance Artist Statement</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class Participation</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops (3 @ 25 pts)</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Check Quizzes</td>
<td>50</td>
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**Total Points Possible:** 1000

A=1000-900  B=899-800  C=799-700  D=699-600  F= 600-0

"A" does NOT mean you have simply successfully completed all assignments. It means you have been consistent and have **exelled** in performances and written work. An "A" student makes me say "Wow!" on a regular basis.

"B" means you have completed all assignments **and** have gone the **extra step** beyond. A "B" indicates that you have thoroughly prepared, followed the assignment requirements, and made the audience/reader interested in your work.

"C" means you have successfully accomplished the assignments and are able to construct and deliver a solid performance or written assignment.

"D" and "F" indicate you have not met the basic criteria of assignments and/or you have turned in or presented deficient work.
SYLLABUS CONTRACT - CMST 2040, FALL 2013

Due in class on Friday, August 30th

**Student may not receive credit on any assignments, in or out of class, without turning in this contract.

I confirm that I have read the syllabus for CMST 2040 (Instructor: Bonny McDonald/Fall Semester 2013), and understand and will abide by the expectations and the course policies detailed therein.

____________________________________  ______________________
Signature                                      Date

____________________________________
Print Name Clearly