**THEORIES OF PERFORMING PROTEST**

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

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

Th: 3.00pm – 5.50pm Office: 227 Coates

137 Coates

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 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 engage with critical and philosophical texts that deal with performing protest, 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. Especially in the last decade, new media such as social media has established new boundaries in human communication. Through cultural theory, phenomenology, and neuroscience, we will also consider questions surrounding technologies of the body and essentials of human connection such as empathy. Finally, participants will critically inquire into philosophical, political, or cultural questions through a work or event of their choosing. Alternatively, they may create a live, visual, literary, or media performance and write an artist’s statement.

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

**Class Blog URL: https://theoriesofperformingprotest.blogspot.com/**

**Course Schedule**

**Introduction**

August 24th Introductions

Performance exercise: the Bag

Discuss the assignments for the semester.

**Week 1**

Aug 31st Response 1

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

Convention on all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979.

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

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

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

*Civil Disobedience* by Henry David Thoreau (available for free on Amazon)

Recommended:

International Covenants on Civil & Political Rights, 1966

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>

International Covenants on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights, 1966.

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

In-class viewing and discussion: *The Salt March*

Performance exercise

**Week 2**

Sep. 7th Response/ Presentation 2

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>

“Stumbling Dance” in *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* by André Lepecki

In-class viewing and discussion: *Cornered* by Adrian Piper

Civil Rights Movement

Performance exercise

**Week 3**

Sep. 14th Response/ Presentation 3

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

Andy Parker & Eve Sedgewick, “Introduction” in *Performativity and Performance.* Routledge 1995. pp. 1-18

Richard Schechner, “Performativity” in *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, pp. 122-168

Recommended: Ann Pellegrini, “Femmes Futiles” and “The Included Middle” from *Performance Anxieties: Staging Psychoanalysis, Staging Race*. New York: Routledge, 1997. pp. 131-156

Schneider, Rebecca. The Explicit Body in Performance. London:

Routledge, 1997.

In-class viewing and discussion: Feminist performance

**Week 4**

Sep. 21st Field Trip

Response

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

*Staging America : cornerstone and community-based theater* by Sonja Kuftinec

"The Street Scene: A Basic Model for an Epic Theatre" by Bertolt Brecht.

Recommended: May Joseph. “Nomadic Citizenship” from *Nomadic Identities: the Performance of Citizenship*. University of Minnesota, 1999. pp. 69-87.

“Confronting governments: human rights” by Michel Foucault

**Week 5**

Sep. 28th Response/ Presentation 4 and Presentation 5

José Muñoz, “Introduction: Performing Disidentifications” in *Disidentifications: queers of color and the performance of politics*. University of Minnesota Press, 1999. pp. 1-35.

“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

*Utopia in Performance* by Jill Dolan, Chapters 2 and 6

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

Performance Exercise

In-class viewing and discussion: excerpts from *The Philosophical Tantrum* and *A Poetic Disobedience Declaration* by Guillermo Gómez-Peña

**Week 6**

Oct. 5th Response/ Presentation 6

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

Diana Taylor, “Acts of Transfer,” in *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003. pp. 1-52.

Performance exercise

In class viewing and discussion: *Couple in a Cage /* G. Gomez-Pena

**Week 7**

Oct. 12th Response/ Presentation 7

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.

Barbara Browning, “Samba: The Body Articulate” from *Samba: Resistance in Motion*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995. pp. 1-34

In class viewing and discussion: Jesusa Rodriguez

**Week 8**

Oct. 26th Response/ Presentation 8

Randy Martin.  “When Consciousness is Not Enough” and “Locating the Body” from *Performance as Political Act: the Embodied Self*. New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1990. pp. 1-12 and pp. 51-81

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

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

*Angels in America* by Tony Kushner

Performance exercise

**Week 9**

Nov 2nd Response/ Presentation 9

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

*Orientalism* by Edward W. Said

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

Due: Final Project: Outline

**Week 10**

Nov. 9th Response/ Presentation 11

*Acts of Activism: Human Rights as Radical Performance* by Soyini Madison (digital copy available online through USF library )

*Performing South Africa's Truth Commission: Stages of Transition*by Catherine M. Cole

Due: Final Project: Rough Draft

**Week 11**

Nov. 16th Field Trip

Performance Seeing Assignment

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

**Week 12**

Nov. 30th Performance Lectures / Rehearsal

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

**Tentative: Nov. 30th 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 Wednesday** 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.

**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.