

CMST 2040 (001): Performance of Literature

Department of Communication Studies | College of Humanities and Social Sciences

NAME: _____

(Print the document, write your name on it and place it in your folder.)

Is there another language, just as exacting for the author, as a language of words? Is there a language of actions, a language of sounds – a language of word-as-part-of-movement, of word-as-lie, word-as-parody, of word-as-rubbish, of word-as-contradiction, of word-shock or word-cry! If we talk of the more-than-literal, if poetry means that which crams more and penetrates deeper – is this where it lies? (Peter Brook, *Empty Space*, The Holy Theatre, p. 49)

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Mail-box	136 Coates (CMST Main Office)
Section 1	MWF 9:30-10:20
Class	137 Coates / HopKins Black Box Theatre

* I adapted or borrowed key wording, assignments, and general notions in this syllabus from Naomi Bennett, Chris Collins, Greg Langner, Bonny McDonald, and Tracy Stephenson Shaffer.

Required Textbook:

Pelias, Ronald J. and Tracy Stephenson Shafer. *Performance Studies: The Interpretation of Aesthetic Texts* (2nd Edition). Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 2007.

Source Texts:

Collins, Billy, ed. *Poetry 180: A Turning Back to Poetry*. New York: Random House, 2003.

Shapard, Robert and James Thomas. *New Sudden Fiction: Short-short Stories from America and Beyond*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.

Stern, Jerome, ed. *Microfiction: An Anthology of Really Short Stories*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Course Overview and Outcomes:

CMST 2040 is an introductory-level Communication course designed to familiarize students with the study of literature through performance, and vice versa. We recognize performance as a method of understanding and enjoying literature, which itself is a profound expression of human experience. We explore different methods for *performing* texts (poetry, prose and drama), as well as methods for learning to *write about* literary texts through the lens of performance.

AIMS:

- Sharpen and enhance both **written** and **verbal communication skills**.
- Stimulate an awareness of the **dramatic potential** of all literature.
- Learn how to **creatively** and **critically** respond to literary texts and live performance.
- Deepen appreciation of and empathy towards **‘self’** and **‘other’** as fundamental constituents of culture, literature, arts and performance.
- Activate a **flexible, responsive, and expressive voice** and **body** in aesthetic performance and everyday life.
- Learn ways to work with **the body as a site of personal, cultural and political exploration, and transformation**.

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What do I expect from you?

1. Professional Conduct:

- **Efficient communication** with the instructor and classmates is essential for success. Please use your LSU email address when contacting me, and always write the code of the course and the section number on the subject line before the title of your email. Start and end your emails with a proper greeting. Please use clear and proper language (not misspelling or incomplete sentences!) and always respond when I have answered your email, even if it is a simple “thank you.” It’s your responsibility to check your LSU email and Moodle regularly. When I send a group email, I accept one person as the group messenger to respond to me in the name of the whole class. Make sure you have a virtual discussion group to contact the whole class when it is needed.

- **Punctuality and Absence Policy:** Firstly, this is a **practice-based course** in which you are expected to be present and ready at all times to fully take part in the process of ‘doing performance.’ You cannot earn a passing grade by only showing up on your performance day and the exams. Secondly, **punctuality** is absolutely fundamental for the work. I do not tolerate a habit of walking in late. To avoid that, come to class five minutes in advance to get prepared. If you are late, come in very quietly. If you are late more than ten minutes on a non-performance day, **do not come in.** Being absent on a presentation, workshop, performance or exam day without prior and fully documented excuse will result in getting an F for that assignment. (For more details, look at In-Class Participation under Assignments & Grades.)

- **Respect:** We want to build a space of **mutual respect** where people avoid disrupting the flow. For example, interrupting someone’s speech or performance, leaving and coming back to class in an arbitrary manner, and exiting the room before we finish the class is **unacceptable**. In relation to that, **NO CELL PHONES, IPADS, and LAPTOPS** are allowed to be used in the space unless otherwise specified for an assignment. Please put your phones away and on mute (no vibration) before you enter the room. If I see anyone with their phone or if your phone rings during another student’s performance, you will automatically **lose 20% of your grade** on that same performance.

2. Clothing and Class Materials:

- Come to class with comfortable clothes and sneakers to be able to move freely.
- You are **NOT** allowed to eat, drink (except water) or chew gum in the space.
- You will need to have a 2040 folder (to collect all printed material) and a personal journal to take notes and make a portfolio of your work. You’re required to bring them to the class at all times.
- You need to have a hard copy of the required text book and bring it with you on the days of assigned chapters. You can have the other source books either as a hard copy or a digital copy only if the entire book is available online. You will chose your texts from those sources as well as some additional ones I will provide.

3. Submission of Assignments: You will have short in-class presentations of the readings, three papers (two short, one medium length) and various other small tasks you will be assigned during the semester. All the written assignments should be typed in a Word document and submitted in a hard copy in class on the day of the deadline. Only email me your assignments when I ask you to do so. If your assignment is late by one day, I will deduct 15%. If it’s late two days, I will deduct 25%. If it’s late 2-4 days, I will deduct 50%. I will not accept your assignment more than 4 days after the deadline.

4. Attendance at Hopkins Black Box Productions: You are required to attend two of the following three productions of HBB this semester for your performance critique paper. Your options are (1) *(dis)embodied in space* (January 23-27), (2) *Burnt City* (February 20-23), and (3) *Ofelias* (March 27-30) (For details of Performance Critique paper, look at Assignments &

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Grades). Specific performance times for each production and reservation information can be viewed on the poster on the door of HBB, [HopKins Black Box Theatre web-page](#) and the [Facebook page](#).

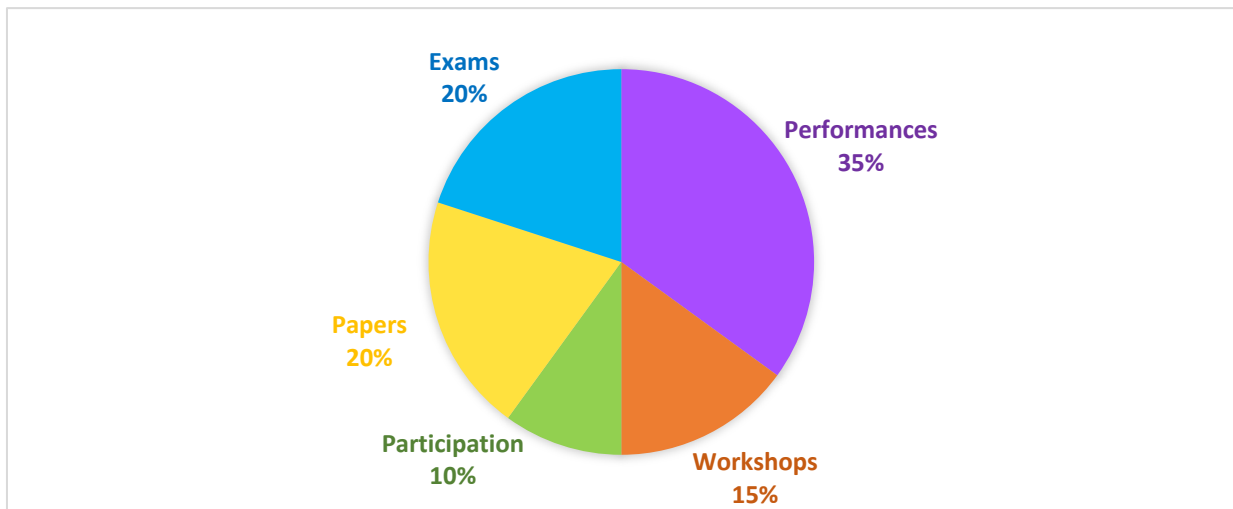
Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. You are required to familiarize yourself with the [Code of Conduct and Plagiarism of LSU](#). If you're not sure how to properly cite something: 1) use [Moodle Module on Academic Integrity](#), 2) look it up in a style manual or ask a librarian, 3) consult your student handbook for further guidelines about academic misconduct. If I detect any (intentional or unintentional) plagiarized material in a paper, exam, or other assignment, I will report the material to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability (SAA). This will be written in your student record, you will fail the assignment and may fail the entire class.

Special Needs Accommodation

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 with [LSU Disability Services](#) (124 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations can be arranged. After you receive the accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations during the first two weeks of class.

Assignments & Grades



a. (3) Performances (each out of 100 points): 35% of your total grade

**All performances are required to be fully memorized.*

Poetry Performance (10%): 2-3 minute performance of an approved poetry selection.

Prose Performance (10%): 3-5 minute performance of an approved prose/narrative selection.

Compiled Performance (15%): 4-6 minutes solo or 9-12 minutes group performance of an approved, strategically compiled selection of multiple texts.

b. (3) Workshops (each out of 100 points): 15% of your total grade

You will be graded for each workshop series [poetry (5%), prose (5%), compiled (5%)] based on your **presence, preparation, memorization and active participation** in the exercises. Each

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unexcused absence on a workshop day result in 30% reduction from the grade of that workshop series.

c. In-Class Participation (out of 100 points): 10% of your total grade

You will never receive credit for simply showing up to class. Earning a “participation grade” means actively and consistently engaging in class discussions, lectures, and activities, and with a demonstrated understanding of the material.

Presentations of readings: 5%

Discussion of readings + small class assignments + class portfolio (a folder and a journal): 5%

Unexcused absences and late entrance:

3-5 absences: - 5 points	3-5 times late: - 5 points
6-8 absences: - 10 points	5-8 times late: - 7 points
9-11 absences: - 15 points	9-11 times late: - 15 points
More than 11 absences: - 25 points	More than 11 times late: - 25 points

**** Punctuality and absences:** Under any circumstances, except real emergencies, you are required to inform me about your absence at least 24 hours prior to the class time. Informing me does not automatically make it an EXCUSED absence. **An excused absence can be a serious health-related issue, supported by an official doctor’s report or a university-sponsored event, with full documentation.** If you are absent, it is your responsibility to keep up with the assignments in the course. Any unexcused absence more than 3 times will directly lower your in-class participation points. If you are late to class more than 3 times, this will also directly lower your in-class participation points.

d. (2) Performance Critique Papers (each out of 100 points): 10% of your total grade

You will attend two productions in the HopKins Black Box this semester. Write a 1.5 - 2 page (1.5 space, 12 font, Times New Roman) response to each performance. First, (1) provide an overall description of the show and its aesthetic; next, (2) interpret what you experienced, and what you think the show aimed to communicate; lastly, (3) make a clear connection between the performance, and your own performance work in this class. There will be no opportunity to make-up these written responses if you fail to attend.

e. Dramatistic (Pentadic) Analysis Paper (out of 100 points): 10% of your total grade

You will conduct a structured and thoughtful analysis of your own *Prose Performance* using Kenneth Burke’s Dramatistic Pentad (detailed in Chapter 5 of your textbook). 1.5 space, 12 font, Times New Roman, 4-5 pages.

f. (2) Exams (each out of 100 points): 20% of your total grade

Midterm Exam (10%): The exam will rely on certain chapters from the book and evaluate your capability of merging that information with the practical work in the class. It will be short (at least paragraph-long) answer (not multiple choice). Additional details will be provided in class as well as a full session for preparation.

Final Exam (10%): In the final, you will be *comprehensively* assessed on your readiness to apply what we have learned throughout the semester. It will not be a multiple choice exam. It will combine different components including writing, speaking and performing. Additional details will be provided in class as well as a full session for preparation.

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A+ (97% – 100%)	B+ (87% – 89%)	C+ (77% – 79%)	D+ (67% – 69%)	F (0% – 59%)
A (93% – 96%)	B (83% – 86%)	C (73% – 76%)	D (63% – 66%)	
A- (90% – 92%)	B- (80% – 82%)	C- (70% – 72%)	D- (60% – 62%)	

		Tentative Schedule		
W	Day	Date	Agenda	Materials & Deadlines
1	M	1/7	No class	
	W	1/9	Course Review + Group Introduction	
	F	1/11	Syllabus Review + Performance Training (Ensemble Making)	
2	M	1/14	Discussion: What is “performance”?	CH 1
	W	1/16	Performance Training (Impromptu Performances)	
	F	1/18	Discussion: What is Performance Studies?	CH 2
3	M	1/21	Martin Luther King Day Holiday	
	W	1/23	Poem Selection Discussion	Poem Selection due* HBB: <i>(dis)embodied in space</i>
	F	1/25	Performance Training + Discussion (The Voice and Body)	CH 6 HBB: <i>(dis)embodied in space</i>
4	M	1/28	Language and Structure of Aesthetic Texts	CH 8 & 9
	W	1/30	POETRY Workshop 1	
	F	2/1	POETRY Workshop 2	
5	M	2/4	POETRY Workshop 3	<i>(dis)embodied in space</i> Critique paper due*
	W	2/6	Poetry PERFORMANCES	
	F	2/8	Poetry PERFORMANCES	
6	M	2/11	Poetry PERFORMANCES	
	W	2/13	Poetry Performance Feedback + Evaluation	
	F	2/15	Preparation for Mid-term	
	M	2/18	Mid-term Exam	
	W	2/20	Everyday Storytelling	CH 4 HBB: <i>Burnt City</i>
	F	2/22	Dramatistic Approach	CH 5 HBB: <i>Burnt City</i> Prose selection due* HBB: <i>Burnt City</i>
8	M	2/25	Prose Selection Discussion	
	W	2/27	PROSE Performance Workshop 1	
	F	3/1	PROSE Performance Workshop 2	Prose memorized*
9	M	3/4	Mardi Gras Holiday	
	W	3/6		
	F	3/8	PROSE Performance Workshop 3	HBB: <i>Burnt City</i> Critique paper due*
10	M	3/11	Prose Performance Rehearsals	
	W	3/13	Prose PERFORMANCES	
	F	3/15	Prose PERFORMANCES	
	M	3/18	Prose PERFORMANCES	

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11	W	3/20	Empathy: The Understanding of Feelings	CH 7
	F	3/22	The Performative Role of the Audience The Evaluative Role of the Audience	CH 10 + CH 12
12	M	3/25	Performance Art + Compiled Performance Description	CH 11 Dramatistic A. Paper due*
	W	3/27	Compiled Performance Planning	HBB: <i>Ofelias</i>
	F	3/29	Compiled Performance Workshop 1	HBB: <i>Ofelias</i>
13	M	4/1	Compiled Performance Workshop 2	Compiled memorised.*
	W	4/3	Compiled Performance Workshop 3	
	F	4/5	Compiled Performance Rehearsals	
14	M	4/8	Compiled PERFORMANCES	
	W	4/10	Compiled PERFORMANCES	
	F	4/12	Compiled PERFORMANCES	
15	M	4/15	Spring Break	
	W	4/17		
	F	4/19		
16	M	4/22	Extra Performance Day + Showcase rehearsal	<i>Ofelias</i> Critique paper due*
	W	4/24	Evaluation of Compiled Performances	HBB: <i>Spring Showcase</i>
	F	4/26	Final Exam Preparation	
17	W	5/1	Final Exam	12:30 - 2:30 @ HBB

CMST 4200 Practicum

Need credit and interested in working in a community of performance makers?

(3 credit units for 40 hours of practical and creative work in the Hopkins Black Box Theatre)

During each semester, the Communication/Performance Studies Department will offer several performance hours and productions here in the HopKins Black Box directed by faculty and graduate students. The practicum course in performance studies is used for students who are working on a specific faculty-led project, like a performance in the HopKins Black Box. Alternatively, you could complete the practicum hours by working on several shows, spread out over the semester, doing things like running the box office on show nights, or working on technical elements (props, costumes, lights, projections, etc.). Sometimes practicum students perform, serve as stage manager, or assist the director. As students in a performance class, you are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities to see and participate in these productions. Check the bulletin board outside the Black Box for announcements of upcoming events and visit our web pages at www.lsu.edu/hbb or on Facebook. If you are interested in that, please email me or come and talk to me in the first few days of the semester. The last day of adding a course is **January 18th**. You need to confirm with me at least 24 hours prior to this deadline.