COGR 275: Performance Theory
Fall 2008
Thursdays 2:00-4:50pm
MCC 201

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Course Description: In the past several decades, Performance Studies has coalesced into a far-reaching discipline—or, in the words of some, an “anti-discipline”—that brings together critical work from the fields of anthropology, art history, communication, critical gender studies, ethnic studies, film studies, literature, and theater studies. This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the foundations of Performance Studies not by tracing any given genealogy, but rather by exploring themes central to the discipline. We will read the writing of a broad range of scholars, concurrently reviewing the performance, film, and photography of a number of contemporary artists. Students in the course will be required to participate actively in course discussions; compose short presentations framing central questions to shared readings; and write a final term paper which may or may not be part of a larger project (for example, a thesis, dissertation, or ongoing art project).

Assignments:
Discussion/Participation (20%)
Note-taking for Orals Notes (10%)
Framing the Questions Presentations (20%)
Final Term Paper (50%)

Required Texts:
Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days*
Daphne Brooks, *Jeff Buckley’s Grace*
Marguerite Duras, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*
Suzan-Lori Parks, *The America Play*
Course Pack available from University Readers
Please also make arrangements to have the following musical albums on hand by week 7. These are widely available from record shops, CD stores, iTunes, etc:
Jeff Buckley, *Grace*
Nina Simone, *Wild is the Wind*

Week One: Introduction to the Course
Week Two: Mimetic Origins
   Plato, *The Republic*, Books III and X
   Aristotle, *The Poetics*
   Walter Benjamin, “On the Mimetic Faculty”

Week Three: Theatricality and Performativity
   J.L. Austin, Selections from *How to Do Things with Words*
   Tracy Davis and Thomas Postlewait, “Theatricality: An Introduction”
   bell hooks, “Performance Practice as a Site of Opposition”
   Eve Sedgwick and Andrew Parker, “Performance and Performativity”
   View: Adrian Piper, “Cornered” (film)

Week Four: Empathy and the “We”
   Wendy Brown, “Wounded Attachments”
   Dwight Conquergood, “Performing as a Moral Act”
   Elin Diamond, “The Violence of ‘We’: Politicizing Identification”
   Marguerite Duras, *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (script)

Week Five: Alienation and Difference
   Bertolt Brecht, “A Short Organum for the Theatre”
   Elin Diamond, *Unmaking Mimesis* (Selected Chapters)
   Franz Fanon, “The Fact of Blackness” and “The Negro and Recognition”
   Suzan-Lori Parks, *The America Play*

Week Six: Mimesis and Alterity
   Gloria Anzaldua, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”
   Eng-Beng Lim, “Glocalqueering in New Asia: The Politics of Performing Gay in Singapore”
   Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity* (Selected Chapters)

Week Seven: Touching Hearing
[NOTE: We will have to reschedule this seminar meeting for another day this week.]
   Roland Barthes, “The Grain of the Voice”
   Bertolt Brecht, “On Gestic Music”
   Daphne Brooks, *Jeff Buckley’s Grace*
   Jeff Buckley, *Grace* [CD]
   Nina Simone, *Wild is the Wind* [CD]
   View: Pina Bausch, *Nelkin [Carnations]* (Selected Scene: “The Man I Love”)

Week Eight: Violence Performed
   Emily Colborn-Roxworthy, “Manzanar, the Eyes of the World are Upon You: Performance and Archival Ambivalence at a Japanese American Internment Camp”
   Saidiya Hartman, “Redressing the Pained Body: Toward a Theory of Practice”
Barbara Lewis, “Decorated Death and the Double Whammy: Attempting to Erase the Excluded through Minstrelsy and Lynching”
Susette Min, “Remains to Be Seen: Reading the Works of Dean Sameshima and Khanh Vo”

Week Nine: Presence and Disappearance
Patrick Anderson, “‘To Lie Down to Death for Days’: The Turkish Hunger Strike, 2000-2003”
Herbert Blau, “Universals of Performance; Or, Amortizing Play”
Dwight Conquergood, “Lethal Theatre”
Peggy Phelan, “The Ontology of Performance: Representation without reproduction”

Week Ten: Intersubjectivity and Hope
Patrick Anderson, “Enduring Performance”
Samuel Beckett, Happy Days
Lauren Berlant, “Cruel Optimism”
Jill Dolan, “Feeling the Potential of Elsewhere”
Peggy Phelan, “Afterword: Notes on hope”