Drama 301: Performance and Performativity
Winter 2008
Tuesdays 1:15-4:05pm
Roble 15

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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 theory not by tracing any given genealogy, but rather by exploring many of the themes central to the field. 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 course texts; and write throughout the quarter towards a final term paper which may or may not be part of a larger project (for example, a thesis, dissertation, or ongoing art project).

Course Policies
* Students are required to attend every class, fully prepared to discuss readings and other assigned materials. Unexcused absences will result in a deduction from the final grade.

* I consider academic integrity to be a political as well as intellectual concern. Please remember to give credit where credit is due, and not to attempt to obtain credit for something you did not do. Stanford’s Honor Code can be found at the following URL: http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm

* All beepers, mobile phones, PDAs, and other devices with audible bells and whistles must be turned off during class. Laptops should also be silenced.

Course Requirements
* Attendance, Participation, Community Spirit: 20%. In addition to being bodily present in every class, students are expected to participate in course discussions and activities creatively, constructively, and rigorously.

* In-Class Presentation: 20%. Throughout the course, individual students and/or small groups of students will be responsible for presenting course readings to the class as a whole. The presentations may take whatever form you choose, but must cover the assigned materials coherently and creatively.
Writing Assignments: 60%. 20-25 page research essay and other small writing assignments. See below for details.

Writing Throughout the Course
In addition to introducing graduate students to performance theory, this seminar is intended to serve as a workshop for developing critical writing. As such, students will write throughout the quarter towards their final research projects. Early in the course, students will present key questions for their research, working to hone these questions into formal writing directives and theses. Following Peggy Phelan’s invocation to indulge moments of hesitation and doubt long enough to explore their implications, students will compose several short “Perhaps” papers at various points during the quarter. In addition, students will use the texts we read together as methodological examples of what David Roman calls “critical compassion,” composing an “Orientations” essay as well as several further “Questions” essay. The final writing project may include variations of all of these shorter writing samples, but should present a strong statement of critical belief and demonstrate a proficient use of primary and secondary sources. The schedule for individual writing assignments follows:

* Questions Essay 1: Primary questions for scholarly research; 1 page (due Week 2)
* Orientations Essay: Statement of scholarly subjectivity, stakes, goals; 3 pages (due Week 3)
* Perhaps Essay 1: Reservations, Hesitations, Self-critique; 3 pages (due Week 4)
* Questions Essay 2: Primary questions, revised and extended to include literature review, objects of study, methodology; 3 pages (due Week 5)
* Peer Review Essay: Reflections on colleagues’ Questions Essay 2; 1/2 page each (due Week 6)
* Perhaps Essay 2: Response to peer reviews; 3 pages (due Week 7)
* Questions Essay 3: Abstract/proposal for final research essay; 3 pages (due Week 8)
* Final Research Essay: 20-25 pages (due Finals Week)

Course Format
Each week, I will begin class with a brief mini-lecture on course texts, tracing specific critical and aesthetic genealogies and posing a number of fundamental questions related that week’s theme. The bulk of each meeting will be reserved for discussion and student presentations, which will typically include close readings of small segments of text, viewing and interpreting images and films, and occasionally short writing exercises. The final 30 minutes of each class will be devoted to discussing students’ writing and research.

Course Texts (Required)
Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days*
Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*
Naomi Iizuka, *Polaroid Stories*
Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*
Suzan-Lori Parks, *The America Play*
Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*
George C. Wolfe, *The Colored Museum*
Additional texts will be made available via Stanford's Coursework website:
http://coursework.stanford.edu/
These are signified below with (CW).

Course Schedule
Tuesday, 8 January 2008: Introduction to the Course

Tuesday, 15 January 2008: Performance and Performance Studies
Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days*
Dwight Conquergood, “Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research” (CW)
Peggy Phelan and Marquard Smith, “Performance, Live Culture, and Things of the Heart” (CW)
Richard Schechner, “What is Performance Studies, Anyway?” (CW)

Tuesday, 22 January 2008: Theatricality and Performativity
J.L. Austin, Selections from *How to Do Things with Words* (CW)
Tracy Davis and Thomas Postlewait, “Theatricality: An Introduction” (CW)
Fred Moten, “Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper’s Theatricality” from *In the Break*
Eve Sedgwick and Andrew Parker, “Performance and Performativity” (CW)

View: Adrian Piper, “Cornered” (film)

Tuesday, 29 January 2008: Representation
Antonin Artaud, “On the Balinese Theater” and “The Theater of Cruelty” (CW)
Jacques Derrida, “The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation” (CW)
Naomi Iizuka, *Polaroid Stories*
Fred Moten, “Resistance of the Object: Aunt Hester’s Scream” and “The Sentimental Avant-Garde” from *In the Break*

Tuesday, 5 February 2008: Affect/Empathy
Wendy Brown, “Wounded Attachments” (CW)
Cathy Caruth, Introduction and “Unclaimed Experience” and from *Unclaimed Experience*
Elin Diamond, “The Violence of ‘We’: Politicizing Identification” (CW)
Raymond Williams, “Structures of Feeling” (CW)
View: Alain Resnais and Marguerite Duras, “Hiroshima Mon Amour” (film)

Tuesday, 12 February 2008: Liveness/Disappearance
Patrick Anderson, “To Lie Down to Death for Days: The Turkish Hunger Strike 2000-2003” (CW)
Philip Auslander, “Against Ontology: Making Distinctions Between the Live and the Mediatized” (CW)
Suzan-Lori Parks, *The America Play*
Peggy Phelan, “The Ontology of Performance: Representation without Reproduction” from *Unmarked*

Tuesday, 19 February 2008: Specularity/Visibility
bell hooks, “Seductive Sexualities: Representing Blackness in Poetry and on Screen” (CW)
Kobena Mercer, “Looking for Trouble” (CW)
Fred Moten, “Visible Music” from *In the Break*
Peggy Phelan, “Developing the Negative: Mapplethorpe, Schor, and Sherman” from *Unmarked*
View: Isaac Julien, “Looking for Langston” (film)

Tuesday, 26 February 2008: Embodiment
Judith Butler, “Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion” (CW)
bell hooks, “Black Looks” (CW)
Eng-Beng Lim, “Glocalqueering in New Asia: The Politics of Performing Gay in Singapore” (CW)
Peggy Phelan, “The Golden Apple: Jennie Livingston’s *Paris is Burning*” from *Unmarked*
View: Jennie Livingston, “Paris Is Burning” (film)

Tuesday, 4 March 2008: Utopias/Dystopias
Angela Davis, “Art on the Frontline: Mandate for a People’s Culture” (CW)
Jill Dolan, “Feeling the Potential of Elsewhere” (CW)
Jisha Menon, “Rehearsing the Partition: Gendered Violence in *Aur Kitne Tukde*” (CW)
Joseph Roach, “One Blood” (CW)
George C. Wolfe, *The Colored Museum*

Tuesday, 11 March 2008: Ends
Cathy Caruth, “Traumatic Departures” from *Unclaimed Experience*
Peggy Phelan, “Afterword: Notes on Hope—for my students” from *Unmarked*