

Undergraduate: Anthro 3399 JD1 (DRAFT SYLLABUS-not for publication on line)

SPRING 2012 (PREPARED 9/23/12)

Meets M and W 2-3:20 Davenport 209 A

**PERFORMING “AMERICA”:
Social Identities, Expressive Cultures, and Everyday Life**

PROFESSOR JANE DESMOND

Office: 385 Davenport Hall Email: desmondj@uiuc.edu Course Web Site: Compass
Office hours: TBA

Departmental Offices: Anthro. 109 Davenport Hall, Dr. Andrew Orta, Head of Dept

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

This course introduces students to the issues and methodologies of the emerging field of performance studies as a mode of analysis for understanding contemporary U.S. cultures. In the last twenty years, concurrent with new theoretical developments in other fields such as literature, film studies, and art history, as well as anthropology, the analysis of live performance events has undergone a radical change. A new area of study has been defined which includes popular

entertainments, dance, performance art, festivals, public rituals, tourist productions, sports, religious rituals, political protests, and the activities of daily life including work, leisure, politics and religion.

No longer limited to the textual nature of earlier theater criticism, or to the qualitative evaluation of specific performances, the field of performance studies seeks to understand and theorize the function of performative events and actions in a particular cultural context at a particular historical time. We will consider: **WHAT DO PEOPLE ACTUALLY DO, HOW DO THEY DO IT, WHY?, AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS AND WITH WHAT EFFECTS?** One key aspect of performance studies emphasizes the public enactment of embodied aspects of social identity such as gender, race, ethnicity, concepts of able-bodiedness, and social class through markers of speech, actions, gesture, fashion, movement and so on. These tools can also be used to analyze the articulation of national identity through performative modes such as presidential debates, the celebration of national holidays, and the mass media representation of events like the Iraq war.

THE COURSE

This course takes a truly interdisciplinary approach. Therefore students should expect to expand their range of literatures, and to work outside of their disciplinary comfort zones. In addition to anthropological texts, we may draw on the disciplines of literary theory, critical race theories, film studies, cultural geography, dance and theater studies, and Marxist, feminist, postcolonial and poststructural modes of analysis. This course will provide a framework for thinking about the ways in which cultural meanings are

constructed, negotiated, contested, rearticulated, and circulated through performative acts of representation and enactment in space and time. This course will introduce students to a wide variety of writings in this area and provide an opportunity for students to reflect on the current issues, methodologies, and theoretical challenges animating this emerging area. Our focus will be on the contemporary U.S, but comparative studies from other parts of the world as well as historical materials will be introduced. For example, there will be a unit on comparative hip-hop practices in the U.S., Japan, and selected other countries.

REQUIREMENTS

The focus of this seminar is on reading, observation, theorization, analysis and discussion. In class exercises, viewings, and out of class observations will support our reading, viewing and discussion.

Each participant will engage with group projects (for ex., creating a flash mob performance), produce two responses to readings, one response to an outside event, an observation exercise at McDonalds, and produce a final research paper in an area of his/her own interest. Details on all will be provided in class. Additional writing in preparation for observation exercise discussion may be required. Topics for your research should be discussed with and approved by me in advance. Research will be presented to the class orally, and the final version will be a written paper of no less than 10 and no more than 15 pages, plus bibliography. Details on all will be provided in class as well.

TEXTS: (books are on library reserve and available at UI bookstore) will be drawn from the following. Additional texts may be assigned:

Texts include: Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*; Krystyn Moon, *Yellowface: Creating the Chinese in American Popular Music and Performance*; Cohen, Wilk, and Stoeltje, *Beauty Queens on the Global Stage*; Desmond, Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*; Phil DeLoria, *Playing Indian*, Ian Condry, *Hip Hop Japan*, E. Patrick Johnson, *Appropriating Blackness*, and several selected articles. All books will be on library reserve. Articles can be accessed through the UIUC library system.

Most class meetings will include *in-class video viewing*, and these will form part of our "texts" too. With few exceptions, these videos are not available outside of class. Weekly attendance is absolutely essential, and assumed. *Students are also encouraged to attend a variety of events* throughout the semester, including theater presentations, drag shows, religious events, fashion shows, parades, protests, court trials, sporting events, etc., and to suggest these to the class in advance. Additional readings may be added throughout the semester to complement issues that arise in class discussion. *Students are invited to recommend supplementary readings/viewings that relate to our discussions.* Please discuss these with me in advance so I can work them into our schedule.

EVALUATION : your grade will reflect my careful evaluation of your grasp of the larger concepts introduced in the course and your ability to analyze

performative activities and their social context and meanings in relation to the theoretical issues we investigate.

Evaluations will be weighted as follows:

Class participation and contribution to discussion: 15%: active, prepared participation (attendance at all class meetings is assumed except in cases of documented emergencies and illness), quality of discussion contributions, evidence of preparation, , ability to draw connections between readings from week to week and to respond with clarity and nuance to those issues raised by other participants in group discussion, and to move the discussions constructively forward.

Reading and event Response papers: three at 10% each for a total of 30%.

Note: At times additional written responses to events in preparation for discussion may be assigned, and will be considered as part of your preparation for discussion. Please bring to class one copy of each of these three response papers for yourself and one for me.

McDonald's observation project description and analysis (approx. 4 pages): 15%

Group creation of Event including rationale, organizational plan, and execution of plan: 15%

Final Research project: 25%. (includes oral presentation) Your research project should draw explicitly on methods and questions arising from the interdisciplinary realm of performance studies, and used to shape your investigation of a phenomena of particular interest to you. You may build explicitly on your methodology essay to frame the research problem. Scale: given the other written assignments in this course, these final papers should only be around 18 pages or so in length, with a minimum of 15 pages, plus bibliography and any appendices.

(An outstanding oral presentation may raise your grade one half letter, while an inadequate one may lower it by the same amount).

POLICY RE: LATE WORK: Late work impedes the progress of the seminar as a whole, and will not be accepted except under extraordinary circumstances and when permission is requested for a deadline extension in advance. Late work may be subject to a one-half letter grade penalty. In case of a true life emergency that prevents your completing the work as scheduled, speak with me.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS: If you need special accommodations to participate in this course due to a documented disability, please discuss these with me and provide documentation at the very beginning of the semester so I can make proper arrangements.

Academic Integrity: By taking this course, you agree to abide by university regulations on plagiarism. Citation of other's ideas and writings is always expected. Using others ideas and words, even when paraphrased, constitutes plagiarism and is subject to disciplinary action. Talk to me if you are unsure of how/what to cite.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, EVENTS

Some additional readings may be added to address topics that develop in our discussions over the course of the semester. Adjustments may be made in this schedule to accommodate possible guests, etc.

JAN. 19 and 21: Course introduction, self-introductions, and introduction to Performance Studies Concepts.

Screening and discussion: "One World/One Dream"-China's Olympic Opening Ceremony and the staging of a "Global Nationalism." Current Events: Protest as performance: enacting change through public presence and action: revolutions of the "Arab Spring" as depicted in the U.S. visual media.

JAN. 26 and 28: : "Performance Studies" as an emergent field of scholarship

Introduction to Performance Studies in the U.S.

Read by today: Schechner, *Performance Studies, An Introduction*.

Chapter One on electronic reserve.; AND Diana Taylor Chapter 1 from her book. (which is required)

Today: Prep. for first observation exercise.

FEB. 2 and 4: Theorizing the relation of Performative Acts, Everyday life, and Social Identities.

Read for today: Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*

(read: Introduction plus Chapter 1 (performances), Ch.2 (Teams) Chapt. 3 (Regions), Ch. 4 Discrepant performances, and the Conclusion., rest is recommended); and read Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender constitution,: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" (Theatre Journal 40:4 (Dec. 1988:519-531. available online through UIUC library.PLACE ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE TOO PLEZSE))

For additional background, you may be interested in de Certeau *The Practice of EverydayLife* , and Bordieu, *Distinction*. See also Butler, *Gender Trouble*, and her *Bodies that Matter* for further reading. Begin team-lead discussions of readings.

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Your jointly authored observation exercises are due today and will be discussed in class too (see below)

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By today—Observation exercise and analysis (done in pairs): public behavior in public spaces. Bring your written analyses to turn in from a one-hour observation in a public space of your choosing such as the shopping mall, a bar, a party, or the student union (not a fast food restaurant like McDonalds—see Feb. 16!) and prepare to discuss in class today, with an emphasis on gender.

Consider: movement, spatial usage, sound, interactive style, posture and gesture, dress, and how they indicate social subjectivity. What relationships do you think you are seeing, and how can you tell? Be very specific in terms of noting what you take as “evidence.”

FEB. 9 and 11: Play, Pretending, and Re-enactment: Temporarily “becoming another” in postcolonial contexts.

Read: de Loria, *Playing Indian, selections*. And, on line, “Der Indianer: “Why do 40,000 Germans spend their weekends dressed as Native Americans?” Utne Reader, Noemi Lopinto (www.utne.com).

FEB. 16 and 18: Everyday Work and the Performance of Social Class

Read: 3 articles available on line through UIUC library:

1. Viv Cuthill, “Consuming Harrogate: Performing Bettys Café and Revolution Vodka Bar,” *Space and Culture* 2007: vol. 10, No. 1, Feb. 2007: pp. 64-76.
2. Adam Weaver, “Interactive Service Work and Performative Metaphors: The case of the Cruise Industry,” in *Tourist Studies*, vol. 5 (1): 5-27, 2005.
3. Peter Adey, “ ‘May I have your attention’: Airport geographies of spectatorship, position and (im)mobility,” in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 25, March 2007: 515-536/

Complete For today: **McDonald’s Exercise.**

Spend one hour minimum in a McDonald’s restaurant and observe client/worker interactions, as well as what you can see of “behind the scenes” behavior. In what ways does social class appear to manifest itself in these interactions? Is class masked or accentuated in the McDonald’s “experience”? Why or why not? If so, how? Prepare a short paper (approx. 4 pages, and no more than 5)-- written summary of your observations, reflections, theoretical considerations, and analyses to turn in in class that day in preparation for our discussion. Your option: you may choose to observe more than one McDonald’s or at the same McDonald’s at more than one time of day, but for each observation, take notes, and spend no less than 1 hour on site. It will help you to read this week’s readings first before doing your observation.

Note: for additional reading, Woody Watson’s ethnographically based collection *Golden Arches East: McDonald’s in East Asia* is very useful to think with. (PLACE ON BOOK RESERVE PLEASE)

Feb. 23 and 25: Spectacle, Gender, and Community Identity: Global Beauty Pageants

Read: Cohen, Wilk, and Stoltje, Editors,

Beauty Queens on the Global Stage: Gender contests and Power

Read Intro. plus chapters 1 through 6 and the Afterward. Rest is recommended.

Screening: Miss America Pageant. Spectacles of transformation—makeovers. Male pageants. Children’s pageants.

For additional reading, Manalansan's *Global Divas* is recommended. (PLACE ON RESERVE PLEASE)

MAR. 2 and 4: Historical Theatrical Stagings of Marked Categories of "Race" and "Ethnicity" in the U.S.

Read

Krystyn Moon, *Yellowface: Creating the Chinese in American Popular Music and Performance* (group two)

In class screening: selections from Marlon Rigg's *Ethnic Notions* and Anna Deveare Smith's *Fires in the Mirror*.

MAR 9 and 11: Political Action and Theatricality: Queer Performance (I'm cutting this reading Michele—but PLACE DAVID ROMAN BOOK ON RESERVE ALONG WITH MUNOZ DISIDENTIFICATIONS PLEASE)

Read: Roman, *Acts of Intervention*

Recommended: Munoz, intro to *Disidentifications*.

In class screening: Tim Miller.

Mar. 16 "Is," "As" or "Does"?: Theorizing Appropriation, Translation, Transposition, and the Politics of racial, sexual, national, and gendered performativity.
Read: E. Patrick Johnson, *Appropriating Blackness*. (Read Intro plus chapt. 1-5, chapt. 6 is recommended).

Mar. 18: Discussion of Johnson continued, and planning for flash mob assignment

MAR. 23 and 25: SPRING BREAK WEEK. NO CLASS MEETING. Work on your final research projects.

MAR. 30 and April 1: Global Circuits of Performance and Transformation—Hip Hop as music, word, and motion across National Boundaries

Read: Ian Condry, *Hip Hop Japan*. Additional readings TBA re: hip hop in selected African and South Asian nations.

APR. 6 and 9: Theaters of Justice, Social action theater, and the Staging of Politics in the U.S.

Read: Lucy Winner and Jessie Allen article on performative elements of the U.S. court system. "Democratic Acts: Theater of Public Trials," in *Theatre Topics*, Sept. 2005, vol. 15:2, pps. 149-169, available through UIUC on line.

Additional reading re: political speech as performance will be assigned.

Assignment for today: by today make sure you have attended a live trial downtown at the courthouse in Urbana. Check on line for the court calendar in advance.

APR. 13 and 15: Theaters of Memory in the Americas—Latin America emphasis

Read: Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*:

Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas (Read selections TBA) (PLACE BOOK ON RESERVE)

APR. 20, 22, 27 and 29 Begin individual research presentation.==approx. 6 per day.

MAY 4 AND 6: FINAL CLASSES Course evaluations. Wrap up discussions and completion of Final Research Presentations.

*******FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS HARD COPY DUE IN MY MAIL BOX IN THE ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENTAL OFFICE BY 3:30 TUES., MAY 11TH. Also mail me an electronic copy please.**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

This seminar will engage with scholarship from a variety of disciplines, and will draw students from several departments. Be prepared to share your knowledge of readings in your areas so we may build a multi-disciplinary bibliography related to class discussions. In addition, I will be happy to suggest additional resources for your special areas of interest, or if you feel there are areas of critical theory where our discussions assume more background than you currently have, and you'd like to read further.

NOTE: Participation in this course assumes compliance with the University Honor Code. All work must be adequately cited and referenced when you are drawing on others writings or ideas. See the university honor code for details.

Responsibilities when preparing for discussion:

- What is the book/article's main argument?
- Its theoretical underpinnings? Its methodology? How are these played out? What are the strengths and weaknesses of those choices made by the author in light of the topics investigated? What is revealed and what is obscured in the work?
- What counts as "evidence" in the work?
- Are there key issues/communities/evidence that, if considered, might substantially change the argument? Does the author account for these?
- What is the explanatory power of the work? What aspects of everyday life, social formations, or performance does it help us understand more deeply? (or not?) What might the effects of that understanding be in the scholarly realm or beyond? Why? For whom?
- How does this set of readings relate to our previous readings and discussions or viewings in this seminar?
- Suggest a few additional readings that participants might want to read after reading this, and why you've made those suggestions.
- If you were to extend this work, what would you do next?
- SUGGEST THREE KEY QUESTIONS you'd like the class to consider in preparation for this discussion. POST these (be brief) on the course web site on COMPASS by no later than 10 AM of the Sunday before our Tuesday class meeting.
- The syllabus notes some of the screenings I already have planned. If

you wish to supplement these on the day of your discussion with additional videos/CDs/audio selections/websites, etc. please do. (You are responsible for obtaining/finding them) Please let me know what media selections, if any, you plan to use by Monday morning of that week.