

LMC 2600 N: Introduction to Performance Studies

Prof. Philip Auslander

Office: 365 Skiles Phone: 404.894.6208 (Voice Mail)

E-Mail: auslander@gatech.edu

Office Hours: T, Th 3:00-4:00 and by appointment

Prerequisite: ENGL 1102

This course fulfills the Core Area C: Humanities/Fine Arts requirement.

Course Description

The premise of Performance Studies, an academic discipline that has grown exponentially since the late 1960s, is that performance is a fundamental category of human (and perhaps not just human) activity not limited to the performing arts. Nevertheless, the institutional and aesthetic roots of at least one central branch of Performance Studies are in the theater, while others derive more from the disciplines of Speech, Oral Interpretation, Ethnography, and Communications. Nevertheless, for most people, as for many of the founders of Performance Studies, acting is the default model for performance, the thing we probably think of first when the concept of performance is raised.

This edition of LMC 2600 will begin with a consideration of acting, perhaps the activity most people most readily associate with the idea of performance. Departing from this base, we will work toward a more general understanding of performance as a category of human behavior that extends, literally and metaphorically, beyond the arts into such activities as rituals and ceremonies, and into everyday life itself.

Learning Outcomes

Students will become familiar with the intellectual inquiry that drives Performance Studies as a field and the uses of the idea of performance as a heuristic with broad applicability.

Textual/Visual Analysis: Students will learn to read, analyze, and interpret cultural projects such as theater, film, television, and new media, as well as cultural performances and everyday behavior.

Interpretive Frameworks: Students will become familiar with a variety of social, cultural, and philosophical theories and be able to apply those theories to cultural performances, everyday behavior, and creative texts, as well as to their own cultural observations.

General Requirements

- Course Reading and Attendance
- Active participation in discussion and class activities, including group work to be performed outside of class time
- Completion of Assignments enumerated below

You are not permitted to use materials developed for other courses to fulfill these requirements.

Please note the grade penalties for not submitting required assignments by their deadlines described below under General Policies.

This course will be conducted primarily on the basis of lecture and discussion. Group work to be done primarily outside of class is another key feature and you are expected to do all you can to make your group function smoothly.

Attendance Policy

- **Attendance requirement.** You may miss a total of three (3) classes over the course of the semester without penalty.
- **Reasons for absences.** The attendance policy does not make any distinction about the reasons for your absences. Only absences officially exempted by the Institute (e.g., due to participation in official GATech athletics, to religious observance, to personal or family crisis confirmed by documentation from the Dean of Students) will not be counted among your allotted absences. These exemptions are difficult to get.
- **Responsibility for missed work.** Students are responsible for finding out what they may have missed while absent from class and what policy the instructor has for making up missed work. However, if you are not present to participate in a group presentation, you will fail the course.
- **Absence penalties.** Each additional absence after the allotted number deducts one-third of a letter grade from your final grade. Missing six (6) classes results in automatic failure of the class.

Think ahead. If you know in advance that you must miss a certain class meeting be sure not to miss more than three others.

If you need to leave a class session early, please inform me before the start of the session and sit near the front of the room so that your departure can be minimally disruptive.

If you sleep (or appear to sleep) during a class session, or engage in activities not conducive to participation (e.g., looking at your phone) you will be considered absent from that class session.

Please note that Georgia Tech policy requires you to wait twenty minutes for the instructor to arrive before concluding that the class is not meeting (this policy is included here primarily for your information).

Readings

The text required for this course is Elizabeth Bell, *Theories of Performance* (SAGE Publications). All other course readings are available to you in .pdf form via the course's T-Square website. Please bring the relevant ones to class (i.e., bring the readings assigned for a given day to class on that day) so that we can refer to them in discussion. I prefer that you print them out and bring them in hard copy, though I understand you may prefer to look at the .pdfs on a screen.

Personal Electronics Policy

I generally prefer that you not use devices such as laptops, tablets, PDAs, cell phones, iPods, IM devices, etc. in class because doing so is not conducive to engaging with the others around you. If you wish to use such a device to display course readings, this is acceptable, but not preferred (see section above). If you are found to be using a device for any purpose not necessary to the immediate conduct of the course, you will be marked absent for the day.

If you're expecting a life and death call, please set your phone to vibrate, sit near the front, and discretely leave the classroom when the call arrives.

Grading

Please note: work that simply meets the requirements of the assignment will receive a grade of "C." Grades of "A" and "B" designate levels of distinction in quality and content of the work.

Two Quizzes @ 20% = 40%

Performance Analysis: 30%

Three Graded Group Performance Exercises (all members of each group will receive the same grades in this category): @ 10% = 30%

Final Grade Scale: To get a final grade of A, you must have earned at least a numerical grade of at least 90 (out of 100). For a B, you must have a numerical grade of at least 80; 70 for a C; 60 for a D. Please use these benchmarks to interpret your numerical grades.

The numerical grade generated by this calculation is subject to modification in either direction in light of attendance, any extra credit, class participation, and other indications of engagement with and commitment to the course (or lack thereof). Please note that I do not automatically round up numerical grades.

Required Work

More information and details on all assignments is posted on T-Square and will be discussed in class. All deadlines are provided on the course schedule at the end of this syllabus. Policies regarding the submission of work appear below under General Policies.

Quizzes

The purpose of the quizzes is to assess your mastery of the course material included in our readings and class sessions. Unless I announce otherwise, the quizzes will be made up primarily of short answer questions and you will have the entire class session in which to complete each one. The dates of the quizzes are on the schedule at the end of this syllabus.

Performance Analysis

This assignment is described in detail on the course's T-Square site.

Group Performance Exercises

In the course of the semester, there will be three Group Performance Exercises directly related to themes and readings of the course. I will ask you to develop and present a creative response to a specific assignment. All Group Members are to perform in all exercises unless otherwise noted.

Although we will discuss these assignments in class, you will work on them primarily outside of class, then present your work during the class sessions designated on the syllabus. I will also ask for a short written summary of the content of your project and the decisions the group made (further instructions appear in the assignments on T-Square). These will be due after you have performed or presented your work in class.

Please note the dates on which the work on these exercises is to be done and be sure to be in class then. Please also note the consequences of missing such a session mentioned in the Attendance policy above.

The Communication Center

The Communication Center is located in Clough Commons, Suite 447. It is an excellent resource for any student (undergraduate or graduate) who wants help with a communication-related project. You can visit the center for help at any stage of the process for any project in any discipline. The knowledgeable and friendly tutors are available to help you develop and revise your projects. They are not available to “fix” your projects. Please do not ask the tutors to proofread or edit your projects. For information on making an appointment please visit this website: <http://communicationcenter.gatech.edu/content/make-appointment>>. If you need assistance with the appointment system, you can call 404-385-3612 or stop by the center. All services are free and confidential.

Students With Disabilities

Any student who feels that he/she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment to see the instructor during office hours. Students with disabilities should also contact Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS) to discuss reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor call (404) 894-2564 (voice) / (404) 894-1664 (voice/TDD) or visit Suite 210 in the Smithgall Student Services Building. For more information visit the following website: <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/>.

Academic Honesty

All work you turn in for this class must be your own work, with all outside reference sources properly cited and acknowledged.

The "Student Conduct Code of the Rules and Regulations" (Georgia Institute of Technology General Catalog, Section XIX) states, “Academic misconduct is an act that does or could improperly distort student grades or other student academic records” and offers the following descriptive list:

- Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the

preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included in an academic course;

- Substitution for, or unauthorized collaboration with, a student in the commission of academic requirements;
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or persons, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism);
- False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the claimant;
- Alteration or insertion of any academic grade or rating so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any institute document relating to the academic status of the student.

The Code continues, “While these acts constitute assured instances of academic misconduct, other acts of academic misconduct may be defined by the professor.” Consult the Honor Code online at <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/> or in the General Catalog to remember your primary commitment to academic honesty. Students who engage in academic dishonesty may receive a 0.0 on the assignment or fail the course. In addition, the instance will be reported to the Dean of Students who may take further action.

General Policies

Unless stated otherwise, your work is to be submitted via T-Square. Your work is due by the stated deadline.

You are required to retain a copy of every assignment for the entire semester in case any problems should arise with T-Square. Please be vigilant about making certain that materials you posted actually appear. It is your responsibility to ensure that your material is present on T-Square at its deadline.

T-Square will accept your work for ten hours following the posted deadline. However, you will lose 10% of the assignment’s point value for each hour or fractional hour past the deadline you submit it. For example, if an assignment is worth 20 points and you pass it in within an hour after the deadline, I will deduct two points from your grade. If you pass it in an hour after that, I will deduct four points, etc. This policy applies to both group and individual assignments.

I strongly recommend that you post your work significantly ahead of all deadlines. Remember: T-Square’s clock is the only one that matters. T-Square is the final arbiter of when your work was submitted.

Please also make sure that the material you submit is what you want me to grade. Whatever is on the site at the deadline is what I will grade. I will not accept other versions past the deadline under any circumstance.

If you experience a legitimate problem with T-Square, please contact me by email immediately. Do not submit work by email unless I specifically ask you to do so.

I reserve the right to give extra assignments and quizzes, announced or unannounced.

Course Schedule

Like any syllabus, this is a starting point and is subject to revision. I will announce any further assignments or other changes in class, by email, and on T-Square. You should be prepared to discuss the materials designated for each date on that date and have the relevant texts with you in class. The readings in the Bell book are designated as such. All other readings are available as .pdfs on T-Square and are listed by their authors.

Part I: What is Acting? What Do Actors Do? How Do We Perceive What They Do?

- 1/10 Introduction to Course
- 1/12 Read Harrop, "Ch. 1: Acting and the Phenomenological Problem"

- 1/17 Read Harrop, "Ch. 5: The Psychology in Acting"
- 1/19 Read States, "The Actor's Presence"

- 1/24 Read Comey, "The Exercise"
- 1/26 **Performance Exercise 1: Working Session with Prof. Auslander**

- 1/31 **Performance Exercise 1: In-Class Presentation**
- 2/2 Read Kirby, "On Acting and Not-Acting"

Part II: Constituting Performance (Performer, Context, Audience)

- 2/7 *Performer*. Read Bell, 29-34 and 43-46. **Documentation of Performance Exercise 1 Due on T-Square by 11:55 PM.**
- 2/9 *Context (Frame)*. Read Bell, 35-43.

- 2/14 Read Goffman, "The Theatrical Frame" (124-144).
- 2/15 **Proposal for Performance Analysis Project Due on T-Square by 11:55 PM**
- 2/16 Continue Discussion.

- 2/21 *Audience*. Read Bell, 47-53.
- 2/23 Review for First Quiz

- 2/28 **First Quiz**

Part III: Life as Drama, Theater, Performance

- 3/2 *Dramatism* (Kenneth Burke). Read Bell, 85-104.

- 3/7 Applied Dramatism. Read Järvinen and Miller, "Selections of reality"
- 3/9 **Performance Exercise 2: In-Class Presentation**

- 3/14 *Social Drama* (Victor Turner). Read Bell, 105-113 and Turner, 149-154.
- 3/16 Turner Applied: Read Lockford, "Social Drama in the Spectacle of Femininity"
Documentation of Performance Exercise 2 Due on T-Square by 11:55 PM.

- 2/21, 23 Spring Break: No Class Meeting**

- 3/28 *Rite of Passage* (Arnold van Gennep). Read Bell, 121-124.
- 3/30 *Ritual and Ceremony*. Read Bell, 128-130 and Turner, 159-167
- 4/4 Turner Applied. Read St. John, "Trance Tribes and Dance Vibes."
- 4/6 Performing *Social Roles* (Erving Goffman). Read Bell, 150-152 and Goffman, "Performances," 17-51.
- 4/11 Read Goffman, "Performances," 51-76.
- 4/13 Goffman Applied: Read Auslander, "Musical Personae."
- 4/18 Review for Second Quiz
- 4/20 **Second Quiz**
- 4/25 **Performance Exercise 3: In-Class Presentation**
- 5/1 **Performance Analysis Due on T-Square by 11:55 PMe**
- 5/2 **Documentation of Performance Exercise 3 Due on T-Square by 11:55 PM**