

**Acting, Being, Doing, Making: Introduction to Performance Studies**  
**Professor Jill Dolan and Professor Stacy Wolf**

THR 300/COM 359/ENG 373/ANT 359

Fall 2011

1:30 – 2:50, T/Th

185 Nassau, Room 219

Office hours:

- Thursdays, 11:00 – 12:00, 113 Dickinson
- Thursdays, 3:00 – 4:00, 214 Lewis Center for the Arts

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Course Description

Performance studies is an interdisciplinary field that examines performance in all its expansiveness. From theatre, dance, music, visual art, and other “framed” performances, to an individual’s actions and behaviors in everyday life; from storytelling, folklore, and blogs; to political speeches, rituals, and celebrations, performance studies analyzes “twice-behaved behavior”—that is, repeatable, embodied activities. Performance studies is distinguished by its two-fold focus on theory and practice; by its borrowings from anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies, as well as from theatre history, theory, and practice; and by the global reach of its objects of study and its examples.

This course explores performance studies in theory and in practice. We ask, What is performance? How can we describe, analyze, and interpret performance? Is there a limit to objects that can be analyzed as performance? How do spectators respond to performance events that aren’t housed in conventional theatre architecture? How do people walking by a street performer interpret what they’re seeing and what it means in a larger cultural context? What do theatre and performance in everyday life have in common? How do people “perform” in a media-saturated culture in which interactions aren’t necessarily live or face-to-face? How can we understand performance globally, being attentive to cultural differences and yet identify similarities across cultures and histories?

This course offers a hands-on approach to the field. Students will apply key readings in performance theory to sites that might include theatre, concerts, museums, sporting events, and/or community celebrations, and will observe people’s behaviors in everyday life (for example, in restaurants and on the street) as performance. We will analyze live performance, adapting techniques applied to written texts to space- and time-based events. We will also practice ethnographic methods with which to collect stories to adapt for performance.

Course goals include:

- Reading and understanding key theories of performance
- Attending a range of performances at various venues
- Analyzing and interpreting performances, both framed and unframed
- Collecting observations from fieldwork
- Creating performance by adapting stories or observations
- Articulating commonalities and differences among performance forms and sites
- Interacting with guest artists and speakers

- Identifying an area of interest and developing an extended research, writing, and performance project

Texts: All readings on e-reserve, which is accessible through Black Board at <https://blackboard.princeton.edu/webapps/login/>. You need to look for readings by titles—the e-reserve lists them by the editor’s name and not the authors. Some readings are on Blackboard as PDFs under “course materials.” These are marked as PDFs on the syllabus. At Labyrinth on Nassau St.: 1) Marina Carr’s *Plays One*, which includes the two we’re reading; and 2) Anna Deavere Smith’s play, *Fires in the Mirror*. Both are required.

Week #1:

Thursday, 9/15                    Course Introduction

Week #2: What is Performance? What is Performance Studies?

Tuesday, 9/20                    (pp. TK)

- Richard Schechner, “What is Performance” in *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 22-44.
- Henry Bial, Introduction to *The Performance Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2007 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), pages TK. (PDF)
- Henry Bial, Intro for Part I, “What is Performance Studies?” in *The Performance Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2007 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), pages TK. (PDF)

Thursday, 9/22                    (66 pp.)

- Victor Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual” in *Ritual and Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982), 20-60.
- Jill Dolan, Chapter Six, “Militant Optimism,” *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theatre* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 139-165. (PDF)

Week #3: Performativity and Performance in Everyday Life

Tuesday, 9/27                    (28 pp.)

- Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution,” *Theatre Journal* 40.4 (December 1988): 519-531.
- Erving Goffman, “Introduction,” in *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 1-16.
- Peggy Orenstein, “I Tweet, Therefore I Am,” *The New York Times Magazine*, August 1, 2010, 11-12.
- Gender continuum exercise.
- Sue-Ellen Case, “Towards a Butch-Femme Aesthetic,” *rec.*

Thursday, 9/29    No class, Rosh Ha’Shana holiday

Week #4: Archives, Repertoires, and Analyses

Tuesday, 10/4                    (Approx. 80 pp.)

- Diana Taylor, Chapter One, "Acts of Transfer," *The Archive and Repertoire* (Durham: Duke UP, 2003), 1-52.
- Deborah Paredez, "'Queer for Uncle Sam': Anita's Diva Citizenship in *West Side Story*," approx. 24 ms. pp. (PDF)
- Watch *West Side Story* [film, 1961] available on video reserves on Blackboard.

Thursday, 10/6 (Approx. 20 pp.)

- Susan Leigh Foster, "Movement's Contagion: The Kinesthetic Impact of Performance," in Tracy Davis, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies* (New York: Cambridge UP 2009), 46-59.
- Emily Coates, "Moving Between, Among, in the Midst," *Theater Magazine* (forthcoming Spring 2012) (7 ms. pp, PDF)
- Emily Coates, "Ici Ou Ailleurs, Excerpt Two," <http://www.vimeo.com/20890687>; password: eclc10.

Week #5: Religious Performance

Tuesday, 10/11 (48 pp.)

- Jill Lane, "Reverend Billy," *TDR: The Journal of Performance Studies* 46:1 (Spring 2002): 60-84.
- Ann Pellegrini, "Signaling Through the Flames': Hell House Performance and Structures of Religious Feeling," *American Quarterly* 59:3 (2007): 911-935.

Thursday, 10/13 Proposal ideas workshop; on your own.

Week #6: Performance and Place

Tuesday, 10/18 (83 pp.)

- Susan Bennett, "Universal Experience: The City as Tourist Stage," in Tracy Davis, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies* (New York: Cambridge, UP, 2009), 76-90.
- Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance: the Semiotics of Theatre Architecture* (Cornell UP, 1989); Introduction, "How Do Theatres Mean?" (1-13); Chapter One, "The City as Theatre" (14-37); and Chapter Five, "Interior Space" (128-162).

Wednesday, October 19: See Phaedra Backwards, written by Marina Carr, directed by Emily Mann, at McCarter Theatre, 8 p.m. Ticket information TK.

Thursday, 10/20

- Guest: Prof. Melissa Sihra, Professor of Drama, Trinity College, Dublin
- Marina Carr, *By the Bog of Cats*
- Marina Carr, *The Mai*

Week #7: Applications of Performance Studies (Midterm week)

Tuesday, 10/25 (15 pp.)

- Guest: Omi Osun Olomo/Joni Jones, Associate Professor, Theatre & Dance, Director, Center for African American Studies, University of Texas at Austin.

[http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/people/faculty\\_and\\_staff/faculty/jones.cfm](http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/people/faculty_and_staff/faculty/jones.cfm).

- Read Joni Jones, "Performance Ethnography: The Role of Embodiment in Cultural Authenticity," *Theatre Topics* 12:1 (March 2002): 1-15.
- Workshop on performance ethnography.

Thursday, 10/27      Student Presentation/mid-term applications

Week #8: Break (Tuesday, 11/1 and Thursday, 11/3)

Week #9: Performance Ethnography and Performance in Everyday Life

Tuesday, 11/8      (16 pp. + play)

- E Patrick Johnson, "Going Home Ain't Always Easy: Ethnography and the Politics of Black Respectability," *Out in Public: Reinventing Lesbian/Gay Anthropology in a Globalizing World*, ed. William L. Leap and Ellen Lewin (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 54-70. (PDF).
- Anna Deavere Smith, *Fires in the Mirror* (play, Labyrinth)
- Anna Deavere Smith, *Fires in the Mirror* (video, on reserve on Blackboard)

Thursday, 11/10      (26 pp.) **Insert Jill Lane and Ann Pellegrini here instead**

- Jill Lane, "Reverend Billy," *TDR: The Journal of Performance Studies* 46:1 (Spring 2002): 60-84.
- Ann Pellegrini, "Signaling Through the Flames': Hell House Performance and Structures of Religious Feeling," *American Quarterly* 59:3 (2007): 911-935.
- ~~Laurie Beth Clark, "Never Again and Its Discontents," *Performance Research* 16:1 (2011): 68-79.~~
- Michael Peterson, "Force Multiplier: What Can Performance Do For and Against Torture?" *Estudos Performativos: Global Performance/Political Performance. XI Colóquio de Outono*, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal. Edições Húmus, 2010: 137-152.

Week #10: Disability Studies

Tuesday, 11/15      (34 pp.)

- Rosemarie Garland Thomson, "Dares to Stares: Disabled Women Performance Artists and the Dynamics of Staring," in Carrie Sandahl and Philip Auslander, eds., *Bodies in Commotion: Disability and Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 30-41.
- Chris Anne Strickling, "Actual Lives: Cripples in the House," *Theatre Topics* 12:2 (September 2002): 143-62.

Thursday, 11/17      Proposal draft workshop; on your own.

Week #11: Music

Tuesday, 11/22      (40 pp.)

- Daphne Brooks, "'This voice which is not one': Amy Winehouse Sings the Ballad of Sonic Blue(s)face Culture," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 20:1 (March 2010): 37-60.
- Ramón Rivera-Servera, "Exhibiting Voice/Narrating Migration: Performance-Based Curatorial Practice in *Azúcar, The Life and Music of Celia Cruz*," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 29:2 (April 2009): 131-148.

Thursday, 11/24: Thanksgiving

Week #12: Reenactments and Reconstructions

Tuesday, 11/29 (43 pp.)

- Carol Martin: "Living Simulations: The Use of Media in Documentary in the UK, Lebanon, and Israel," *Get Real: Documentary Theatre Past and Present*, eds. Alison Forsyth and Chris Megson (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 73-90.
- Rebecca Schneider, Chapter Four, "Poor Poor Theatre," *Performing Remains: Art and War in times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 111-137.

Thursday, 12/1

- **Project proposals due.**
- *Dionysus in '69*, Brian de Palma, dir., Performance Group's original production. Video e-reserves.
- *Dionysus in '69*, Rude Mechs reconstruction of the original production. (TK)
- *Dionysus in '69*, print archive with script, commentary, and photographs of original Performance Group production (available at circulation/reserve desk on first floor at Firestone Library—must be read in Firestone)
- Richard Schechner, "Six Axioms for Environmental Theatre," in *Environmental Theatre* (New York: Applause, 1973, reissued 1994), xix-xli.

Week #13: Rude Mechs

Tuesday, 12/6 Rehearsal for symposium.

Thursday, 12/8 Rude Mechs workshop.

Friday, December 9, 4:00-6:30, and Saturday, December 10, 9:00-6:00, Performance Studies Symposium, James Stewart Theatre, 185 Nassau. Also see *Dionysus in '69 by the Rude Mechanicals*, Matthews Theatre, 185 Nassau, Friday, December 9, 8:00 p.m. Attendance required at symposium events and performance. See [http://www.princeton.edu/arts/arts\\_at\\_princeton/theater/event/pss/overview/](http://www.princeton.edu/arts/arts_at_princeton/theater/event/pss/overview/) for more information on speakers and events.

Week #14: Wrap up.

Tuesday, 12/13 (19 pp.)

- Debrief from symposium.
- E.J. Westlake, "Friend Me if You Facebook: Generation Y and Performative Surveillance," *TDR: The Journal of Performance Studies* 52:4 (Winter 2008): 21-40.

Thursday, 12/15 Synthesis and review.

**Course Requirements and Deadlines:** See appendix for details (posted separately on Blackboard)

1. 20%: Attendance and participation.

2. **30%:** *Two performance responses to reading material with supplemental writing.*
3. **20%:** *Mid-term application project.*
4. **30%:** *Final project/paper.*
  - a. Project ideas to be workshopped with peers, **Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>**
  - b. Proposals workshopped with peers, **Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup>**
  - c. Proposals due, **Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>**
  - d. Presentation during reading week, **Wednesday, January 11<sup>th</sup>**. Please reserve 1:00-5:00 for presentations, then 5:30-7:30 for a class dinner.
  - e. Final project/paper due, **Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>**, Dean's Date