

COM 341- Social Contexts for Performance

Instructor:

We will meet in Stuaffer A318 for the first class ONLY.

All other classes will meet at The Empty Space in the Cornerstone Performing and Media Arts Building located at the NE corner of Rural and University. The building is situated in the NE corner of the parking lot. You should park in the areas designated for ASU. To find The Empty Space, enter the main doors from the south side, go straight back, turn right, and then turn immediately to your left.

Office:

Office Hours:

Email:

(Email is the best way to contact me. I will check/respond to my emails during my office hours and, when possible, I will check email other times of the week.)

COURSE PHILOSOPHY AND DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed with a commitment to critical communicative principles, a respect for cultural difference, and the courage to engage complex social issues through literature, narrative, community involvement and performance. The course engages the study of interactive performance for and with the community outside of the university. It includes research into performance as public service, and performance ethnography and performance as a method for civil political/social discourse. This is a communication course, and as such, it is an interactive discussion course dependent upon the assigned readings, engagement with outside community members and critical thinking. **Students must also commit to engaging a community outside of the university.** We will consider ways in which we engage, conceptualize, interact, assimilate and resist various communities and social contexts. Specifically, we will explore how performance methods, theories and practice can assist us in understanding various social contexts as well as bridge gaps between and amongst communities. This course engages students in understanding communication, literature and culture through alternative academic practices. This class also requires each of us to respect people and their ideas--even if we do not like those ideas or agree with them. Moreover, it is assumed that students will have a level of maturity that will allow them to talk about diverse issues with both a serious engagement and an open mind. As a matter of course, students will explain, apply, and evaluate class material throughout the semester.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The following objectives will be met through a process of lecture, performance, reading, discussion, community engagement and critical analysis.

1. Define & explore the practice of performance in social contexts
2. Understand the use of performance in educational, communal and activist contexts.
3. Develop an appreciation of performance in public service situations
4. Define & explore the practice of performance ethnography & autoethnographic methods of inquiry
5. Define community & the relationship between performance & conceptualizations of community
6. Understand the impact of space & social context in conceptualizations of community
7. Learn performance dialogue techniques to investigate points of public difference & disagreement to more fully understand our own communities as well as those of others
8. Use performance as a method of inquiry
9. Use performance as a means of understanding communities other than our own
10. Interact successfully in group & performance collaboration with persons within & outside of the university

COURSE MATERIALS AND REQUIREMENTS:

- **Course Packet** Available at Alternative Copy Shop (located on the corner of 10th st. and Mill Ave. across from the ASU Art Museum). 1004 S. Mill Ave. 480-829-7992
- Additional readings as posted on Blackboard or handed out in class
- Some type of **recording device**
- A **journal** to serve as a place to collect field notes and document interviews with community members that will be used for various performance projects in the class. Further, the journal should be used to engage in the collection of narratives, notes, thoughts and expressions throughout the semester that should be brought to class **every day!** It may also be helpful to keep the journal with you as much as possible...you never know when you might engage an interesting narrative, person, space or idea.
- Working knowledge of APA writing style (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>)

USEFUL SOURCES:

The Empty Space, located at the NE corner of Rural and University, is the creative workshop space for The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication. It is available to faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students who are interested in presenting performance scholarship to the public. See me for more info and if you are interested in getting involved.

You will find more information about performances at The Empty Space by visiting our website: <http://humancommunication.clas.asu.edu/content/current-performances>

GRADING POLICIES

Your grade in this course is dependent upon your level of commitment to reading, responsible in-class participation, effective analysis and writing, and performance choices. Creative work challenges you as well as the class, offers insight into your growth as a thinker and a learner, and confirms your goals as an effective aesthetic communicator. Responsible work shows me that you are a capable and well-meaning student. Written work should reflect ethical research, creativity and elevated levels of thinking. Your interactions with your peers, and me, should be mature and useful. You will do well in this class if I believe you are making an effort to take risks as a learner. Risk happens when you step outside of limitations and discover something refreshing you did not know before.

Also, I strive to be clear in my expectations and fair in giving the score your work has earned. I may make errors or you may disagree with me, therefore I have a 24/7 policy. Use the first 24 hours after an assignment is returned to review the instructions, your work, and my feedback. After the initial 24 hours, you may email or see me to discuss your grade. After 7 days, I will assume all scores are accurate and the grade is understood.

WRITTEN WORK

Papers turned in after the class period will be considered late and will receive an initial 10% deduction. For each additional day that your paper is late (including weekend days), I will deduct 5%. I will not accept late papers beyond one week. All papers must be typed, double-spaced, utilize 12 pt font and provide proper APA citation of sources. For each of these assignments you will be given a handout that will explain my expectations for content, length, and guidelines for analysis. I may ask you to submit your paper to Blackboard—so be sure to look for that instruction on the assignment guidelines.

GRADING SYSTEM

<i>Attendance, Application & Evaluation:</i>	<i>250 pts</i>
Attendance (4pts for each class):	60 pts
Participation	40 pts
Outside Event Critiques (2 @ 25 pts each)	50 pts
Reading Responses (2 @ 25 pts each)	50 pts
Midterm Examination	50 pts

<i>Civilian Dialogue</i>	<i>100pts</i>
Civil Dialogue Essay (Pt. 1 & Pt. 2)	50 pts
Civilian Dialogue Participation (2 @ 25)	50 pts

Community Testimony

<i>Performance Assignments:</i>	<i>375 pts</i>
Performing Belonging (2-3 mins)	50 pts
Mediated Contexts (Audio/Photo/Video project) (3-5mins)	75 pts
Oral History/Performance Ethnography (6-8 mins)	75 pts
Final Collage Performance (using previous performances; 10-12 mins)	150 pts

Community Engagement

<i>Writing Assignments:</i>	<i>325 pts</i>
Community Rationale	50 pts
Performance as a way of knowing	75 pts
Final Critical Essay (incorporating previous three essays)	150 pts

Course Total: ***1000 pts***

A+= 1000-980 A=979-930 A-=929-900 B+=899-870 B=869-830 B-=829-800
C+= 799-770 C=769-700 D=699-600 E=599-below

For clarity on how I grade please review the following:

A+: A remarkable grade! Perfect work. Very difficult to earn (but not impossible).

A & A-: "A" work is superior work. I expect polished and unflawed performance technique, powerful written analysis offering exceptional ideas in connection to course material, fully prepared participation in the classroom experience.

B+, B, B-: "B" work is good work. I expect obvious effort and confidence in performance, clever and insightful papers, and participation above the norm.

C+ & C: "C" work is average. I expect completion of performance assignments with an attempt to meet requirements, written work that reflects some thought, minimal participation in class discussion.

D: "D" work is poor. Performance at this level is not prepared or presented adequately, writing is narrow or does not use perspectives taken from the course material, and participation or attendance is poor.

E: "E" work is failing. Performance is not done, written work is not turned in for evaluation, and I don't see your face in my class for extended periods of time.

A Scholarship Opportunity in Performance Studies!!

The Kristin Bervig Valentine Endowed Scholarship in Performance Studies is awarded annually to an undergraduate student who has successfully completed at least one performance studies class and has shown significant interest in additional performance research, creative activity, or community service. Apply for this scholarship at <http://humancommunication.clas.asu.edu/undergraduate/scholarships>

ATTENDANCE, APPLICATION & EVALUATION (300 PTS)

Attendance (60pts) and Participation (40pts)

Your presence and participation is required for this course because of its discussion-based nature. You get points for showing up and participating in our class discussions. If you are absent, late or engage in behavior that detracts from your participation in class (ie: texting/social networking, working on a project for another class, falling asleep) you may lose points from your attendance/participation grade, and you may not be notified that I have done so.

Life happens and I understand that you may have outside conflicts that require you to make choices about attending class. You get four points everyday for showing up on time. Conversely, you will not receive full points if you are absent, late or leave early. The only “excused” absences are: Religious holidays, university-sponsored events (athletic teams, debate and forensics, etc.), and a documented extreme illness or emergency (i.e., car accidents, death in the family, etc.). In all three cases, for an absence to be excused you will need to provide me with appropriate documentation. If you are going to miss class for religious holidays or university-sponsored events, you must notify me in writing at the start of the semester or, at minimum, two weeks in advance. In the event of an extreme illness or emergency, you must provide me with documentation within a week of the missed class(es). Makeups for missed performances, provided they are missed for one of the documented “excused” reasons, are at my discretion and my concerns for overall class needs.

Reading Responses: 1 Performance Response; 1 Written Response (@ 25 pts each):

Will be due on a day that the class is assigned the reading you chose. You will construct one 2-3 minute performance and one 2-3 page written response that displays your intellectual, emotional, personal, political, (etc.) response to two assigned reading. This is not meant to be a regurgitation of the article, but rather what it inspired in you. You should be prepared to discuss your performance/writing in the class discussion that follows. You will be graded on

- the craft and creativity
- the effort that is displayed
- the depth of discussion your creative interpretation elicits from the class.

*Performance responses will only be rescheduled due to an unavoidable emergency. If it is rescheduled, there will be an **automatic 5 point deduction**.

Outside Performance/Event Critiques (2 @25 pts):

You are required to attend two outside performance events and write a 2-3 page (typed/double spaced) description and critical evaluation of each performance. **At least one of the events must be at The Empty Space**. Your critique will evaluate the text using course readings, concepts, and lecture. Critiques must be turned in within ONE week of the performance event, and within the deadlines provided in the syllabus. Attach your ticket or program to your essay.

Midterm Examination (50 pts):

You’ll have a take home, essay examination at the midpoint of the semester. The exam will cover course readings, lectures, performance workshops and student performances.

CIVILIAN DIALOGUE

Civil Dialogue™ Participation (2 @ 25 pts):

This is a form of public performance that was designed and implemented by John Genette during the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections. The primary goal of a public civil dialogue is to “promote understanding of political rhetoric, to ensure that questions are being asked, answers are being considered, and all views are respected reciprocally” (Genette 2004). You will be asked to attend and participate in two Civil Dialogues (one of which we will attend together during class time).

Civil Dialogue Essay (In two parts; each worth 25pts):

In Part 1 (Due Sept. 16): In 2-3 pgs, reflect on your observation/participation in the Civil Dialogue, include how you felt able/unable to contribute or not to the dialogue. Consider your own relationship to the community at the heart of the dialogue, your awareness of the issue(s), your level of comfort with the format/environment and your own ideologies. Consider if/how Civil Dialogue might be an effective strategy for engaging the issue(s) facing your chosen community. Turn in your tracking sheet and a description of your participation in the dialogue.

In Part 2 (Due Nov. 25): Construct two Civil Dialogue statements that specifically relate to issues facing your community. Describe which of your previous performances you could/would pair it with and explain your choice. Discuss how this form of public performance may promote understanding of your chosen community to ensure that both the class and larger publics would have the opportunity to engage the issue(s) facing your chosen community in a way in which “all views are respected reciprocally” (Genette, 2004). Using examples from other Civil Dialogues you have attended, how might you imagine audience responses/engagements might be. How, if at all, might Civil Dialogue, when paired with performance, be affected?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSIGNMENTS

PERFORMANCE COMPONENTS

Performing Belonging (50 pts):

You will share a well-thought out story about an event, a relationship, a place, etc. that introduces you and your community to the class. You can choose any creative form of expression including but not limited to: spoken word, dance, music, poetry etc. The purpose of this assignment is (1) provide you an opportunity to engage and become comfortable with performing and (2) introduce and establish your relationship with your chosen community.

Mediated Contexts (75 pts)

For this project, you may use audio, video, photos, text images, social media, and other digital content to create a mixed-media performance project that explores the current and historical conditions of discourse involving your chosen community.

Oral History/Performance Ethnography (100 pts):

You may choose to use either oral history or performance ethnographic methods to explore the lived experiences and everyday stories of the members of the community you have chosen. You will use your chosen method to create a 6-8 minute performance crafted from the voice or voices of your community.

Final Collage Performance (150pts):

This performance will combine portions from each of your previous performances to create a multi-media performance project that tells the story of your chosen community. The goal of this performance project is to create a more nuanced understanding of your community of study, by sharing the voices of community members, highlighting the issue(s) facing this community and showing how the larger social/political discourses that have shaped the lives of the community member(s) with whom you have engaged. Consider how this final project may be of service to your chosen community. These final performances will be open to members of all our communities to attend.

WRITTEN COMPONENTS

Community Rationale (50 pts):

In 3-4 pages you will establish a definition of community, the relationship between 'space', 'place', and community, definitions of belonging and how systems of classification (race, gender, age, nationality, class) influence conceptualizations of community. You will outline how your chosen community is situated within larger discourses of community, how the community has been historical understood/discussed and the current issue(s) facing this community. You will also discuss how you understand yourself in relation to your chosen community. Ultimately you will provide a foundation for understanding your chosen community, the issues facing that community, and provide sufficient rationale for the study of your chosen community.

Performance as a Way of Knowing (75 pts)

In 3-4 pages you will explore how performance, performance ethnography, testimony, personal narrative, visual ethnography, oral history, narrative poetry, and/or another performance concept are ways of knowing for you, your audience and your community. Throughout the semester this should be something you take notes on, explore and notice during your time in the community, your time developing performances/projects and in your course readings.

Culminating Critical Essay (150 pts):

In 10-15 pages you will outline your ethnographic journey with and within the community you chose to explore throughout the semester. The first 5-7 pages of this essay will be revised versions of both your *Community Rationale* and *Performing as a Way of Knowing Essays*. Adding to this foundation, you will detail your autoethnographic journey with your chosen community and your ethnographic account, including interviews you completed with community members to provide a critical examination of community and the issue(s) facing the community you studied. Incorporate how issues of civility and *Civil Dialogue* might impact your community. This essay will conclude with a summary of your semester long interactions with your chosen community, how that engagement impacted your understanding of the self, community, the political/social discourses that define your community of study and recommendations for how community members might successfully confront the issue(s) that impact them.

***Detailed descriptions of written and performance assignments will be posted on Blackboard throughout the semester.**

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Code Of Conduct

In this class, I hope we can co-create an atmosphere that allows for a healthy and civil exchange of diverse ideas and differing viewpoints which encourages rethinking of accepted perspectives; it requires making choices and taking risks. In this class I encourage diversity among learners, a supportive atmosphere, active listening, and opportunities for presenting and criticizing arguments that encourages our learning, aids in our growth and stimulates our imagination. It is *especially* important that we:

- Display respect for all in the class—including the instructor and fellow students;
- Pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities;
- Avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g. having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, posting on Facebook, making and receiving cell phone calls or text messages, etc); and
- Avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our classroom or campus.

This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represents examples of the types of things that can have a dramatic impact on the class environment. Your final grade may be reduced by 1% *each time* I determine that you engage in these sorts of behaviors. Further, students who are verbally or physically aggressive towards the instructor or another student before, during, or after class will have their grade lowered by 25% *each time* they engage in this sort of behavior (and, students engaging in such behaviors will be permanently removed from the class and the proper authorities notified). An instructor may withdraw a student from a course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process and students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed at: <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm201-10.html>

Class Material Disclaimer

It is with respect that we will take up some material in this class that may involve violence, sexual situations, and adult language. Some of us may find this material offensive. We will be discussing controversial issues and at times some of us may feel uncomfortable. Some ideas/issues presented may challenge our ways of thinking or oppose our sense of values. It is essential to approach these issues, the opinions of others and the topics in this class in a professional and respectful manner. You may hold/express (respectful) differences of opinion from your classmates or instructor. If you find your personal opinions, beliefs or values challenged by some of the material, I encourage you to wrestle with that in an academic way. Write about it, process it, and learn from it. Your continued enrollment in class, after reviewing this syllabus, indicates your awareness of this material and your choice to remain in this section of class. Please talk with me about any concerns you have at the beginning of the term.

Accommodation Needs:

If you need accommodations in this course due to a disability, please bring documentation from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at the start of the semester, or at least two weeks prior to the assignment for which you made need an accommodation, so that we can make timely arrangements. You can contact The DRC in the Matthew's Center at 480-965-1234 (voice) / 480-965-9000 (TDD) / <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences are strong proponents of academic integrity. Thus, we expect that all of your work will be original. Therefore, cheating on exams, quizzes, or other assignments will not be tolerated. If you choose to violate University standards for academic integrity, you will be subject to one of the following sanctions: failing the assignment, failing the class, receiving an XE for the class, which goes on your transcript denoted as a drop from a class for cheating, or being removed from the program.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Plagiarism is defined in this class as intentionally or unintentionally using another's work (including wording, phrases, or original ideas) without giving that person credit. Follow APA guidelines, and when in doubt, always cite your sources, including page or paragraph numbers! I will always collect reference pages for written work that requires sources, and if I find a discrepancy, I will take action. Cheating on exams or other assignments is strictly forbidden as well. The use of Internet "paper mills" or "files" in various organizations to which you may belong is a practice of which I am aware, and I will investigate and take action in any situation where a student engages in such unethical behavior. For further information, please consult the HDSHC's Academic Integrity Policy.

<http://humancommunication.clas.asu.edu/undergraduate/policies.shtml>

READING LIST

- Madison, D. S., & Hamera, J. (Eds.). (2006). *The Sage handbook of performance studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- **Schechner, R. (2013) *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. (3rd ed.) London: Routledge.
**HANDOUT
- Genette, J., Linde, J. and Olson, C.D. "Civil Dialogue: Diffusing Polarization and Seeking Insights." The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication. Aug. 2011.
<http://humancommunication.clas.asu.edu/files/CDwhitepaperfinalversion3-11.pdf>
- Spry, T. (2006). A "Performative-I" copresence: Embodying the ethnographic turn in performance and the performative turn in ethnography. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 26(4) 339-346
- **Casas, J. (2005). Scenes from *14*. In J. Saldaña, (ed) *Ethnodrama: An Anthology of Reality Theatre*, (pp. 45-61). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. **HANDOUT
- Conquergood, D. (1988). Health Theatre in a Hmong Refugee Camp: Performance Communication, and Culture. *The Drama Review* 32(3), 174-208
- Conquergood, D. (1985/2003). Performing as a moral act: Ethical dimensions of the ethnography of performance. In Y. S. Lincoln & N. K. Denzin (Eds.), *Turning points in qualitative research: Tying knots in a handkerchief* (pp. 397-413). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- **Smith, A. D. (2000). *Talk to Me: Listening Between the Lines*. New York: Random House.
**HANDOUT
- Bell, E. (2008). *Performing Culture*. In *Theories of Performance*. (pp. 115-145). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.**
- Park-Fuller, L. (2000). Performing absence: The staged personal narrative as testimony. *Text and Performance Quarterly* 20(1), 20-42.
- Madison, D. S. (2003). *Performance, personal narratives, and the politics of possibility*. In Y. S. Lincoln & N. K. Denzin (Eds.), *Turning points in qualitative research: Tying knots in a handkerchief* (pp. 469-486). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.**
- Stucky, N. (1995). Performing Oral History: Storytelling and Pedagogy. *Communication Education* 44, 1-13.
- Saldaña, J (2010). Writing ethnodrama: A sampler from educational research. In M. Savin-Baden & C. H. Major (Eds.), *New approaches to qualitative research: wisdom and uncertainty* (pp. 61-69). New York: Routledge.