

COM 442: Identity, Performance, and Human Communication

Office:

Office Hours:

Office Phone:

Email:

The Empty Space Theater: Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

<http://www.asu.edu/clas/communication/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is about human communication, performance, and issues of identity. Specifically, we use methods and theories of performance to examine identity at the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and nation. We will consider the ways we frame, engage with, and perform our own identity as well as the way we audience and cor construct identity with others.

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

- To define, explore, appreciate, and understand the communicative value of performed/embodied identities;
- To critically examine the concepts of culture and cultural performance;
- To study strategies of resistant performance as they pertain to self and others;
- To work as an individual and within dyads and groups to present aesthetic messages which pertain to communicated identities;
- To play, to listen, to dare, to learn.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Course Reader: located at Alphagraphics on University—815 West University Drive, Suite 101, Tempe, AZ. 85281. To place an order: www.agonuniversity.com Phone: 480-968-7821. Please bring your Course Reader to class daily. We often refer to its content during discussions and group activities.

Some readings may be posted on the MyASU course website or given out in class.

A two-pocket folder will be used to accumulate your written and oral performance comments and grades. **Important:** Keep all submitted and returned materials in this folder, and bring it to class every time we meet. Do not use this folder for class notes or assignment handouts.

Two exam booklets (Blue Books) – these can be purchased at the campus bookstore.

USEFUL SOURCES:

The Empty Space 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.

You will find more information about performances at The Empty Space by visiting our website:

<http://humancommunication.clas.asu.edu/content/current-performances>

Look for additional outside performance opportunities online for The Empty Space as well as other performance sites in and around town (e.g. Gammage Auditorium, Black Theatre Troupe, Mesa Arts Center, etc.).

GRADING: POLICIES AND POINTS

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 college student. Written work should reflect ethical research and elevated levels of thinking. Your interactions with your classmates, and me, should be mature and useful. You will do quite well in this class if I believe from your demonstration that you are making an effort to take risks and “to dare” yourself as a learner. Risk is when you step outside of your limitations. To dare is to discover something refreshing about yourself that you did not know before.

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.

Points:

Attendance:	25 points
Participation:	25 points
Exams (2@ 50 points each)	100 points
2 Outside Event critiques (2 @ 25 pts.)	50 points
Staging my Self/ves Performance	100 points
Cultural Performance	125 points
Reporting Resistance Performance	125 points
2 Performance Responses (20 ea.)	40 points
3 Reading Responses (20 ea.)	60 points

Total points = 650

**A+=642-650 A=641-620 A-=619-590 B+=589-560 B=561-532 B-=531-517
C+=516-493 C=492-455 D=454-420 E=419-below**

I will not discuss grades during class time. I go by the **24/7** policy. You must wait at least **24** hours after receiving your assignment back before contacting me. Additionally, you have to contact me within **7** days of receiving your assignment. You are welcome to visit or call me during office hours to talk about your grade. I reserve the right to ask for your grade concerns in writing and to raise or lower a grade only after a discussion. Offer a cogent and well-supported written argument. This means that you should support your claims from course materials and/or class lectures.

PERFORMANCES:

You will be asked to prepare three major performances and two shorter performance responses this semester. For the three major performance assignments you will be given a handout that will explain my expectations for the assignment. It will include instructions on performance conceptualization, guidelines for the written analysis, time limitations, presentation format, due dates, and other requirements of the assignment. You should follow the instructions in the syllabus for the performance response.

First Performance:

Staging my Self/ves You will construct a solo performance in which you use your body, voice, and any other texts that symbolize or represent your identity. The goal of this performance is to share an aspect of yourself with a particulate audience.

Second Performance:

Cultural Performance In a small group (3-4 people), you will craft a performance that explores identity as it pertains to ritual, social roles, or social drama. The goal of this assignment is to formulate an intellectual and physical understanding of the relationship between performance and culture.

Third Performance: *Reporting Resistance*: Either solo or as a dyad or small group (no more than 3) you will present a performance that reports on a moment, an

event, or a period of time where you or another sought to challenge some form of imposed control. The goal of this performance is to explore resistance as a form of communicated identity.

Do **not** miss class on the day of an assigned performance. You are responsible for trading dates with someone if you have a conflict. I will give you a zero on the assignment if I do not have knowledge and clearance of your absence **ahead of time**. Only students with **documented** and **absolutely unavoidable** reasons for missing a performance will be given an opportunity to make up the assigned performance at a reduced grade.

Performance responses will be due on days that the class is assigned readings from the reading packet. The response will be a **2-4 minute** performance that displays your intellectual, emotional, personal, political, (etc.) response to the assigned reading. You should be prepared to discuss your performance in the class discussion that follows. You will be graded on

- the craft and creativity of your performance;
- your ability to follow instructions;
- the effort that is displayed in your performance;
- and the depth of discussion that your creative interpretation of the reading elicits from the class.

I will post a sign-up sheet on my office door in Stauffer and you must sign up for **two** of the readings from our Course Reader. Your choice of two readings will inspire your performance responses. You are to sign up no later than **February 2nd**. You will be assigned two readings if you do not sign up by this date.

Please keep in mind that your work in this class should be creative and inclusive of aesthetic qualities. So, even though your responses do not need to be memorized, they should be scripted and rehearsed. You should not deliver your response as a speech! If you read from notes or only stand behind the lectern, you are not being inclusive of aesthetic creativity. Examples of aesthetic qualities include the use of your voice and body, the use of the performance space, lighting, sound, etc.

READING:

You are expected to **read the material assigned** in this class. Most of the classroom discussion will center on this reading and all exams will require your understanding of this material.

Reading responses will be due on days that the class is assigned readings from the reading packet. The goal of these responses is to demonstrate critical reading and to co-facilitate productive and generative class discussions. Reading responses should not summarize the main points of the readings; rather they should raise questions, engage in discussions, and grapple with the theories, practices, and writing of identity that the authors pose. Feel free to make these creative responses.

Your Reading Response might take the form of a rant, letter, stream of consciousness, poetry, spoken word, or whatever seems appropriate to you. The point is to engage these readings on a level that is more than mere proof that you have completed the reading.

You will be graded on

- the level of critical thinking displayed in your response;
- your ability to follow instructions;
- your willingness to engage with the material in creative and intellectual ways.

Reading responses are to be submitted **on Blackboard** by the beginning of class period on the day in which the assignment is due. Reading responses must be typed and double spaced. See me if you have intentionally crafted a response that is best displayed in another format. There is no length requirement. You should pay attention to the quality of the content rather than the length of the response. A Reading response is considered late if it is not uploaded to Blackboard by its deadline and your score will be reduced by 25%. Only documented emergencies will be considered a reason to submit a late reading response. (See policy on *Attendance* below in the syllabus).

I will post a sign-up sheet on my office door in Stauffer and you must sign up for **three** of the readings from the Course Reader no later than **February 2nd**. You will be assigned three readings if you do not sign up by this date.

EXAMS:

You will have two exams in this class. The final is not comprehensive, however, you are expected to make associations with and between the articles read throughout the semester. Please be sure to bring your exam notebooks on exam days. You may purchase exam booklets at the campus bookstore for a nominal fee.

WRITTEN WORK:

For each of these assignments you will be given a handout that will explain my expectations for content, length, and guidelines for analysis.

Papers are due **on the day of your performance** and must be **submitted on Blackboard**. **DO NOT SEND YOUR PAPERS TO MY EMAIL ADDRESS**. Papers posted/turned in after the class period will be considered late and your assignment will receive an initial 15% deduction. If you experience technical problems with Blackboard, or you are unsure if your paper has been posted appropriately and on time, then it is your responsibility to submit a hardcopy of your paper on the day of your performance. There are no exceptions if you do not submit your paper, and your paper will not be accepted for grading. All papers must be typed, double-spaced, utilize 12-pt font and provide proper citation of sources.

Outside Performance Critique (25 points). You are required to attend two outside performance events and write a 2-3page (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. Further details on the critique will be provided in class. Critiques must be turned in (hardcopy brought to class and submitted) by the due date noted in the syllabus. Attach your ticket or program to your essay.

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION:

I believe attendance and participation are very important! You will lose 5 points per class period missed unless it is a university-sanctioned absence. It is your responsibility to make sure that you have put your name on the attendance sheet each class period. So, if you are late to class, be sure that you do so at the end of class. An absence is an absence. I do not differentiate between illness, car trouble, out of town obligations, jury duty, etc. The only absence that will not be counted is one that involves a university-sanctioned event. I require documentation of these types of absences. I will give anyone with perfect attendance a 5-point bonus at the end of the semester.

Participation points are given for the following: following the guidelines of the syllabus, speaking up during class discussion, having a positive attitude, putting effort into class exercises and activities, showing proper audience etiquette, demonstrating knowledge of the assigned reading, not being late to class, etc.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication is strongly committed to academic integrity; thus cheating and plagiarism is not tolerated. If a student is charged with academic dishonesty and found to be in violation, disciplinary action will be taken. For further information, please read the Student Academic Integrity Policy and the code of conduct for The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication at:

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

