**ENGL 660: Studies in Genre—Performance Studies and Theatrical Time**

Class Meeting: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, 1-3:50 PST (via Zoom)

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-4, by appointment

“at the uttermost consummation of performance…*we are seeing what we have seen before*”

 --Herbert Blau

Theatrical performance, as many scholars of the discipline have explored, bears a unique relationship to time. “Performance’s only life is in the present,” performance studies scholar Peggy Phelan asserts; “theater is…a function of remembrance,” contends the theorist Herbert Blau. On one hand, theatrical performance is of the moment—an experience of liveness, transience, and ephemerality. On the other hand, theatrical performance is of the past—a receptacle for history, memory, and tradition. Dramatic action thus involves actors and spectators alike in a temporal “telescoping,” as we oscillate constantly between an awareness of where we stand, where we have stood, and who else has stood there before.

Our seminar will explore these temporal oscillations in theory and practice, and by doing so students will receive a thorough grounding in the academic field known as performance studies. Our primary text, and the backdrop for our theoretical readings, will be Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. How, and why, do performance theorists from all scholarly backgrounds regularly choose *this play* to illustrate their claims about performance? Our theoretical readings on performance (work by Peggy Phelan, Marvin Carlson, Joseph Roach, Herbert Blau, among others) will be organized according to signal “keywords” in performance studies (re-enactment, memory, ghosting, liveness, script). We will then be observing how these terms operate in our primary text (*Hamlet)*, in our theoretical texts,and in the course of our daily lives. As structured, this course should appeal to students interested in early modern studies, Shakespeare, and adaptation, but it should also speak to scholars with a broader interest in performance and the relationship that exists among literature, cultural memory, and time. While our class investigations will be guided by the general example of Shakespeare, students are invited for their final projects to explore the issues raised in our discussions via any text or performance event.

**Assignments and Grade Breakdown:**

1. Four tiny papers (500-750 words) due in class on Thursdays, in weeks one through four. See the syllabus for specified prompts. These papers will be read aloud in class, as well as handed in to me at the end of discussion. **40%**
2. On the last week of class, we will perform our scholarship at a mini-conference. I will request a 200-250 word abstract of your presentation, that you will workshop with me on June 17. For our class conference, you will present a fifteen to twenty-minute conference paper on the topic of this abstract; ideally, your talk should be a working version of the argument for your final seminar paper. **20%**
3. One seminar paper (15-20 pages, properly footnoted and with full bibliography). Or, as an alternative to this assignment, you may prepare something to pitch to a public humanities venue such as <https://theconversation.com/us>. (For students interested in the latter, our USC contact for making such pitches is Michelle Boston: msboston@dornsife.usc.edu). **40%**

For examples of past student publications from the course, see <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/occupying-memory-on-monuments-in-concrete-and-verse/>

<https://www.poetrynw.org/touching-time-the-poetry-and-performance-of-charles-simic/?fbclid=IwAR38E0DwsRD1VPw0N5qh4KDmF6w0J7T37iuM_II2LCa3SO1eJu2vxPcs2aQ>

The tiny papers may serve as the core of the seminar paper to be completed at the end of the term, but you may elect to write on a different topic after discussing it with me well in advance of the due date. Students are encouraged to discuss their final paper interests in office hours early in the semester.

**Book List**

Please purchase, on your own, any edition of

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

As supplementary or recommended reading, I will try to place copies of these books on e-reserves.

Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*

Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare’s Ghost Writers*

Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead*

Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*

Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked*

Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex*

Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains*

Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*

Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*

I will also place on reserve copies of

 *The Performance Studies Reader,* ed. Henry Bial

 *Performance Studies, An Introduction*, ed. Richard Schechner

All other required materials are posted on blackboard and/or are accessible via JSTOR, ECCO, or through the library’s electronic access. Materials that you access via a library database, blackboard or e-reserves should be accessible to you during class.

**Schedule of Assignments (readings may be subject to revision):**

Week 1: **Performance**

Wednesday May 20:

°*OED:* Performance **[electronic access]**

° Richard Bauman, “Performance,” in *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments*, ed. Richard Bauman(NY: Oxford UP, 1992), 41-49.

° Marvin Carlson, “What Is Performance?”, *The Performance Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Bial, 2nd edition (NY: Routledge, 2007)*,* 70-75.

° Richard Schechner, from *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 35-37.

°Mary Ann Crane, “What Was Performance?”, *Criticism* 43.2 (Spring 2011): 169-184 (pp. 169-179 most crucial).

°Joseph Roach, “The Blunders of Orpheus,” *PMLA* 125.4 (October 2010): 1078-1086.

*Why might it be it hard to study performance? How does the study of early modern drama in particular (according to Crane) illustrate these difficulties and their resolutions?*

Thursday, May 21

° William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (bring *Hamlet* to this and every subsequent class meeting)

**Tiny Paper due in class:** Choose one passage from *Hamlet* that, to your mind, constitutes a “performance.” Why does the word “performance” apply to what you are describing?

Week 2: **Archive; Script / Text**

Tuesday May 26

*°*Jacques Derrida, from “Archive Fever,” *Diacritics* 25.2 (Summer, 1995): 9-12.

*°* Diana Taylor, “Acts of Transfer,” in *The Archive and The Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2003), 1-33, 279-284.

*°*Jose Estaban Muñoz, “Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts,” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8.2 (1996): 5-16.

*°* Mark Algee-Hewitt et.al, “Canon / Archive: Large-scale Dynamics in the Literary Field,”

<https://litlab.stanford.edu/LiteraryLabPamphlet11.pdf>

*°* Barbara Hodgdon, “Photography, Theater, Mnemonics; or, Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Still,” in *Theorizing Practice: Redefining Theatre History*, ed. W.B. Worthen and Peter Holland (NY: Palgrave, 2003), 88-119.

*°* <http://www.newmuseum.org/pages/view/performance-archiving-performance> (browse)

Wednesday, May 27

Office Hours / Performance event: find an “archive”; spend at least an hour exploring it.

Thursday, May 28

*°* W.B. Worthen, “Disciplines of the Text / Sites of Performance,” *TDR* 39.1 (Spring 1995): 13-28.

*°* W.B. Worthen, “Drama, Performativity, and Performance,” *PMLA* 113.5 (1998): 1093-1106.

*°* Lukas Erne, “Shakespeare and the Publication of His Plays,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53.1 (2002): 1-20.

# Notes towards a Performance Theory of Orature

[Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o](https://www.tandfonline.com/author/Thiong%27o%2C%2BNg%C5%A9g%C4%A9%2BWa) (next time)

*°* from J.L. Austin, “How to Do Things with Words,” in *Performance Studies Reader*

 **Tiny Paper due in class:** describe your Wednesday activity

Week 3: **Memory; Ghosting**

Tuesday, June 2

*°*Joseph Roach, “Preface” and “Introduction: History, Memory, and Performance,” *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (NY: Columbia UP, 1996), 1-32.

*°* Marvin Carlson, “Introduction,” *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 1-15.

*°* Peter Holland, “On the gravy train: Shakespeare, Memory and forgetting,” in *Shakespeare, Memory and Performance*, ed. Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006), 207-236.

Wednesday, June 3

 Office hours / Performance assignment: attend / observe a “haunted” performance

Thursday, June 4

*°* Marvin Carlson, “Introduction” and “The Haunted Text,” *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 1-15, 16-51.

*°* Marjorie Garber, “Shakespeare’s ghost writers” and “Hamlet: Giving up the Ghost,” in *Shakespeare’s Ghost Writers* (NY: Methuen, 1987), 1-27, 166-237.

*°* Andrew Sofer, “How to Do Things with Demons: Conjuring Perfomatives in *Doctor Faustus,” Theatre Journal* 61.1 (March 2009), 1-21

**Tiny Paper due in class:** describe Wednesday’s activity

Week 4: **Re-enactment; Liveness / Presence**

Tuesday, June 9

*°* Rebecca Schneider, “Foreword” and “In the meantime: performance remains,” in *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (NY: Routledge, 2011), 1-31, 87-110.

*°* Jonathan Lamb, “Historical Re-enactment, Extremity, and Passion,” *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 49.3 (Fall 2008): 239-49.

Wednesday, June 10

Office Hours / Performance event: attend / observe a re-enactment

Thursday, June 11

*°*Philip Auslander, “Introduction,” *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (NY: Routledge, 2008), 1-9.

*°* Peggy Phelan, “The ontology of performance: representation without reproduction,” in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (NY: Routledge, 1993),146-166, 191-192.

*°* Herbert Blau, “Virtually Yours: Presence, Liveness, Lessness,” in *Critical Theory and Performance*, 2nd edition, eds. Janelle Reinelt and Joseph Roach (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 532-546.

*°* view Fred Moten, “Blackness and Nonperformance,” AFTERLIVES, MoMA, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2leiFByIIg> (subsequently published as “Erotics of Fugitivity,” from *Stolen Life* [Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2018], 241-67).

**Tiny Paper due in class:** describe Wednesday’s observation

Week 5: **Embodiment; Voice**

Tuesday, June 16

*°* Judith Butler, “Preface,” “Introduction,” from *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (NY: Routledge, 1993), viii-x, 1-23.

*°*Joseph Roach, “Mimic State,” from *It* (Ann Arbor, MI: U of Michigan Press, 2007), 36-40.

*°* Marvin Carlson, “The Haunted Body,” *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 52-95.

*°* Peggy Phelan, “Introduction: this book’s body,” and “Uncovered rectums: disinterring the Rose Theatre,” in *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (NY: Routledge, 1997), 1-22, 73-94.

*°* Michael Dobson, “Embodying the Author,” in *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship, 1660-1769* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), 134-184.

Wednesday, June 17

 Office Hours / Individual Workshops—ABSTRACTS DUE

Thursday, June 18

*°* Roland Barthes, “The Grain of the Voice,” in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (NY: Hill and Wang, 1977), 179-189.

°PeterHolland, “Hearing the Dead: The Sound of David Garrick,” in *Players, Playwrights, Playhouses: Investigating Performance, 1660-1800* (NY: Palgrave, 2007), 248-270.

*°*Judith Pascoe, “Sarah Siddons, Theatre Voices, and Recorded Memory,” *Shakespeare Survey* 61 (July 2014): 1-10.

*°* Fred Moten, “Resistance of the Object: Aunt Hester’s Scream,” from *In the Break* (Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota Press, 2003), 1-24.

BRING REVISED ABSTRACTS TO CLASS

Week 6: **Class Performance; Time**

Tuesday, June 23

 *°*Class final paper presentations

Wednesday, June 24

 Office Hours / Workshops

Thursday, June 25

*°*Thomas Postlewait and Charlotte M. Canning, “Representing the Past: An Introduction on Five Themes,” in *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography* (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2010), 1-34

*°*Tracy C. Davis, “Performative Time,” in *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography* (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2010), 142-167.

*°*Emily Hodgson Anderson, “Against Loss,” in *Shakespeare and the Legacy of Loss* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 13-25.

**FINAL PAPERS DUE: Tuesday, June 30, by 4pm**

**Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus,* the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.