

Performance Seminar

ANTH E502, Spring 2016 Monday 10:55 AM -1:10 PM, Student Building 060

Prof. Susan Seizer (sseizer@indiana.edu) Office hours: Tuesday 2:00-4:00, and by appointment Office: Room 160 Office Phone: (812) 856-1986

Course description:

This course is a graduate-level introduction to performance-oriented perspectives on the study of social life. We will explore the principal conceptions of performance that shape performance studies in the humanities and social sciences, with attention to their intellectual history, their descriptive and analytic foci, and their potential for capturing what interests us in performance. Specifically, we will consider (1) performance as *practice*; (2) performance as *performativity*; (3) performance as *theatricality*; (4) performance as *artful communication*; and (5) performance as *display event*. We will balance our attention between the exploration of theoretical and analytical perspectives on the one hand, and ethnographic case-study examination of specific performance forms on the other. In attending to the latter, we will pay particular attention to how scholars represent their own relation to the material they present, and the interaction between observer and observed and whether this too might be seen as a performance.

Books:

There are four required books for this course.

- 1 Hurston, Zora Neale. 1990 [1935]. *Mules and Men*. NY: Harper.
- 2 Bauman, Richard. 2004. *A World of Others' Words: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Intertextuality*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- 3 Auslander, Philip. 2008. *Liveness: Performance in A Mediatized Culture (Second Edition)*. London: Routledge
- 4 Pandian, Anand. 2015. *Reel World: An Anthropology of Creation*. Duke U Press.

All additional readings for this course are available on Canvas in the Files section of our course site.

Note: Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are also in journals that are available online through the IU Library.

Required course work:

1. Class attendance and participation. Regular attendance, preparation, and participation in a graduate seminar should go without saying, but just so that we're clear: I expect you to be present in class, to come to each class meeting having read the assigned reading/s for the week, and to participate in class discussion. You are expected to take notes on the readings and have them available for reference in class. Any unexcused absences will negatively affect your final course grade.

2. Web Postings. In preparation for each class session, each member of the seminar will formulate one salient question or synthesizing statement relating to the subject of the upcoming class session, keyed to one or more of the week's assigned readings and framed in such a way as to elicit further discussion. Post these in the relevant Canvas Discussion **24 hours before our class meeting, so by noon on Sunday**. I encourage you to read and comment on each others' posts prior to our meeting. I will utilize this online discussion as a point of departure for our class discussions, aiming to bring out thematic interests and concerns that bear on the study of performance more broadly.

3. Short Paper: The assignment for this short paper is under Canvas Assignments. This is a 3-5 page paper

semester to apply the themes of a set of weekly readings to the structure of a class session. A) In the first, each student will have the opportunity to apply the theoretical lens introduced in a given week's readings to performance materials of his or her choosing. For the purposes of this exercise, your job is to demonstrate to the class how the key ideas of the text(s) encountered this week might usefully be applied to materials you select. Please provide an accompanying handout outlining some key points that connect our readings to the materials you've chosen. B) In the second, each student will have the opportunity to structure and lead the class in discussion of a given week's reading/s. How you structure the class is up to you; you may choose to lead us in some sort of physical or theatrical exercise, or develop with us a Socratic dialogue, or lead us through the readings in a particular order and with a particular orienting question, etc. I leave the structure of a plan up to you but will be happy to discuss ideas with you in advance if you'd like a springboard (My Tuesday afternoon office hours are a good time for this!). *Sign-ups for both these opportunities will take place at our second class meeting on Jan. 25.*

5. Outline for final paper: an outline (1-2 pages) that sets out the problem(s), perspective(s), and data to be addressed in your final paper for the course (see #8 below), with a brief bibliography of relevant works. Schedule a planning discussion with Prof. Seizer by appointment and email me your outline *at least 24 hours prior* to our scheduled meeting time. Bring a hard-copy of the outline with you to our meeting. Appointments may be scheduled for a meeting during the weeks of March 21st – April 11th.

6. Final Presentation: On April 18th each student will have the opportunity to share with the class a sample of the data and approach to it that he or she is working with for the final paper/project, and to get our collegial input. Use this opportunity to try out modes of presentation and get feedback on what is working and what isn't yet. You may steer discussion to what you are finding most interesting and exciting, and/or to that which you are finding most difficult or surprising in working on your topic. A one-page handout should accompany your presentation that provides us a succinct statement of your topic and approach, and points us to key ideas from scholars whose work you find useful in analyzing your material.

7. Feedback provider: One seminar member will be designated to provide written feedback on each presentation. Providers of feedback will email comments and suggestions to the presenter (cc'd to Prof. Seizer on the day following the presentation. Such feedback may include bibliographic references, theoretical and analytical suggestions, recommendations concerning the framing and rhetoric of the argument, suggestions about the relative emphasis placed upon aspects of the argument, expressions of praise, etc. The feedback may be as brief or as long as you are inspired to offer. What is important is that you engage with the presentation and try to be as collegial and helpful as you can.

8. Final Paper: Due by noon on Monday April 25th. The final paper for the course consists of an original research paper of 12-15 pp. in length in which you explore one or more of the problems and perspectives considered in the course in relation to empirical data. The core of the paper is to be an analysis of a corpus of primary data, taken from your own empirical research or from other available sources (e.g., published materials, archival collections, historical sources, media representations or documentations, etc.). In the process of developing and writing your paper, it is important that you contextualize your analysis by reference to the scholarly literature we discuss in the seminar. Relevance to the concerns of the course will be a major consideration in the evaluation of the paper; your paper should demonstrate that you took the course seriously and learned something in the process.

The paper will develop through the following stages:

- 1 A planning meeting and outline (detailed in #5 above)
- 2 The presentation to the class (as detailed in #6 above)
- 3 Receipt of feedback from another/other seminar members (#7 above)
- 4 The final paper itself due May 2 (as detailed in #8 above)

Grading

In evaluating your work for this course I will weigh the required components in the following percentages:

1. Class attendance, participation, and weekly posts: 35%
2. Application Opportunities: 15%
3. Short paper (due Feb. 15): 10%
4. Final presentation (due April 18): 10%
5. Final paper (due April 25): 30%

Weekly schedule of class topics and readings:

Week 1. Jan 11: Intro lecture on analytic frameworks

- Introduce the course: *This is a course on how we, as scholars and students of performance and ethnography, might learn to better see and appreciate the complexities of human performance, whether onstage or in everyday life. I have chosen (for the most part) to assign readings for this course that I consider to be primary texts rather than secondary sources. One thing this means is that we will not be using an "Introduction to Performance Studies" textbook (although some good ones exist! Let me know if you would like pointers to one of these). Such a claim of course raises the question: what is a primary text in this field? For example: What makes Clifford Geertz's interpretation of the cultural texts of others "primary"? What makes Zora Neale Hurston's collection of tall tales she heard in her hometown "primary"? What makes my analysis of the comedic performances of actors in south India "primary"? There will necessarily be much to do with history in any answer to such questions: When and in what historical context was this text written? What were the reactions to it, what were its disciplinary effects, and what other kinds of studies did it spawn? Had anyone written this way about a performance event, or floated an interpretation like this, previously? I hope our study raises such questions repeatedly throughout the semester and I look forward to our collective discussions about the materials we will read and consider throughout the semester in this course.*

- Review syllabus and assignments
- Introduce five notions of performance we find in contemporary social analysis

***** no class on Jan 18th: Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service *****

Week 2. Jan 25: Performance as a Continuum of Consciousness: Art, Reflexivity, & the Theatrical Metaphor

Armstrong, Robert Plant. 1981. *The Powers of Presence: Consciousness, Myth, and Affecting Presence*. Pp. 3-20. Phi U of Penn Press. [17 pages] (Canvas: Files)

Babcock, Barbara. 1987. "Reflexivity." In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. Mircea Eliade, ed. Vol. 12, pp. 234-38. New York: Macmillan [4 pages] (Canvas: Files)

Brecht, Bertolt. 1957 [1936]. "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting." *Brecht on Theatre*, tr. John Willett. NY Hill & Wang, pp. 91-99 [8 pages] (Canvas: Files)

Burns, Elizabeth. 1972. "Theatricality." Harper & Row, pp 8-21 (Canvas: Files)

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Pp. 15-16, 252-255. New York: Anchor Doubleday. [5 pages] (Canvas: Files)

Burke, Kenneth. 1969[1945]. "Introduction: the five key terms of dramatism." In *A Grammar of Motives*. Pp. xv-xxiii. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. [8 pages] (Canvas: Files)

Hall, Kira. 1999. "Performativity." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 9(1-2): 184-187.

Week 3. Feb. 1st: Cultural Performance

Application opportunity : _____ Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" Pp. 3-32 and "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" pp. 412-453. In *The Interpretation of Cultures*. NY: Basic Books. (Canvas: Files)

*Schieffelin, Edward L. 1985. "Performance and the cultural construction of reality." *American Ethnologist* 12(4): 707-24. (Canvas: Files)

Singer, Milton. 1972. *When a Great Tradition Modernizes: An Anthropological Approach to Indian Civilization*. Pp.70-75. (NY: Praeger) [5 pages] (Canvas: Files)

Mead, Margaret. 2009 [1973]. "Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words." Introduction to *Principles of Visual Anthropology* [electronic resource], Ed. Paul Hockings. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 1-10. *This is the written text version of M. Mead's rant given at the AAA 43 years ago

Screen in class:

- Short film of Balinese cockfight (DVD)
- Short film by Mead & Bateson, "Bathing Babies in 3 Cultures" (youtube)

Week 4. Feb. 8th: Verbal Art as Performance, Heteroglossia and Intertextuality

DR. RICHARD BAUMAN will attend our class and discuss his work with us, including his involvement with the development of the ethnography of speaking and with the introduction of M. M. Bakhtin's work in the United States.

*Bauman, Richard. 1977. "Verbal Art as Performance." *American Anthropologist*, V77 N2, June 1975, pp. 290-311. (Canvas: Files)

*Sawin, Patricia. 2002. "Performance at the nexus of gender, power, and desire: reconsidering Bauman's Verbal Art from the perspective of gendered subjectivity as performance." *Journal of American Folklore* 115(455):28-61. (Canvas: Files)

*Bauman's response, 2002. *Journal of American Folklore* 115(455): 92-98. (Canvas: Files)

Bauman, Richard. 2004. *A World of Others' Words: Cross-Cultural Performances of Genre and Intertextuality*. Malden MA: Blackwell. Chs. 1, 3-4, 7-8. (Canvas: Files)

Bakhtin, M. M. 1994.

- Chs. 9-10 (pp. 102-122), excerpts from "Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics (1963) and "Discourse in the Novel" (1935)." In *The Bakhtin Reader*, ed. Pam Morris, London: Arnold Press. (Canvas: Files)
- Chs. 17-18 (pp. 194-226), "Carnival Ambivalence," excerpts from *Rabelais and His World* (1965). In *The Bakhtin Reader*, ed. Pam Morris, London: Arnold Press. (Canvas: Files)

Week 5. Feb 15th: Performing Fieldwork: living the interaction between observers & observed

[*short paper due in class]

Application: _____

Hurston, Zora Neale. 1935. *Mules and Men*. Read in 1990 edition: Preface, Foreword, Introduction, and Part I: Folk Tales (pp. xiii-179).

Cotera, Maria Eugenia. 2008. "Lyn' Up a Nation': Zora Neale Hurston and the Literary Uses of the Folk." Ch. 2 in *Native Speakers*, Austin: University of Texas Press, pp. 71-101. (Canvas: Files)

Hymes, Dell. 1975 "Breakthrough into Performance." *Folklore Performance and Communication*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein. Paris: Mouton, pp. 11-74. (Canvas: Files)

Recommended reading (optional): Austin, J.L. *How to Do Things with Words*. Lectures I, II, III, IV. (Pp. 1-52.) Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Canvas: Files)

In-class screening: example of breakthrough into performance, from Prof. Seizer's fieldwork: interview with Tom Sobel, comedy club booker

Week 6. Feb. 22th: Orientation in Performance (footing, stance, alignment)

Application: _____

Goffman, Erving. 1974. "Footing." *Semiotica* 25 (1-2): 1979. 1-29 (Canvas: Files)

Seizer, Susan. 1997. "Jokes, Gender, and Discursive Distance on the Tamil Popular Stage." *American Ethnologist*, V 24 N 1, pp. 62-90. (Canvas: Files)

Sacks, Harvey. 1989. "An Analysis of the Course of a Joke's Telling in Conversation," in *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, ed. Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer, second ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 337-353. (Canvas: Files)

Glick, Douglas J. 2007. "Some performative techniques of stand-up comedy: An exercise in the textuality of temporalization." *Language & Communication*, Volume 27, Issue 3, Pages 291-306
+ Watch: Eddie Izzard's "Flags" on youtube.com

In-class screening: footage of *The Buffoon's Monolog* from Prof. Seizer's fieldwork, www.stigmasofthetamilstage.com

Week 8. Feb. 29th: Play, Creativity & Flow: the pleasures of performance

Application: _____

Bateson, Gregory. 2000 [1972]. "A Theory of Play and Fantasy" in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, pp. 177-195.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. 1975. *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: Experiencing Flow in Work and Play*. Chs. 1-4, pp. 1-54; Ch. 9, pp. 140-160; Ch. 11, pp. 179-206. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Seizer, Susan. 2013. "Double-Voiced Parody: Stewart Huff Plays a Bigot." [draft under revision for *Humor: An International Journal of Humor Studies*]

In-class screenings:

- example from Prof. Seizer's fieldwork of Stewart Huff on the Wright Brothers (6 min; Huff is a stand-up comic who seems to channel Csikszentmihalyi!)
- "Nevelson in Process" (dir. Jill Godmilow, 1975, 29 min.)

Week 9. MARCH 7: Performance and/as theater: liminality, socialdrama, embodiment

Application: _____

Turner, Victor. 1967. "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage," Ch V pp. 93-112, in *The Forest of Symbols*.

Turner, Victor. 1982. *From Ritual to Theatre*. "Introduction," pp. 7-20, and "Dramatic Ritual/Ritual Drama" pp. 89-101.

*Schechner, Richard. 1981. "Restoration of Behavior." *Studies in Visual Communication* 7:2-45.

Barish, Jonas. 1991. Intro excerpt (4 pp) & Ch. XIV, pp. 450-477, "The Theater against Itself." In *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice*. Berkeley: U of California Press **In-class screening:** rehearsal excerpts from "Lear 1987" (dir. Jill Godmilow, 1987)

*** SPRING BREAK MARCH 13-20*** (No class on March 14)

Week 10. MARCH 21: Audiences and Publics

Application opportunity: _____

- Barber, Karin. 1997. "Preliminary notes on audiences in Africa." *Africa* 67(3):347-362.
- Warner, Michael. 2002. *Publics and Counterpublics*. Pp. 65-124. NY: Zone Books.
- *Irvine, Judith T. 1979. "Formality and Informality in Communicative Events." *American Anthropologist* 81:773-90.
- Seizer, Susan. 2011. "On the Uses of Obscenity in Live Stand-up Comedy." *Anthropological Quarterly*. Vol. 84, No. 1, p. 209-234.

Recommended:

Theatricality.” In *Public Space and Democracy*, ed. Henaff and Strong, pp. 1-31. Minn: U of Minnesota Press.

Week 11. March 28:

Application opportunity: _____

Barber, Karin. 2003. “Text and Performance in Africa.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 66(3):324-333. (Canvas: Files)

Taylor, Diana. 2003. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Preface, “Who, When, What, Why”; ch 1, “Acts of Transfer”; ch. 2, “Scenarios of Discovery: Reflections on Performance and Ethnography.” Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, pp. . xiii-78. (Canvas: Files)

Optional reading: Fusco, Coco. 1995. “The Other History of Intercultural Performance.” In *English is Broken Here*. NYC: The New Press, pp. 37-64 (Oncourse)

In-class screening: “The Couple in the Cage” (dir. Coco Fusco, 1999, 33min.)

Week 12. April 4th: Recreated Performances: real what?

Application opportunity: _____

*Bruner, Edward & Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. 1994. “Maasai on the lawn: tourist realism in East Africa.” *Cultural Anthropology* 9(4):435-70.

*Gable, Eric & Richard Handler 2005. “Horatio Alger and the Tourist’s Quest for Authenticity, or, Optimism, Pessimism, and Middle-Class American Personhood” in *Anthropology and Humanism* Vol 30 No 2 Dec:124-132.

Auslander, Philip. 2008 (2nd edition). *Liveness: Performance in A Mediatized Culture (Second Edition)*. London: Routledge.

Week 13. April 11: Ethnography is more than description

Application opportunity: _____

- Pandian, Anand. 2015. *Reel World: An Anthropology of Creation*. Duke U Press.

Recommended:

- Urban, Greg. 2001. *Metaculture: How Culture Moves through the World*. Ch. 1, pp. 1-40.

Week 14. April 18: Student presentations. Presentations should be no longer than 15 minutes, leaving time for 10 minutes of productive class discussion after each presentation. A one-page handout should accompany each presentation.

1. _____ feedback provider: _____
2. _____ feedback provider: _____

Week 15. April 25th: Final papers due by noon on Canvas Assignments