

ARHU 158D: Explorations in the Arts and Humanities

LIVES OF PERFORMANCE

Tuesdays/Thursdays 3:30-4:45 PM, Tawes Hall 0214

Professor: Scott Trudell
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Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-3:00 PM, and by appointment
Tawes Hall 3243

Overview of ARHU 158:

This course is designed to empower and acclimate freshmen as they begin their undergraduate studies in areas of the arts and humanities. ARHU 158 introduces different methods of humanistic study and explores how multiple disciplinary perspectives can be used richly and critically to understand the human condition. Students will learn about and experiment with key questions, concepts, vocabularies, methods, critical strategies and practices within ARHU. They will have a collaborative opportunity to engage in the practice of humanistic research drawing on skills cultivated throughout the course, together with an overview of campus tools and resources through which they can further engage with the College and campus communities.

Core issues of this section:

Our section explores "live" performance and its many afterlives in audio and visual media. We will study performance as an artform ranging from Shakespeare to the Cohen Brothers, and as a social practice that includes race, sexuality and political protest. Students will approach performance from the perspectives of literary studies, musicology, theater studies and more, working throughout the course on collaborative projects that find their own, creative ways to engage communities around them.

What to expect:

This is a versatile course introducing you to humanities disciplines, campus resources, advising and performance theory. We will have several guest speakers, we will explore the campus, we will study texts by a range of writers, artists and performers, and we will attend three live performances. You will work together on final projects that "perform" humanities knowledge on campus or in the University community.

Help make this class a safe space for your peers. The first semester will feel overwhelming at times. Use your classmates and me to talk through your concerns, thrive and enjoy the experience.

You will be sure to succeed in this course if you attend every class, keep up with weekly assignments and post on the blog by the due dates.

If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please let me know during the first two weeks of class.

If there are hardships that will affect your course performance, please let me know early in the semester. We can discuss strategies for succeeding.

Make sure to take advantage of my office hours, or send me a quick email to set up an appointment outside of them. **Plan to meet with me at least once, by the end of October.**

Pay close attention to the due dates on the syllabus: most of your writing assignments have deadlines outside of class, in electronic form.

Texts:

- William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine (Folger Shakespeare Library, 1993), ISBN 0743477545.
- *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*, with the San Francisco Opera, conducted by John DeMain and stage directed by Francesca Zambello (recommended)
- Nikky Finney, *Head Off & Split* (do not purchase: I copies for you)

Check www.amazon.com and www.addall.com for used and inexpensive copies. The DVD of *Porgy and Bess* will be available to stream on ELMS/Canvas, so purchasing your own copy is optional.

All other assigned texts will be available on our ELMS/Canvas site. **Make sure to print them out and bring them to class.** Buy a printer if you don't already own one (you'll save money in the long run).

Course requirements:

- Participation (25%)
- Blog posts and comments (25%)
- Short writing assignments (25%)
- Final project, including 5-page written component (25%)

Policies:

- Attendance and participation are the keys to success in this course.
- I grade participation based on thoughtful, consistent engagement with the class. This is not simply about speaking often: more important is how you listen and respond to your peers.
- I take attendance daily. Absences that are not excused under University policy will result in failing participation grades. For further information, see <http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/V-100G.pdf>
- If you miss class, follow these steps:
 - 1) You are required to post a brief reaction to that day's readings on the course blog. Make-up posts are in addition to your weekly writing assignments (they do not count as your post for the week). Post within three days of the class you missed and title it "Make-up post." Failing to complete make-up posts

will result in lower or failing grades for participation and blog performance.

2) You are responsible for obtaining notes. Find a partner and exchange contact information early in the semester to help with this.

- Turn off phones and computers completely (not to vibrate or silent) and leave them in your bag. See me if you require an exception.
- You are responsible for following the university code on academic honesty. If I detect plagiarism, I will report it to the Honor Council, and you will be subject to receiving an "XF" for the course, with the notation on your transcript, "Failure due to academic dishonesty." For information on plagiarism, visit: <http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/citing.html>

Blog:

Each week you are required to post on the course blog. You may post anytime by the end of the day on the due date (including some days earlier). Please bookmark the page and sign up for email updates:

www.livesofperformancefall15.wordpress.com

You may write about any aspect of the coursework or assigned readings for that week. I will often provide an assignment prompt on the right-hand column of the blog. This is optional: you may take up another topic if you wish, as long as it is relevant.

Write informally and creatively! The blog is a chance to try out new ideas, follow up on topics that came up during class, respond to your peers' ideas and bring up different points of view.

I encourage you to incorporate include songs, video clips, performance adaptations and other media that help us rethink the performances we discuss in class. Also use the blog to try out ideas that relate to your final projects.

To make a post, it's best to use the "Write a new post" link in the "Get to work" column on the right (using the drop-down menu sometimes leads to technical problems).

Don't forget that you are required to **read and comment** on your peers' postings. Try suggesting an improvement, debating an idea or making a connection to another text or quote.

Welcome

September 1

- Introductions
- Bring home copies of *Head Off & Split* and *Be Worldwide*

What are the humanities?

September 3

- *Be Worldwide* booklet
- Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center (CSPAC) brochure
- Watch the eight "Insights" segments here:
<https://arhuinsights.umd.edu/frontpage>
- Fareed Zakaria, "Why America's obsession with STEM education is dangerous" (pdf)
- Assignment: what does Professor Trudell do for a living?
- Overview of faculty interview assignment

What is performance?

September 8

- Nikky Finney, *Head Off & Split*
- Henry Bial, "What is Performance?" (pdf)
- Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, "Performance Studies" (pdf)
- Assignment: create an account on the course blog

September 9: **Blog post due**

September 10

- Nikky Finney, *Head Off & Split*
- Erika Fischer-Lichte, "The Concept of Performance" (pdf)
- Assignment: Identify your personal type in the Jung typology test by navigating to <http://www.humanmetrics.com/> and selecting "Take test." Print your results and bring them to class.

What am I doing here?

September 15

- Meyers-Briggs activity

September 16: **Blog post due**

September 17

- Encountering difficult texts activity
- "How is college different from high school" (pdf)
- Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution"

Discipline encounter 1: English

September 22

- Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 1

September 23: **Blog post due**

September 24

- Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 2

September 29

- **ARHU Convocation in the Gildenhorn Recital Hall, CSPAC**

September 30-October 25, *Animal* at the Studio Theatre (1501 14th St NW, Washington DC), class trip TBD

September 30: **Blog post due**

October 1

- Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Acts 3-4
- Watch Michael Hoffman, dir., *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (on ELMS Online Media Reserves)
- Recommended: Mary Z. Maher, "Midsummer Night's Dream: Nightmare or Gentle Snooze?" (pdf)

October 6

- Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 5
- Bertolt Brecht, "A Dialogue about Acting" (pdf)
- Recommended: Annabel Patterson, "Bottom's Up: Festive Theory in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*" (pdf)
- Overview of scavenger hunt assignment

Campus Resources

October 8

- Check-in: best and worst of college so far?
- Discussion of library, LGBT center, campus police, counseling center, CSPAC and other resources
- Assignment: campus resources scavenger hunt

October 9: **One-page paper due**

October 13

- ARHU advising visit

October 15

- **Faculty interview assignment due**
- In-class presentations
- Brainstorming session: come to class with potential project ideas
- Overview of intellectual development assignment

October 20

- Zora Neale Hurston, "Bone of Contention" (pdf)
- Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Why the 'Mule Bone' Debate Goes On" (pdf)

October 21: **Intellectual development narrative due (post on blog)**

Discipline encounter 2: Musicology

October 22

- Faculty visit: Professor Richard G. King

October 26: **Blog post due**

October 27

- *Porgy and Bess* (on ELMS Online Media Reserves: watch the San Francisco Opera production)

October 29: **No class. Nikky Finney event TBD.**

October 30: **Project ideas due (on blog)**

November 3

- *Porgy and Bess*
- Ellen Noonan, Introduction to *The Strange Career of Porgy and Bess*

November 5

- Faculty visit: Professor Mary Helen Washington

November 6-10: *Tartuffe* at CSPAC, class trip TBD

November 9: **Blog post due**

November 10

- *Porgy and Bess*
- *New York Times*, "Metropolitan Opera Says Its 'Otello' Tenor Will Not Wear Blackface" (pdf)
- Alison Kinney "As the Met Abandons Blackface, a Look at the Legacy of African Americans in Opera" (pdf) and online: <http://hyperallergic.com/226687/as-the-met-abandons-blackface-a-look-at-the-legacy-of-african-americans-in-opera/>

Discipline encounter 3: Theater and Performance Studies

November 12

- Faculty visit: Professor Faedra C. Carpenter

November 13: **One-page paper due**

November 17

- *New York Times*, "It Ain't Necessarily 'Porgy'" (pdf)
- Listen to *Fresh Air* interview with Audra McDonald:
<http://www.npr.org/2012/08/30/160316050/audra-mcdonald-shaping-bess-on-broadway>

November 19

- Listen to *NPR*, "Five Classic Jazz Takes On 'Porgy And Bess'" (note that the first two links do not work, so you'll need to search for the recordings on *YouTube*)
<http://www.npr.org/sections/ablogsupreme/2011/08/31/140091297/five-classic-jazz-takes-on-porgy-and-bess>
- Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man"

November 20-24: *Don Giovanni* at CSPAC, class trip TBD

November 23: **Project outlines due (post on blog)**

November 24

- Group work on projects: bring hard copies of project outlines to class

Thanksgiving Break!

Explorations

November 30: **Blog post due**

December 1

- Group work on projects

December 3: Career Advising Session

- **Meet in the Career Center**, at 3100 Hornblake Library, South Wing.
- Assignment: explore LinkedIn's alumni feature

December 7: **Blog post due**

December 8

- Group work on projects

December 10

- Group work on projects

Saturday, December 19, 10:30-12:30

- **Project reports due:** meet in our regular classroom to share how it turned out.