

PERFORMANCE & ETHNOGRAPHY: EINFÜHRUNG IN DIE THEORIE UND ÄSTHETIK

Instructor: Dr. Brandon Woolf
Email: bwoolf@mac.com
Office Hours: Tuesdays (14-15 Uhr)
Or By Appointment
Hausarbeiten Due: 15. October 2016

Seminar Meetings:

Di, 19.04.2016 10 - 14:00 (SR I)
Di, 26.04.2016 10 - 14:00 (SR I)
Di, 03.05.2016 10 - 14:00 (SR I)
Di, 10.05.2016 10 - 14:00 (SR I)
Di, 17.05.2016 10 - 14:00 (SR I)
Di, 24.05.2016 10 - 14:00 (SR I)
Di, 14.06.2016 10 - 14:00 (SR I)
Di, 21.06.2016 10 - 14:00 (SR I)
Di, 28.06.2016 10 - 14:00 (SR I)
Di, 05.07.2016 10 - 14:00 (SR I)
Di, 12.07.2016 10 - 14:00 (SR I)
Sa, 16.07.2016 10 - 19:00 (Hörsaal)

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Course texts are available digitally as PDFs at the following link:

http://www.brandonwoolfperformance.com/?attachment_id=3854

Please bring copies of the readings with you to class and be prepared to speak about specific portions of the text. (Please let me know if you have any problems accessing the digital files, and we will find a solution.)

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Outside of Class: Attend the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin *and* Rimini Protokoll's "50 Aktenkilometer" Walking Tour (be sure to save your tickets to the museum and to take a "selfie" of yourself on the walking tour, as I will ask you to hand them in with your final paper.)

2. Solo "Colleague" Performance (2 minutes) DUE: In Class on 3. May 2016

- At the second seminar meeting, I will pair each student with a colleague. The colleagues will schedule a time to meet outside of class and "interview" one another.
- Then, on your own, you will create a 2-minute solo performance of your devising that performs a brief introduction to this colleague for the larger group – in whatever form you choose.
- This "biographical" performance can be about the colleague's personal background, family, interests, studies, everyday life, hobbies, physicality, etc. – whatever you choose to focus on in your "interview" time.
- The goal of this assignment is to emphasize the ways in which performance can help us convey something about ourselves, and to underscore how performance constructs and informs our everyday experience and identities.

3. Class Discussion Leader/ Group Presentation (5-7 minutes)

- In small groups, you will be assigned a day on the syllabus on which you will be responsible for guiding part of our discussion. You will arrive in class prepared with a short presentation.
- Think about how your presentation will elucidate the key issues raised by the text and/or how the reading relates to and/or complicates key ideas from the course.

- The Monday night before the Tuesday presentation in class, you will email me a list of four discussion questions pertaining to the text you are presenting. The questions will derive from your research pertaining to the reading(s) we will be discussing the following day. I will then use these questions to help structure our classroom discussion. Please make sure to email me the questions **by 5PM on the Monday before your presentation.**

4. Group Performance Ethnography (10-15 minutes) DUE: In Class on 16. July 2016

- Working in groups or pairs, students create a performance centered around ethnographic research they have conducted over the **whole** semester.
- Chose a topic or “field site” of some importance to your group, conduct interviews related to that topic, spend time at that “field site,” and devise a brief performance based on the ethnographic “data” you collect.
- These performances might be strict adaptations of interview transcripts or they might be loosely inspired by the time spent in the field. All performances should include the use and/or creation of text, movement, and possibly music. The performances should be memorized and rehearsed.
- The goal of this assignment is to introduce performance ethnographic methods as a rich source for creative practice; to develop skills in critical and creative collaboration; and to see the ways in which performance methodologies can make a contribution to discussions on vital issues of our time.
- Each group must come speak to me in office hours about their chosen “site” **before 25. May 2016.**

5. Critical Reflection Paper (10 pages) DUE: 15. October 2016

- Finally, there will be an essay detailing your ethnographic work, as well as the process and creation of the performance. Relate the project to the themes explored in our class over the course of the semester.
- You may include field notes and visual “data” in your paper, but you must also present a clear and cogent representation of your ethnographic and collaborative work with a narrative structure and central questions or arguments.

COURSE SCHEDULE

UNIT 1: PERFORMANCE AS METHOD

Week 1: Introductions (19. April 2016)

- *Watch in Class: The Heart Broken in Half* – a film by Taggart Siegel & Dwight Conquergood

Week 2: Performance Ethnography (26. April 2016)

- D. Conquergood, “Rethinking Ethnography” in *Cultural Struggles: Performance, Ethnography, Praxis*, ed. E. Patrick Johnson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 81-103.
- D. Soyini Madison, “Performance Ethnography” in *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2005), 165-208.

Week 3: Methods 1 – Performing Others (3. May 2016)

- D. Soyini Madison, “Introduction to Critical Ethnography” and “Methods” in *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2005), 1-50.
- J. Jones, “Performance Ethnography: The Role of Embodiment in Cultural Authenticity,” *Theatre Topics* 12.1 (2002): 1-15.
- *In Class*: Solo Performances

Week 4: Methods 2 – Into the Field (10. May 2016)

- D. Soyini Madison, “Methods and Ethics” & “It’s Time to Write” in *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2005), 127-147 & 209-232.
- *In Class*: Groups Discuss Ethnographic Projects

UNIT 2: PERFORMANCE AS ANALYTIC

Week 5: Rites and Rituals 1 (17. May 2016)

- C. Geertz, “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight” in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 412-454. **[I will try to find the German translation.]**
- D. Conquergood, “Performance Studies: Interventions in Radical Research” in *Cultural Struggles: Performance, Ethnography, Praxis*, ed. E. Patrick Johnson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 32-46.

Week 6: Rites and Rituals 2 (24. May 2016)

- V. Turner, “Introduction” and “Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual,” in *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982), 7-60
- J. McKenzie, “The Liminal-Norm” in *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 49-53.

NO CLASS: 31. MAY & 7. JUNE

- **DURING BREAK VISIT:**
 - Ethnologisches Museum Berlin (Lansstraße 8) **[We will discuss on 14. June.]**
- and
- Rimini Protokoll’s “50 Aktenkilometer” (<http://www.dradio-ortung.de>)

Week 7: “Indigenous” Aesthetics 1 (14. June 2016)

- B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Objects of Ethnography” in *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 17-78.
- D. Conquergood, “Performing as a Moral Act: Ethical Dimensions of the Ethnography of Performance” in *Cultural Struggles: Performance, Ethnography, Praxis*, ed. E. Patrick Johnson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 65-80.

Week 8: “Indigenous” Aesthetics 2 (21. June 2016)

- *Watch*: C. Fusco & G. Gómez-Peña, *The Couple in the Cage* [<https://vimeo.com/79363320>]
- C. Fusco, “The Other History of Intercultural Performance,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 38.1 (1994): 143-167.
- B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “The Ethnographic Burlesque,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 42.2 (1998): 175-180.

UNIT 3: PERFORMANCE AS PRACTICE

Week 9: Performing Oral History 1 (28. June 2016)

- D. Pollock, “Moving histories: performance and oral history” in *The Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies*, ed. Tracy C. Davis (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 120-135.
- E.P. Johnson, “Going Home Ain’t Always Easy: Ethnography and the Politics of Black Respectability” in *Out in Public: Reinventing Lesbian/Gay Anthropology in a Globalizing World*, eds. Ellen Lewin & William Leap (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 54-70.
- E.P. Johnson, “Some Bitter and Some Sweet: Growing Up Black and Gay in the South” in *Sweet Tea: Gay Black Men from the South – An Oral History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 24-108 [**Please try to read at least half of this chapter.**]
- *Watch*: *Pouring Tea Promo* [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZF3pzj6wFQ>]
- *Suggested*: E.P. Johnson, “From Page to Stage: the Making of *Sweet Tea*,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 32.3 (2012): 248-253.

Week 10: Performing Oral History 2 (5. July 2016)

- *Watch*: A. Deavere Smith, *Fires in the Mirror* (parts 1-6 are on YouTube) [<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLg5zSPvbwPT7GCfZ27ca-xvTEj-5srg6i>]
- D. Pollock, “Introduction: Remembering” in *Remembering: Oral History Performance*, ed. Della Pollock (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 1-17.
- C. Martin, “Anna Devere Smith: The Word Becomes You,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 37.4 (1993): 45-62.

Week 11: Performance as Activist Intervention (12. July 2016)

- D. Conquergood, “Health Theatre in a Hmong Refugee Camp” in *Cultural Struggles: Performance, Ethnography, Praxis*, ed. E. Patrick Johnson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 127-169.
- D. Soyini Madison, “Water Rites/Rights” in *Acts of Activism: Human Rights as Radical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 97-156

Final Block Weekend: Performance Ethnography Festival (16. July 2016)

EVALUATION AND ATTENDANCE:

In this class, you will be evaluated on the level of your contribution to the discourse of the class, as well as on your solo and group presentations, and on your written work at the end of term. Your thoughtful participation and inquiry are very important, as is the timely completion and responsible composition of all of your assignments. There will be no extensions on any of your assignments.

An essential part of a vibrant society is an informed, thoughtful citizenry, empowered to ask questions about their social world. I encourage you practice that mode of critical engagement in this classroom. To do so, you must come prepared – having read and considered the assigned readings – to grapple with the ideas presented in this course. I urge you to do so with respect and empathy for all of your interlocutors (both on the page and in the flesh).

EMAIL FAQ:

I look forward to getting to know you over the course of the semester and am excited to hear from you via email if you would like to set up a time to speak in office hours. However, do keep in mind that I check my email only once each weekday afternoon. In most cases, please expect to wait 24 hours to hear back from me. Please be sure if you are emailing about a time sensitive issue that you leave an appropriate amount of time for a response from me.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM:

Under **NO** circumstances will academic dishonesty or plagiarism be tolerated in this course.

Plagiarism can include:

- Copying of passages from works of others in your writing without acknowledgement and citation.
- Using the views, opinions, or insights of another without acknowledgement.
- Paraphrasing another person's characteristic or original phraseology, metaphor or other literary device without acknowledgement.

If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to speak with me.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:

Please speak with me as soon as possible if you will require any additional accommodations; this policy might apply to students with disabilities, student parents, and others whose personal situations affect their ability to participate in class or complete assignments on time.