THAR 407: Performing Literature

Fall, 2013
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Office hours: T 11 am – 12:30 pm, R 12:15 – 1:30 pm, or by appointment
LAAH 211

Catalog description: Credit 3. Analysis and performance of poetry, prose and drama; emphasis or translating analytical decisions into performance; solo performance, readers theatre, chamber theatre, and technology in/as performance.

Prerequisites: Junior or senior classification.

Learning Outcomes:

- Analyze literature as a critical and communication tool.
- Apply theories of performance studies that support performances of literature.
- Identify links between critical decisions about genres of literature and performance choices.
- Present critically informed performances in the genres of personal narrative, poetry, prose, and drama.
- Apply interpretive decision making about literature in communicative performances.
- Discuss and respond critically to others’ performances using their own readings of literature.

Required Readings


All other required readings and viewings for this course are available through TAMU E-Learning in the modules given on the syllabus. These are listed under the class period in which they will be discussed; “for discussion” indicates the materials should be prepared for that particular class day. In addition to the required materials listed, students are expected to adhere to the style guide of their choice: APA, Chicago Style, or MLA.
Assignments and Grading

**Note:** Assignment descriptions, including objectives and evaluation rubrics, will be distributed during the first week of class.

- Class participation: 10 points
- Performance 1 - Personal Narrative: 15 points
- Paper 1 - Performance centered analysis - Poetry: 15 points
- Performance 1 - Poetry: 20 points
- Paper 2 - Analysis and Adaptation of Prose: 20 points
- Performance of Prose: 30 points**
  **group project
- Peer review responses to Prose Performance: 20 points
- Drama/Chamber Theatre Performance: 30 points
- Drama/Chamber Theatre Reflection Paper: 20 points
- Final Exam: 20 points

**Total:** 200 points

200 - 180 points: A. You have consistently gone above and beyond simply meeting the class requirements. You have added both extra effort and originality to all assignments with virtually no problems. Your written and oral presentations have been stylistically and grammatically correct, with detailed analyses and appropriate bibliography that reflects considerable independent research. Your participation has evidenced systematic engagement with the course readings. The class learned something valuable from you.

179 - 159 points: B. While you have exceeded expectations on some assignments, there have been a few significant errors, or a number of smaller or recurring ones. Analyses may have been less detailed; written and oral presentations may not demonstrate the level of polish commensurate with “A” work. Participation may have been inconsistent or not substantial, bibliographies may have demonstrated less than thorough searches, or arguments or examples may have lacked needed nuance. This is solid work that has the potential to improve.

158 - 138 points: C. A “C” is average work. You have done what was expected of a student in this course: no more, no less.

137 - 127: D. You have done less than expected of a student in this course. There may have been multiple errors in multiple assignments, neglect of opportunities to improve missed assignments or problems with consistency over the course of the term.

126 - 0: F. You have not completed sufficient work, or completed it with sufficient quality, to pass this course.
What Does "Class Participation" Mean?

Class participation is respectful of different points of view, is specific, and advances the larger intellectual project of this class. Attendance also affects class participation. It will not be possible to secure full participation credit with more than two unexcused absences. (This does not mean, by the way, that simply showing up for every class insures full credit.) An excused absence is accompanied by Texas A&M University Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class form available at http://attendance.tamu.edu presented immediately upon your return to class, even if the illness or injury results in an absence of less than three days.

Questions about what constitutes an excused absence should be directed to TAMU Student Rule 7: http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07

Students are responsible for securing any information missed due to absences or lateness.

Written Assignment Requirements

Grammar and writing style are components of grades for all written assignments, excluding in-class quizzes or exams. Written assignments must include appropriate documentation (APA, Chicago, or MLA) of all sources used. Point deductions will be made for grammar, writing style, and documentation errors in each evaluation category affected. Assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of the specified class period. No late submissions are allowed except as specified in TAMU Student Rule 7.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit http://disability.tamu.edu.

Academic integrity statement. Academic honesty is of great importance to all students at TAMU. In this and all classes, you must follow the Aggie Honor Code.

Aggie Honor Code

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do.”

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System [. . .]. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the Texas A&M community from
the requirements or the processes of the Honor System. For more information, see http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Schedule of Topics and Major Assignments

Unit 1: Getting Started

Week 1
August 27    Course Introduction – From Oral Interpretation to Analysis and Performance of Literature

August 29    Theories of Performance, Performance as Research
For discussion:
    Bell, Theories of Performance, Chapters One and Two
    Stern and Henderson, Learning to Perform, Chapter One

Week 2
September 3    Performing Texts
For discussion:
    Bell, Theories of Performance, Chapter Three

September 5    Personal Narrative Performance
For discussion:
    Bell, Theories of Performance, Chapters Six and Seven
    Personal Narrative module, TAMU e-learning

Week 3
September 10   Personal Narrative Performance, continued
For discussion:
    Stern and Henderson, Learning to Perform, Chapters Five, Two, and Four

September 12   Identity, Culture, and Critique in Personal Narrative Performance
For discussion:
    Bell, Theories of Performance, Chapter 5

Week 4
September 17   Personal Narrative Performance
September 19   Personal Narrative Performance
Unit 2: Performing Poetry

Week 5
September 25       Poetry Performance as Critical Analysis
For discussion:
        Stern and Henderson, Learning to Perform, Chapter 6
        “Poetry 1” folder and Javon Johnson media module, TAMU e-learning

September 26      Poetry, continued
For discussion:
        Stern and Henderson, Learning to Perform, Chapter 7
        “Poetry 2” folder, TAMU e-learning

Week 6
October 1       Poetry and performing difference
For discussion:
        Stern and Henderson, “The Body as Text: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the
        Performance of Literature,” TAMU e-learning

October 3       Peer Editing Session: Performance Analysis of Poetry drafts
For discussion:
        DRAFT Poetry papers to be exchanged and discussed
        Groups and texts assigned for prose performance

Week 7
October 8       Poetry Performances – I (papers due on day of performance)

October 10      Poetry Performances – I (papers due on day of performance)

Week 8
October 15      Poetry Performances – I (papers due on day of performance)

Unit 3: Prose Performance

October 17      Prose and Voice – Solo performance and adaptation
For discussion:
        Stern and Henderson, Learning to Perform, Chapter 8
        “Prose 1” folder, TAMU e-learning

Week 9
October 22      Prose and Voice, continued
For discussion:
        Stern and Henderson, Learning to Perform, Chapter 9
        “Prose 2” folder and “Narration On Stage” module, TAMU e-learning

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**October 24**  Prose and Voice in Nonfiction Performance
For discussion:
  Bell, *Theories of Performance*, Chapter 8
  Stern and Henderson, *Learning to Perform*, Chapter 12
  “Performing Nonfiction” module, TAMU e-learning

**Week 10**
**October 29**  Prose Performances, Groups 1 and 2
Adaptation Papers due on day of performance

**October 31**  Prose Performances, Groups 3 and 4
Adaptation Papers due on day of performance

**Unit 4: Drama/Chamber and Readers Theatre**

**Week 11**
**November 5**  What’s “Chambery” and “Readerly” about Theatre?
For discussion:
  Stern and Henderson, *Learning to Perform*, Chapters 10 and 11
  Peer Response Papers due.

**November 7**  Oral Interp Wins Tony™ Awards
For discussion:
  Zimmerman, *Metamorphoses*
  *Metamorphoses* module, TAMU e-learning

**Week 12**
**November 12**  Chamber Theatre and Technology
For discussion:
  Bell, *Theories of Performance*, Chapter 9
  “Performance Art” module, TAMU e-learning

**November 14**  Group previews – peer discussion
For discussion:
  Goals and techniques for final performances

**Week 13**
**November 19**  Final Performances, Groups 1 and 2

**November 21**  Final Performances, Groups 3 and 4

**Week 14**
**November 26**  Performance postmortem and peer reflections

**November 28**  No class today. Campus closed.
Redefined Week

December 3
   Course Conclusion and Exam Review
   Reflection Papers due

December 7  12:30 – 2 pm  – (Final Exam Schedule): Final Exam