

University of Puerto Rico
Río Piedras Campus
College of Humanities
Department of English

Title: Oral Tradition and Performance, theory and practice

Code: INGL 4005 Professor: Lowell Fiet
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(787) 568-3020

Hours/Credits: 45hours/3 credits Office: Pedreira 10
Hours: J 1:30 – 4:30
y por cita

Prerequisites: Level Five

Description: The study and analysis of oral culture and performance in terms of
1) “orature” and oral/scribal debates, 2) cultural performance, 3)
“otherness” and the “art of performance”, and 4) oral culture,
(post)postmodernity, and globalism.

Objectives: By the end of the course, the student will

- 1) understand the principal aspects of “oral” culture and “performance” in theoretical terms and through examples of the processes and practices that relate and/or distinguish them;
- 2) develop skills of critical writing to explore and describe the theories and practices of oral culture and performance;
- 3) acquire experience in fieldwork to document artistic as well as popular and everyday practices of oral and performance art;
- 4) analyze acts of oral culture and performance in historical contexts and in relation to global tendencies of contemporary culture;
- 5) participate in a variety of presentations, readings, performances, and workshops to express creativity and improve skills and to compare and evaluate these activities in terms of purpose, form, content, and style;
- 6) be prepared to continue with creative projects, research, and critical analyses in oral culture, performance, and related fields.

Calendar: **(The order of assignments can change during the semester)**

Week 1: Introduction: defining terms: Oral/Scribal, Orature versus Literature
Assignment: (Essays available as PDF files)

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (essay)
Video: *Jab* (Trinidad)

Week 2: Oral History, Prehistory, Performance, Cultural Performance
Assignment: J. Edward Chamberlain (Essay)
NYT Essay on Mali

Week 3: Performance Art, Difference, Otherness, Postmodernity and Globalization.
Assignment: Guillermo Gómez Peña
Video: *The Artist is Present* (Marina Abramovic)

Week 4: Creative Expression: Mask Workshop; languages without words.

Week 5: Spoken Word poetry; poetry and identity
Assignment: Poems
Video: *Piñero* (film on the life of poet and playwright Miguel Piñero)

Week 6: Field Work: Oral Histories; Myths, stories, legends of everyday life.
Assignment: Field notes

Week 7: Everyday Performance: Augusto Boal and Forum Theater
Assignment: Augusto Boal, "Invisible Theater"

Week 8: Performance Poetry: the voice of the poet, the collective voices of the poetic text
(Workshop).
Assignment: Poem selections and Creative Writing exercise

Week 9: Performance Poetry: Student in-class performances

Week 10: The Performance Space/Body/Mind
Assignment: Barbara Ehrenreich, *Dancing in the Streets* (selections)
Eric Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*
(selections)

Week 11: Project Debates, planning and development
(List of suggested topics to be supplied.)

Week 12: Student Forum: Presentation of Projects

Week 13: Student Forum: Presentation of Projects

Week 14: Performance, Presentations, Acts, Gests, Explorations.
Assignment: Final performances

Week 15: Due date for Final Reflections: Analysis of Projects and Position Paper

ATENCIÓN:

De ser necesario, se realizará evaluación diferenciada a estudiantes con necesidades especiales.

Los estudiantes que reciban servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional deben comunicarse con el profesor al inicio del semestre para planificar el acomodo razonable y equipo asistivo necesario conforme a las recomendaciones de la oficina de Asuntos para las Personas con Impedimento (OAPI) del Decanato de Estudiantes. También, aquellos estudiantes con necesidades especiales que requieren de algún tipo de asistencia o acomodo deben comunicarse con el profesor.

Teaching Strategies:

Lecture, Discussion, Guest Workshops and Performance, Fieldwork, Creative Projects, Critical Analyses.

Resources:

Open classroom with moveable desks, digital and video projection, and enough space for workshop and performance activities.

Evaluation:

Daily attendance, participation, comments, and responses (20%)

Miscellaneous oral, written, and performance projects (15%)

Critical reflections on guest workshop/performances (20%)

Position Paper for Student Forum (20%)

Final Project (25%)

Attendance and Participation are Required.

Evaluación diferenciada a estudiantes con necesidades especiales.

Grading:

A, B, C, D, F

Suggested Texts (All required readings will be available on reserve or in digital format):

Brooks, Daphne A. *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910*. Durham, NC/London: Duke UP, 2006.

Brown, Fahamisha Patricia, *Performing the Word: African American Poetry as Vernacular Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ/London: Rutgers UP, 1999.

Cohen-Cruz, Jan, ed. *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology*. New York/London: Routledge, 1998.

Gómez-Peña, Guillermo and Roberto Sifuentes, *Exercises for Rebel Artists: Radical Performance Pedagogy*. New York/London: Routledge, 2011.

www.pochnostra.com

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: Heinemann, 1986.

---. *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms*. London: Heinemann, 1993.

www.postcolonialweb.org

<http://people.africadatabase.org>

Notes from Nowhere, ed. *We are everywhere: the irresistible rise of global anti-capitalism*. London/New York: Verso, 2003.

www.defenestrator.org

Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. London/New York: Routledge, 2002.

www.google.com/Top/Arts/Visual/-Arts/Performance_Art/

Readings and Resources:

Abrahams, Roger D. *The Man-of Words in the West Indies: Performance and the Emergence of Creole Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1983): xv-xxxi, 1-20, 40-54.

Alegría, Ricardo. "The Fiesta of Santiago Apóstol (St. James the Apostle) in Loíza, Puerto Rico." *Journal of American Folklore* 69 (1956): 123-34.

Artaud, Antonin. *The Theater and Its Double*. Trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958).

Aznor Almazán, Sagrario. *El arte de acción* (Madrid: Editorial Nerea, 2000).

Benítez Rojo, Antonio. *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, 2nd ed. Trans. James E. Maraniss (Durham/London: Duke UP, 1996).

Bettelheim, Judith. "Ethnicity, Gender, and Power: Carnival in Santiago de Cuba" in *Negotiating Performance*, Diane Taylor and Juan Villegas, eds., 176-212.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture* (London/New York: Routledge, 1994).

Blau, Herbert. *The Dubious Spectacle: Extremities of Theater, 1976-2000* (Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 2002).

_____. "Ideology, Performance, and the Illusions of Demystification" in *Critical Theory and Performance*, Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach, eds., 430-46.

_____. "Universals of performance; or amortizing play" in *By Means of Performance*, Richard Schechner and Will Appel, eds., 250-272.

Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* [1974], Urizen, 1979 (New York: TCG, 1985).

Brook, Peter. "The Culture of Links" in *The Intercultural Performance Reader*, Patrice Pavis, ed., 63-66.

Brown, Fahamisha Patricia. *Performing the Word: African American Poetry as Vernacular Culture* (New Brunswick/London: Rutgers UP, 1999).

Burton, Richard D. E. *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean*. (Ithaca/London: Cornell UP, 1997).

Carlson, Marvin. *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996).

Case, Sue-Ellen and Janelle Reinelt, eds. *The Performance of Power: Theatrical Discourse and Politics* (Iowa City: U Iowa P, 1991).

Cohen-Cruz, Jan, ed. *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology* (London /New York: Routledge, 1998).

Colleran, Jeanne and Jenny S. Spenser, eds. *Staging Resistance: Essays on Political Theater* (Ann Arbor, U Michigan P, 1999).

Cowley, John. *Carnival, Canboulay, and Calypso: Traditions in the Making* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996).

Crow, Brian (with Chris Banfield). *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theatre* (New York/Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996).

Diamond, Elin, ed. *Performance and Cultural Politics* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996).

Fernández Olmos, Margarite and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gerbert, eds. *Sacred Possessions: Vodou, Santería, Obeah, and the Caribbean*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

Fiet, Lowell. *El teatro puertorriqueño reimaginado: notas críticas sobre la creación dramática y el performance* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, February 2004).

_____, ed. *Performance and Text in Caribbean Literature and Art. SARGASSO Special Edition 1999* (U of Puerto Rico, 2000).

Fiet, Lowell and Janette Becerra, eds. *A Gathering of Players and Poets: Voice and Performance*

- in Caribbean Culture(s)* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Caribe 2000/Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1999).
- _____, eds. *Cultural (con)Fusion: Performance and TransCaribbean Performance* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Caribe 2000/Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2001).
- Fusco, Coco, ed. *Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000).
- Gilbert, Helen and Joanne Tompkins. *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996).
- Goldberg, Roselee. *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*. Rev. ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988).
- Gómez-Peña, Guillermo. "The Multicultural Paradigm" in *Negotiating Performance*, Diane Taylor and Juan Villegas, eds., 17-29.
- Goodman, Lizbeth (with Jane de Gay), ed. , *The Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2000).
- Haedicke, Susan C. and Tobin Nellhaus, eds. *Performing Democracy: International Perspectives on Urban Community-Based Performance* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan P, 2001).
- Harris, Max. "Masking the Site: The Fiestas de Santiago Apóstol in Loíza, Puerto Rico." *Journal of American Folklore* 114 (2001): 1-12.
- Herskovits, Melville J. "African Gods and Catholic Saints in New World Negro Beliefs." *American Anthropologist* 39 (1937): 635-43.
- _____. "Dramatic Expression Among Primitive Peoples" in *Yale Review*, XXXIII (1944): 683-98.
- Kershaw, Baz. *The Radical in Performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard* (New York: Routledge, 1999).
- Lugo, Dorian, ed. *saqueos: antología de producción cultural* (Puerto Rico: editorial noexiste, 2002).
- Marranca, Bonnie and Gautam Dasgupta, eds. *Interculturalism and Performance* (New York: PAJ, 1991).
- Martiatu Terry, Inés María. "Mythological and Ritual Theatre in Cuba," *Performance Research* 3.3 (Winter 1998): 54-60.
- Mason, Peter. *Bacchanal! The Carnival Culture of Trinidad* (London: Latin American Bureau/Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1998).
- McKenzie, Jon. *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2001).
- Mendoza, Zoila S. *Shaping Society Through Dance: Mestizo Ritual Performance in the Peruvian Andes* (Chicago/London: U Chicago P, 2000).
- Negrón-Muntaner, Frances. *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and the Latinization of American Culture* (New York: NYU P, 2004).
- Nunley, John W. and Judith Bettelheim, eds., *Caribbean Festival Arts* (Seattle: U Washington P, 1988).
- Pabón, Carlos. *Nación Postmortem: Ensayos sobre los tiempos de insorportable ambigüedad* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2002).
- Parker, Andrew and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, eds. *Performativity and Performance* (London/ New York: Routledge, 1995).
- Pavis, Patrice, ed. *The Intercultural Performance Reader* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996).
- Pepón Osorio: *de puerta en puerta/door to door* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: EAP Press, 2000).
- Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London/New York: Routledge, 1993).
- Reinelt, Janelle G. and Joseph R. Roach, eds. *Critical Theory and Performance* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan P, 1992).
- Reinelt, Janelle. "Notes for a Radical Democratic Theater . . .," in *Staging Resistance*, Jeanne Colleran and Jenny S. Spenser, eds., 283-300.
- Roach, Joseph. *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia UP,

- 1996).
- Roulet, Laura. *Contemporary Puerto Rican Installation Art: The Guagua Aérea, The Trojan Horse and The Termite* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: U Puerto Rico P, 2000).
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).
- Sandoval-Sánchez, Alberto and Nancy Saporta Sternbach, eds. *Puro Teatro: A Latina Anthology* (Tucson: U Arizona P, 2000).
- Sayre, Henry M. *The Object of Performance* (Chicago/London: U Chicago P, 1989).
- Schechner, Richard and Willa Appel, eds. *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990).
- Simpson, George Eaton. *Religious Cults of the Caribbean: Trinidad, Jamaica and Haiti* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Institute of Caribbean Studies, 1980).
- Smith, Felipe. "King Zulu's Two Bodies: Racial Masquerade in a Black New Orleans Carnival Performance," in *A Gathering of Players and Poets*, Lowell Fiet and Janette Becerra, eds., 127-54.
- Soláns, Piedad. *Accionismo vienés* (Madrid: Editorial Nerea, 2000).
- Sotomayor, Auria María. *Femina Faber: Letras, música, ley* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2004).
- Svich, Caridad and María Teresa Marrero, eds. *Out of the Fringe: Contemporary Latina/Latino Theatre and Performance* (New York: TCG, 2000).
- Taylor, Diane and Roselyn Constantino, eds. *Holy Terrors: Latin American Women Perform* (Durham/London: Duke UP, 2003).
- Taylor, Diane and Juan Villegas, eds. *Negotiating Performance: Gender, Sexuality, and Theatricality in Latin/o America* (Durham/London: Duke UP, 1994).
- TDR. The Journal of Performance Studies. Trinidad and Tobago Carnival* 42,3 (Fall 1998).
- Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ wa. "The Language of African Theatre" in *Radical Street Performance*, Jan Cohen-Cruz, ed., 238-44.
- Turner, Victor, "Are there universals of performance in myth, ritual, and drama?" in *By Means of Performance*, Richard Schechner and Willa Appel, eds., 8-18.
- _____. "Dramatic Ritual/Ritual Drama: Performative and Reflexive Anthropology," in *Interculturalism and Performance*, Bonnie Marranca and Gautam Dasgupta, eds., 99-111.
- Ungerleider Kepler, David. *Las Fiestas de Santiago Apóstol de Loíza: La cultura afro-puertorriqueña antes los procesos de hibridización y globalización* (San Juan: Editorial Isla Negra, 2000).
- Koningsbruggen, Peter. *Trinidad Carnival: A Quest for National Identity* (London: Caribbean, 1997).
- Zaragoza, Edward C. *St. James in the Streets: The Religious Processions of Loíza Aldea, Puerto Rico* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1995).