Title: Oral Tradition and Performance, theory and practice

Code: INGL 4005  Professor: Lowell Fiet
      L 1:00 – 3:50  lowellfiet@icloud.com
      (787) 568-3020

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

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

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):


Readings and Resources:


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


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).


Lugo, Dorian, ed. saqueos: antología de producción cultural (Puerto Rico: editorial noexiste, 2002).


Pepón Osorio: de puerta en puerta/door to door (San Juan, Puerto Rico: EAP Press, 2000).


Roach, Joseph. Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance (New York: Columbia UP,


*TDR. The Journal of Performance Studies. Trinidad and Tobago Carnival* 42.3 (Fall 1998).


