

# PERFORMANCE STUDIES (PERF-UT)

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## PERF-UT 101 Introduction to Performance Studies (4 Credits)

*Typically offered Fall*

To enter the field of Performance Studies is to proceed with a willingness to forgo strict definitions of art “objects” and “events.” The field encourages engagement with everyday life, performers from a variety of media, things inside and outside cultural institutions, and an expansive sense of the stage to reflect on how performance impacts our sense of the world. Music, theater, visual art, dance, and film are not divided into separate areas of study, but are necessarily engaged all together. While the question, “what is performance?” has mystified the minds of many, this course moves beyond this question to investigate: what does performance do? And how does performance help us to ask questions about aesthetics, politics, and the social world? The question “what does performance do?” opens the line between theory and practice; a line that falsely separates the performer from the critic. Students will work together across these divides. In addition to deepening an understanding of the field of Performance Studies, students read texts that vitalize critical thinking in the humanities. The course engages theories of the field as they emerge from performances themselves, especially from the robust creative repertoires of New York City.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## PERF-UT 102 Performance Theory (4 Credits)

*Typically offered Fall*

Theories of performance help us consider concepts of the subject, from the grammatical “I” to politicized notions of the individual or the citizen, as well as the forms of experience that constitute a sense of subjectivity. Readings that connect performance to language and literary theories, political philosophy, psychoanalytic theory, anthropology, and studies in race and gender will shape a investigation into the construction of the self.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## PERF-UT 103 Performance of the City (4 Credits)

*Typically offered Fall*

What can performance tell us about the dynamic histories that comprise New York City? How does the study of performance train us to experience the City in all its immeasurable diversity? This course engages a wide variety of performances to consider how they shape the metropolis and the lives of its people. With a focus on the 20th century to the present, students will become familiar with different aesthetic movements that incorporate music, dance, performance, and visual art in such New York creative experiments as the Harlem Renaissance, the Mambo Craze, Pop Art, Punk Rock, and Hip Hop. We will also study everyday performances as improvisatory responses to living in the city.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

## PERF-UT 104 Performance and Politics (4 Credits)

*Typically offered Spring*

This course focuses specifically on the political aspects of performance – how it reflects, enacts, and shifts political discourse and practices. Beginning with a broad construction of “politics” – that “the personal is political, and vice versa” – the course encourages students to study events and practices that produce political effects. How can performance and performance theory be applied usefully to understand how, why, and where political dialogue takes place, and where it fails to do so?

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## PERF-UT 106 Gender Performance (4 Credits)

*Typically offered not typically offered*

This class explores the relationship between gender and violence from a range of disciplinary vantage-points and through a diverse archive of materials (including performance and film, legal cases, photography, and literature). Throughout the semester we will pay especial attention to how gender-based violence is inflected and shaped by other social variables, such as race and religion. Rather than assuming we know what any of these keywords means in advance, over the course of the semester we will together seek to refine and rethink these terms individually and in relation.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## PERF-UT 200 Performance Studies: An Introduction with Richard Schechner (4 Credits)

*Typically offered Spring*

Performance Studies – An Introduction explores the wide world of performance - from theatre, dance, and music to ritual, play, political campaigns, social media, and the performances of everyday life. Performance studies also ranges across cultures – Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, the Americas. And it spans historical periods from the art of the paleolithic caves to YouTube and the avant-garde. This course is devised by Richard Schechner, one of the pioneers of performance studies, in dialogue with more than a dozen expert scholars and artists. Performance Studies – An Introduction puts students in dialogue with the most important ideas, approaches, theories, and questions of this dynamic, new academic field. Performance Studies – An Introduction is a “flipped” course: students will read and watch lessons online, blog about the material, and participate in a weekly interactive seminar guided by Professor Erin B. Mee – a theatre director and scholar – who has worked with Schechner for years.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## PERF-UT 201 Performance Composition (4 Credits)

*Typically offered Spring*

This course focuses on performance as a mode of research/ investigation: how can engaging in a performance or practice (rather than simply reading about/observing it) illuminate in ways that may be otherwise inaccessible to the researcher? What knowledges does the doing of performance produce? Students in this class will be asked to develop a research question (in consultation with the instructor), design and engage in a performance project aimed at answering (or at least investigating) that question, and then produce a final project (written or performed) that illustrates her/his research findings.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

**PERF-UT 204 Performative Writing Workshop (4 Credits)***Typically offered Fall*

Students in this workshop will study theories of linguistic performativity – how words/writing perform functions in shaping the world (i.e., in law, science, fiction, etc.) – and then explore that functionality in their own writing. How can the performative effects of writing be deployed purposefully, strategically, artistically, etc.? What do particular rhetorical/textual choices do? What is the relationship between the performativity of writing, on the one hand, and performance on the other? Students will be encouraged to experiment with their writing (both in terms of style and subject matter), and then to analyze the results of these experiments in order to hone their abilities to both observe, describe, and enact performance strategies in writing.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PERF-UT 205 Performance Histories (4 Credits)***Typically offered Spring*

Countering the "presentist" critique of performance studies as a field (i.e., that its emphasis on "liveness" limits it to analysis of contemporary practices), this course will examine both the long history of performance (and the specific research methodologies that are required for that examination), and the history of performance studies as a mode of social inquiry. How have performance, and the writing about performance, been deployed historically, and to what ends? How can contemporary researches access the archives that house answers to these questions, and how do archives in themselves constitute an historiographic "performance"? Students will consider the impact of performance in the contexts of (post-)colonial history, aesthetic genealogies, and other historiographic projects.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PERF-UT 206 The Performance of Everyday Life (4 Credits)***Typically offered Spring*

This course focuses in depth on "everyday" versions of performance (as opposed to theatrical or formal performances). Drawing from anthropology, affect studies, social psychology, sociology, architecture studies, etc. the course invites students to view seemingly non-theatrical social interaction as performance, and to consider the significance of the seeming "normal" and inconsequential nature of such performances. What happens when what is "second nature" becomes the focus of our attention? The course will also place particular emphasis on writing as a mode of illuminating and interrogating the "everyday," as well as considering it as performance practice in and of itself.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PERF-UT 302 Queer Politics and Performance (4 Credits)***Typically offered Spring*

This course takes sexuality as its lens through which to consider performance, and vice versa. Much of the current vitality of the concept of "performance" has come through the study of gender and sexuality – the political impact and social legibility of performances of gender and sexuality in daily life, art practices, and elsewhere – and this course examines and applies these theories of gender/sexuality performance to a wide range of examples. Students will read both new and canonical work in field of gender studies with an eye toward the specific impact of performance in this work, as well as examine performance examples in order to analyze the ways gender and sexuality are produced within them.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PERF-UT 303 Theories of Movement (4 Credits)***Typically offered Fall*

This course will explore the rich history of experimental dance and movement-based performance, and the possibility of a movement-based analysis of performativity. While dominant theories of "performativity" (the doing that performance does) emerge from linguistic theories and/or text-based accounts (ethnographic descriptions of ritual, etc.), the direct impact of movement has garnered less scholarly attention (with the exception of dance studies). How does movement (not only in dance, but in performance more generally) enact social/aesthetic theory, and how might movement itself theorize social relations?

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PERF-UT 304 Performance and Technology (4 Credits)***Typically offered Spring*

On blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Ello, Tumblr, email, SoundCloud, YouTube, and more, we are constantly performing using technology. Performance Studies has long been concerned with technology, but it is only recently concerned with questions brought to the fore by new technologies and new technological practices, particularly on the Internet. This survey course requires us to consider the relationship between Performance Studies as a discipline (one that incorporates performance theory, critical theory, feminist theory, queer theory, and other theoretical genres) with technology, particularly the Internet. Open to Non-Majors.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PERF-UT 305 Topics in Performance Studies (4 Credits)***Typically offered Fall and Spring*

Topics in Performance Studies is an upper-division course that focuses on a specific genre, theme, region, or other framework. Students will research in depth the particular contexts and implications of a given categorization of "performance". Students are expected to participate actively in discussion and undertake research projects related to the course topic.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes**PERF-UT 306 Race and Performance (4 Credits)***Typically offered Fall*

This semester, the course will consider various forms of performance (including performance art, visual art, sound art, literature, politics, and performance of everyday life) by artists of color to think about belonging and alternative forms of world-making. This course will ask: what difference might it make to think of race as performative? How might the analytic of performance equip us in this course to identify and enact anti-xenophobic strategies for everyday practice? We will explore these questions through engagement with cultural texts, including scholarship in critical ethnic studies, queer of color critique, and affect studies.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PERF-UT 400 Final Projects in Performance Studies (1-4 Credits)***Typically offered Spring*

Students in this course will build on a research paper/project that they originated in another PS course, with the goal of extending, refining, and further developing it in order to synthesize what they have learned, as well as further hone their research, analysis, and writing skills. Students must earn a course grade of "C" or better in departmental courses (or approved substitutions) in order to receive credit toward the major.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

**PERF-UT 9103 Performance of the City: (4 Credits)**

*Typically offered Fall*

A founding tenet of the Performance Studies field is the significance of the site where performance takes place—including its metropolitan environment. This course serves to introduce students to the many performance cultures of Madrid and to the ways in which its unique urban environment, its many histories, cultures, sub-cultures, and multi-cultures are staged and performed by the city's residents, migrants, and visitors. The class will take Madrid itself as its main "performance" to analyze – by exploring the city's past and present, and its varied public spaces where the population gathers in a collective spectacle of social relations. Readings in urban performance studies with an emphasis on International Situationism and Gaia Theory will be supplemented by class trips to different live events including public parades, religious processions, experimental theater, classic flamenco dance, and a series of artistic dérives in the city.

**Grading:** Ugrd Tisch Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No