

**PERFORMANCE ETHNOGRAPHY**  
**T D 387D**  
**Fall 2004**

**Dr. J. L. Jones**  
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**T: 3:30-6:30; WIN 2.112 & Lab Theatre**

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**Office Hours: TWTh, 1-3**  
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**Course Description/Objectives:** The course will explore the relationship between performance and ethnography through readings and performance. The students will conduct fieldwork, use Personal Narratives and Everyday Life Performance techniques, and create a public performance based upon the fieldwork. In-class exercises and readings are designed to encourage students to draw conclusions about the virtues and problems associated with Performance Ethnography. Key issues will include self-reflexivity, accountability, multivocality and participation.

*“Everything is related, and therefore what we do in our work with others will inevitably be done to us.”*  
--M. Cristina Gonzalez, *“The Four Seasons of Ethnography”*

**Texts:**

Denzin, Norman K. Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997.

**Assignments**

**Everyday Life Performances**—You will select a verbatim moment of interaction from your fieldwork. This may have been acquired from videotape, audiotape or both. You will apply ELP techniques to that interaction to create your performance. Minimal staging considerations should be made. (20 pts.)

**Personal Narratives**—You will choose a narrative derived from your fieldwork. You will decide how to “edit” the narrative and how you will present (or re-present) it for performance. Consider theatrical elements such as setting, costumes and props. Consider ethnographic issues such as power, identification and authenticity. Consider dramatic elements such as character, structure and relationship to audience. The performance will be 2-3 minutes in length. (20 pts.)

**Performance Ethnographies**—You will shape your fieldwork experience into a 10-15-minute performance to be presented as a Reading Hour to a general University audience. The performance will occur in the CMA Auditorium unless a more suitable venue can be found. You will also prepare Program Notes for this performance in which you share background on the fieldwork, describe your approach to the performance and/or discuss the person(s) you are embodying. (25 pts.)

**Paper**—You will select an aspect of Performance Ethnography and discuss it through an examination of your final performances the readings from the course. Your aim is to determine how your performance work (and the work of your peers) adds insight/complication/illumination to your understanding of the concept you have chosen. (25 pts)

Participation (10 pts.)--

--You will lead the discussion around one or more of the essays required for the course. You should point out the key points, raise questions about the ideas, draw connections to other ideas and experiences in the course, and encourage the class to contribute their own thinking about the essay. You are NOT to merely summarize. You must plan this presentation carefully as you will have a total of 10 minutes to present your thoughts.

--You should be prepared on each rehearsal day.

--Attendance, participation and discussion are expected.

--You should plan to attend two Performance Studies Reading Hours. A schedule will be provided.

### **Course Schedule:**

#### **3 September**

Introduction to the Course; View Samples; Self Exercises

#### **10**

Denzin, Chapters 1-4; "Rethinking Ethnography," "Performance as a Moral Act," "Dramatic Ritual/Ritual Drama;" "Performing Ethnography," "Personal Narratives and Performance"

#### **17**

Denzin, Chapters 5-9; "Post-Modern Ethnography," "Anthropology and Autobiography," "Culture to Culture," "Critical Interrogation"

#### **24**

"Scattered Hegemonies," "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" "Conversational Dramatism and Everyday Life Performance," "Toward an Aesthetics of Natural Performance"

#### **1 October**

"Performance Ethnography: The Role of Embodiment," "Ethnography and the Audition"

#### **8**

Everyday Life Performance Exercises

#### **15**

Everyday Life Performances

#### **22**

Ethnographic Videos

#### **29**

Fieldwork Update

**5 November**

Personal Narratives

**12**

Performance Ethnography Scripts Due

**19**

Performance Ethnography Excerpts; Program Notes Due

**26**

Performance Ethnographies

**3 December**

Papers Due; Review of Performances