

T D 387D/WGS 393, Unique #24185
Performance and Politics in the 1960s
Tues and Thurs, 12:30-2, WIN 1.114
Professor Stacy Wolf

Office: WIN 2.166

Phone: 2-5342

Email: stacywolf@mail.utexas.edu

Office hours: Thursdays 3:30-5:30 and by appointment

Course Description:

This course will explore performance of the 1960s U.S.—from mainstream, Broadway theatres to the avant garde to political theatres—in the context of the social, cultural, and intellectual politics of the decade. We'll consider production practices and intentions, “texts” (both scripted and unscripted), and reception, both critical and popular. Our goal will be to construct a complex and nuanced “thick description” of performance and politics of this volatile period, while also questioning the value and limitations of decade-oriented historiography.

Questions include:

- What are the connections among venues, content, and forms of theatre and performance in the 1960s? What is the relationship between high and low forms of culture? between the mainstream and the avant garde? between political movements and their performances? among text-based, movement-based, politically-driven, and process-oriented modes of performance?
- How was this work created? How were ideas and practices of performance production specific to this era?
- Who were the audiences of these performances? Why did they attend? What did they do? Why did it matter? How did they interpret and use these performances?
- What is the relationship between the culture and the politics of the decade; how are they in conversation with one another? How are these various forms of theatre and performance in conversation as well?
- What kinds of histories have been told of these performances? How was the work documented, if at all? What remains? How can we re-historicize this work?

A note on course organization: Readings are scheduled weekly, rather than daily. On Tuesday, two (or three) students will lead the class, using the reading as a basis for presentation and discussion. On Thursday, we will all build on the work of Tuesday and continue the discussion.

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance and participation and short writing assignments** (1/3 final grade)
100% attendance and participation are expected.

Short writing:

1) **Blackboard post** on *America Divided*, due by Wed Sept 3rd, 5 p.m.

Please post either: 1) one or two questions for discussion; 2) a quotation from the book with an accompanying question; 3) an observation; 4) a critique; 5) an idea that connects this book to something else you have read or studied. About 250 words.

2) **Response paper** on reading for Sept 9 (Banes, Savran, and/or Bottoms), due posted to Blackboard by class time on Tues Sept 9 and please bring hard copy for me. Form and content your choice. Word limit: 500 words, double-spaced.

3) **Four mid-week Blackboard posts**: Every other week (beginning the week of Sept 16), each student will post a brief comment (less than 250 words) to Blackboard between Tuesday and Thursday's classes, either extending the conversation, raising new questions, making observations about the material, pointing to issues that we have not discussed. Specific dates TBA. Due by 5 p.m. each Wednesday.

4) **Short writing** or assignments as designated by students

2. **One day of presentation/discussion facilitation** (1/3 final grade)

Much of the assigned reading is primary material—plays, manifestos, firsthand accounts, contemporaneous articles. Student presentations will connect the performances that we study with their social, political, and cultural milieu by contextualizing the assigned readings vis-à-vis the “politics” of the era. “Politics” here is loosely defined and will be re-defined weekly, depending on the performance form, its creators, the audience, the venue, the reception, and so on.

Each group will also delineate the parameters of “context,” which I hope will allow us to explore a range of histories of this period. You may want to focus on economic issues of theatre production, for example. Or you may want to consider the performances in relation to the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Liberation Movement, the anti-war movement, or the gay liberation movement. Or you may want to explore the connections between live performance and other forms of media and culture, like movies, tv, or popular music. You might also analyze performance in relation to the intellectual history of the period, including, for example, what might be seen as the beginnings of post-structuralist theory. Finally, students should attempt to make connections with the previous weeks' performances, issues, and concerns.

Student facilitators should design an assignment, either written or performance, or provide some questions for consideration, for Tuesday's class. (This assignment should be posted to Blackboard no later than the preceding Sunday at 5 p.m.) Student presenters are encouraged to supplement the reading with bibliographies. Please do see me to discuss your ideas and plans for

the class, and plan to meet with me afterwards to evaluate the class. For some weeks, I have ordered books from which the week's class leaders can choose excerpts or selections.

I do expect that students will do outside research—this assignment is not primarily to facilitate discussion but rather to provide us with ways of dealing with this material.

3. **Final project**, due in the following stages: (1/3 final grade)

- 1) **Proposal** (due Oct 9th)
- 2) **Draft** to workshop group (optional to me) (due three weeks before your presentation. Groups and dates TBA)
- 3) **In-class presentation** (10 minutes)
- 4) **Final project** (due Mon Dec 8, 5 p.m.)

Your final project should allow you to extend the work of the class into your own area of interest and research. A conference-length paper is an excellent option, but you should also feel free to consider other forms of work—creating a website; making a performance; devising an annotated bibliography, to name a few.

Recommended Historical Autobiographies (to read before the course begins):

Hettie Jones, *How I Became Hettie Jones*

Norman Mailer, *Armies of the Night*

Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*

Required Texts

Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*

Sally Banes, *Greenwich Village 1963: Avant-Garde Performance and the Effervescent Body*

Theodore Shank, *Beyond the Boundaries: American Alternative Theatre*

Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Lorraine Hansberry, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window* [also on reserve at FAL]

Harold Pinter, *The Birthday Party* [also on reserve at FAL]

John Tytell, *The Living Theatre: Art, Exile, and Outrage*, 3-194 (Parts I, II, and III)

Claudia Orenstein, *Festive Revolutions*, 1-27, 90-123

Jean-Claude Van Itallie, *The Serpent*

Luis Valdez, *Early Works: Actos, Bernabe and Pensamiento Serpentino*

Yolanda Broyles-Gonzalez, *Teatro Campesino*

Richard Schechner, *Environmental Theatre*

Dale Wasserman, Mitch Leigh, and Joe Darion, *Man of La Mancha*

Stephen Sondheim and George Furth, *Company*

COURSE READER at Abel's (715D West 23rd St, 472-5353) [\$38.36]

Required Performance

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? at Zach Scott Theatre, Sept 25-Nov 2

Recommended for Reference:

Christopher Bigsby, *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama, Volume Three, Beyond Broadway* (Chapters on Zen, Happenings, Artaud, Grotowski;

Performance Theatre (Living, Open, Performance Group); Theatre of Commitment (SF Mime; Bread and Puppet; Teatro Campesino)) [also on reserve]

Videos on reserve

The Brig, performed by the Living Theatre [VIDCASS 1062 Fine Arts Library]

The Serpent, performed by the Open Theatre [VIDCASS 4035 Fine Arts Library]

CDs on Reserve:

Man of La Mancha

Hair

Company

Course Outline

Week #1, Thurs Aug 28

Intro to course, you, me, goals and expectations

Week #2: Histories

Tues, Sept 2: LBJ Museum and Library Tour. Meet at front desk. Visit museum exhibits on your own.

Thurs, Sept 4: Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*

****Blackboard post due** on Isserman and Kazin by Wed Sept 5, 5 p.m.

Week #3, Sept 9 and 11: Histories and Performance Histories

Sally Banes, "Introduction," "Another Space," "The Reinvention of Community," in *Greenwich Village 1963: Avant-Garde Performance and the Effervescent Body*, 1-80, 257-267

Steve Bottoms, "The Efficacy/Effeminacy Braid: Unpicking the Performance Studies/Theatre Studies Dichotomy," *Theatre Topics* (forthcoming in September 2003) [Reader]

David Savran, "Revolution as Performance," in *Taking It Like a Man*, 104-160, 334-342. [Reader]

****Response paper due.** Please post to Blackboard by class time and bring hard copy for me.

Week #4, Sept 16 and 18: Broadway

Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962, Tony in 1963)

Neil Simon, *Barefoot in the Park* (1963), in *The Comedy of Neil Simon*, 104-214 [Reader]

Lorraine Hansberry, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window* (1964)

Robert Nemiroff, Introduction to *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*

Harold Pinter, *The Birthday Party* (1967)

William Goldman, "Chapter 4: 'We're Losing You Darling,'" in *The Season: A Candid Look at Broadway*, 41-52. [Reader]

****Attend performance of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* at Zach Scott Theatre, Sept 24-Nov 2**

***Student leaders begin this week.**

***Mid-week Blackboard posts begin this week**

Week #5, Sept 23 and 25: The Black Arts Movement

Amiri Baraka, *Dutchman* (1964), in *The Harcourt Brace Anthology of Drama*, 999-1007
[Reader]

Amiri Baraka, *Slave Ship: A Historical Pageant* (1967), in *The Motion of History and Other Plays*, 131-50 [Reader]

Adrienne Kennedy, *Funnyhouse of a Negro* (1964), in *Adrienne Kennedy in One Act*, 1-23
[Reader]

Baraka, "The Revolutionary Theatre" (1966), in *The Harcourt Brace Anthology of Drama*, 1164-66 [Reader]

Baraka, "The Myth of a 'Negro Literature'" (1966), in *Within the Circle: An Anthology of African American Literary Criticism from the Harlem Renaissance to the Present*, 165-71
[Reader]

Larry Neal, "The Black Arts Movement" (1968), in *Within the Circle*, 184-98 [Reader]

Hoyt W. Fuller, "Towards a Black Aesthetic" (1968) in *Within the Circle*, 199-206 [Reader]

Mike Sell, "The Black Arts Movement: Performance, Neo-Orality, and the Destruction of the 'White Thing,'" in *African American Performance and Theater History: A Critical Reader*, 56-80 [Reader]

Sally Banes on the BAM, 145-158

Week #6, Sept 30 and Oct 2: The Living Theatre (est. 1951)

Kenneth H. Brown, *The Brig* (1963), 43-80 [Reader]

Julian Beck, "Storming the Barricades," *The Brig*, 3-35 [Reader]

Judith Malina, "Directing *the Brig*," *The Brig*, 83-107 [Reader]

Antontin Artaud, "No More Masterpieces," *The Theater and Its Double*, 74-83 [Reader]

Julian Beck, Entries 1-10, *The Life of the Theatre* [Reader]

John Tytell, *The Living Theatre: Art, Exile, and Outrage*, 3-194 (Parts I, II, and III)

Shank, *Beyond the Boundaries*, 9-37

Banes, *Greenwich Village*, 175-87

Viewing: Videotape of *The Brig* [FAL reserve VIDCASS 1062]

Week #7, Oct 7 and 9: "Political" Theatres: San Francisco Mime Troupe (est. 1959) and Bread and Puppet (est. 1961)

Claudia Orenstein, *Festive Revolutions*, 1-27, 90-123

R.G. Davis, *The San Francisco Mime Troupe: The First Ten Years*, 13-28, 47-63, 149-72
[Reader]

Peter Schumann, "Bread and Puppets," "The Radicality of Puppet Theatre," in *Popular Theatre: A Sourcebook*, 40-48 [Reader]

James Roose-Evans, *Experimental Theatre from Stanislavsky to Peter Brook*, 120-30 [Reader]

Shank, *Beyond the Boundaries*, 50-74 on SF Mime; 103-113 on Bread and Puppet

**Final project proposals due on Thursday

Week #8, Oct 14 and 16: The Open Theatre (1963-1973)

Jean-Claude Van Itallie, *The Serpent* (1969)

Megan Terry, *Viet Rock* (1966), in *Four Plays by Megan Terry*, 21-110 [Reader]

Richard Schechner, "Introduction," in *Four Plays by Megan Terry*, 7-18 [Reader]

Eileen Blumenthal, *Joseph Chaikin Exploring at the Boundaries of Theatre*, 38-66 (“An Open Theory”), 106-39 (“The Serpent”) [Reader]

Joseph Chaikin, *The Presence of the Actor*, 1-26 (Section I) [Reader]

Robert Pasolli, *A Book on the Open Theatre*, 74-86 (on Viet Rock), 108-27 (on *The Serpent*) [Reader]

Shank, *Beyond the Boundaries*, 38-49

Viewing: *The Serpent* [FAL reserve VIDCASS 4035]

Week #9, Oct 21 and 23: El Teatro Campesino (est. 1965)

Luis Valdez, *Early Works: Actos, Bernabe and Pensamiento Serpentino*, 6-120

Yolanda Broyles-Gonzalez, *Teatro Campesino*, 3-167

Shank, *Beyond the Boundaries* 74-90

Week #10, Oct 28 and 30: The Performance Group (est. 1967)

Richard Schechner, *Environmental Theatre* (1973) [selections]

Jerzy Grotowski, “Towards a Poor Theatre,” “The Theatre’s New Testament,” *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968), 15-53 [Reader]

Dionysus in 69 (1968) [script with photographs on reserve at FAL]

Shank, *Beyond the Boundaries*, 91-103

Week #11, Nov 4 and 6: Off-off Broadway

Steve Bottoms, “Digging (up) the Scene: An Introduction,” “In One Act: On the Aesthetics of Off-Off-Broadway Playwriting,” *What Happened: A Critical History of the 1960s Off-Off-Broadway*, ms. pp. 1-9, 1-13 [Reader]

Rosalind Drexler, *Home Movies* (1963), in *The Line of Least Existence and Other Plays*, 77-119 [Reader]

Susan Sontag, “Going to the Theatre, etc.,” in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, 140-62 [Reader]

Lanford Wilson, *The Madness of Lady Bright* (1964), in *The Rimers of Eldritch and Other Plays*, 74-91 [Reader]

Maria Irene Fornes, *The Successful Life of 3* (1965, Obie), in *The Winter Repertory 2: Promenade and Other Plays*, 163-203 [Reader]

Rochelle Owens, *Futz* (1967), in *Futz and What Came After*, 3-30 [Reader]

Richard Gilman, “Introduction,” in *The Winter Repertory 2: Promenade and Other Plays*, 1-3 [Reader]

Week #12, Nov 11 and 13: Broadway Musicals

Dale Wasserman, Mitch Leigh, and Joe Darion, *Man of La Mancha* (1966)

Gerome Ragni, James Rado, and Galt MacDermot, *Hair* (1969), 379-478

Stephen Sondheim and George Furth, *Company* (1970)

Listening: Cast albums for each show [on FAL reserve]

Week #13, Nov 18 and 20

Tues, Nov. 18: Presentations or catch up

Thurs, Nov. 20: Presentations

Week #14, Nov 25 and 27

Tues, Nov 25: No class

Thurs, Nov 27: Thanksgiving holiday

Week #15, Dec 2 and 4

Tues, Dec 2: Presentations

Thurs, Dec 4: Presentations/Summary

Mon, Dec 8, 5 p.m.: Final projects due.

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Student at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY.

I encourage you to come to see me or to communicate via email with questions, ideas, suggestions, and comments.