

# PERFORMANCE & ACTIVISM

## Class Meetings:

Monday - Wednesday

9:30 a.m. - 10:50 a.m.

GAB 321

## Contact Info:

Instructor: Brittany Hale

Email: [brittany.hale@unt.edu](mailto:brittany.hale@unt.edu)

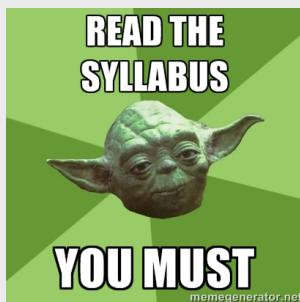
(I prefer you message through Canvas.)

Office Hours:

Monday & Wednesday 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. & Tuesday 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

## Required Texts:

- ✦ Articles and chapters may be accessed through our Canvas site.



## Course Description

This course analyzes not only how performance provides a vital public forum, but also how theories and methodologies from Performance Studies can be applied to the study of demonstrations, protests, and activist undertakings.

This class offers a broad survey of significant artists and activists who utilize performative practices to advance their social justice goals. We will examine the fundamental principles that were the foundation for many of these performers. Together we will trace the development of artistic principles used in activist contexts, specifically how activists use performative means to convey their political messages.

Along the way, we will explore what skills and tools we need to develop as activist artists. This class will foster our ability to apply performance as a catalyst for change.

## Course Objectives:

*We are interested in exploring the following questions:*

- How can performance affect change in communities?
- How does performance relate to hierarchy, power, and resistance?
- How can we adapt performance strategies to support political action and education?



"Art is a sneak attack while the giant sleeps, a slight of hands when the giant is awake, moving so quickly that they can do their deed before the giant swats them. Our survival depends on being creative."

Gloria Anzaldua

## COURSE POLICIES:

### Contact Policy:

Please contact me through Canvas message. You may additionally email me at [brittany.hale@unt.edu](mailto:brittany.hale@unt.edu). Allow one business day for an email reply; please keep them short and professional. In the subject line of your email, please include the course title. Remember, before emailing questions about due dates, grading policies, assignments, etc. check the syllabus to attempt to answer your question first. **A lack of communication or planning on your part does not justify an emergency on my part.**

### Class Climate:

Students are expected to attend each class session, to have read the material, and to be prepared to participate actively and intelligently in class discussions. Discussing cultural differences can be a challenging process on a personal and social level. Please keep in mind that part of the goal of this course is to explore different ways of viewing the world through performance. We may be challenging some deeply held beliefs and values during class discussions. We are not evaluating these beliefs and values as good or bad, but rather allowing ourselves to view the world from another's perspective. Some of you will undoubtedly have strong reactions; however, the ways in which reactions are presented must be respectful and civil. In order for us all to glean the most from this course, we must create an environment in which individuals feel comfortable speaking their minds and relaying their experiences. **Disrespect of any kind cannot be tolerated and may warrant your removal from the class.**

### Acceptable Student Behavior:

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <http://deanofstudents.unt.edu>.

### Participation:

In order to be successful in this course you will need to come to class prepared, readings completed, and ready to engage in discussion. As an upper division course your active participation is expected. A portion of your grade will include participation.

### Tardies:

**Late arrivals** are distracting for students and instructors. Occasional late arrivals are understandable, however, if you make a habit of arriving late, you will be marked absent. Additionally, **leaving class early** is also distracting and without prior approval, you will be marked absent for the entire class period.

### Incompletes:

A student can only receive a course grade of "I" if the student 1) has completed at least 75% of the coursework, 2) is passing the course, and 3) has a justifiable and documented reason beyond the control of the student for not completing the work on schedule (e.g., serious illness, military service).

### Attendance:

Attendance will be taken in class each day. If you are absent more than three (3) class periods over the course of the semester, your grade will be reduced. For each absence beyond three (3), 10 points will be deducted from your final grade total. So if you are absent 5 class periods, your final grade will be reduced by 20 points. **You** are responsible for obtaining notes from missed classes. It is not the responsibility of the instructor to inform you of what you missed in class.

If you miss a performance or presentation, you will receive a ZERO for that assignment. Throughout the semester, there may be several opportunities for extra credit. However, individuals who have missed more than three (3) days of class will NOT be eligible for extra credit.

### Excused Absences:

University authorized absences will not count toward your total. **HOWEVER**, it is your responsibility to alert me by the second week of class, in writing, if you plan to miss class over the course of the semester for either a University-sponsored activity or religious observation. In this e-mail, please include specific dates and your reasons for missing class. If you are traveling for a University-sponsored activity, I will also need official documentation from the Dean of Students within 3 days of your absence.

Regardless of your reason for missing a class, you are still responsible for that day's in-class materials and deadlines.

An unexcused absence on an assigned performance date will result in a grade of **zero**. Make up performances are permitted only if you have a university authorized absence or a note from a doctor.

### Academic Integrity:

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam [or specify alternative sanction, such as course failure]. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students, who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express

permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

It is of utmost importance that you understand what is meant by cheating, facilitating academic dishonesty, fabrication, plagiarism, etc. It is also important for you to understand your rights should I or any other instructors accuse you of academic dishonesty. Every graded assignment, unless otherwise indicated, requires you to do original, independent, and creative work. In addition to copying someone else's words or ideas, reusing your own work (from other courses) is considered academic dishonesty—you might be permitted to extend research from other classes, but you must clear this with your professors before proceeding with such research.

**ADA Statement:**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://disability.unt.edu>. You may also contact them by phone at (940) 565-4323.

**Student Needs:**

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to provide any resources that they may possess.

**Crisis Contingency:**

In the event of the university closing for weather-related reasons or illness outbreak (e.g. swine flu), you will be alerted by Eagle Alert. I will provide instructions on how to turn in assignments and how the class will precede utilizing Canvas.

**COMM Library Copier Use Policy**

Students conducting research in the Communication Studies Library associated with departmental coursework have access to a printer/photocopier located in the office adjacent to the library. We encourage students to make use of this resource to print research accessed online in the library or to copy essays from any of the department's holdings. Students may not use this resource for other purposes, such as printing courses assignments, class notes, scripts, etc. Students who use the copier for uses other than those outlined above will lose copying privileges.

**Evaluation**

Out of 1000 points, each assignment is worth:

**Performances**

- (200) Performance 1
- (200) Performance 2

**Presentations**

- (150) Movement Presentation
- (50) Small Players
- (50) Beautiful Trouble

**Paper**

- (100) Final Paper
- (50) Panel Response Paper

**Writing, Testing, & Participation**

- (50) Peer Evaluation
- (200) Disc, Daily Assign, Partic.

**Grading Scale**

The following scale will be utilized for evaluating all work in the course:

900-1000	A	Excellent
800-899	B	Good
700-799	C	Average
600-699	D	Below average
<599	F	Unsatisfactory

**24/7 Rule**

When you receive a grade, you must wait 24 hours before discussing it with me in my office hours. Make an appointment and take the time to form a coherent argument about what you would like to discuss regarding your grade. After this 24-hour wait period, you have 7 days to contact me about your grade. After 7 days, your grade is non-negotiable.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Further details for each assignment will be provided on Canvas.

**Performance**

**Performance 1- Solo Mystery**

For the final performance of the class, you will need to write/compile your own script exploring an issue you are connected to that you feel deserves activist attention. You will utilize the Mystery methodology for this performance. The Mystery combines personal, professional, and popular texts to create a compiled text.

**Performance 2- Solo in Collectives**

With your group members (performance collective), you will create an aesthetic performance over a social issue of interest to your group. Although your performance will be a solo performance piece, it must communicate with the other pieces in your group. Each piece will be individual, but the theme will be cohesive.

**Presentations**

**Social Movement Presentation**

In your groups, you will prepare an educational presentation over a the social movement connected to your group. In the presentation, focus on the performance strategies your chosen social movement utilizes and what those performances tell us about their movement at large. Although you will have freedom in your topic choice, it must be approved by me in advance. You must also use supporting scholarly research and provide annotations for each source. Peer evaluation grades of your fellow group members will also be factored into the project grade. Each group will create their own contract to ensure respect is given and rules are followed.

**Small Players Presentation**

The most well-known activists are not the only ones who made change happen. As a solo assignment, you will research and present on activist, non-profit leader, or social movement member who made significant (even if not well publicized) strides towards the movement. You must create a handout about this person and a visual aid to use as you present the information to the class.

**Beautiful Trouble Presentation**

Beautiful Trouble is a handbook and website that analyzes and promotes social justice activities. For this presentation, you will choose a tactic, principal, or case study to present to your peers.

## **Writing, Testing, & Participation**

### **Final Reflection Paper**

For this solo written paper, you will be given a list of prompting questions to encourage your reflection on the role of performance within activism. You must utilize connections to the assigned course reading material through the paper.

### **Journal & Daily Assignments**

Throughout the course, you will be expected to respond to writing prompts. These will be centered around required reading material and will help in the building of your performances. Additionally, we will have daily assignments throughout the semester that you must be in class to complete.

### **Quizzes**

To attain maximum benefit from the course, it is imperative that you read the book chapters and articles assigned for the course **before** the day they are covered. You may be given a reading quiz on any of the articles and/or chapters.

### **Participation**

You must come to class having fully read each chapter and/or articles by the day we begin lecture. Full participation requires engaging in classroom discussion. You will also support with your classmates by offering thoughtful and constructive criticism.

### **Extra Credit**

The more you ask for extra credit, the less I am interested in giving it. Please note that there are caveats to the extra credit policy: ***If you have more than 3 absences, then you are not eligible for any extra credit.*** If you have a satisfactory attendance record, you can earn **up to 35** points of extra credit in multiple ways.

- 1) *Outside Analysis*- You can earn up to 5 points of extra credit for every two-page critical response written on outside performance and/or culture related media: ex. TED Talk, podcast, external lecture. Some links/opportunities will be provided for you. You may also choose your own adventure by bringing something to me for approval (before conducting your analysis).
- 2) *"Outside" Performance*- You can earn up to 10 points of extra credit for every two-page critical response written on outside performances this semester. These may be streamed live through the UNT Comm Studies Black Box.
- 3) *Outline a chapter/article*: You may turn in a handwritten outline of the chapter/article assigned as reading (1 point each). I suggest you make a copy to use to take additional notes during the lecture and discussion.

### **Disclaimer**

This syllabus should not be considered a binding contract on the part of the professor, who reserves the right to change any aspect of the course without prior notice.