

CMST 2040: Introduction to Performing Literature – D. Mungin  
Spring 2015  
Coates 137 – The HopKins Black Box

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Office Hours: T/TH Noon – 2:00 p.m., *or by appointment*  
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**Catalog Description:** The study of literature through performance; reading, analysis and performance of prose, poetry, and drama.

**Required Text**

Collins, Billy, ed. *Poetry 180: A Turning Back to Poetry*. New York: Random House, 2003.

Pelias, Ronald J. and Tracy Stephenson Shaffer. *Performance Studies: The Interpretation of Aesthetic Texts* (2nd Edition). Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 2007.

Shapard, Robert and James Thomas. *New Sudden Fiction: Short-short stories from America and Beyond*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.

Stern, Jerome, ed. *Microfiction: An Anthology of Really Short Stories*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.

**Course Objectives**

1. Require active participation in oral communication. Ignite, engage and embody imaginative and intellectual responses to imaginary worlds, literary texts and language.
2. Stimulate an awareness of the dramatic potential of all literature.
3. Deepen appreciation of self and other as they interact in engaging human experience.
4. Activate a flexible, effective, and expressive voice in the performance of literature.
5. Release a responsive and expressive body in the performance of literature.
6. Sharpen basic communication skills.

**General Education Course Goals**

CMST 2040 is an introductory level communication course designed to familiarize students with the study of literature through performance. This class is based in the assumption that performance is a method of understanding and enjoying literature as an expression of profound human experience. We will explore different methods of performing texts as well as learning to write about literary texts, performances and the act of performing.

*As a General Education Humanities Course, CMST 2040 will teach students an awareness of, and the ability to formulate, rational interpretations of human experience AND enrich their competency in written and oral communication.*

### **Course Expectations**

1. You will attend (show up physically) every scheduled class meeting and be on time and present (show up mentally/ emotionally) for every class.
2. All of your assignments are expected to be on time. If you are assigned to perform or workshop on a certain day it is your job to switch days with a classmate and inform me of the switch. I will not allow you to change days once the schedule is set so please do not email me frantic messages asking for me to change the order.
3. You will be a respectful and receptive class member and actively participate in all aspects of the course- This includes (but is not limited to) turning OFF all electronic devices. Texting, calling, web surfing, or any other kind of electronic activity is not permitted during class time.
4. You will try your hardest with every assignment and seek help from your instructor or peers when necessary.
5. As giving, preparing and executing performances is a stressful and arduous task, you will be expected to give your fellow classmates the attention and respect they deserve. Disrespect in the classroom WILL NOT be tolerated. Every member of the classroom can practice respectful behavior by actively speaking up in class, doing all readings and assignments, preparing for and practicing performances, giving helpful and encouraging feedback to their peers.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is crucial for a communication studies course. You will be expected to be an active participant in this classroom and be on time for all lessons. There will be daily exercises that will factor into your final grade, these exercises can't be made up at a later date. In order to prevent miscommunication between you and your instructor, make sure I am informed so I can further help to aid and/or accommodate you in an emergency.

### **Americans with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states: "If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office of Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations can be arranged. After you receive the accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

### **Honor Code Policy**

Plagiarism and cheating is not tolerated at LSU. It inhibits your learning opportunities and stifles your growth as a mature and influential individual. All students will be expected to cite all their sources and take credit and responsibility for their work. If there is any question as to whether a part or all of your paper is plagiarized you will be expected to approach me with your inquiries before I have to approach you.

I have no tolerance for plagiarism. Any student found to have turned in material not their own (either downloaded from the internet or written by another student) will immediately be reported to the Dean of Students and fail the course. The Internet has made plagiarism very easy and very tempting.

Hundreds of sites offer papers, research, writing, and editing. The ease with which such material is available over the Internet does not lessen the seriousness of claiming material from the Internet as your own. See the LSU policies on plagiarism here: <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/instruction/plagiarism2.html>.

Your paper would be considered as plagiarized in part or entirely if you do any of the following:

- Submit a paper that was written by someone other than you.
- Submit a paper in which you use the ideas, metaphors or reasoning style of another, but do not cite that source and/or place that source in your list of references. Simply rewording a sentence does not make work your own.
- Submit a paper in which you “cut and paste” or use the exact words of a source and you do not put the words within quotation marks, use footnotes or in-text citations, and place the source in your list of references.

### Grading System

#### Performances:

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Poetry Performance   | 100 |
| Prose Performance    | 100 |
| Compiled Performance | 115 |

#### Tests:

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Midterm                    | 125 |
| Textual Analysis & Quizzes | 100 |

#### Written Work:

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| 5 Page Dramatistic Analysis | 125 |
| Final Paper                 | 125 |
| Black Box Paper 1           | 50  |
| Black Box Paper 2           | 50  |

#### Participation:

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Participation (class activities etc.) | 110 |
|---------------------------------------|-----|

Total Points Available 1000

A=1000-900 B=899-800 C=799-700 D=699-600 F= 600-0

### Assignments

#### Performances (315 Points)

The focus of this class is well established: live performance. ***You must deliver all three assigned***

**performances in order to receive a passing grade in the course.** It is imperative, due to the time constraints of each semester, for performances to be given on the days that they are assigned. The penalties for missing a performance are severe as a result: failure to perform on an assigned day will result in the reduction of one letter grade for each class period missed until the performance is completed. Your earliest chance to complete the performance requirement is after everyone else has fulfilled his/her spot, or if another becomes available. If you miss class, come prepared to perform every class period until the performance requirement is fulfilled. **Performances must be memorized.**

### **Workshops**

Before you present your final performance for each unit you will workshop your performance. This is essentially a practice run that allows you to get feedback from myself and your classmates before the final performance. The more prepared you are for your workshop, the more substantive the feedback you will receive. My expectation for workshops is that you have half of your performance memorized and have made at least two performances choices. Further, your workshop grade will factor into your performance grade. 10% of your performance grade is determined through completion all of the requirements for the workshop.

### **Quizzes and Exams (225 Points)**

Over the course of the semester you will take eight quizzes and two major exams (a midterm and a final). The dates and content of each quiz are listed on the tentative course schedule. ***I do not offer make-up quizzes*** should you be absent on the day of a scheduled quiz or exam. However, I do drop your lowest quiz grade. If you know you are going to miss class for a university excused absence it is your responsibility to schedule to take the quiz early.

### **Dramatistic Analysis (125 Points)**

Part of understanding performance is learning how to articulate your response to performance. In addition to your production response you will write a **5 page analysis** of your prose selection. **The quality of your writing matters and is part of the content of this course.** I will assess your writing in terms of both content and style. Style includes components such as paper organization, sentence structure, accurate word choice, typographical mistakes, passive voice, spelling, and basic grammar errors.

### **HopKins Black Box Shows (100 Points)**

The Hopkins Black Box theatre serves not only as a classroom space for students of performance studies. It is also an experimental laboratory theatre space where faculty and graduate students produce and direct full-length performance productions and guest artists perform and/or host workshops. For students of performance, these productions provide an invaluable opportunity to broaden their understanding of performance as object of analysis and an epistemological method for approaching a wide variety of cultural texts. Thus, you are required to attend one black box production over the course of the semester and turn in a 2 to 3 page written response. Shows dates and times are listed on the tentative course schedule as well as on the departmental website.

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Do you have a major?

Business leaders and other professionals recognize the importance of developing communication skills and analysis. Alan Greenspan, for example, stated, “To succeed, you will soon learn, as I did, the importance of a solid foundation in the basics of education – literacy, both verbal and numerical, and communication skills.” We hope this course contributes to your success.

To learn more about communication, you may want to major or minor in the Department of Communication Studies. The program explores how people sustain and change, experience, and make sense of the world through symbolic action. Students develop conceptual skills to analyze written, oral, and visual messages. Students gain practical experience in such areas such as public speaking, group decision-making, performance, and film. Such skills are elemental to careers in business, government, law, social services, and the arts.

*A major in Communication Studies requires 36 hours including 12 hours of core classes and 12 hours at the 3000 or 4000 level. A minor requires 15 hours with one core class and 6 hours at the 3000 level or above.*

More information is available at [www.lsu.edu/cmst](http://www.lsu.edu/cmst) or by contacting our undergraduate advisor Mr. Kent Filbel ([kfilli@lsu.edu](mailto:kfilli@lsu.edu)), whose hours are posted at his office, 135 Coates Hall.

Anticipated Course Topics Schedule:

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Week 1      | <p>Overview</p> <p>1/15 - Course Introductions and Overview</p>  |
| Week 2      | <p><i>What is Performance?</i></p> <p>1/20 - Introduction to Performance Studies &amp; A Definition of Performance Studies (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 1 &amp; 2)</p> <p><b>1/22 – Life Story Performance</b></p>   |
| Week 3      | <p><i>History and Storytelling</i></p> <p>1/27 - Everyday Storytelling (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 4)</p> <p>1/29 - A Historical Account of Performance Studies (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 3);</p> <p><b>Poetry Selection Due</b></p>   |
| Weeks 4 & 5 | <p><i>Poetry Workshops</i></p> <p>2/3 – Poetry Workshop</p> <p>2/5 – Poetry Workshop</p> <p><i>Poetry Performances</i></p> <p><b>2/10 – Poetry Performances</b></p> <p><b>2/12 – Poetry Performances</b></p> <p><b>2/15 – Poetry Peer Critiques</b></p>  |
| Week 6      | <p><i>Unit II</i></p> <p><b>2/17 – Mardi Gras Holiday</b></p> <p>2/19 – The Dramatistic Approach (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 5)</p> <p><b>Pentad Quiz Due 2.22.15</b></p>   |
| Week 7      | <p><i>The Body and Empathy</i></p> <p>2/24 – The Voice and Body as Analytic Tools (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 6) &amp; Discussion of Dramatistic Paper</p> <p>2/26 – Empathy (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 7)</p>  |
| Week 8      | <p><i>Midterm Week</i></p> <p>3/3 – Midterm Review; Prose Selection Due</p> <p><b>3/5 – Midterm</b></p> <p><b>3/8 – Dramatistic Analysis Due</b></p> <p>Black Box Performance: <i>Lullaby</i> Devised &amp; performed by Savannah Ganster &amp; Ashley Beard - Thursday 3/5 through Saturday 3/7 @ 7:30 PM</p> |

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|-------------|--|
| Week 9 & 10 | <p><i>Prose Workshops</i></p> <p>3/10 – Prose Workshops<br/>         3/12 – Prose Workshops</p> <p><i>Prose Performances</i></p> <p><b>3/17 – Prose Performances</b><br/> <b>3/19 – Prose Performances</b></p> <p><b>3/22 – Prose Peer Critiques</b></p>   |
| Week 11     | <p><i>Aesthetics</i></p> <p>3/24 – The Structures of Aesthetic Texts (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 9) &amp; The Performative Role of Audience (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch. 10)<br/>         3/26 - The Expanding Aesthetic of Performance Art (Pelias and Shaffer: Ch.11);<br/>         Compiled Script Group discussion</p> <p>BlackBox Performance: <i>Tracking Shots</i>: Devised and directed by Patricia Suchy.<br/>         Wednesday 3/25 through Saturday 3/28 @ 7:30 PM, Sunday 3/29 @ 2:30 PM</p> |
| Week 12     | <p><i>Playing with Texts</i></p> <p>3/31 – 4/2 – Group Texts Work<br/> <b>4/5 – Compiled Script &amp; 1<sup>st</sup> Black Box Paper Due</b></p>   |
| Week 13     | <p><i>Spring Break</i></p> <p><b>4/6 – 4/10 – No Class</b></p>   |
| Week 14     | <p><i>Compiled Performance Workshops</i></p> <p>4/14 – 4/16 – Group Text Work</p> <p>4/21 – 4/23 – Group Workshops</p> <p>BlackBox Performances: <i>Racy</i>: Written and directed by Bonny McDonald<br/>         Wednesday 4/22 through Saturday 4/25 @ 7:30 PM, Sunday 4/26 @ 2:30 PM</p>  |
| Week 15     | <p><i>Final Performances</i></p> <p><b>4/28 – 4/30 – Final Compiled Performances</b></p> <p>4/29 - <i>The Spring Undergraduate Showcase</i> @ 7:30 PM</p> <p><b>5/4 – Black Box #2 Paper &amp; Final Performance Review due</b></p>  |