

**CMST 4141:1 Analysis and Performance of Narrative
Spring 2014, TU/TR 4:30-5:50, 237 Coates Hall**

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players . . .
William Shakespeare*

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(Always e-mail me through Moodle first. Allow 24 hours for a response/ 48 hours on weekends)

Catalog Description: This course assumes that performances are not just entertaining distractions from “real” life. They are a primary way in which human beings develop shared social and cultural lives. Focusing in particular on oral history and performance ethnography, this course is designed to introduce you to performance as a *research method*, a way of learning about the world around you, especially those who are different than you.

Course Objectives: After successful completion of this course you should be able to:

- LO1. Craft life experiences into engaging performances.
- LO2. Conduct ethical, practical and compelling ethnographic interviews.
- LO3. Write essays that explicate key claims in performance scholarship and apply them to relevant social and cultural performances
- LO4. Produce original works of performed scholarship that engage with the life worlds of others in ethical, practical, and compelling ways

Prerequisite: CMST 2040: Introduction to Performing Literature

Required Reading: John Bowe et al eds. *Gig: American's Talk about Their Jobs*. (Three Rivers: New York, 2000) ISBN: 9780609807071

I will post other readings on Moodle during the course of the semester.

Course Assignments: You will receive a letter grade in each of the following categories that corresponds to the "Interpreting Grades" schema below. Grades will be posted on Moodle in a timely fashion so that you will be aware of your current standing.

Assignments

	Brief Description	Learning Objective	% of Final Grade
PERFORMANCES			50%
1. Name Story	Tell a story about one of the names you go by or have been called. 1 minute.	LO1	2%
2. Family Myth Performance	Using David Sedaris as a model/inspiration/jumping off point, recount a story that is often told in your family. 3-4 minutes.	LO1	8%
3. Place Performance	Recount a significant part of the special place that one of your classmates has recounted to you. 3-4 minutes	LO1, LO2,	10%
4. Gig Performance	Represent one of the <i>Gig</i> interviews in performance. 4-5 minutes (The memorization of this piece may be time consuming and you are advised to start early)	LO1, LO4	15%
5. Interview Performance	Share a moment from your ongoing ethnographic interviews with	LO1, LO2,	15%

Brief Description	Learning Objective	% of Final Grade
someone who has a different cultural location than you do 5-8 minutes (We will talk about this ongoing project throughout the semester, but it is imperative that you allow enough time for the interview process. You will need a minimum of 10 hours of fieldwork from which to draw the 4-5 minute performance)	LO4	25%
Final PAPER PARTICIPATION	I expect you to come to class each week having read assigned reading, watched assigned films, and/or listened to assigned audio. In addition to regular quizzes over the material, I will also give you points for active, committed participation in class discussions and activities. I will deduct points for the behaviors listed above, and others that disrupt our ability to be a supportive, engaged learning community.	25%
TOTAL		100%

Course Grading Scale

Grade	What it means	How to earn it
A	Excellent Exceeds expectations in multiple ways, is creative, intelligent, committed and prepared.	Make the performance/paper your own. An A performance is fully embodied, committed, full of energy, and it leaves the audience seeing the world just a little bit differently than they did before they encountered it. An A paper is thoughtful, well organized, and considers counter arguments. It builds an idea that leaves the reader seeing the world just a bit differently than she or he did before reading the paper.
B	Very Good Demonstrates work beyond the expected level of competence and preparation	Thoroughly cover everything the assignment asks you to do as competently as possible. Dot your i's, cross your t's. Make sure that you hit every element of the performance or paper assignment guideline and that you clearly demonstrate your understanding of the concepts and ability in the skills asked for. Make sure to point your reader/audience in the right direction every step of the way so that they have a good idea where you are taking them and how all the pieces fit together.
C	Satisfactory Fulfills requirements with average competence and preparation.	Address almost everything on the assignment guidelines. Make sure that you have a working knowledge of the concepts and/or skills involved. In performance: Be memorized. Rehearse enough that you can get through the piece without blanking. Hit every single thing on the assignment list in at least a minimal way. Make at least a couple of strong committed choices. In writing: basically cover the idea asked for. Proofread for errors.
D	Needs Improvement Falls short of several criteria and/or presents major deviation from assignment.	Make an attempt to fulfill the assignment, but do your work at the last minute when you don't have enough time to cover everything the assignment asks for. Don't proofread. Don't rehearse (or if you do, make sure to do it alone and not with someone to watch and give you feedback). In performance: Have a general idea of what you want to do, but make weak choices and don't commit to them. In Writing: Have a general idea of what you want to say, but make sure that your writing meanders and leaves the reader unsure what you are saying.

Grade	What it means	How to earn it
F	Failing/Unsatisfactory Does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.	Do nothing at all or do work that does not meet the minimum requirements for the assignment.

Course Expectations:

The following is a list of what I expect from students in my courses. They are policies based on years of experience in the classroom. I believe that they reflect my commitment to creating an equitable, engaging, and safe learning environment for all students. If you have questions about any of these policies please see me within the first two weeks of the course so that we can discuss them in greater detail.

Cultivate a positive attitude: Embrace this class or drop it. I want us all to have fun and get as much as we can out of our time together. I try and make my courses engaging and avoid "busy work." For your own (and your classmates') mental health, make it the best experience you can or find another course that better meets your needs. If you choose to stay I expect that you will engage the class in a mature way, demonstrate commitment to the learning goals, contribute your thoughts and insights, ask questions, work hard, and challenge yourselves.

Participate with respect: This is a highly participatory course in which you will learn collectively (together and from each other) and kinesthetically (with your whole body, not just your mind). Performance requires that we take risks. Therefore, this course requires an ethical commitment to approach one another with care and respect so that we can collectively create a safe and supportive learning environment. Provide constructive comments for your fellow classmates. Respect diversity and each other. Challenging ideas is wonderful. Challenging people is not.

Be on time: Being late will hurt your ability to learn and is disrespectful to everyone else's time. If you are late for some reason beyond your control, make sure not to interrupt anything as you come in (especially not someone else's performance).

Use technology appropriately: If some piece of technology is helping you to learn and not distracting your classmates, you are welcome to use it. Monitor yourself to make sure that your ipad/iphone/laptop/ kindle/ thingamajig is not getting in the way of your or someone else's ability to learn. Unless you NEED it to help you learn what you need to learn for THIS class, turn it off.

Manage your time: Success in a three-unit college course is based on the expectation that students will spend, on average, three hours per week in class and **6 hours per week outside of class** reading, writing, preparing, studying, rehearsing, discussing and otherwise engaging with course materials. If you find that you are spending significantly more time than this on the course, please come and see me as early as possible to discuss better study strategies. If you choose to spend significantly less time than this on the course, please adjust your expectations for your final grade accordingly.

The Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act of 1973: 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 may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, please meet with me at some point during the first two weeks of class to discuss the provisions of those accommodations. See LSU PS-26 for details.

Do not ask for special deals: In order to maintain a fair and equitable learning environment all students must take the same course. Any opportunities to earn points, or retake or make-up or take late quizzes and assignments must be available to all students in the class (see LSU PS-44). Adding extra credit and other accommodations thus adds significantly to my workload and limits my ability to teach the class as designed. Accordingly:

- Please do not ask for special accommodation for assignments (excluding those requested through the Office of Disability Affairs above).

- Please do not ask for extra credit assignments to earn points. I will say no (no matter how much I like may like/dislike you personally).
- Please do not invoke “special” cases or circumstances. It is unfair to other students for me to take into account whether or not the grade you earn will prevent you from graduating, maintaining eligibility for sports or other activities, getting financial aide, becoming disqualified, etc.
- Please remember that your actions and decisions have consequences. This isn’t personal. I don’t grade your life choices, I grade you as I grade everyone else, as fairly as possible within the confines of the course.

Do not plagiarize: unless you put something in quotation marks and cite where you got it from I will assume that you are presenting all work you turn in for this course as your own original work. If you try to pass off work done by others as if it is your own work this is grounds for serious repercussions. I will report all suspected cases of academic dishonesty to the office of Student Advocacy and Accountability. For more details see saa.lsu.edu/plagiarism/html.

Discuss grades respectfully: My primary motivation is to help you meet the course learning objectives. I understand that it can be very disappointing to not receive the grade that you desire or feel you deserve. I do not want such disappointment to inhibit your learning. I also know that I do, sometimes make mistakes. Accordingly, I am happy to discuss your grades with you. Please come to see me in person after you’ve had at least 24 hours to consider your response but within two weeks of the grade posting to discuss your grade on any assignment. If you strongly believe you deserve a higher grade than you have received please bring a written statement with you that explains why you think your work on a given assignment is deserving of a higher grade based on the criteria above (e.g. if you believe you deserve an "A" be prepared to help me see how your paper exceeds expectations in multiple ways).

Turn in your work when it is due: No late papers. No exceptions. Know when assignments are due and plan ahead. I will NOT extend the deadline for written work for any reason. All papers are turned in to Moodle in electronic form with deadlines announced significantly in advance. In the rare event that Moodle is down during the time frame that the paper is due I will accept a paper copy of the assignment (during the next class period after the due date ONLY) as a temporary stand in until you can upload the paper online. Fried hard drives and the like are no excuse. I expect that you have a redundant back up system for your files (e.g. save them to more than one of the following: Google docs, on your hard drive, in a dropbox, on a flash drive, e-mail it to yourself). I expect that you will plan ahead and have the bulk of your paper done the day before it is due and use those last few hours to proofread and copy edit. That way if something does arise at the last minute you will still have something to turn in for the bulk of the points. You are strongly encouraged to upload early drafts of your major assignments early and then replace them with a more complete versions later. If you turn in a partial assignment by the time the assignment is due I *may* give you (and all other students) the opportunity to revise the paper for additional points, but I will NOT extend the deadline for written work for any reason.

Be present for in-class exams: As a general policy, I do not give make-up tests. If a make-up is necessary because of an extenuating circumstance, it will be in essay format.

Plan to perform on your assigned dates: There will be NO make-ups for any in class quizzes or performances worth less than 5% of your final grade. In rare circumstances (e.g. university excused absence, communicable illnesses, earthquakes, death in the immediate family), I may offer you the opportunity to reschedule a **major** performance or in class presentation if doing so does not disrupt the schedule for the rest of the class but my priority will always be to provide the best learning opportunity for the entire class, even if doing so inconveniences you personally. If such a situation arises please let me know as soon as possible so that I can make appropriate modifications to the schedule. (HINT: If you know you will be missing class your best bet in preserving both your own sanity and the integrity of the course schedule is to find another student who is presenting on a different day who is willing to switch with you well ahead of time.)

Remember it is your responsibility to be at all class sessions: PS-22 “Student Absence from Class” defines attendance as “the responsibility of the student” and an expectation that if unfulfilled requires the student to

not only contact the professor beforehand (if applicable) but also to "[compensate] for what may have been missed." I expect you to come to class. Period. If you do have to miss a meeting because of a "valid reason for absence" (also defined in the policy) such as a communicable illness or death in the immediate family, Please recognize that it is **YOUR responsibility** to obtain the day's notes and announcements both from Moodle and from communication with another student **before** making an appointment to meet with me. I am glad to help you clarify things that you might have trouble with, but I will not re-teach material I already covered in class until you have shown this good faith effort and communicated with me about your absence in an honest, upfront and conciliatory tone that makes clear you understand that, even when life events are out of your control, course work is your primary responsibility as a student. Any e-mail asking me "what did I miss in class?" that does not follow these guidelines and does not begin with a summary of what you learned from your conversation(s) with your classmate(s) AND your consultation of Moodle will not receive a reply.

Beware the end of semester temporary empathy lapse The few days of the session are stressful for us all. While I will always do my best to help you learn, please keep in mind that I am significantly more able to help you raise your grade early in the semester than later on. **A lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine.**

Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change with fair notice)

DATE	What we will do	Reading to be completed	Assignment(s) Due
Week 1			
AUGUST			
TU 26	Introduction to the course: syllabus, structure of class, expectations		
TR 28	Name Story Performance	Sedaris "Go Carolina" and "The Youth in Asia"	
Week 2			
SEPTEMBER			
TU 2	Name Story Performances	Storyteller's guide Sedaris "Jesus Shaves"	
TR 4		Colins and Cooper Sedaris "Shiner like a Diamond"	
Week 3			
TU 9		Langelier and Peterson 1-3	
TR 11		Langelier and Peterson 7-18	
Week 4			
TU 16		Langelier and Peterson 19-37	
TR 18	Workshop		
Week 5			
TU 23	Family Myth Performances		

TR 25	Family Myth Performances		
Week 6			
TU 30	Watch Laramie Project		
OCTOBER			
TR 2	NO meeting fall holiday		
Week 7			
TU 7	Oral History	Pollock Remembering	
TR 9	Active Interviewing	Gubrium and Holstein	
Week 8			
TU 14	Partner Place Performances		
TR 16	Partner Place Performances		
Week 9			
TU 21		GIG: Long Haul Trucker, Lawn Maintenance Man, Heavy Metal Roadie, Professional Basketball Player, Escort, Doula, Palm Reader, and 4 more entries of your choosing	
TR 23		GIG: Wal-Mart Greeter, Workfare Street Cleaner, Slaughterhouse Human Resources Director, Crime Scene Cleaner, Bar Owner, Drug Dealer. And 4 more entries of your choosing.	
Week 10			

TU 28	Workshop		
TR 30	Workshop		
<i>NOVEMBER</i>			
Week 11			
TU 4	Gig Performances		
TR 6	Gig Performances		
Week 12			
TU 11		Madison Chapter 7 PDF	
TR 13			
Week 13			
TU 18	Workshops		Workshops
TR 20	ONLINE WORKSHOPS		
Week 14			
TU 25	ONLINE WORKSHOPS		
TR 27	NO MEETING THANKSGIVING		
Week 15			
<i>DECEMBER</i>			
TU 2	Interview Performances		
TR 4	Interview Performances		
FINAL EXAM			
TR 11 5:30 pm	The final exam will be an essay exam centering on the question: how is performance a research method?		Final Exam