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TH670, 3 credits
University at Buffalo – SUNY
Spring 2021
Th 9-11:30
Remote

TH670: Performance Historiography

Course Description

This graduate course will teach students how to do performance history. Emphasis will be directed towards learning how to contextualize and situate sources within their historical and cultural frameworks with attention to issues of time, space, identity, narrative/causality, and the archive. Some basic questions to be addressed are: what are the historian's methodologies, critical and otherwise, that may be used to conduct research in the fields of theatre and performance studies? What assumptions or interpretations are made in the process of doing performance history? How does one decide what matters in an archive? How does archival or primary document research become evidence for an argument or thesis? In spring 2021 this course will focus on Black performance histories and Black feminist theory as a historical methodology and praxis.

Land Acknowledgment

I will be facilitating this course from Buffalo, NY on the territory of the Seneca Nation, a member of the Haudenosaunee/Six Nations Confederacy. This territory is covered by The Dish with One Spoon Treaty of Peace and Friendship, a pledge to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. It is also covered by the 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua, between the United States Government and the Six Nations Confederacy, which further affirmed Haudenosaunee land rights and sovereignty in the State of New York. Today, this region is still the home to the Haudenosaunee people, and we are grateful for the opportunity to live, work, and share ideas in this territory. I encourage you to visit <https://native-land.ca/> to explore the histories of Indigenous stewardship of the land on which you reside.

Required Materials

Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography, eds. Charlotte Canning and Thomas Postlewait (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010), in course calendar as *RTP*.

Additional readings per the course calendar are available on Ublearns.

Recommended purchase: *Race and Performance After Repetition*, eds. Soyica Colbert, Douglas A. Jones, Jr., and Shane Vogel (Durham: Duke UP, 2020).

Course Outcomes

By the conclusion of this course, students will:

Outcomes	Methods of Assessment
Develop the research skills and conceptual tools necessary to evaluate sources and situate performances and plays in their historical and aesthetic contexts.	Seminar paper assignments, participation, BAMT.
Demonstrate the successful acquisition of these research skills and conceptual tools by placing theatrical objects in their scholarly, artistic, and historical contexts.	Seminar paper assignments, BAMT, participation.
Become conversant with contemporary debates in theater and performance historiography.	Participation in discussion of state-of-the-field readings, annotated bibliography, BAMT.

Methods of Assessment

Participation

Students are expected to participate fully in class discussion, including any and all outside preparation that may be necessary. This includes not only doing the reading, but preparing any visual/digital/aural material for class discussion, as well as preparing discussion questions when asked. Be an active listener, share your ideas, and ask questions.

BAMT (Bibliography, Authorship, Method, & Takeaways)

This assignment was developed by Dr. Brian Herrera as a way to process and engage with complex scholarship. Complete 3 BAMT forms throughout the semester (see UBLearn for this form).

Seminar Essay

You may write on any historical topic within performance history. Model your essay on one you admire in a recent number of *Theatre Survey* or *Theatre Journal* or a similarly rigorous academic journal in music, dance, film, etc. Please write this essay in four stages: a concept paper, an annotated bibliography, a first draft, and a final draft.

- i. Concept paper: In about 4-6 pages, identify a possible thesis for your essay, briefly explain your approach to the topic, outline how

you will develop your argument, and provide a first bibliography. This is due on **Monday March 8**.

- ii. Annotated bibliography: please annotate **8** sources for this assignment; 4 should be primary sources and 4 should be secondary (scholarly) sources. For the primary sources, please articulate their value to your project as evidence. For the secondary sources, please summarize the author's argument and how you plan to be in conversation with it, as well as a brief review of the evidence used by the author. Due **Monday April 5**.
- iii. First Draft: Complete a full draft of your essay. At a minimum, you must have finished the introduction, the thesis paragraph, and enough of the body of your paper so that the seminar can see the shape of your argument and your most important evidence. Please distribute to the class by **Monday May 3**.
- iv. Final Draft of seminar essay: due **Friday May 14**.

Course, Departmental, and Institutional Policies

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is unacceptable. Do not sell yourself short by pirating someone else's ideas: do the work yourself, be brave, and share it. This does not mean we are not inspired by others' work, nor does it mean we should not acknowledge where others have influenced us or can support our ideas. This is done through proper citation not just of scholarly work, but also of creative work. You **MUST** cite anything that does not originate with you. Pick a style – MLA, APA, or Chicago – and stick to it. Please see me with any questions about plagiarism and citation **BEFORE** you turn your work in. If you plagiarize, you will fail the assignment.

UB Official Academic Integrity Policy: Academic integrity is a fundamental university value. Through the honest completion of academic work, students sustain the integrity of the university while facilitating the university's imperative for the transmission of knowledge and culture based upon the generation of new and innovative ideas. For the complete policy please visit: <http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml>

ACCESSIBILITY

I am committed to the academic success of all students in this course. If you have a disability of any kind that will affect your participation in this course, please let me know so that accommodations can be arranged in advance. University resources are available at <http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/ods/>.

ATTENDANCE

Your presence helps all of us learn more effectively. Please attend to your needs as they arise during class, including caregiving of yourself and others.

CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

We are committed to cultivating an inclusive learning environment devoted to dialogue across intellectual and cultural differences. The study of theatre and dance routinely involves sensitive and challenging material, and although we do not know all the complexities that individuals bring to the classroom, studio, or rehearsal space, we remain committed to making those spaces supportive, collaborative, and inclusive. In order to achieve this, students and faculty alike are expected to engage with class materials and each other with respect and professionalism.

Students are encouraged to bring issues of harassment, exclusion, or discrimination to the attention of the instructor, a faculty member with whom they feel comfortable, or the department chair. In addition, UB's office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) exists to ensure that issues of harassment, discrimination, and accommodation are addressed in a timely and effective manner, and to foster and sustain a working and learning environment where each member of the community can succeed. If you experience harassment, discrimination, or a lack of accommodation, you are encouraged to speak with EDI confidentially, with no threat of retaliation:

<http://www.buffalo.edu/equity.html>

INJURY-INCIDENT REPORT POLICY

In the event of injury on campus, an incident report should be filed immediately. To file an incident report, contact campus police at 716-645-2222.

CRITICAL CAMPUS RESOURCES

Sexual Violence

UB is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and stalking. If you have experienced gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), UB has resources to help. This includes academic accommodations, health and counseling services, housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and assistance with reporting the incident to police or other UB officials if you so choose. Please contact UB's Title IX Coordinator at 716-645-2266 for more information. For confidential assistance, you may also contact a Crisis Services Campus Advocate at 716-796-4399.

Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. These might include strained

relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, health concerns, or unwanted sexual experiences. Counseling, Health Services, and Health Promotion are here to help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn more about these programs and services by contacting:

Counseling Services: 120 Richmond Quad (North Campus), 716-645-2720, or 202 Michael Hall (South Campus), 716-829-5800. Health Services: Michael Hall (South Campus), 716-829-3316. Health Promotion: 114 Student Union (North Campus), 716-645-2837.

Basic Needs Insecurity

If you are experiencing food insecurity, UB has a variety of services available to assist you with food access. Please visit the following for details:

<https://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/help/emergency/food-support.html>

If you are experiencing housing insecurity, UB's Emergency Fund may be able to assist you. Please visit the following for details:

<https://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/help/emergency/emergency-funds.html>

Course Calendar

subject to change at instructor's discretion
all readings are due on the day indicated

WEEK ONE: Th 2/4 - Introduction

1. Thomas Postlewait, "Historiography and the Theatrical Event, A Primer with 12 Cruxes," *Theatre Journal* 43.2 (1991).
2. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "The Power in the Story," *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015).

WEEK TWO: Th 2/11 – Introduction, continued

1. RTP, Charlotte Canning and Thomas Postlewait, "Representing the Past: An Introduction on Five Themes."
2. Pannill Camp, "The Poetics of Nonevents," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 32, No. 2 (2018).
3. *Joseph Roach, "Introduction: History, Memory, Performance," *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia UP, 1996).
4. *Susan Leigh Foster, *Choreographing History* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995).

WEEK THREE: Th 2/18 – Archive Part I

1. *Rebecca Schneider, "Performance Remains," *Performance Research* 6, No. 2 (2001).
2. *Diana Taylor, "Acts of Transfer," *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke UP, 2003).
3. RTP, Claire Sponsler, "Writing the Unwritten: Morris Dance and Theatre History."

WEEK FOUR: Th 2/25 – Archive Part II

1. *Robin Bernstein, "Dances With Things: Material Culture and the Performance of Race," *Social Text* 27, No. 4 (2009).
2. RTP, Christopher B. Balme, "Playbills and the Theatrical Public Sphere."
3. *Jeanne Klein, "The Cake Walk Photo Girl and Other Footnotes in African American Musical Theatre History," *Theatre Survey* 60, No. 1 (2019).
4. *Saidiya Hartman, excerpts from *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019).

WEEK FIVE: Th 3/4 - Time

1. *Soyica Colbert, Douglas A. Jones, Jr., and Shane Vogel, "Tidying Up After Repetition," *Race and Performance After Repetition* (Durham: Duke UP, 2020).
2. *Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* 35, No. 2 (2009).
3. RTP, Aparna Dharwadker, "Representing India's Pasts: Time, Culture, and the Problems of Performance Historiography."
4. RTP, Tracy C. Davis, "Performative Time."

Concept paper due Monday 3/8

WEEK SIX: Th 3/11 – Space

1. *Kemi Adeyemi, "Beyond 90: the angularities of black/queer/women/lean," *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 29, Vol. 1 (2019).
2. *Mario LaMothe, "Witnessing Queer Flights: Josué Azor's *Lougawou* Images and Antihomosexual Unrest in Haiti," in *Race and Performance After Repetition*, eds. Colbert, Jones, and Vogel (Durham: Duke UP, 2020).
3. RTP, David Wiles, "Seeing is Believing: The Historian's Use of Images."
4. *Maya Cantu, "Beyond the Rue Pigalle: Recovering Ada 'Bricktop' Smith as 'Muse,' Mentor and Maker of Transatlantic Musical Theatre," in *Reframing the Musical: Race, Culture, Identity*, edited by Sarah Whitfield (London: Red Globe Press, 2019).

WEEK SEVEN: Th 3/18 - Identity

1. RTP, Catherine Cole, "History's Thresholds: Stories from Africa."
2. *Brian Herrera, "How the Sharks Became Puerto-Rican," in *Latin Numbers: Playing Latino in Twentieth-Century U.S. Popular Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015).
3. *Suk-Young Kim, "Finding History from the Living Archives: Inscribing Interviews and Interventions," in *Theater Historiography: Critical Interventions*, eds. Henry Bial and Scott Magelssen (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010).

4. *Thomas Postlewait, "Notorious Jeffrey Hudson: The 'Court Wonder' of the Caroline Masques, 1626-1640," in *The Oxford Handbook to Dance and Theater*, ed. Nadine George-Graves (New York: Oxford UP, 2015).

WEEK EIGHT: Th 3/25 – Narrative

1. RTP, Brian Singleton, "Narratives of Nostalgia: Oriental Evasions about the London Stage."
2. *Koritha Mitchell, "Introduction," in *From Slave Cabins to the White House* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2020).
3. RTP, Bruce McConachie, "Reenacting Events to Narrate Theatre History."
4. *Katherine Zien, "Parabolic Moves: Time, Narrative, and Difference in New Circus," in *Race and Performance After Repetition*, eds. Colbert, Jones, and Vogel (Durham: Duke UP, 2020).

WEEK NINE: Th 4/1

1. REST
2. **Annotated bibliography due Monday 4/5**

WEEK TEN: Th 4/8 – Case Study: the Archives of Sara Baartman

1. *Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, No. 2 (2008).
2. *Hershini Bhana Young, "Introduction," in *Illegible Will: Coercive Spectacles of Labor in South Africa and the Diaspora* (Durham: Duke UP, 2017).
3. *Kellen Hoxworth, "The Many Racial Effigies of Sara Baartman," *Theatre Survey* 58, No. 3 (2017).
4. *Harvey Young, "Touching History," in *Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory, and the Black Body* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010).

WEEK ELEVEN: Th 4/15 – Case Study: Spectatorship, Identity, and Musical Theatre

1. *Kate Elswit, "Introduction," *Watching Weimar Dance* (New York: Oxford UP, 2014).
2. *La Donna L. Forsgren, "The Wiz, Redux; or, Why Queer Black Feminist Spectatorship and Politically Engaged Popular Entertainment Continue to Matter," *Theatre Survey* 60, No. 3 (2019).
3. *Broderick Chow, "Seeing as a Filipino: *Here Lies Love* (2014) at the National Theatre," in *Reframing the Musical: Race, Culture, Identity*, edited by Sarah Whitfield (London: Red Globe Press, 2019).
4. *Ariel Nereson, "Allergies, Allegiances, and Authenticity: Bill T. Jones's Choreography for Broadway," *Studies in Musical Theatre* 13, No. 1 (2019).

WEEK TWELVE: Th 4/22 – Case Study: *Shuffle Along*, Recovery, and Revival

1. *Jayna Brown, "Babylon Girls," in *Babylon Girls: Black Women Performers and the Shaping of the Modern* (Durham: Duke UP, 2008).

2. *Joanna Dee Das, "Choreographic Ghosts: Dance and the Revival of *Shuffle Along*," *Dance Research Journal* 51, No. 3 (2019).
3. *Catherine Young, "The Performance and Politics of Concurrent Temporalities in George C. Wolfe's *Shuffle Along*," in *Race and Performance After Repetition*, eds. Colbert, Jones, and Vogel (Durham: Duke UP, 2020).

WEEK THIRTEEN: Th 4/29 – Digital Performance Historiography

1. *Sarah Bay-Cheng, "Theater History and Digital Historiography," in *Theater Historiography: Critical Interventions*, eds. Henry Bial and Scott Magelssen (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010).
2. *Derek Miller, "Average Broadway," *Theatre Journal* 68, No. 4 (2016).
3. *Harmony Bench and Kate Elswit, "Mapping Movement on the Move: Dance Touring and Digital Methods," *Theatre Journal* 68, No. 4 (2016).
4. *Sylvaine Guyot and Jeffrey S. Ravel, "[Digital Technology and Theater History](#)," *The French Stage Online 1680-1793*.

First draft due Monday 5/3

WEEK FOURTEEN: Th 5/6

1. *David Savran, "Toward a Historiography of the Popular," *Theatre Survey* 45, No. 2 (2004).
2. *Charlotte Canning, "Feminist Performance as Feminist Historiography," *Theatre Survey* 45, No. 2 (2004).
3. *Leo Cabranes-Grant, "Performance, Cognition, and the Quest for an Affective Historiography," *Theatre History Studies* 39 (2020).
4. *Patricia Ybarra, "Gestures Toward a Hemispheric Theatre History: A Work in Progress," *Theatre History Studies* 39 (2020).

Final draft due Friday 5/14