

Ritual Performance

HUAS 6394 - 501 CREATIVITY: PERFORMANCE

Fall 2011 TH 7:00 PM - 9:45 PM

University of Texas at Dallas

Thomas Riccio, Professor, Performance & Aesthetic Studies

972.883.2016 (office & voice)

Thomas.riccio.utdallas.edu

www.thomasriccio.com

Office Hours Tuesday & Thursday 4:00-6:30 & by arrangement

Office Location JO 4.126

Course Description

This course will apply a variety of exercises and follow a methodology developed by the instructor for the creation of ritual performance expression. The course will proceed in three phases 1) Body, 2) Space, and 3) Place. Each phase will introduce a foundational element in the progression of developing and comprehending ritual performance. Each phase will explore through exercises, improvisations, and performance studies three themes: balance, circles, and rhythm.

At the core of this course's methodology is the objective of locating and articulating a human body in relation to space. The objective of such articulated action is to situate the body relationally in a space and by so doing create a place—the systemization of layered spaces.

By creating a performance place (be it a circle, stage, film, or other communal gathering point) an assembly site is actualized. The performance place is both literal and metaphoric, serving to organize many formerly disparate spaces, objects, and actions into a meaning system. A performance place is the microcosmic ordering of the world, a site of agency, simultaneously catalyst, metaphor and mnemonic and ultimately a dynamic, microcosmic, and tactile diagram of how societies and cultures are expressed and formulated. It is, to a greater or lesser degree, a ritual. Humans create ritual(s) instinctually, for this is how the species enhances a body's ability to maintain order, reflect, take stock, and survive.

Student Learning Objectives

1) To examine and convey fundamental awareness and understanding of ritual performance from a performer's perspective, 2) develop a critical understanding and vocabulary of ritual performance and its function as a cultural expression, 3) develop performance skills enabling the understanding, appreciation, and enactment of ritual performance, 4) develop a self-awareness as one uses the body, voice, and emotions to communicate through performance, 5) use course readings to examine historical contexts and cultural and social functions of ritual performance.

Course Requirements

- Completion of assignments prior to class
- Successful Completion of 5 Performance Exercises
- Development & maintenance of a Performance workbook
- Final Performance Presentation
- Class participation & attendance

Required Text

The Myth of the Eternal Return, by Mircea Eliade

The Spell of the Sensuous, by David Abram

Animism, by Graham Harvey

NOTE: additional articles and performance texts will be available via eLearning and will be assigned throughout the course

Course Policy

- *Late* or *incomplete* work is not accepted
- Incompletes Grades will not be given in this class
- All dates and assignments are subject to change
- Assignments will be made with ample time for completion given please be alert to alterations or corrections in the schedule

Attendance Policy

Two 2 unexcused absences permitted, however each subsequent unexcused absence will result in the Loss of 5% per absence. Two late arrivals (30 minutes + after the hour unless lateness is pre-arranged) will count as one absence. Note: No Gum Chewing or Eating in Class. Soft Drinks, Coffee, and water permitted.

Class Participation & Citizenship

This is a participatory and action based course. Students are expected to participate and to contribute to class exercises and discussion and be open to, and respectful, of the opinions and perspectives of others.

Grading Policy

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Performance Exercises 5 x 6% | 30% |
| Class participation | 15% |
| Ritual analysis 2x 7.5% | 15% |
| Workbook | 15% |
| Final Project | 25% |

1000 pt grading scale 900 + = A 800 + = B 700 + = C 600 + = D 600 and below = F

Class Schedule

Body

Week 1

8.25

Introductions, expectations: walking, expressing, and organizing what you know – working external to internal

Week 2
9.1

Personal Resources: Body-Mind Basics
Circle-the diagram and symbol
Circle awareness and explorations

Read: Eliade

Week 3
9.8

Rhythm-the articulator and drive
Rhythm awareness and explorations
Cultural, personal, and world rhythms

Week 4
9.15

Balance-the objective and the vision
Balance awareness and explorations

Etude 1

Week 5
9.22

Body Parts, movement, expression, and interactions.
Masks, Movement, Making Ritual

SPACE

Week 6
9.29

Every Space is a Circle: Spaces we inhabit

Etude 2
Read: Abram

Week 7
10.6

Sound and Movement and Space
Thinking through action and through the body
Improvisation

Week 8
10.13

Archetypes and Elemental Forms
Identifying and performing inherited patterns

Week 9
10.20

Every space seeks a balance and has a rhythm
Spatial understanding and performance

Etude 3

Week 10
10.27 **Function, shape, and expression of ritual: body in space(s)**
The animism of performance

PLACE

Week 11
11.3 **Body in Space = Place**
Developing compositions creating a performance place

Read: Graham

Week 12
11.10 **Scenarios, patterns, repetitions**
Creation of ritual and meaning through performance actions

Etude 4

Week 13
11.17 **Creative resources and project Work**

Week 14
11.24 **THANKSGIVING NO CLASS**

Week 15
12.1 **Community, Creation, Performance Body Space Place**
The New Indigenous
(Re) Inventing Performance

Week 16
12.8 **Community, Creation, Performance Body Space Place**
The New Indigenous
Summing Up

Etude 5

Final
12.13 **Final project presentations**

Student Conduct & Discipline

<http://www.utdallas.edu/dept/graddean/CAT2008/appendices/Appendix1.htm>

<http://www.utdallas.edu/deanofstudents/conductguidelines.html>