CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY
University Honors Program
HON 360.01: Performing America(s): Creating, Celebrating, and Contesting Nationhood in U.S. Theatre and Popular Entertainment
Spring 2018, MW 1:00-2:15pm, DeMille Hall 146

Instructor: Dr. Jocelyn L. Buckner
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        785-764-6665 (cell, 9:00am-9:00pm, including weekends, no texting)
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Mailbox: Department of Theatre, Moulton Hall 138
Office Hours: By appointment, schedule posted by my office on Thursday afternoons.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:
As a public platform, the stage has long been a site for expressing or challenging individual, national, or group identities. Students will examine primary materials including plays, vaudeville, minstrel, and circus entertainments from the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries, in conjunction with multidisciplinary critical and theoretical scholarship, to develop an understanding of the history of U.S. performance as a tool for political and social agency.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:
• To acquire analytical vocabulary based on exposure to and discussion of varied stylistic, structural, and theoretical approaches to dramatic literature and performance
• To deploy this vocabulary to analyze and critique the structural and thematic content of diverse scripts and cultural performances
• To communicate critical interpretations of dramatic works through written analysis and research, creative projects, and oral presentations
• To engage in philosophical dialogue through creative work, presentations, writing, and class discussion

HONORS PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Upon completing a course in the University Honors Program students will have:

a. Obtained a starting point for integrative exploration of the development of cultures and intellectual achievements through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives;

b. Sharpened their ability to critically analyze and synthesize a broad range of knowledge through the study of primary texts and through engagement in active learning with fellow students, faculty, and texts (broadly understood);

c. Understood how to apply more integrative and interdisciplinary forms of understanding in the advancement of knowledge and in addressing complex challenges shaping the world;

d. Developed effective communication skills, specifically in the areas of written and oral exposition and analysis.

Honors Program Category: Human Sciences
GE Categories: Artistic Inquiry (7AI), Social Inquiry (7SI)
**CLASSROOM CONDUCT:**

Students are expected to conduct themselves professionally with respect for the instructor, their colleagues, themselves, and the intellectual and artistic works we encounter. Students are expected to attend class prepared to participate in discussion and engage with lecture material. Private conversations should be conducted outside of the classroom. Please limit food and beverages to covered drinks and small snacks. Full meals should be consumed outside of the classroom.

**Everyone sees you when you text or use social media in class. It’s awkward for everyone. Please don’t put us in that position. Students are permitted to use laptops or tablets during class for note taking purposes ONLY. The distracting use of electronics will result in a deduction of the user’s daily participation grade. Do what you need to do (see above) to avoid distractions.**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Chapman University is a community of scholars that emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university. For more information see: [http://www.chapman.edu/academics/academic-integrity/files/academic-integrity-policy.pdf](http://www.chapman.edu/academics/academic-integrity/files/academic-integrity-policy.pdf)

**DISABILITY SERVICES:**

In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. The University, through the Disability Services Office, will work with the appropriate faculty member who is asked to provide the accommodations for a student in determining what accommodations are suitable based on the documentation and the individual student needs. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or the integrity of the course. For more information see: [http://www.chapman.edu/students/student-health-services/disability-services/index.aspx](http://www.chapman.edu/students/student-health-services/disability-services/index.aspx)
EQUITY and DIVERSITY:
Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in Chapman’s Harassment and Discrimination Policy: http://tinyurl.com/CUHarassment-Discrimination. Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the Dean of Students and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy.

ATTENDANCE:
It is your job to attend class. Any absence or tardy negatively impacts your final grade, because you are not present to participate. Missing 20% or more of class meetings will result in an automatic failure of the class. Attendance will be taken with a sign in sheet at the beginning of class. If you are late, sign in after class.

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY
Late work will incur a penalty. Assignments turned in late but within 24 hours of the deadline will receive a 5 point deduction (1/2 a letter grade). Any assignment submitted more than a day late will receive a 10 point late penalty (1 full letter grade) for each day that it is late. All assignments must be submitted in hard copy and on Turnitin unless otherwise instructed.

CONTENT:
Theatre and popular performance have long been sources of community building, political debate, personal expression, patriotism, and controversy. In this course we will examine how these cultural sites have created, contested, or celebrated the notion of identity, and how they contribute to our individual and collective understandings of “America.” We will analyze a variety of works themselves – including plays, minstrel shows, vaudeville sketches, Chautauqua speeches, and docudramas – from the nineteenth to twenty-first century. We will work to understand these pieces as products of their cultural moment and as part of our national legacy, while grappling with our reactions to them from our own particular vantage point. We will also work to understand the scholarly, critical, theoretical, and political conversations informing and surrounding these cultural artifacts through reading and discussing secondary scholarship and developing our own informed, critical responses to these materials.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
The following play scripts are required reading and can be purchased in the bookstore or online:
Additional required critical and theoretical readings are drawn from a variety of sources and will be accessible online via links in the syllabus and/or provided by the instructor via Blackboard.
PERFORMANCE EVENTS (out of class requirement):

Students will attend the following productions and develop a written production response to them based on course themes and a directed prompt from the instructor:


INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES:

- In class discussions
- In class individual and group creative exercises and presentations
- Reading, research, and written assignments
- Attendance at Chapman University and professional performances

METHODS of EVALUATION:

- Written assessments of written assignments and research projects
- Oral and written feedback on creative projects and research presentations
- In-class and written feedback on class participation, preparation, and engagement

GRADING:

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joint Production Response to <em>Water by the Spoonful</em> and <em>Cambodian Rock Band</em></td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prompt Responses (3 @ 10%)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Project/Presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
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*I AM HERE TO HELP, but I can’t do so if you don’t tell me you need assistance! Please schedule meetings with me to discuss any questions or concerns throughout the semester.*

The following class schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instruction in order to accommodate class discussion or unforeseen conflicts. Changes will be announced in class and in writing.

*Students are advised that this is a reading and writing intensive course. Please budget your time accordingly.*
CLASS SCHEDULE

Week One: Introduction

M 1/29
Course overview and introductions

W 1/31
Read the following interviews and commissioning project website to get a sense of how two contemporary U.S. theatres, Asolo Rep in Sarasota FL, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland OR are (re)conceiving notions of American identity in performance:
http://www.tcg.org/publications/at/issue/featuredstory.cfm?story=2&indexID=41
and
For discussion: Bring to class an example of a performance (a script excerpt, song, dance, image, etc.) that, for you, celebrates, contests, or creates an idea of “America.”

Part I: Immigration in Performance

Week Two:

M 2/5

W 2/7
- Blackboard: Elinore Sisters, “Irish 400,” University of Rochester Special Collections.

Week Three:

M 2/12

W 2/14
**Week Four:**

M 2/19  
- Luis Valdez, *Zoot Suit* (1979)  
- Jorge Huerta, “Introduction to Zoot Suit.”

W 2/21  

**DUE: Final Project Topic**

**Week Five:**

M 2/26  

W 2/28  

**REQUIRED ATTENDANCE:** Thursday 3/1 8:00pm *Water By The Spoonful*, Mark Taper Forum, Center Theatre Group, Los Angeles. Tickets purchased with Honors funds, transportation provided by Residential Life.

**Production Response Prompt (same as below):** Reflecting on the performances of *Water By The Spoonful* and *Cambodian Rock Band* (below), identify what you think was the main message of each piece. Were they similar or different? Do their messages complement one another, or are they addressing different issues in different ways? How do the two pieces use alternate reality and/or memory and anachronistic scenes to address the relationship between ideas of the personal/national/political, and themes of identity/legacy/ancestry? How does each piece address issues of immigration and diaspora? Discuss how each production worked to create, contest, or celebrate American identity in its performance, and how it accomplished this (through things like staging and production elements such as costumes, casting choices, music/media, etc.). Do you think these productions are important to produce at this moment, in this area of the country, and if so, why? Craft your response in 3-4 typed, double spaced pages. Please cite any sources you reference and/or quote using MLA formatting. Bring a hard copy to class AND submit to Turnitin on Blackboard under Turnitin Assignments.

**Part II: Performing the American Racial Binary**

**Week Six:**

M 3/5  

W 3/7
DUE: Final Project Inspirational Materials and In-Class Group Work Day

REQUIRED ATTENDANCE: Thursday 3/8 6:30pm pre-show College Night and 8:00pm Cambodia Rock Band, South Coast Repertory Theatre, Costa Mesa, CA. Tickets purchased with Honors funds, transportation provided by Residential Life.

Production Response Prompt (same as above): Reflecting on the performances of Water By The Spoonful and Cambodian Rock Band (below), identify what you think was the main message of each piece. Were they similar or different? Do their messages complement one another, or are they addressing different issues in different ways? How do the two pieces use alternate reality and/or memory and anachronistic scenes to address the relationship between ideas of the personal/national/political, and themes of identity/legacy/ancestry? How does each piece address issues of immigration and diaspora? Discuss how each production worked to create, contest, or celebrate American identity in its performance, and how it accomplished this (through things like staging and production elements such as costumes, casting choices, music/media, etc.). Do you think these productions are important to produce at this moment, in this area of the country, and if so, why? Craft your response in 3-4 typed, double spaced pages. Please cite any sources you reference and/or quote using MLA formatting. Bring a hard copy to class AND submit to Turnitin on Blackboard under Turnitin Assignments.

Week Seven:

M 3/12
-In class: view and discuss Ethnic Notions and Bamboozled excerpts

W 3/14
-Monday materials continued

DUE: Prompt 1: In the first section of HON 360: Performing America(s) we have explored how immigration has both influenced performance and been a subject of performance across time, genre, and context. In three typed, double spaced pages, explore some facet of America’s immigrant identity that you have learned about from our readings and discussions on vaudeville, the Chautuaqua circuit, dramatizations of historic events in Zoot Suit, the cross-section of society depicted in Water By The Spoonful, and the legacy of the past in Cambodian Rock Band. In what ways do these performance traditions, scripts, and/or performances reflect or complicate the cultural pastiche of the U.S.? Use specific examples from the readings we have studied
and/or performances we have seen to support your argument. Please cite any sources you reference and/or quote using MLA formatting. Bring a hard copy to class AND submit to Turnitin on Blackboard under Turnitin Assignments.

**Week Eight: Spring Break - Relax! Make Smart Choices! Work on your Final Project!**


**Week Nine:**

M 3/26
- Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959)

W 3/28
- In class: view excerpts from *A Raisin in the Sun*

**DUE: Response to Water By The Spoonful and Cambodian Rock Band**

**Week Ten:**

M 4/2
- Bruce Norris, *Clybourne Park* (2009)

W 4/4

**Week Eleven**

M 4/9

W 4/11
- In class: view PBS special: “*A Raisin in the Sun* Revisited: ‘The Raisin Cycle’ at Center Stage”

**DUE: Final Project Working Bibliography**
**Part III: Intersectional Identity in American Performance**

**Week Twelve:**

M 4/16
-Ayad Akhtar, *Disgraced* (2013)

W 4/18

**DUE: Prompt 2:** In the second section of HON 360: Performing America(s) we explored how race has both influenced performance and been a subject of performance across time, genre, and context. In particular, we have examined how theatre has been used to explore how race intersects with the “American” themes of home, hate, and history, and how these issues are reflected on a micro and macro level on stage and within individual homes, communities, and the nation at large. In three typed, double spaced pages, explore some facet of America’s identity or performance history that you have learned about from our readings and discussions on embodied racial stereotypes reflected in minstrelsy and blackface traditions, the most popular American play of the twentieth century, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), and the legacy of both prejudicial performance practices, racism, and *Raisin* in the two more recent plays we read, *Clybourne Park* (2009) and *Beneatha’s Place* (2013). In what ways do these performance traditions and plays reflect or complicate the cultural pastiche of the U.S.? Use specific examples from the readings to support your argument. Please cite referenced and quoted sources using MLA formatting. Bring a hard copy to class AND submit to Turnitin on Blackboard under Turnitin Assignments.

**Week Thirteen:**

M 4/23
Week Fourteen

M 4/30

W 5/2

Week Fifteen

M 5/7
-Final project group meetings, in class, attendance will be taken

W 5/9
-Evaluations
-Course Wrap Up

**DUE: Prompt 3:** In the final section of HON 360: Performing America(s) we have explored how intersectionality has both influenced performance and been a subject of performance across time and context. In particular, we have examined how theatre has been used to explore intersections with “American” themes of power, status, and belonging, and how these issues are reflected in both public and private stories. In three typed, double spaced pages, explore some facet of America’s identity or performance history that you have learned about from our readings and discussions on identities that intersect race, gender, class, and/or sexuality and the themes of power, status, and/or belonging explored in *Disgraced* (2013), *Sweat* (2015), and *Indecent* (2017). *In what ways do these plays reflect or complicate the contemporary cultural pastiche of the U.S.?* Use specific examples from the plays and supplementary readings to support your argument. Please cite referenced and quoted sources using MLA formatting. Bring a hard copy to class AND submit to Turnitin on Blackboard under Turnitin Assignments.

**Final Exam:** Wednesday May 16, 8:00-10:30am, Final Project Presentations
Final Project: Performing America(s) (30% of final grade)

Throughout this course we have studied a variety of performances as cultural sites, how they have created, contested, or celebrated the notion of identity, and how they contribute to our individual and collective understandings of “America.” For your final project, you will work in a group to develop a performance (10 minutes) and presentation (20 minutes) about a particular aspect of identity, a major current event/debate, or a national issue. The aim of the project is to creatively, critically, and collaboratively explore an idea that speaks to your thoughts and experiences of American life, either now or in a particular historical moment.

The format of this assignment is fairly open – we have a variety of students, talents, and majors in this class, thus each group’s piece will inevitably be a reflection of the group members’ abilities, experiences, and interests. The piece may, for example, be site specific, multi-media, or text based. It may be inspired by and extend from assigned readings from the semester, or work from a completely separate topic.

Your piece should include the following:
A title
Text – both found (via research, reading, observation) and self-created
Music or singing
Composition – a consideration of shape, levels, spatial relationship
Gesture – movement that is expressive & social
Color
Vocal variety
An element of surprise
A specific world/environment – where are you?
A beginning, middle, and end
Costume/wardrobe
A defined performance space – *tell me in advance if you plan to perform outside the classroom so we can coordinate the presentation time appropriately*
At least 3 hand-held props/objects
At least 1 set piece – something in the performance space that you interact with

Questions to consider:

What is your piece based on – an image, a piece of music, a memory, a novel, your imagination….?
What is the theme or message?
What is the story/ What happens?
Who’s in the story?
Who are they to each other?
Where are they?
What time period?
What’s unique about this world, these people?
Why do you want to tell this story? Why now? What excites you about it?
Is it based on a particular art form – impressionism, westerns, tango…?
Where is the audience and what role do they play?
What is the conflict? What are the obstacles?
What is the climax?
Where is the love, the humanity, magic, drama?

To help you to shape your piece and to help me to evaluate your process, the following are required:

2/25: Topic selection (5%) – Your group should submit in writing for approval a 2 page project proposal that includes a paragraph on each of the following:
-an introductory paragraph that details the topic, theme, idea, or issue you want to address in your piece
-a paragraph that communicates an initial thesis for your piece and articulates your perspective or argument about the topic you’ve chosen
-a paragraph that explains what you want the piece to communicate/achieve (awareness? action? emotional connection?) and why
-a paragraph describing your early ideas about how you envision achieving this in performance

3/15: Inspirational materials (5%) – Your group will share with the entire class materials that are proving inspirational, informative, or foundational to the development of the performance piece. Each group member should contribute at least two items. The group should submit in writing a 2-3 page collective statement explaining how the materials are contributing to the development process, discuss what productive discoveries have been made, and what challenges the group has encountered thus far.

4/14: Working bibliography (5%) – Your group will submit an annotated working bibliography of at least 6 primary and secondary sources that have contributed to the development of the performance piece thus far.

Citation information in MLA format + explanation of the source’s influence/usefulness to your project = an annotated entry.

5/10: Workshop performance and meeting with instructor (5%) – Your group will meet with the professor for 20 minutes to show the performance piece in process, ask questions, and receive feedback on the project for use in finalizing the piece for performance and presentation during the final exam period. Please also submit three questions for consideration that may be asked of you during the final exam period.

5/16, 8:00am-10:30am, Final Exam Period: Performance and Presentation, ALSO Individual Reflection Paper, Peer Evaluations, and Group Bibliography (10%) – Your group will have 30 minutes to present the 10 minute performance piece, followed by a 20 minute presentation outlining your process, intent/thesis for the piece, and what influences, challenges, and research informed the work. Groups should also be prepared to answer the three questions that they submitted to the professor about their work, and anticipate additional questions from the audience.
Additionally:
-individually, each group member should write a 3 page reflection paper articulating 1) your own involvement and contribution to the piece, 2) your analysis of the efficacy of the work, and 3) what research/resources you found that were most engaging for you in the process of developing this piece

-each group member should complete and submit a peer evaluation form (provided below) for each member in their group (including themselves).

-your group should submit a final group annotated bibliography of at least 10 primary and secondary sources that ultimately were used, influenced, or inspired your performance piece and informed your presentation. Again, citation information + explanation of the source’s influence/usefulness to your project = an annotated entry.
Final Project: Performing America(s)
Group Participation Rubric

Please rate each member of your group (including yourself) based on the following rubric. Detailed comments are very important. Please submit this as directed.

0 = This member did not participate.
1= This member participated at minimal levels but was not consistent in observing timelines for submitting work or occasionally submitted incomplete work.
2= This member was prompt and observed timelines for submitting work and responding to others.
3= In addition to being prompt and observing timelines for submitting work and responding to others, this member’s individual work, participation, organizing, or editing role was significant.
4= In addition to being prompt and observing timelines for submitting work and responding to others, this member’s individual work, participation in discussion or organizational/editing role greatly influenced for the better the quality of group interaction.

Your Name _________________________  Group Topic ______________________

Member’s Name:   Rating:  Comment
_________________   ___  ___________________________
_________________   ___  ___________________________
_________________   ___  ___________________________
_________________   ___  ___________________________