PERFORMING THE PAST

Spring Quarter 2000 IHUM 22a
Lecture: Little Theatre, TU/TH 10-11AM
Course web site: www.stanford.edu/~fordyce/past.htm

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**Faculty**

Ehren Fordyce  
111 Memorial Hall  
Mon 1-2; Th 11-12  
ehren_fordyce@hotmail.com  
723-9730

**Teaching Fellows**

Tate Davis  
211, bldg 300  
TBA  
tatedavis@jps.net  
725-9557

Steve Tillis  
212, bldg 300  
T&TH 12-1  
sgtillis@stanford.edu

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**RATIONALE**

This class is designed to offer students a broad survey of different cultures and periods -- from the ancient to the modern; from the west to east, north to south -- and to do so specifically by using texts and artifacts related to traditions of performance. We will try to understand how history becomes embedded in performances; how performances attempt to shape and change history; how different notions about time and space inform the specific performances of different cultures; and how individual cultures themselves are subject to historical changes in the way that they process and understand their own cultural legacies. In terms of artifacts of performance, we will tend to concentrate on texts in dramatic or dialogic form that have become canonical within a specific culture or across a number of cultures. However, we will not restrict ourselves only to written texts. Whenever possible, we will also look at artifacts that give us a visual, physical, material, and performative sense of how cultures are enacted. From classical Greek vase drawings to contemporary videos, how can we reconstruct a lived sense of culture, a sense of how we constantly perform our histories in order to create our futures?

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**REQUIRED TEXTS (AVAILABLE AT THE BOOKSTORE)**

Course Reader  
Georg Büchner, *Danton’s Death*  
Henrik Ibsen, *Ghosts*  
Caryl Churchill, *Cloud Nine*  
Samuel Beckett, *Krapp’s Last Tape*  
Heiner Müller, *Hamletmachine*

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Other audio-visual materials assigned for the class will be made available at the Green Media Library for individual viewing or through streaming media over the campus network; some will be made available at the course web site (www.stanford.edu/~fordyce/past.htm).

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**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Please consult your teaching fellow. He or she will provide information on both course-wide and section-specific policies and procedures.
**EVALUATION**
Your grade will reflect your performance on the following:

1. **Participation** (25%)
Participation consists of attending every lecture, discussion, performance, and screening (any absence will affect your grade); completing short writing exercises and assignments; and contributing to discussion, which is evaluated according to IHUM grading guidelines:

   **C range:** The student meets the basic requirements of section participation. This student is usually prepared and participates once in a while but not regularly. This student's contributions relate to the texts and the lectures and offer a few insightful ideas, but do not facilitate a discussion. (Failure to fulfill satisfactorily any of these criteria will result in a grade of "D" or below.)

   **B range:** The student participates consistently in discussion. This student comes to section well prepared and contributes quite regularly by sharing thoughts and questions that show insight and a familiarity with the material. This student refers to the materials discussed in lecture and shows interest in other students' contributions.

   **A range:** The student is fully engaged and highly motivated. This student is well prepared, having read the assigned texts, and has thought carefully about the texts' relation to issues raised in lecture and section. This student's ideas and questions are substantive (either constructive or critical); they stimulate class discussions. This student listens and responds to the contributions of other students.

2. **Presentation** (15%)
One in-class presentation. Performance optional. See teaching fellow for details.

3. **Midterm Paper** (25%)
One 7-page midterm critical analysis. Details to follow. See grading guidelines below.

4. **Final Paper** (35%)
One 8-page critical analysis. Details to follow. Papers are evaluated according to the following IHUM grading guidelines:

   **C range:** This paper has some but not all of the basic components of an argumentative essay (i.e., thesis, evidence, coherent structure): for example, it may offer a thesis of some kind, but it presents no evidence to support this thesis; or it may present an incoherent thesis; or it may simply repeat points made in class without an overall argument. Such a paper is usually poorly organized, written and proofread. A paper will fall below a "C" if it lacks more than one of the basic components of an argumentative essay.

   **B range:** This paper's thesis is clear; the argument is coherent and presents evidence in support of its points. The argument shows comprehension of the material and manifests critical thinking about the issues raised in the course. The paper is reasonably well written and proofread. The argument, while coherent, does not have the complexity, the insight, or the integrated structure of an A range paper.

   **A range:** This paper is outstanding in form and content. The thesis is clear and insightful; it expands in a new way on ideas presented in the course. The evidence presented in support of the argument is carefully chosen and deftly handled. The argument is not only unified and coherent, but also complex and nuanced.
**SYLLABUS**

Notes: You are expected to *complete* a reading in preparation for the *first day* a work will be discussed. Some viewing of videos out of class will be required; dates of showings will be announced. Texts that can be found in the Course Reader are marked with an (R).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>Büchner, <em>Danton’s Death</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>Marx, <em>The German Ideology</em>, pp. 110-64 (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 17</td>
<td>Ibsen, <em>Ghosts</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 19</td>
<td><em>Ghosts</em> (continued)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (R); Melies, Lumière, film shorts</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 26</td>
<td>Eisenstein, <em>Film Form</em>, pp. 3-17, 28-63 (R); John Cassavetes, <em>Opening Night</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td><em>Opening Night</em> (continued);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Fanon, “On National Culture,” pp. 206-248 (R); Sembene, <em>Guelwaar</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 8</td>
<td><em>Guelwaar</em> (continued)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>de Beauvoir, <em>The Second Sex</em>, pp. 3-60, 139-144, 712-715 (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>Churchill, <em>Cloud Nine</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 17</td>
<td><em>Cloud Nine</em> (continued); Judy Chicago, “The Dinner Party”</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 22</td>
<td>Beckett, <em>Krapp’s Last Tape</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 24</td>
<td>Müller, <em>Hamletmachine</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 29</td>
<td>Saussure, <em>Course in General Linguistics</em>, pp. 1-20, 65-70, 11-127 (R); Wilson, <em>the CIVIL warS</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 31</td>
<td><em>the CIVIL warS</em> (continued)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 5</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
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</tbody>
</table>