

**THEATER 100, Fall 23 (TuTh, 1:00-2:15)****THEATRICAL FRONTIERS: LIVE PERFORMANCE IN THE WORLD TODAY**

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**WHAT IS THIS COURSE ABOUT?**

This course explores the world of live theater today, a moment when traditional categories and definitions of art and performance are rapidly changing. In a world where so much is experienced “virtually,” via screens, what does it mean for something to be live? We will examine this question together by looking at performances from the United States and around the world, with the first half of the semester focusing on the performance of identity and solo performance, and the second half on ensemble theater. We will attend two theater productions here on campus. And we will become creators of our own original performance pieces and projects.

By taking this course, you will learn to think critically about the relationship of theater to society. You will learn about the major components of theater, sometimes by meeting the artists behind the works you are studying. You will learn to respond thoughtfully to theatrical performances and communicate ideas about them with richness and specificity. You will also be asked to regularly embody your learning through exercises and hands-on projects. In so doing, you will take away many skills and proficiencies that you can apply to your own field and interests.

As a General Education class, Theater 100 seeks to stretch your mind, broaden your experience, sharpen your critical thinking, and better prepare you for the rapidly changing world in which we live. You will be asked to be both analytical and creative. You can expect the writing assignments to be graded rigorously. Please note, the course features two major hands-on theater projects in which you will work to create performances shared with other members of the class.

You do *not* need to have any acting or theater experience to succeed in this class. You will *not* be graded on your theater skills. However, you *do* need to be willing to participate actively in your own education by taking part in group projects, activities, and discussions throughout the semester. You need to be willing to take some risks, to be open-minded, to explore.

Welcome to Theatrical Frontiers!

## HOW DOES THE GRADING WORK?

Your written work is graded by the TA, under standards set forth by the Professor.

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS
9 Performance Responses, 50 points each (last one worth 100)	500
Solo Project	200
Ensemble Project	200
Attendance	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000 pts</b>

### *Attendance Calculation*

0 unexcused absences:	110 pts. (10 points Extra Credit)
1 unexcused absence:	105 pts. (5 points extra credit)
2-3 unexcused absences:	100 pts. (full credit)
4 unexcused absences	85 pts
5 unexcused absences:	70 pts.
6 unexcused absences:	55 pts.
7 unexcused absences:	40 pts.
8 unexcused absences:	25 pts.
9 unexcused absences:	10 pts.
10+ unexcused absences:	0 pts.

### GRADING SCALE

940 and up:	A	770-799:	C+
900-939:	A-	740-769:	C
870-899:	B+	700-79:	C-
840-869:	B	670-699:	D+
800-839:	B-	640-669:	D
		639 and under:	F

Absences are excused for religious observance, bereavement, illness, or official university event. Please contact me if you foresee an absence and provide documentation whenever possible. Please let me know if there is anything impacting you outside of class that may affect your ability to attend, submit assignments on time, or do your best work.

*Late attendance:* Class starts promptly at 1:00. Three unexcused lates equal one unexcused absence. I may assess an additional penalty if you are *very* late on a given day.

*Late Submission of Written Work:* Performance Responses are generally due at 11:30 PM on the night before each indicated date. For each 24-hour period that an assignment is handed in late, 5 pts will be taken off. The same late penalty applies even if the assignment is a draft that will later be revised.

*Late Adds.* If you Add the class late, you have 96 hours (4 days) from the time of adding the class to make up all missed work and post all missed Performance Responses. After that, late penalties apply.

All readings and Performance Responses prompts can be found on Moodle.

## WHAT SHOWS ARE WE SEEING?

- *The Hatmaker's Wife* by Lauren Yee. Directed by Gina Kaufmann. UMass Dept of Theater. Curtain Theater. Oct 27-28 & Nov 1-4 @ 7:30 PM. Nov 4 @ 2 PM.
- *They Don't Pay? We Won't Pay!* by Dario Fo. Directed by Behnam Alibakhshi. UMass Dept of Theater. Rand Theater. Dec 1-2, 4-8 @ 7:30 PM. Dec 2 @ 2 PM>

Tickets for the two performances can be obtained at the Bromery/Fine Arts Center box office, [here](#). They can also be obtained in person at the Bromery Center Box office, during regular business hours, or at the theater the evening of the performance. It is strongly recommended that you buy tickets in advance or arrive early the evening of the show, since some performances will sell out. Student i.d. required for \$5 tickets, and also for entry into the theaters.

## WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS FOR ACADEMIC HONESTY, AND IS CHATGPT OKAY?

You are responsible for being familiar with the standards of academic honesty outlined within [UMass' Academic Honesty Policy](#). We take these standards seriously. Do not claim as your own any work that belongs to others or pass in written work that was created with or borrowed from others, including work pasted in from the web, or loosely paraphrased from the web without citation. Doing so violates the sense of trust fostered in this classroom community and abuses the confidence of the vast majority.

There is a lot of discussion about the place of AI programs like Chat GPT in writing. It is likely that these tools will increasingly serve as important writing-aids. They are already adept at providing various kinds of competent summary writing. At the same time, these programs are prone to bias and distortion. They are full of inaccuracies and are designed to harvest your own work – and mine – for the benefit of future users.

Theatrical Frontiers is a course about the fostering of personal expression through the arts. My goal is for *you* to improve to develop *your own individual and unique human voice as a writer*. The development of that voice will support your emotional, social, and intellectual development as a human being. Therefore, I ask you not to use Chat GPT or similar programs to generate writing for this class, unless I specifically and explicitly designate when such use is okay. Unless specifically designated as permissible by me, any use of Chat GPT or similar AI programs will be considered a violation of UMass' Academic Honesty Policy. By the way, this is also the general policy for all courses at UMass.

If you have questions or uncertainties about this policy, please feel to talk with me or the T.A.

***The penalty for Academic Dishonesty consists of a "0" for the assignment and official notification of the campus Academic Honesty Office***

## HOW MUCH DO THE COURSE MATERIALS COST?

We try hard to keep the cost of course materials low. Required course materials this semester come to \$10 (2 tickets @ \$5 each). If you need support with the costs of the course, please speak to me: I can often find a way to help out.

## WHAT ARE THE ASSIGNMENTS?

A. *Performance Responses*. The Performance Responses ask you to respond, via a prompt on Moodle, to an experience live performance. You should answer in a personal way via well-organized paragraphs, totaling approximately 300 words per assignment. It is better to go a little over 300 words than to go under. The writing needs to be correct and carefully proofed. These assignments should be uploaded as Word compatible documents. Performance Responses are graded on a scale of Excellent/Very Good/Satisfactory/Needs Improvement. The performances/plays covered by the Performance Responses are the key “texts” for Theater 100 this semester:

***Please submit all Responses as Word-compatible file uploads, not Online Text.***

1. Performance of Identity (due 9/4)
  2. Rituals and Live Events (due 9/11)
  3. Solo Performance: *We’re Gonna Die* (due 9/18)
  4. Performance Art: *Artist is Present* (due 9/25)
  5. American Theater Practice (due 10/23)
  6. Ensemble Theater and Devising (due 10/30)
  7. Sri Lankan and Indian Theater (due 11/6)
  8. They Don’t Pay (12/11)
- B. *Solo Performance or Performance Art Project*. Each of you will individually craft and create a short solo performance show, inspired by work we are studying in class, to be shared with other members of your subsection of the class. More info to come.
- C. *Ensemble Theater Project*. All of you will work in small groups to craft and create a devised theater project, inspired by the work we are studying in class, to be shared with your subsection of the class. More info to come.

## A FEW THOUGHTS ON ACCESS

I hope to foster a learning environment for you that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives, and experiences, and honors your identities. To help me accomplish this goal:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those on Spire, please let me know.
- If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me.
- If there is some support that I can provide you with or direct you to, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me.
- If something was said in class (by me or anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. If you prefer to talk to someone else, a good resource is our department chair Chris Baker [cbake1@umass.edu](mailto:cbake1@umass.edu)

I am very easily reached by email and will respond to most queries within 24 hours (not counting weekends and holidays).

## **WHAT ARE WE DOING ON EACH DATE?**

Please make sure you have completely read, viewed, or listened to the texts for the week *prior* to the Tuesday class session for each week. Unless otherwise indicated, all Performance Responses are due Monday at 11:30 pm prior to the Tuesday session. All required texts are available via Moodle.

### **Week of Sep 4: Performance of Identity**

#### **Texts for the Week:**

VIEW: Ali Hannon: Gender as a Performance (18 minutes)

LISTEN: Chenjerai Kumanyika: Challenging the Whiteness of Public Radio (4 minutes)

PERFORMANCE RESPONSE #1: DUE Sep 6 @ 11:30 PM

**Tu Sep 5**      Performance of Identity

**Th Sep 7**      Performance of Identity (cont)

### **Week of Sep 11: Rituals, Games, Live Events**

#### **Text for the Week:**

READ: Selections from Richard Schechner and Sara Brady: "Performance Studies: An Introduction" (pp. 28-88). (E-book in library)

PERFORMANCE RESPONSE #2: DUE Sept 11 @ 11:30 PM

**Tu Sep 12**      Rituals, Games, Live Events

**Th Sep 14**      Rituals, Games, Live Events (cont)

### **Week of Sep 18: Solo Performance**

#### **Texts for the Week:**

VIEW: Young Jean Lee, "We're Gonna Die" (51 minutes)

PERFORMANCE RESPONSE #3: DUE Sep 18 @ 11:30 PM

**Tu Sep 19**      Solo Performance

**Th Sep 21**      Solo Performance

### **Week of Sep 25: Performance Art**

#### **Texts for the Week:**

VIEW: "Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present" (106 minutes)

PERFORMANCE RESPONSE #4: DUE Sep 25 @ 11:30 PM

**Tu Sep 26**      Performance Art  
**Th Sep 28**      Performance Art

**Week of Oct 2: Solo Projects**

**Tu Oct 3**        Solo Projects  
**Th Oct 5**        Solo Projects

**Week of Oct 9: Solo Projects**

**Tu Oct 10:**      **No class – Monday class schedule**  
**Th Oct 12:**      Solo Projects

**Week of Oct 16: Solo Performance Projects**

**Tu Oct 17**        Solo Projects  
**Th Oct 24**        Solo Projects

**Week of Oct 23: American Theater Practice**

**Texts for the Week:**

READ *The Hatmaker's Wife* by Lauren Yee (on Moodle)

PERFORMANCE RESPONSE #5: DUE Oct 23 @ 11:30 PM

**Tu Oct 24**        American Theater Practice (*Hatmakers Wife*)  
**Th Oct 26**        American Theater Practice and Global Theater Practice (*They Don't Pay?*)

***[See The Hatmaker's Wife @ Curtain Theater. Dates in this syllabus]***

**Week of Oct 30: Ensemble Theater & Devising**

**Texts for the Week:**

VIEW: "Working in the Theater: Double Edge Theater" (26 minutes)

VIEW: "About Us (Double Edge Theater)" (5 minutes)

VIEW: Trailers for "Suga," "Leonora's World," "Leonora, la maga, y a la maestra" (5 minutes)

PERFORMANCE RESPONSE #6: DUE Oct 30 @ 11:30 PM

**Tu Oct 31**        Ensemble Theater & Devising  
**Th Nov 2**        Ensemble Theater & Devising

**Week of Nov 6: Global Theater Practices: Sri Lanka and India**

**Texts for the Week: TBA**

PERFORMANCE RESPONSE #7 (*Hatmaker's Wife*): DUE Nov 6 @ 11:30 PM)

Tu Nov 7      Global Theater Practices: Sri Lanka and India  
 Th Nov 9      Global Theater Practices: Sri Lanka and India

**Week of Nov 13: Ensemble Projects**

Tu Nov 14      Ensemble Theater Projects  
 Th Nov 16      Ensemble Theater Projects

**Week of Nov 20: Ensemble Projects**

Tu Nov 21      NO CLASS

**Thanksgiving Break****Week of Nov 27: Ensemble Projects**

Tu Nov 28      Ensemble Theater Projects  
 Th Nov 30      Ensemble Theater Projects (present)

***[See *They Don't Pay...?* @ Rand Theater. Dates in this syllabus]***

**Week of Dec 5: Ensemble Projects**

Tu Dec 6      Ensemble Projects (present)  
 Th Dec 8      Ensemble Theater Projects and Final Class

PERFORMANCE RESPONSE #8 (*They Don't Pay?*) DUE Dec 11 @ 11:30 PM

FINAL "DOUBLE" PERFORMANCE RESPONSE (100 points): DUE Dec 15 @ 11:30 PM

**A FINAL WORD: ON WHOSE LAND DO WE STAND?**

Our class takes place on the unceded homelands of the Pocumtuc Nation on the land of the Norrwutuck community. This Land Acknowledgement affirms our connection and responsibility to the 82 Native nations west of the Mississippi whose homelands were sold through the Morrill Act of 1862. The money from these sales were used to establish UMass and many other land-grant universities. We honor the strength and resilience of the indigenous people who continue to live here and steward their land. This Acknowledgement is part of a broader effort of building and sustaining relationships and partnerships with the Native Nations to whom we, as a university community, are connected.

## APPENDIX: OTHER IMPORTANT STATEMENTS FROM UMASS

### Accommodation Statement

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements. For further information, please visit Disability Services (<https://www.umass.edu/disability/>)

### Academic Honesty Statement

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent ([http://www.umass.edu/dean\\_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/)). [See main part of syllabus for more information.]

### Title IX Statement

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 that prohibits gender-based discrimination in educational settings that receive federal funds, the University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students, free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation. This includes interactions in person or online through digital platforms and social media. Title IX also protects against discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, or related conditions, including recovery. There are resources here on campus to support you. A summary of the available Title IX resources (confidential and non-confidential) can be found at the following link: <https://www.umass.edu/titleix/resources>. You do not need to make a formal report to access them. If you need immediate support, you are not alone. Free and confidential support is available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week / 365 days a year at the SASA Hotline 413-545-0800.