Prof. Philip Auslander

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Office Hours: MWF 1:00-2:00 and by appointment

**LMC 3362: Science, Technology, and Performance**

**Prerequisite**: ENGL 1102

**Core Area**: This course fulfills the Core Area C: Humanities/Fine Arts requirement.

**Course Description**

If one thinks of performance as essentially a kind of expressive communication, then communications of scientific knowledge can be considered performances. This course uses the concept of performance as a heuristic for considering a range of historical and contemporary situations in which scientific knowledge is communicated--and sometimes created--through acts of performance. In each case, it is necessary to consider what genre of performance is involved, who the performers and audience are and what their relationship is, the material circumstances of the performance, its function or purpose, and so on. Aesthetic performances can also reflect scientific ideas directly or indirectly and we will consider a few instances of this kind, some from the 20th century. At the end of the course, we will discuss the possibility of using performance as a concept to bridge the arts and sciences, while also examining the issues raised by this possibility.

**Learning Outcomes**

* Science and Technology Knowledge Construction: Students will understand that both scientific and technological innovation and the ways new scientific knowledge is both created and disseminated occur in specific social, historical, and communicative contexts.
* Historical Analysis: Students will study literary and cultural texts and performances within historical frameworks to become familiar with the various forces that shape the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge. They will learn to interpret history actively, rather than passively accepting archival information.
* Interpretive Frameworks: Students will become familiar with the concept of performance as an interpretive framework drawn from a variety of social, cultural, and philosophical theories and be able to apply this framework to both scientific and creative texts, as well as to their own cultural observations.

**Required Texts**

All of the readings assigned for this course are available through T-Square. Background readings will be selected from the multi-volume *Cambridge History of Science*. Other readings will be drawn from specialist articles on specific topics. Steven Shapin, the historian and sociologist of science, will be another important source.

**Graded Assignments**

* Two Exams@ 20% = 40%
* Performance Analysis Paper: 25%
* Group Project (all members of each group will receive the same grades in this category):
* Proposal: 10%
* Project: 25%

**Attendance Policy**

You are entitled to four “personal days” for which you may be absent for any reason, including ordinary medical issues. This is your quota of excused absences.

The only other form of excused absence I recognize is absence for participation in Institute-sanctioned activities (e.g., sports, course-related field trips and other departmentally approved activities, etc.). Such absences are not considered “personal days.” Documentation of your participation in such activities should come from the Registrar’s office.

Please note also that I do not give make-up quizzes except under extraordinary circumstances.

In the case of emergencies, serious medical issues, or personal situations affecting your ability to attend class or your academic performance, please consult with the Dean of Students Office. (Visit their website for more information on attendance: http://deanofstudents.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=25.)

For each non-excused absence after your fourth “personal day,” I will deduct 1.5 points from your final grade. If you fail to attend on a day when your group is scheduled to make a presentation you will fail the course.

**Student Accommodations**

Any student who feels that he/she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment to see the instructor during office hours. Students with disabilities should also contact Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS) to discuss reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor call (404) 894-2564 (voice) / (404) 894-1664 (voice/TDD) or visit Suite 210 in the Smithgall Student Services Building. For more information visit the following website:

http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/.

**Academic Honesty**

All work you turn in for this class must be your own work, with all outside reference sources properly cited and acknowledged.

The "Student Conduct Code of the Rules and Regulations" (Georgia Institute of Technology General Catalog, Section XIX) states, “Academic misconduct is an act that does or could improperly distort student grades or other student academic records” and offers the following descriptive list:

• Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included

in an academic course;

• Substitution for, or unauthorized collaboration with, a student in the commission of academic requirements;

• Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or persons, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism);

• False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the claimant;

• Alteration or insertion of any academic grade or rating so as to obtain unearned academic credit;

• Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any institute document relating to the academic status of the student.

The Code continues, “While these acts constitute assured instances of academic misconduct, other acts of academic misconduct may be defined by the professor.” Consult the Honor Code online at http://www.honor.gatech.edu/ or in the General Catalog to remember your primary commitment to academic honesty. Students who engage in academic dishonesty may receive a 0.0 on the assignment or fail the course. In addition, the instance will be reported to the Dean of Students who may take further action.

**Weekly Schedule**

**Unit I: Introductory Matters**

We will begin by putting some basic ideas on the table, including a definition of performance, genres of performance of scientific knowledge, and the audiences for those performances. These are among the themes we will develop throughout the course.

Week 1

Introduction to the Course

What is Performance? Read Bauman (pp. 8-11)

Week 2

Genres of Scientific Performance. Read Dolby (pp. 16-21) and Collins (pp. 725-

29).

**Unit II: The Anatomical Theatre from the 15th – 17th Centuries**

Week 3

Backgrounds: Read Dear and Wilson.

Week 4

Read Castiglioni and Findlen.

Week 5

Read Klestinec. View surgical videos online.

**Unit III: 17th Century Experimental Philosophy in England**

Week 6

Backgrounds: Read Blair, Smith, and Shapin, “The Man of Science”

Week 7

Read Shapin, “The House of Experiment”

Read Serjeantson, and Shapin and Schaffer (“Leviathan Ch. 2”)

**Unit IV: Performing Electricity in the 18th Century Salon**

Week 8

Read Bertucci

Read Elsenaar and Scha

Week 9

Performing Electricity in Contemporary Performance Art

**Unit V: Cultural Performance in the Age of Darwin**

Week 10

Backgrounds: Read Hodge

Darwin as Celebrity: Read Browne

Week 11

Watch selections from Baba Brinkman, *The Rapper’s Guide to Evolution*

Read Goodall, “Missing Links”

Week 12

Read Auslander, “Animal-cam”

Read Goodall, “Varieties”

Week 13

Contemporary Protean Acting 1: Whoopi Goldberg

Contemporary Protean Acting 2: Anna Deveare Smith

**Unit VI:** **Analogies and Identities Between the Arts and Sciences**

Week 14

Read Crease

Read Ihde

Read Collins, 729-46

Week 15

Group projects presented in class