

# **Advanced Theory and Methodology**

## **Performance Historiography**

Why do we write performance history? How do we document, interpret, and tell histories about performance? What is the relationship between history and theory? How can performance act as a method of historical inquiry? Approached from an interdisciplinary perspective, Performance Historiography will engage with these questions, among others, in our study of the methods and craft of historical research and writing, philosophies of historiography and history, and disciplinary development of theatre and performance history and historiography. Since theatre and performance scholarship draws on a range of fields, we will examine trends in sociology, anthropology, and political science, in addition to history, that influence the conceptualization, research, interpretation, and writing of theatre, performance, and cultural history. Students will analyze major historiographical trends, reflect on their own approaches as scholars, and practice applying different historiographical methods to their own research.

## **The Way We Argue About Performance Now: Histories, Presents, and Futures of Performance Studies**

The past fifty years has witnessed a proliferation of scholarship focused on performance: on stage, in museums, in political actions, and in everyday life. In this seminar, we will ask: What does performance do as both an object of analysis and a theoretical lens? How have scholars defined and challenged the parameters of what performance is, what performance does, and the utility of performance as a lens of cultural and historical analysis? What are the histories of performance studies as a field of interdisciplinary inquiry? What theoretical and methodological commitments structure the field's contemporary intellectual and political landscapes? What are the most urgent directions for future performance studies analysis? This seminar situates performance scholarship within a broad array of interdisciplinary commitments: theatre studies, visual studies, literary studies, ethnomusicology, cultural history, critical race and ethnic studies, and queer and feminist studies. After engaging a series of readings and presentations that historicize performance studies as an interdisciplinary, we will stage a series of encounters between key texts and recent monographs. Key themes will include: embodiment, labor, theatricality, performativity, worldmaking, and liveness. Possible authors include: Katherine Zien, Joshua Chambers-Letson, Tavia Nyong'o, Leo Cabranes-Grant, Sarah J. Townsend, Priya Srinivasan, Julia Bryan-Wilson, Derek Miller, Jisha Menon, Diana Taylor, Rebecca Schneider, José Esteban Muñoz, Shannon Jackson, Stephanie Batiste.

## **Mobility and Performance**

This seminar explores the premise that we cannot understand culture and society unless we understand how power systems intersect with the meanings ascribed to bodies through their movement. This course brings together recent scholarship from Theatre and Performance Studies, Dance Studies, Cultural Geography, Sociology, Black Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and Anthropology to examine mobility and how it can serve as a historiographical and methodological approach to performance and culture. We will explore mobility's relation to systems of power and performance's role in constructing and perpetuating the various meanings of movement. Building on previous Theatre and Performance Studies scholarship, how can

mobility serve not only as a site of study, but also a methodology for historical and contemporary cultural analysis? How do scholars need to think and imagine differently in order to write about movement and its meanings? In what ways is mobility a critical component in understanding and analyzing gender, race, class, and sexuality? What role does mobility play in the identities, oppression, and resistance of minoritarian groups? Throughout the semester, we will explore a range of mobilities from stage performance to migration, travel, digital movement, and mental roaming among others. Reading include works by Debra Caplan, Sarah Jane Cervenak, Susan Foster, Sabine Haenni, Derek P. McCormack, Fiona Wilkie, SanSan Kwan, Tim Cresswell, Nicolás Salazar Sutil, and Mark Fleishman, among others.

### **Global Perspectives on Race and Performance**

Global Perspectives on Race and Performance examines the fundamental role of performance in the construction of race from the nineteenth century through the present. Bringing together critical race studies, theatre, and performance studies, the course explores developing conversations in the field as well as how global and transnational methodologies have shifted debates about race. We will investigate how performances of race are constructed, appropriated, and adapted across geographies and how the performances' circulation established international connections among communities as well as artists. The course will substantially engage with issues including: the ways gender and sexuality shape discourses on race within and beyond communities, historical and contemporary migration, histories and historiographies of slavery and colonization, and visual, sonic, and embodied experiences of race. Readings include works by Daphne Brooks, Jayna Brown, Catherine Cole, Tsitsi Jaji, Sean Metzger, Stephanie Batiste, José Esteban Muñoz, Analola Santana, Kathryn Bishop-Sanchez, and Siyuan Liu among others.

### **Transnational Performance in the Long Nineteenth Century**

Performance in the long-nineteenth century includes a range of seemingly unconnected events: the spectacle of Adah Isaacs Menken riding up a mountain on a horse; the performance of the telegraph; Frederick Douglass's lectures on slavery; and dramatic and musical performance in Manila and the Asia-Pacific, among others. Yet, these performances participated in a transnational circulation that scholars have only started to uncover and analyze. This seminar examines the intersections of transnational and national performance histories during the long nineteenth century and questions the ways transnational and related global methodologies, especially transatlantic perspectives, reconfigure our ideas of performance, historiography, nation, race, gender, and queerness. How do attempts to de-center US and European-based nineteenth-century performance narratives shift our notions of how to research, analyze, and write performance history? In what ways do transnational approaches reconceptualize how we might theorize performance by people or objects inside and outside the playhouse? How does the methodological shift to the transnational highlight or obfuscate the experiences of people of color and women during the long nineteenth century? How does focusing our attention on sound or mobility impact how we reimagine transnational performance history? Readings include work by Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, Kathleen Gough, Tavia Nyong'o, Marlis Schweitzer, Daphne Brooks, Tom Wright, Jonathan Hess, Jenna Gibbs, and meLê Yamomo, among others.