Decolonizing Performances (of resistance)
STPEC 492H-01
SPRING 16 Syllabus
TuTh 11:30AM - 12:45PM
Dickinson room 206

Professor
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Department of Communication
Office: 334N Integrative Learning Center
Hours: Wednesday 12:00-1:00; Friday 11:00-1:00pm and by appointment
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Course Description:

What is Decolonizing Inquiry? What is Performance (auto) Ethnography? How can we think about Performing Ethnography? This performance-based seminar will focus on the implications of decolonizing emancipatory epistemologies for critical, interpretive inquiry. Drawing heavily in the works of Dwight Conquergood, Norman Denzin, and D. Soyini Madison, we give a rest to traditional forms of qualitative inquiry as we disrupt the notion of "business as usual" in the academic space. We will examine the interpenetrating relationships among performance, ethnography, and culture. More, we will focus on the relationship between everyday life and decolonizing performances. We will explore how communication in everyday life may be understood using performance as a metaphor and method of study. We will also look at how decolonizing performances are informed by everyday experiences. We will discuss culture as a continuous performance, from the “ordinary” speech of an individual to the elaborate rituals/practices of groups and organizations. We will look at how these everyday performances construct and maintain culture. The readings and assignments forefront localized critical pedagogy, critical personal narratives, decolonizing and interpretive inquiry as moral, political discourse. From the everyday space where gender, race, class, and performances intersect, we will examine how the practices of critical inquiry can be used to imagine, write and perform a free democratic society.

Course Objectives

• To provide a focused examination on the structures, processes, practices, possibilities, and challenges of identity, power, and politics within the intersection of performance auto ethnography and everyday life.
• To pay close attention to how performance auto ethnography provides a unique opportunity to engage questions of ethics, political efficacy, race, class, gender, sexuality, regionalism, and power that are specific to the performance studies classroom.
• To analyze the affective work of performance auto ethnography on behalf of globalizing processes and its commitment to social justice (i.e., corporations, Diaspora, media, nationalism, etc.).

Required Course Texts:

Online Readings (Moodle):
In lieu of a reading packet, readings will be located online as .pdf or .doc files on the MOODLE website throughout the semester as the situation warrants. These readings are identified in the syllabus by the [MOODLE] designation.
General Information:

1. All written work must be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins and, where necessary, stapled together.
2. Due dates are non-negotiable. Extensions will be granted only in the case of University-approved excuse (death in the family, medical emergency, court appearance, etc.).
3. If you have a question about the assignment or any aspect of class, be sure to speak to me before/after class, visit me during my office hours, or send me an email. If contacting me by email, I will endeavor to respond to your inquiry within 24 hours. If I do not, please send it again.
4. I have established a MOODLE website for the course. It will be updated as needed with readings and so forth as the semester progresses, along with grades, etc.
5. As you approach each reading, you should be thinking about the following questions:
   1. What are the basic assumptions or points of view that the author is writing from?
   2. What theoretical and philosophical questions are raised in the reading?
   3. What are the strengths/weaknesses of the author’s argument?
   4. What are your critiques of the argument?

Assignments:

1. First Performance Text—Due @ 30% of Grade
2. Final Group Performance—Due @ 30% of Grade
3. Class Participation and Attendance 40% of Grade

Grade Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>94-100</th>
<th>87-89</th>
<th>77-79</th>
<th>67-69</th>
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<td>80-83</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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Grades are based upon the readings, videos, lectures, and discussions (which sometimes overlap and sometimes do not). To be perfectly clear: EVERY assigned reading will be fair game, EVERY lecture will be fair game, and EVERY video clip shown will be fair game.

I. First Performance Text —DUE @ (30% of grade)

Experimental, personal experience, autoethnographic text, based on an epiphanic moment in your own life connected to a moment of heightened racial, or gendered, or social class consciousness. Deploy the representational strategies of Holman-Jones, Alexander, and/or another author of the readings. Hence, this performance text consists in two parts: writing part (50 points) and performance part (50 points). (No more than 2 pages)

II. Class Participation (30% of grade)

Attendance (20%) is mandatory. As we are a small class of ~20 students, it is of the utmost importance that you come to class having done the readings and are prepared to discuss them in both small-group and full-class formats. Often during class reference will be made to specific readings and passages. I recommend that you bring your readings to class to facilitate discussion and instruction. Lectures will cover material not found in the readings. No additional screenings will be provided of ads or films viewed in class. If you miss class, you are responsible for getting the notes from a classmate (in other words, I won't make mine available online nor summarize lectures during office hours). Note: Any absence after 2 unexcused absences, or after 4 whether excused, unexcused or some combination thereof, will count against your grade. For example: if we have 26 meetings a student who attend all of them will have 100% of her/his grade. After that, we just follow a simple math.

Reports—20%  Reports—15% for almost each week there will be a set of readings and you will be required to turn in a mini-report for these readings. The reports are due by 2 pm on the Wednesday before
class on the course website. Late reports will not be given credit. The report should consist of a brief paragraph summary of the argument and your analysis of the readings (length—300 words).

III. Final Performance—Due @ (30% of grade)

Do a revision (la Denzin essays) of your First Performance Text, constructing a collective performance text. All of your individual stories should be brought together into a variety of popular culture texts, which represent or comment the experience(s) in question. Try to produce a dialogical emancipator “play” to be co-performed with the whole class. Please remember, your work in this class, as cultural performer, “cannot be separated from power, knowledge, politics, and identities. It inhabits the performative spaces, in concrete life, where identity is formed, agency is negotiated, and the grand narratives of nation, gender, race, class, religion, and sexual orientation are shaped and confronted.” Again, as stated in the course description, from the everyday space where gender, race, class, and performances intersect, we will examine how the practices of critical inquiry can be used to imagine, write and perform a free democratic society. This performance text consists in two parts: writing part (40 points) and performance part (60 points). (No more than 5 pages)

A Note About Late Assignments
Barring legitimate, University-approved excuses (e.g., death in the family, court appearance, hospitalization, etc.), late papers and assignments will not be accepted.

Week-by-Week Schedule/Reading

NOTE: I reserve the right to alter the course schedule, drop and add readings, as the need arises.

Week 1: 1/19 & 1/21
Lecture: Introductory Performance (1/19)
Course Overview, Expectations, Grading, etc. (1/21)

Week 2: 1/26 & 1/28
Lecture: Unraveling the Field: The Philosophical and Epistemological Position of Interpretive Method and Inquiry: Paradigms and contention
Reading:
• 1/28: Denzin and Lincoln eds. (2005). Handbook of Qualitative Research. Sage Publications. Preface (pp. ix-xix) and Introduction (pp.1-32)

Week 3: 2/02 & 2/04
Lecture: Autoethnography and the call to performance
Reading:


Week 4: 2/09 & 2/11
Lecture: Performance Studies
Reading:


Week 5: 2/18
Lecture: Conquergood’s caravan.
Reading:


Week 6: 2/23 & 2/25
Lecture: Conquergood’s caravan II.
Reading:


Week 7: 3/01 & 3/03
Lecture: Qualitative Manifesto
Readings:

• Entire book

Week 8: 3/08 & 3/10 first Paper due @ 3/10 beginning of the class!
Lecture: Betweener Talk I.
Readings:

• chapters 1-7 of Betweener Talk book
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>3/22 &amp; 3/24</td>
<td>Betweener Talk III</td>
<td>chapters 8-10 of <em>Betweener Talk</em> book</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>3/29 &amp; 3/31</td>
<td>A la Denzin</td>
<td>Chapters 1-5 of <em>Performance ethnography</em> book</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>4/05 &amp; 4/07</td>
<td>A la Denzin</td>
<td>chapters 6-12 of <em>Performance ethnography</em> book</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>4/12 &amp; 4/15</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>4/19 &amp; 4/21</td>
<td>Student Presentations + Course Wrap-</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>4/26</td>
<td>Student Presentations + Course Wrap-Up</td>
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