



## **PERFORMING ETHNICITY THE “OTHER” AND US**

**Fall 2018**

**TR 10:30-12:20pm**

**Chauntee’ Schuler Irving**

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### **Course Description**

Performing Ethnicity is a course designed to examine the effect of ethnicity on character in narrative storytelling. Through a study in documentary theatre, students will wrestle with concepts and theories surrounding ethnicity, race, identity, and culture. Students will examine how these concepts translate into the performative demands of storytelling from another’s perspective as well as the effect such stories have on research communities.

### **Course Objectives**

1. Explore documentary theatre by gathering performance material from media sources and conducting one-on-one interviews.
2. Articulate a vocabulary and working knowledge of concepts of ethnicity, race, and Brechtian performance techniques.
3. Analyze and create authentic characters from diverse ethnic groups through physical acting techniques.

### **Required Texts**

*Fires in the Mirror* by Anna Deveare Smith

*The Laramie Project* by Moisés Kaufman

*Performing Ethnicity, Performing Gender Transcultural Perspectives* by Hofman and Mueller

## Required Media

“Sara Jones: One Woman, Many People” - YouTube

*Laramie Project* Film - YouTube

*Fires in the Mirror* (Parts 1-4) – YouTube

## Participation and Performance Expectations

1. Two (2) interview sources will be presented to the class. Each source must be of a different ethnicity than the student presenting the interview material:
  - One (1) interview source must be of a living person of your identifying gender who can be *seen* and *heard* throughout the interview. The interview source can be found through media sites such as YouTube, major news sources, or any television or film programming.
  - One (1) interview source must be a personal interview with someone of the same or differing gender than you identify with who lives within the community of our research population. ***The in-person interview must be recorded.*** The recording must include an accurate vocal representation of the interviewee. If the student is not able to have visual and audio recordings of the interview, the student ***must obtain a vocal recording*** of the interview aided by detailed notes on the source and their non-verbal means of communication. Both interviews must be transcribed.
2. Two (2) distinct characters will be created based on your interviews and presented in class. The embodiment of both characters will include work on voice, body/physicality, and storytelling. Character work will include but is not limited to: dialects, Fitzmaurice, Brechtian acting techniques, and Barrow Group acting tools.
3. The class work will culminate in two (2) staged presentations to offer to the community. Full participation in both presentations is mandatory.

## Written Assignments

1. Three (3) two (2) page response papers will be assigned. Response papers will be reactions and feedback to readings and media material.
2. One (1) final assessment paper will be used to constructively critique the personal experience of performing ethnicity throughout the semester as well as the community impact of such performative work.

# Grading

Participation 20 %

Interviews 20%

Character Embodiment 20%

Performance 20%

Written Assignments 20%

## Grading Scale

A: 93-100%;

B: 85-92%;

C: 77-84%;

D: 69-76%;

F: 68% and under

## Grading Expectations

- A. Enthusiastic participation in all classroom work and discussions. Thoughtfully prepared interviews. Authentically crafted characters. Timely and professional completion of written work.
- B. Standard participation in discussions and classroom work. Basic and timely preparation for interviews and character work. Timely written work that lacks in revision and pertinent content.
- C. Little participation in discussions. Consistently distracted participation in classroom work. Unprepared interviews and character work. Late written assignments with little to no revision and professionalism.
- D. No preparation of reading materials for discussion. No participation in classroom work. Missing or incomplete written assignments. Lacks respect for classmates and classroom environment.
- F. No participation or written assignments. Complete lack of care and consideration for the entirety of classwork, written assignments, and classmates. Regularly disrespectful to classmates and the classroom environment.

# Calendar

## Tuesday

Aug 28 Ethnicity and Race

Sep 4 Documentary Theatre

Sep 11 Interview #1 Presentations

Sep 18 Idiolects and Dialects

Sep 25 Sara Jones

Oct 2 Brecht/Gestus

Oct 9 Character #1 Presentations

Oct 16 Review and Recap

Oct 23 Interview #2 Presentation

Oct 30 Embodiment - Voice

Nov 6 Embodiment – Transformation

Nov 13 Embodiment – Tempo/Rhythm

Nov 20 Recap Characters #1 and #2

Nov 27 Rehearsal

Dec 4 Performance Week

Dec 11 Final Class (**Final Paper Due**)

## Thursday

Aug 23 Introduction

Aug 30 Fires in the Mirror

Sep 6 Laramie Project (**Response #1 Due**)

Sep 13 Embodiment - Voice

Sep 20 Vocal Coaching with Karen Kopryanski

Sep 27 Embodiment – Transformation

Oct 4 Embodiment – Tempo/Rhythm (**Response #2 Due**)

Oct 11 Character #1 Presentations

Oct 18 Fall Break

Oct 25 Performing Gender

Nov 1 Vocal Coaching (**Response #3 Due**)

Nov 8 Embodiment – Gestus

Nov 15 Character #2 Presentations

Nov 22 Thanksgiving Break

Nov 29 Rehearsal

Dec 6 Performance Week

## **VCU Code of Conduct**

Please refer to the link below to read and understand all expectations and requirements of TheatreVCU, VCUarts departments, and VCU. <http://arts.vcu.edu/theatre/files/2012/09/Student-Handbook-17-18.pdf>



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# STUDENT CONTRACT

*The instructor reserves the right to update or change this syllabus and/or class schedule at any time throughout the semester. No additional assignments will be added to the syllabus.*

**I have read the entire syllabus and understand the policies, requirements, and consequences contained herein.**

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_