

CMST 2040: Introduction to Performing Literature
Louisiana State University
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Course Catalogue Description

This is a General Education course. The study of literature through performance; reading, analysis and performance of prose, poetry and drama.

Additional Description

CMST 2040 is a General Education Humanities Course designed to familiarize students with the study of literature through performance. Based on the assumption that performance is a method of understanding and enjoying literature as an expression of profound human experience, we will explore different methods of performing texts as well as learning to write about literary texts, performances, and performing. As a General Education Humanities Course, CMST 2040 will teach students an awareness of, and ability to formulate, rational interpretations of human experience and enrich their competency in written and oral communication.



Course Texts

Pelias, Ronald J. and Tracy Stephenson Shaffer. Performance Studies: The Interpretation of Aesthetic Texts (2nd Edition). Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 2007.
Shapard, Robert and James Thomas. New Sudden Fiction: Short-short Stories from America and Beyond. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007.
Stern, Jerome. Micro Fiction: An Anthology of Really Short Stories. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.
Collins, Billy. Poetry 180: A Turning Back to Poetry. New York: Random House, 2003

Course Objectives

- 1) Engage and embody imaginative and intellectual response to literary texts and language.
- 2) Stimulate an awareness of a variety of forms of literature.
- 3) Deepen appreciation of self and other as they interact in engaging human experience.
- 4) Activate a flexible, effective and expressive voice in the performance of literature.
- 5) Develop a responsive and expressive body in the performance of literature.
- 6) Sharpen basic written and oral communication skills.

Assignment Descriptions & Grade Scale

Performances (3)	37		A+	97.00 – 100		C	73.0 – 76.9
Exams (2)	20		A	93.0 – 96.9		C-	70.0 – 72.9
Reading Response (8)	16		A-	90.0 – 92.9		D+	67.0 – 69.9
Paper	10		B+	87.0 – 89.9		D	63.0 – 66.9
BB Response (2)	10		B	83.0 – 86.9		D-	60.0 – 62.9
Participation	7		B-	80.0 – 82.9		F	0 – 59.9
<u>Total</u>	<u>100</u>		C+	77.0 – 79.9			

Performances	Three times, you will perform short pieces of literature for the class. They include: poetry (10 points), prose (12 points), and a compiled performance (15 points). The first two will be solo and the last may be done in groups if you so choose.
Exams	Twice, you will have an exam covering the topics of the course text. If late, you may receive an exam up until the first person finishes and leaves the room.
Reading Response	8 times prepare a reading response illustrating a theoretical tension or concept in the reading from the day [min. 350 words, max. 700 words]. You will read your response and end with 1 or 2 discussion questions to propel class in a discussion of the readings. I accept late responses, either same day or a month late, at 2/3 credit. This is the only assignment I accept late. Must do 2 per unit.
Paper	You will write a 5-7 pg. paper critiquing your prose performance using Burke's Pentad. This will illustrate much of what you have learned over the semester: that you can identify larger themes, structures, literary devices, and rhetorical patterns in the text/performance and that you can communicate those finds in an organized, clear, and concise manner.
HBB Response	Attend 2 HBB productions over the course of the semester and turn in a 1-2 page typed response for each.
Participation	I recognize and respect a variety of learning styles and, therefore, do not have a particularly dogmatic approach to participation. That said, this is a discussion-based class. I evaluate your participation on speaking in class, making use of my office hours, working effectively in groups, demonstrating improvement over the course of the semester, etc. Like life, it requires more than just showing up.

Class, University, & Federal Policies or, How to Be in the Course

- On Showing Up** Attendance is expected. Unless it is university-excused, proven through documentation, there is no need to email me about your absence or tardiness. Visits to the student health center are not university-excused absences. The documentation must prove you were too ill or sick to attend class. Please refer to the LSU policy handbook. Students who are constantly late, on their cell phones, or who are falling asleep are not engaged and, as a result, not able to earn participation points. This is graded both quantitatively (based off my discussion records) and qualitatively (your progression throughout the semester, your use of office hours, etc.) You are expected to attend presentation days.
- On Technology** Generally, cell phones and other electronics are not to be used unless taking notes or work shopping. I consider students who use these inappropriately absent. There is zero tolerance for disruptions during speeches. A disruption is any action that distracts the audience's attention or interferes with the delivery of a speech. The penalty for disrupting someone speech will result in a zero for you on that particular presentation assignment.
- On Plagiarism** Any student found to have turned in material not their own (either downloaded from the internet or written by another student) in part or in whole will immediately be reported to the Dean of Students.
- On The ADA** If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office of Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations can be arranged. After you receive the accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.
- On Title IX** In accordance with Title IX and other applicable law, LSU is committed to providing a learning, working, and living environment that promotes integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual misconduct which includes sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and retaliation.
- This syllabus is better because of colleagues who have shared their own syllabi, assignments, and policies with me. I especially thank Drs. Collins, Stephenson Shaffer, and McGeough. Similarities between this syllabus and others at LSU exist so continuity in the course, despite different instructors, is maintained.

Date	Topic	Assignment/Exam/Reading
Unit 1: Introduction to Performance & Performing		
TH 1/11		Syllabus
TU 1/16	Understanding Performance	Chapter 1
TH 1/18	A Definition of Performance	Chapter 2
TU 1/23	A Historical Account of Performance	Chapter 3
TH 1/25	Everyday Storytelling	Chapter 4
TU 1/30		Workshop
TH 2/1		Workshop
TU 2/6		Poetry Performance
TH 2/8		Poetry Performance
TU 2/13 [MG]		
Unit 2: On the Performative Event & Performing with Feelin'		
TH 2/15	The Dramatistic Approach	Chapter 5
TU 2/20	The Voice & Body as Analytic Tools	Chapter 6
TH 2/22	Empathy: An Introduction to Feelin'	Chapter 7
TU 2/27	Aesthetic Texts & Transactions I	Chapter 8
TH 3/1	Aesthetic Texts & Transactions II	Chapter 9
TU 3/6		Midterm
TH 3/8		Workshop
TU 3/13		Workshop
TH 3/15		Workshop
TU 3/20		Prose Performance
TH 3/22		Prose Performance
TU 3/27 [SB]		
TH 3/29 [SB]		
Unit 3: Remembering the Audience & Putting it Toegther		
TU 4/3	The Performative Role of the Audience	Chapter 10
TH 4/5	Performance Art	Chapter 11
TU 4/10	The Evaluative Role of the Audience	Chapter 12
TH 4/12		Workshop
TU 4/17		Workshop
TH 4/19		Workshop
TU 4/24		Compiled Performance
TH 4/26		Compiled Performance
TU 5/3 [Final] 12:30 – 2:30		