

Performance and Video
FILM 203B—Spring 2015
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the intersections of video and performance art. Course participants will be challenged to make artworks that respond to video technology's most fundamental property: its ability to reproduce a stream of real-time synchronized images and sounds. How does video mediate between a human performer and her audience? How can artists interested in creating critical and self-reflexive art utilize and respond to and draw upon video's immediacy and "liveness"? How can performance artists exploit video technologies (playback devices, displays, projectors, and interactive software) within live performance art?

In the first half of the course, you will create performance "tapes" (or tapeless digital recordings), while examining and reflecting on the history of experimental video that has emphasized live performance for the videocamera. The second half of the course will concentrate on the use of video as a central component within live art events. In addition, we will carry on a continued discussion about the larger cultural and psychological impact of video technologies on our understanding of subjectivity and the real. This conversation will be supplemented by readings and viewings of work (screened in class and online) by a wide range of contemporary and historically significant artists in the field.

I've selected screenings and readings that I hope will challenge you, inspire your creative assignments, and introduce you to significant moments in the history of video and performance art. Much of the work we'll watch critiques television, media culture, and a culture of passive viewership. It can be difficult to watch, often deliberately so. Some of the work we will view in class may contain material you find objectionable, either on the level of form or content. You are expected to watch and engage with all work, whether or not you derive immediate enjoyment from watching it. You will not be penalized for thoughtfully critiquing work I screen and for the most part, I will not attempt to censor you. You should always be prepared to stand behind the work you make and the things you say in class discussions.

CRITIQUES

A significant portion of class time is devoted to discussing and critiquing student work, both in its rough and finished states. In critiques and classroom discussion, positive encouragement and respectful treatment of your classmates is expected. In many cases, the performer himself/herself is a "medium" or central component of his/her art. For this reason, negative criticism of creative performance work can sometimes feel like a personal attack on the artist. We should not tiptoe around delicate subject matter or engage in dishonest praise of work that might benefit from critical feedback. At the same time, we must all be careful to choose our words so that we don't belittle or disparage an *artist* in the process of critiquing his/her *work*.

READINGS AND WEB SCREENINGS

There is no textbook for this class. Short weekly readings will be made available as PDFs and as web links. Weekly viewing assignments will be made available as web links. These readings and screenings are intended to compliment creative assignments, technical workshops and class discussions. You should print out and read these articles before class. Please come to class prepared to discuss all texts.

VIDEO JOURNAL

Students are required to write *typed* critical and personal responses to weekly web screenings. Your writing can take a variety of forms. There is no set expectation about the length and content of each week's entry. You are not required to discuss every work we look at. You can write about a variety of things. For instance, you might choose to record observations on various formal elements (e.g. editing strategies, shot composition/framing, image/sound relationships) or the concepts or ideas underlying videos/performances. You may compare and contrast different works. You can discuss ways in which the

works we view relate to course readings, ideas brought up in class, artworks you've encountered in other classes, or your own life experience. You may discuss how the works you watch inspire ideas for your own creative work. Your journal is not a collection of formal, polished essays. But it should be a forum for honest and thoughtful reflection.

On March 3, you will email me a PDF or Microsoft Word DOC that contains all of your responses up to that point. On April 21, you will email me a PDF or DOC of responses to all of the second half web screenings.

DEADLINES

Assignments are due on the date stated on the syllabus. This policy extends to weeks in which students are expected to present proposals and works in progress. If you do not bring in work on the weeks when proposals or work-in-progress is due, you will be considered late on that week's assignment, which will impact your grade (see below).

CLASS ATTENDANCE

You are allowed two absences throughout the semester for whatever reason.* After more than two absences—except as noted above—your semester grade will lose one half letter for each absence. Being more than 15 minutes late to class counts as an absence. Example: You are 20 minutes late to class three times. Your earned semester grade of "A-" becomes a "B+."

Those with disabilities, medical conditions, or other issues that are likely to impact class attendance should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester. In the case of dire personal emergency, you should contact the instructor as soon as reasonably possible to explain your situation.

There are no excused absences except in cases of dire personal emergency. Being absent does not excuse you from turning in work in a timely fashion. If you haven't completed an assignment by a due date, it is much better for you to come to class empty-handed than it is for you to simply skip that day's class. Material you miss because you are absent will not be repeated in a subsequent class.

* **Note:** It is extremely important that you attend class either of the final critique days (May 6 and May 13) or the final performance nights (May 7 and May 14 from 6:00-9:00). This includes the days/evenings on which you are not presenting work. Unexcused absences on final critique days will result in a *full-grade* penalty to your grade. Example: An "A" becomes a "B."

PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Please turn off phones and stow laptops *before* the start of class. The use of portable electronic devices in class will be interpreted as a show of disrespect for your classmates and instructor, and will result in a one-grade deduction to your class participation grade for the semester.

TECHNICAL HELP

Due to time constraints, basic camera operation & editing basics will not be covered in class. Students are allowed to use whatever tools they deem necessary (including personal video cameras and iMovie) to create their work. However, you are strongly encouraged to utilize the resources of the department and expand your technical skills by using all available tools.

During the first week of the semester, I will hold an optional "crash course" in camera operation for all interested students. During the second week of the semester, I will hold a demonstration of Adobe Premiere (editing software) basics. See below for details.

If you are interested in receiving additional help with Adobe Premiere Pro editing software, I recommend you purchase a special student account on Lynda.com, an online software training website. I will send out an email to all students in the second week giving you instructions on how to sign up for Lynda's online training. (Approximate cost: \$35 for the semester). Any online training you decide to use will be completed independently outside of class time. I will not check your work.

EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES

Cameras and other production gear will be available to check out from the Film and Electronic Arts equipment room. The Avery computer lab (Room 333) and Henderson Mac lab have iMacs equipped with the full suite of Adobe Creative Cloud editing software.

You are responsible for purchasing your own external hard drive to store your projects.

I recommend you purchase a hard drives with the following specifications:

Interface: USB3 (and/or Thunderbolt)

Capacity: 1 TB or greater

Completed creative assignments will be turned in as digital files copied to the classroom computer. You should save your projects as Quicktime videos (H264 or Apple ProRes compression) on your portable hard drive. Edit five seconds of silent black video at the head (beginning) AND tail (end) of each video. Always watch your mastered final video before you show it in class to make sure it is as you intended. You must finish exporting/previewing your finished videos before the start of class!

MEDIA MANAGEMENT

This course requires the use of digital media for storing and transmitting required coursework. Learning good data management is an important aspect of digital video production. As such, computer failure or other forms of computer data loss will not be accepted as a legitimate excuse for late work.

Working with computers is always a risky business. Electronic equipment, especially in a shared lab setting, can behave unpredictably. External hard drives are extremely sensitive, prone to sudden crashes and data loss. Each student must act responsibly and make back-up copies of personal data at every convenient opportunity. Uploading works in progress to the Internet (e.g. Dropbox, YouTube, or Vimeo) is one way of ensuring you have a record/backup of the work you've done, should data loss interrupt or destroy a project.

PLAGARISM/INTELLECTUAL HONESTY

The creative assignments you turn in should be new works created for this class. You should never hand in someone else's work, or submit a creative project you produced for another class. If you think you might want to repurpose or remix footage you originally created for another class, you should discuss your plans and receive permission from me first.

In your creative projects, creative appropriation/remixing/reworking of "found footage" (or preexisting unoriginal media) is allowable. If and when you use found footage, you should always credit your sources and remain completely transparent about *how* you have built upon or reused other people's preexisting work in your own work.

GRADING

Your grade is based on three criteria:

- **Engagement in the class** (attendance, participation in critique and conversations)
- **Productivity outside of class** (assignments complete and thorough, readings completed on time)
- **Innovation** (formal/conceptual risk-taking, creative depth, and originality of work)

Each criterion is worth a maximum of three points (0-3).

Nine points is equal to an A, eight an A-, seven a B+, etc.

Non-compliance with the course policy on deadlines and attendance will result in grade reductions. See above for details.

COURSE WEB PAGE

Note: This syllabus is subject to change throughout the course of the semester, based on the progress and needs of the course as deemed by the instructor. Check the course web page each week for the most up-to-date version of the syllabus and links to the current week's readings/screenings.

Web page: <http://www.tvchannel.tv/~bard/performance/>
User Name: bard
Password: raptors

PART 1: PERFORMANCE FOR THE CAMERA

Week 1 / January 28: Course Overview

In Class: Andy Warhol, "Outer and Inner Space" (1966), 16mm two-channel projection, 33 min., Miranda July, "The Amateurist" (1998), 14 min.

Thursday, January 29, 3:00-4:30: Remedial Camera operation workshop (optional)
Avery 117

Tuesday, February 3, 5:00-7:00 PM
Michael Smith Lecture
Campus Center, Weis Auditorium
Attendance Strongly Recommended

Week 2 / February 4: Body and Apparatus

In Class: Joan Jonas, "Vertical Roll" (1979), 20 min., William Wegman early video works, tripod use

Homework Due:

Reading: Sol Lewitt, "Sentences on Conceptual Art"

Chris Hill, "Performing Video in the First Decade, 1968-1980"

Web Screenings: Bruce Nauman, "Walk with Contrapposto" (1968), 60 min.

Richard Serra & Nancy Holt, "Boomerang" (1974), 11 min.

Jon Baldessari, Baldessari Sings Lewitt (1972), 15 min.

Peter Campus, Three Transitions (1973), 5 min.

Thursday, February 5, 3:00-4:30 PM: Remedial Adobe Premiere Editing Workshop (optional)
3rd Floor Computer Lab

Week 3 / February 11: Artist as Medium

In Class: Project 1 Critiques

Homework Due:

PROJECT 1 DUE

Reading: Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act"

Roselyn Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism"

Web Screenings: Marina Abramović: "4 Performances" (1975-76), 54 min.

Vito Acconci, "Centers," 23 min., "Pryings," 21 min., "Claim Excerpts" (all from 1971), 63 min.

Dan Graham, Performance/Audience/Mirror (excerpt) (1975), 9 min.

Week 4 / February 18: Media Culture, Mediated Subjects

In Class: Ernie Kovacs television excerpts, Green Screen Demo

Homework Due:

Mike Kelley, "Mike Talks to Mike about Mike"

Michael Smith, "Harry Dodge and Stanya Kahn"

Alex Allenchey, "Meet the Artist: Kalup Linzy"

Web Screenings: Michael Smith, "Secret Horror" (1980), 13 min.
Harry Dodge & Stanya Kahn, "Let the Good Times Roll" (2004), 15 min.
Kalup Linzy, "Melody Set Me Free Ep1 – Return to the Battlefield" (2010), 14 min.

Week 5 / February 25: Performing History, Performing Identity

In Class: Critiques of Event Scores

Homework Due:

PROJECT 2 EVENT SCORE/TREATMENT DUE

Reading: Ken Friedman, Owen Smith, and Lauren Sawchyn (ed.), *The Fluxus Performance Workbook*

Paul Chan, visual score for ~~Lights~~

Dan Graham, TV Camera/Monitor Performance score/treatment

Lee Smith, "Missing in action: The art of the Atlas Group/Walid Raad"

Web Screenings: Adrian Piper, "Cornered" (Part 1, Part 2) (1988), 17 min.

Walid Raad, "Hostage: The Bachar Tapes (English Version)" (2001), 16 min.

Week 6 / March 4: Digital Performance

In Class: Shana Moulton, "Whispering Pines"

Homework Due:

TURN IN SCREENING JOURNALS FOR FIRST HALF OF SEMESTER

Reading: Reading: Susan Sontag, "Notes on Camp"

John Pilson, "Alix Pearlstein"

Web Screenings: Ryan Trecartin, *A Family Finds Entertainment* (2004), 42 min.

Jeremy Bailey, *Don't Mouse Around* (2003), 3 min., *SOS* (2007), 5 min.

Alix Pearlstein, *Crash* (2004), 8 min.

Petra Cortright, *when you walk through the storm* (2009), 2 min., *sickwoof.mov* (2011),

30 sec., *rgb,d-lay* (2011), 23 sec., *DRK PARA* (2013), 2 min.

Week 7 / March 11: Performance for the Camera: Synthesis

In Class: Project 2 Critiques

Homework Due:

PROJECT 2 DUE

Thursday, March 12, 6:00 PM
Carolee Schneeman Lecture/Performance
Campus Center, Weis Cinema
Attendance Mandatory

MARCH 18 - NO CLASS (SPRING RECESS)

PART 2: LIVE PERFORMANCE AND VIDEO

Week 8 / March 25: Media Interventions, Interactive Broadcasting

In Class: Miranda July, "Love Diamond" (1998-2000)

Homework Due:

Reading: Patricia Mellencamp, "Video Politics: Guerilla TV, Ant Farm, Eternal Frame"

Web Screenings: Chris Burden, "The TV Commercials, 1973-77," 9 min.

Web Screenings: Ant Farm, "Media Burn" (1978), 23 min.

Week 9 / April 1: Projection and Performance

In Class: Cloud Eye Control, performance excerpts

Homework Due:

Readings: RoseLee Goldberg, "Performance: Art for All," "

RoseLee Goldberg, "Videos," from *Laurie Anderson*

Laurie Anderson, "Words in Reverse"
Web Screenings: Laurie Anderson, *Alive From Off Center* (1986), 28 min.
Tracey and the Plastics (Wynne Greenwood), *Live Video Documentation* (2002), 10 min.
Tara Mateik, *Putting the Balls Away* (2008) - watch performance excerpt 3 min. and complete single-channel version, 19 min.
Beyoncé, *Run The World (Girls) Live @ Billboard* 2011, 5 min.

Friday, April 3, 7:30 PM
Neil Gaiman in Conversation with Laurie Anderson
Sosnoff Theater, Fisher Center
Attendance Mandatory

Week 10 / April 8: Real-Time Mixing and Effects

In Class: Real-time digital effects, Zach Poff's free video tools for Mac
Homework Due:

PROJECT 3 DUE

Web Screenings: Trisha Baga, "Madonna y El Niño Act III" Parts 1-3 (2009), 22 min.

Week 11 / April 15: Real-Time Mixing and Effects, Continued

In Class: Video Mixing, Modul8 Demo, Final Project Proposal Discussions
Homework Due:

PROPOSAL FOR FINAL PROJECT DUE

Web Screenings: TBA

Thursday, April 16, 7:00 PM
Jacolby Satterwhite Artist Talk (Skype)
Ottaway Theater
Attendance Mandatory

Week 12 / April 22: Final Project Workshops

Homework Due:

FINAL PROJECT WORKS IN PROGRESS – GROUP A
READINGS/SCREENINGS JOURNALS DUE

Week 13 / April 29: Final Project Workshops

Homework Due:

FINAL PROJECT WORKS IN PROGRESS – GROUP B
READINGS/SCREENINGS JOURNALS DUE

Week 14 / May 6: Final Projects Workshops

FINAL CRITIQUES – GROUP A

Thursday, May 7, 7:00 PM (you should arrive by 6:00 PM)
PUBLIC SCREENING/PERFORMANCE IN STUDIO X – GROUP A

Week 15 / May 13: Final Projects Critiques

FINAL CRITIQUES – GROUP B

Thursday, May 14, 7:00 PM (you should arrive by 6:00 PM)
PUBLIC SCREENING/PERFORMANCE IN STUDIO X – GROUP B