Cluster Course: Performing Peace
THE 225: Theatre for Social Engagement
TR 9:20 – 10:50 AM * Spring 2019 * Beeghly Theater (PH BEEGH)

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Course Description (from the course catalog): In this highly participatory course, students will engage the social issues of the day using various interactive performance methods, including Playback Theatre and Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed techniques. The course culminates in the creation of an original devised production that addresses a local social issue and is produced in collaboration with an under-represented segment of the local community. Meets Social Thought and Tradition Intellectual Perspective requirement (ST).

Westminster Student Outcomes
1) To reason logically and evaluate critically
2) To communicate effectively
3) To think creatively, and appreciate aesthetic expressions
4) To demonstrate intellectual curiosity
5) To acquire knowledge of self, society, human culture, the natural world, and human relationships to God
6) To apply our knowledge to contemporary issues
7) To demonstrate moral and ethical commitments to neighbor, society, and the natural world
8) To demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning and the acquisition of skills for careers and responsible service as world citizens

Cluster Course Objectives
1) Explore the history of human rights and the role of the United Nations in protecting human rights globally (1, 6, 7, 8)
2) Critically examine current social issues related to poverty in the United States (1, 2, 5, 6)
3) Examine the status of women and children as populations in special need of protection (1, 2, 5, 6)
4) Pursue in-depth research to develop expertise about a specific topic related to poverty in the United States and present research to classmates (1, 4, 5, 6, 8)
5) Develop exercises, games and structures for creating original performance material (2, 3)
6) Contribute to the collaborative creative process that leads to a performance of an original work (1-7)
7) Learn techniques for creating safety, fostering creativity, and building trust in groups (2, 3, 6)
8) Be encourages to examine their assumptions about themselves, their community, and their community neighbors (5, 6)
9) Plan and facilitate creative workshops and rehearsal with a community group (2, 3, 5, 7)
10) Research, and write and/or report on a performing artist or company that uses alternative methods of theatre making (1, 2, 4, 6, 7,8)

Grading
Theatre Units 100
Service Learning Unit 200
Performances 150
Artist Company Paper 100
Video Journal 150
Live Performance Response Paper 50
Written Reflections 100
Attendance/ Participation/ Professionalism 150

Grading Scale
A: 930-1000
A+: 925-929
B+: 865-894
B: 830-864
B-: 795-829
C+: 765-794
C: 730-764
C-: 695-729
D+: 665-694
D: 630-664
D-: 595-629
F: 0-594
*Performance presentations will be graded on the student’s memorization, development and growth from the first rehearsal, as well as application and understanding of the exercises and notes brought up in class. Talent is not considered a factor in determining grades; commitment, preparation, and a willingness to try are!

**Texts**

Additional readings may be provided on D2L.

**Course Requirements**

**Theatre Units** (100 points total)
Throughout the semester, we will explore a variety of games, activities, and theater techniques that are used for Theatre and Social Engagement. Major units include Theatre of the Oppressed, Documentary Theater, and Devising. Students will be asked to take turns as warm-up leaders, bringing in new exercises to start the class and build our ensemble’s repertoire (which will be useful in the service learning units). Students will be asked to participate in all unit activities. These Theatre and Social Engagement approaches will explore a variety of identities, looking at the roles of power and privilege in them, including (but not limited to): Age, Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Gender Expression, Religion, Disability, Class, Sexual Violence, Nationality/Ethnicity, Weight/Size.

**Service Learning Units** (200 points total)
There are two different units we'll completing in collaboration with residents at Shenango on the Green. Both will lead to community performances featuring and/or inspired by the residents. One unit will be using documentary theater techniques where students will interview residents early in the semester about immigration and family heritage. The other unit will involve several visits throughout the second half of the semester to the Nursing Home to where students will take turns leading warm-up games and coordinate a performance of short scenes and games for the other Shenango on the Green residents, family members, and invited Titans.

Additionally, the class will have the opportunity to explore producing staged readings of suggested plays in efforts to raise money for various causes.

**Performances** (150 points total)
As mentioned above, there will be a few different performances involving and/or inspired by the Shenango on the Green residents. In addition, with every Theatre unit, there will be a mini performance for students to demonstrate their understanding. These performances may be private or public, depending on the intention of the performance.

**Artist Company Paper** (100 points total)
Students must write a 3-4 page research paper on a theater artist or company that uses Theatre and Social Engagement tactics and techniques in order to effect change. More information will be provided on D2L.

**Video Journal** (150 points total)
You will keep a notebook for your class notes, in-class reflection free-writes, and rehearsals. What you will turn in each week is a video journal, uploaded to the designated D2L dropboxes every Friday by 5pm. They should be between 1 and 2 minutes. Please start by stating the dates your video journal will be covering. Then, for the next 1-2 minutes, reflect on the work you have done that week, or anything in the work that you have done up to that point. Feel free to ask questions, rant and rave about how things are
going for you, reflect, work something out loud, talk about your stumbling blocks or any light bulb moments, anything related to the work and your process in it. Entries should be honest, in-depth examinations of techniques, of social issues addressed, of fellow performers, and of your own person. Try to discover what interests, inspires, provokes, intimidates, and entertains you about your own work and the work of your fellow students. Use your notebook regularly so that you have a record of how the work is going for you and so that you have something to reference when making your recordings. **Avoid simply summarizing class activities** – push yourself to deeply investigate your understanding and awareness from week to week**

1 Live Performance Response Paper (50 points)  
You are required to attend, or participate in, one of Theatre Westminster’s spring events and write a 2-3 page (double-spaced) analysis on it. Writing prompts will be available on D2L. These assignments should be uploaded to D2L for plagiarism checks before the start of class on its due date. Make note in your planners: 24 Hour Theater Festival shows January 26（due Jan 29）and Fever/Dream shows February 28 – March 3（due March 5）. Tickets are free with Titan ID.

Written Reflections (25 points each for 100 points total)  
Throughout the semester, students will be asked to submit 1-2 page written reflections on their experiences performing, reading, and discussing in class as well as teaching and interviewing the Shenango on the Green residents. Only the top four scores will count towards this portion of your overall grade, all other scores will be dropped. For every reading assignment, you will need to upload to D2L a written reflection before the start of class. There will be other times when a reflection will be assigned in class.

Attendance/ Participation/ Professionalism (150 points)  
You should be ready to work every day - meaning being physically, mentally, and emotionally ready to jump in. While some people are natural performers and others are battling stage fright, the participation portion of this grade is based on a student’s effort and willingness to push themselves outside of their usual patterns. Participation also relates to students’ attentiveness, effective and constructive feedback in-class, and reliability and accountability to their peers for rehearsing projects outside the classroom.

Being present is of the utmost importance, even when your scene/monologue is not being “worked”; you learn just as much, if not more, by watching than by doing (what works, what doesn’t, etc.). Beyond mere attendance, punctuality is vital to the creative process. Respect your fellow classmates by showing up on time and not disturbing any work that might be going up (wait until there’s a pause between performances where you can enter/exit).

You are allowed two absences (excused or unexcused) before your final grade will be affected. For every absence thereafter, your final grade will be reduced by 50 points. For every tardy, your final grade will be reduced by 25 points. If you are coming straight from another class and fear being tardy on a regular basis, please inform the instructor. After 5 absences (or combination of tardies and absences equal to the point value outlined above), the instructor reserves the right to drop a student with an F. If a student has an excused absence it is the student’s responsibility to schedule any and all makeup work within one week of returning to school if they wish to receive (possibly partial) credit for the assignment. The instructor reserves the right to reject late assignments; grade deductions will be assigned to any late work that the instructor decides to accept.

Classroom Etiquette  
This is an acting laboratory, which means you will be trying new things each and every class. You must wear comfortable clothes and sneakers (no sandals or flip flops) in which you can move freely and don’t mind
getting dirty (there might be exercises where you’re on the floor). This space is our lab and we should treat it with respect – please help the instructor return the room to its original condition at the end of every class.

No food or drink (except water) is allowed in the acting space. Additionally, please silence or turn off cell phones and put them away. It is extremely impolite to be on a device while someone is working, being vulnerable in front of their classmates. If it becomes a recurring issue, you will be asked to hand over your phone at the start of class to avoid further distractions. While this is a creative, explorative environment, please be mindful of your fellow students – safety comes first. If you plan on doing any major physical stunts or stage combat, please inform the instructor first.

Mature and Controversial Subject Matter
Theatre is about depicting and exploring human experiences. The breadth of performance material available and the intimacy of the acting lab setting might bring about situations where controversial subject matter such as offensive language, sexual situations, and/or discriminatory viewpoints comes up. Content and characters may conflict with the opinions and beliefs of certain individuals. Remaining enrolled in this course means that you understand that you may encounter what you consider mature and/or controversial subject matter, and that you agree to be civil and professional in discussions and assignments involving such material. If you encounter material which makes you personally uncomfortable to the extent that you do not feel you can adequately engage with this material, you should discuss this with the instructor.

Course Schedule

**Subject to change***Keep checking D2L regularly for updates on assignments, reading material, etc.**

Week One (T 1/15 & R 1/17)
Intro to course/cluster (Instructor out of town)

Week Two (T 1/22 & R 1/24)
Fires in the Mirror on YouTube (80min, 6 videos) & upload reflection; Video Journal due (F 1/25 by 5pm); Intro to documentary theater & Theatre of the Oppressed

Week Three (T 1/29 & R 1/31)
Read Doerries p3-56 & upload reflection; Theatre of the Oppressed; 24 Hour Theater Festival paper due; Interview Shenango on the Green residents; Video Journal due (F 2/1 by 5pm)

Week Four (T 2/5 & R 2/7)
Read Doerries p57-152 & upload reflection; Theatre of the Oppressed; Video Journal due (F 2/8 by 5pm)

Week Five (T 2/12 & R 2/14)
Read Doerries p153-210 & upload reflection; Theatre of the Oppressed; Video Journal due (F 2/15 by 5pm); fundraiser performance?

Week Six (T 2/19 & R 2/21)
Read Doerries p211-271 & upload reflection; Theatre of the Oppressed & Devising; Video Journal due (F 2/22 by 5pm)

Week Seven (T 2/26 & R 2/28)
Theatre of the Oppressed & Devising; Video Journal due (F 3/1 by 5pm)

Week Eight (T 3/5 & R 3/7 – no class Thursday – instructor at conference)
Theatre of the Oppressed & Devising; Video Journal due (F 3/8 by 5pm)
Week Nine  (T 3/12 & R 3/14)  ***NO CLASS ALL WEEK – SPRING BREAK***

Week Ten  (T 3/19 & 3/21)  
Theatre of the Oppressed & Devising;  **Video Journal due (F 3/22 by 5pm)**

Week Eleven  (T 3/26 & 3/28)  
Workshops at Shenango on the Green;  **Video Journal due (F 3/29 by 5pm)**

Week Twelve  (T 4/2 & R 4/4)  
Workshops at Shenango on the Green;  **Video Journal due (F 4/5 by 5pm)**

Week Thirteen  (T 4/9 & R 4/11)  
Workshops at Shenango on the Green;  **Video Journal due (F 4/12 by 5pm)**

Week Fourteen  (T 4/16 & 4/18)  
Workshops at Shenango on the Green;  **Video Journal due (F 4/19 by 5pm)**

Week Fifteen  (T 4/23 – no class Tuesday & R 4/25)  
**Artist Company paper due 4/25; URAC performance?** Theatre of the Oppressed & Devising;  **Video Journal due (F 4/26 by 5pm)**

Week Sixteen  (T 4/30 & R 5/2)  
Theatre of the Oppressed & Devising;  **Video Journal due (F 5/3 by 5pm)**

Week Seventeen – Finals  
Wednesday, May 8: 8:00 – 10:30 AM – FINAL – Performance & **reflection**

**Other important policies:**

**Submission Format Policy:** You may not submit a paper for a grade in this class that already has been (or will be) submitted for a grade in another course, unless you obtain the explicit written permission of me and the other instructor involved in advance.

**Accessibility Statement:** Westminster actively strives for the full inclusion of all our students. Students who require access solutions for environmental or curricular barriers should contact Faith Craig, Director of Disability Support Services, in 209 Thompson-Clark (x7192, craigfa@westminster.edu). If you have a condition that qualifies you for reasonable accommodation under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), you must have ADA documentation on file with the Student Affairs Office to receive that accommodation.

**Safe Zone Statement:** The professor considers this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect as a human being - regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided you can agree to disagree. It is the professor's expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.

**Academic Success Center:** They can help you with free academic support, including drop-in tutoring hours and individual tutoring for specific subjects, as well as individualized academic consultations to help you with goal setting, time management, note-taking, reading strategies and other skills that will help you reach your academic goals. Located on the fourth floor of Thompson-Clark Hall, the center also offers rooms for individual or group studying on a first-come, first-serve basis until 10 p.m. every night. For more information, contact Coordinator Jessica Shelenberger by visiting TC 412, by emailing shelenjp@westminster.edu, or by calling (724) 946-6700, or by visiting www.westminster.edu/academics/learning-center/index.cfm.

***By accepting this syllabus, you are indicating that you understand and accept all the professor's policies listed herein.***