

Performance, Television, and Social Media, THEATER 118AC, 2019*

Four (4) semester credits

Course Description

This course examines the intersections of performance and media—specifically the media forms of television and social media in the U.S.—with a focus on how various types of difference are enacted, articulated, represented, and played on TV and social media platforms. We will study the many intersections of performance theory and television, which include the TV industry’s roots in New York theater, the unique modes of acting required by television roles, and the numerous ways that television audiences “perform” for one another in response to the media they consume, for example by writing stories based on their favorite shows and sharing them online. We will also study how contemporary social media platforms operate as performance spaces, in which all of the users are the “actors,” performing for one another. We will then discuss how issues pertaining to race/ethnicity, gender, and sexuality are depicted on television and discussed on social media. We will focus on representations of African Americans, indigenous peoples, Latinxs, Asian Americans, women, and LGBTQIA people. Students will be expected to apply the theoretical concepts and frameworks from performance studies (which they will learn in Modules 1 and 2) to the television texts and social media that they analyze. This course has been approved to fulfill the UC Berkeley American Cultures requirement.

Prerequisites

There are no prior course requirements.

Course Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Identify the core scholarly literature and key concepts and theories of performance studies, media studies, new media studies, critical race studies, and gender studies, particularly theories pertinent to the cultural forms of television and social media.
- Analyze how mass media and social media have influenced widespread perceptions, stereotypes, and definitions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic class, and how

minority groups have historically protested or otherwise sought to alter media (mis-)representations of them.

- Develop critical media literacies, i.e., the analytical tools and vocabularies for identifying and articulating how difference and diversity are depicted and enacted in television and social media.
- Articulate thoughtful, informed insights and opinions about historical and contemporary television and social media.
- Become a well-educated observer and analyst of current trends and shifts in media and new media.
- Build the necessary foundational skills for careers in media research, scholarship, and teaching, and/or professions in the media and new media industries.

Instructor Information, Contact, Office Hours, & Communication

Course Instructor

Prof. Abigail De Kosnik (Gail)

adekosnik@berkeley.edu

415.975.1286 (TEXT ONLY)

Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs)

While the instructor will interact with the whole class and will oversee all activities and grading, as well as being available to resolve any issues that may arise, the GSIs will be your main point of contact. Your GSIs are responsible for assisting you directly with your questions about assignments and course requirements, as outlined in the Assignments and Calendar. The GSIs will also facilitate ongoing discussion and interaction with you on major topics in each module.

GSIs are TBD.

Office Hours

The course instructor and GSIs will offer virtual office hours, when students can communicate real time (synchronously) using the bCourses Chat tool. While these chats are optional they can be valuable for discussion, answering questions, and reviewing for exams. Chats are optional; no points are awarded for participation.

Days and times of the weekly chats will be announced at the beginning of the course. If you wish to meet outside of the weekly chat, please email your instructor or GSI.

The sessions will be for one hour. However, if no one shows up in the first 15 minutes, then that office hour will be cancelled.

Course Mail

Make sure to check the Course Mail for messages from the instructor. You can access course email within the Learning Management System by clicking on the Inbox link or choose to have your course mail forwarded to your personal email account or your cell phone.

Question & Answer Forum

Please use this forum to post questions about the course material, assignments, the learning management system or online homework. **The instructor/GSIs will monitor this forum**, but you should also feel free to post answers to help other students. This helps to create a general FAQ so that all students in the course may benefit from the exchange.

Course Materials and Technical Requirements

Required Materials

- All students must have access to a computer with consistently reliable high-speed Internet service, which will allow them to access course announcements, readings, and instructor-posted materials through the bCourses site, participate in the weekly chats, and post their weekly Assignments and Final Project.
- Students must be able to watch television (online or on a television set) and interact with (or simply observe) social media platforms throughout the course. It is highly recommended that students have a working subscription to an online streaming platform of television content such as Netflix, Hulu, or Amazon Prime Video for the duration of the course. This will make it easier for students to find television examples to write about for their Assignments. If students have difficulty finding examples to write about, or have a question about whether a particular title is a television series (as opposed to a film), they should email the instructor and/or their section's GSI.

- Students must also compose their Assignments and Final Projects on a computer and submit their completed exams electronically on bCourses. Handwritten Assignments and Final Projects will not be accepted.

Technical Requirements

This course is built on a Learning Management system (LMS) called Canvas and you will need to meet these [computer specifications to participate within this online platform](#).

Optional

Canvas allows you to record audio or video files of yourself and upload them in the course. Although doing so is not required for any of the activities, using these features will enhance your engagement in the course. If you would like to use these features, you will need to have a webcam and a microphone installed on your computer.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulties please alert one of the GSIs immediately. However, understand that neither the GSIs, nor the professor can assist you with technical problems. You must call or email tech support and make sure you resolve any issues immediately.

In your course, click on the "Help" button on the bottom left of the global navigation menu. Be sure to document (save emails and transaction numbers) for all interactions with tech support.

Extensions and late submissions will not be accepted due to "technical difficulties."

Learning Activities

VERY IMPORTANT

You won't be able to access your course material until you read and make your pledge to Academic Integrity. Click the button below to navigate to and complete the Academic Integrity pledge.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PLEDGE

You are expected to fully participate in all the course activities described here.

1. Read the assigned textbook pages
2. Watch and listen to the lecture presentations

3. Read web-based announcements and postings assign during the course
4. Compose and post assigned responses to lectures and readings
5. Complete the midterm exam and final exam
6. Complete writing assignments

Sections

For grading purposes, each of you has been assigned to one of the course GSIs and placed within his/her section. Your particular GSI will grade all of your work, as well as that of your section-mates, and engage with you in the course discussions. You can see whose section you've been placed in by exploring the "Section" column within the "People" page or by examining your discussion group's title, which includes your GSI's name.

Modules

A module is a grouping of topics related to one area of study, typically with readings, lectures and various kinds of assignments. Each module contains a list of Learning Outcomes for the module. Your assignments reflect the learning activities to perform to reach those outcomes. For an at-a-glance view of due dates and projects, refer to the course Calendar.

Each module takes place over the course of one week. For each module, students must watch the instructor's lectures, and read the assigned readings, posted to the bCourses site.

Reading Assignments

Each module includes assigned readings relevant to each topic covered in that module.

Multimedia Lectures

Recorded lectures support your readings and assignments but also contain additional material that may be included in the exams. Each lecture has been broken into sections. You are expected to take notes while viewing the lectures as you would in a regular classroom. For those of you with limited bandwidth, we strongly encourage you to download the longer lectures before attempting to view them.

Homework Assignments

On Thursday of each week, the instructor will post an Assignment, which will be due the following Monday, except for the July 4 holiday

weekend. (Students the Disabled Students Program will receive extended deadlines; the instructor must receive a DSP letter of accommodation before granting extended deadlines.)

Assignments will require students to explain several concepts that they learned about in the lectures and readings for that Module, and to apply those concepts to examples from television or social media. Each assignment will be worth up to **12 points**. All 7 Assignments combined will be worth up to a total of **84 points**.

Discussion Forum

Questions and Answers Forum

Please use this forum to post questions about the course or topics being studied. The questions will be answered in the forum by the course instructor or GSIs. This way, all students benefit from seeing the answers. This is the preferred place to ask and get answers to questions that are likely to be of general interest.

Final Project

The Final Project will be posted on bCourses at the beginning of the course and due at the end of the course. No extensions for the Final Project will be given to DSP students because every student will have the entire duration of the course to work on their final projects. For the Final Project, students must produce a creative project involving performance (an audio recording/podcast or a video recording) pertaining to the themes of the course and referencing at least two readings from different modules from the course. Audio or video recordings must be no longer than 5 minutes long. (Students who do not possess the skills or equipment to produce an audio or video recording can produce a written work; these students should email their GSIs to discuss possible formats for their Final Project.) Students must also write a minimum 2-page (double-spaced) paper explaining how their creative work deals with concepts they learned in the course, and how it is informed by the two readings. Students must upload their final project (both parts: the creative work and the explanatory paper) at the end of the course. The Final Project will be worth up to **16 points**.

Reminder: Your Course End Date

Your course will end on August 16th. As you work through the course, please keep the end date in mind, and if you want to save any

commentary or assignments for future reference, please make sure to print or copy/paste those materials before your access ends.

Grading and Course Policies

Each student enrolled in this course must complete 7 Assignments and one Final Project.

Students who do not receive a passing score on the Final Project, will not pass the course. Even if students complete all of their Assignments and receive high scores on them, they must do a Final Project and receive a score of 10 points or higher in order to pass. A student who does not submit a Final Project, or who receives a score lower than 10, will fail the course.

It is important to note that not all components are graded online and included in the online course grade book. Because of this, the online course grade book will not display your overall course grade at any given time or your final grade. It should simply be used to assess your performance on the components that are included within it: the discussions, written assignments and midterm exam. Your final letter grade will be mailed to you by the registrar's office.

Late Work Policy

Please notify the instructor and your section GSI in writing by the end of the first week of the course about any known or potential extracurricular conflicts (such as religious observances, graduate or medical school interviews, or team activities). We will try our best to help you with making accommodations, but cannot promise them in all cases. In the event there is no mutually-workable solution, you may be dropped from the class.

Course Policies

Promptness

Homework assignments and discussion forum postings all have specific final due dates and times. You will not receive full credit if assignments are submitted after the indicated due date.

Further, each online activity must be submitted through the course website by the due date. Fax or mail submission will not be accepted. Students who wait until the final hours prior to a submission deadline risk having problems with their ISP, hardware, software, or various

other site access difficulties. Therefore, it is advisable to submit assignments and tests through the course website early. The multiple days allowed for submission are to accommodate the busy schedules of working professionals, not to accommodate procrastination. Students should plan accordingly and get into the habit of checking the course website several times each week, and submitting and posting early.

Honor Code

The student community at UC Berkeley has adopted the following Honor Code: "As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others." The expectation is that you will adhere to this code.

Collaboration and Independence

Reviewing lecture and reading materials and studying for exams can be enjoyable and enriching things to do with fellow students. This is recommended. However, unless otherwise instructed, homework assignments and the online exam are to be completed independently and materials submitted as homework should be the result of one's own independent work.

Cheating

A good lifetime strategy is always to act in such a way that no one would ever imagine that you would even consider cheating. Anyone caught cheating on a quiz or exam in this course will receive a failing grade in the course and will also be reported to the University Center for Student Conduct. The expectation is that you will be honest in the taking of exams.

Plagiarism

To copy text or ideas from another source without appropriate reference is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade for your assignment and usually further disciplinary action. For additional information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, explore the resources linked below:

[UC Berkeley Library Citation Page, Plagiarism Section](#)

[GSI Guide for Preventing Plagiarism](#)

Academic Integrity and Ethics

Cheating on exams and plagiarism are two common examples of dishonest, unethical behavior. Honesty and integrity are of great importance in all facets of life. They help to build a sense of self-confidence, and are key to building trust within relationships, whether personal or professional. There is no tolerance for dishonesty in the academic world, for it undermines what we are dedicated to doing - furthering knowledge for the benefit of humanity.

Incomplete Course Grade

Students who have substantially completed the course but for serious extenuating circumstances, are unable to complete the final exam, may request an Incomplete grade. This request must be submitted in writing or by email to the GSI and course instructor. You must provide verifiable documentation for the seriousness of the extenuating circumstances. According to the policy of the college, Incomplete grades must be made up within the first three weeks of the next semester.

Students with Disabilities

If you are requiring course accommodations due to a physical, emotional, or learning disability contact the [UC Berkeley's Disabled Students' Program](#) (DSP). Notify the instructor and GSI through course email and inform them which accommodations you would like to use.

End of Course Evaluation

Before your course end date, please take a few minutes to participate in our Course Evaluation to share your opinions about this course. You will be receiving the Course Evaluation via email. The evaluation does not request any personal information, and your responses will remain strictly confidential. You may only take the evaluation once.

Course Schedule

All readings are available as .pdfs on bCourses except where indicated (i.e., where a hyperlink is given to a website).

Module 1: Introduction // Performance and Television (June 24 - June 30, 2019)

Lectures:

- Introduction to the course
- Theater and Early Television

- Theater and Performance in, for, and with Media
- Description of Final Project

Readings:

- Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Chapter 5, "The People in the Theater Next Door"*
- Kim Durham, "Methodology and Praxis of the Actor within the Television Production Process"
- Abigail De Kosnik, "Drama Is the Cure for Gossip"
- Nick Couldry, "Reality TV, or The Secret Theater of Neoliberalism"
- Francesca Coppa, "Writing Bodies in Space"
- Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (brief excerpt)

Assignments:

1. The Final Project Assignment will be posted on bCourses on Monday, June 24, 2019 at 9 a.m. and will be due on Monday, August 19, 2019 at 9 a.m. (DSP students will not receive an extension on the final project because every student will have the entire duration of the course to work on their Final Projects.)
2. Assignment 1 will be posted on bCourses on Thursday, June 27, 2019 at 9 a.m. and will be due on Monday, July 1, 2019 at 9 a.m. (DSP students may receive an extension according to their letters of accommodation.)

Module 2: Performance and Social Media (July 1 - July 7, 2019; July 4 is a holiday)

Lectures:

- Is Twitter a Stage?: Performance Studies and Social Media

Readings:

- Abigail De Kosnik and Keith Feldman (editors), *#identity: Chapter One, Abigail De Kosnik, "Is Twitter a Stage?": Theories of Social Media Platforms as Performance Spaces"*
- Erving Goffmann, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (excerpt)
- Marshall McLuhan, "At the moment of Sputnik the planet became a global theater"

- Annette Markham, "Interaction in Digital Contexts"
- Erika Pearson, "All the World Wide Web's a Stage"
- J. Donath and d. boyd, "Public displays of connection"
- Hugo Liu, "Social Networking Profiles as Taste Performances"

Assignment:

Assignment 2 will be posted on bCourses on Wednesday, July 3, 2019 at 9 a.m. (one day earlier than usual because of the July 4 holiday), and will be due on Monday, July 8, 2019 at 9 a.m. (DSP students may receive an extension according to their letters of accommodation.)

Module 3: Gender and Sexuality in TV and Social Media (July 8 - July 14, 2019)

Lectures:

- The Gay 90s
- The Trans Tipping Point
- The Bechdel Test
- Interview with Caleb Luna and Julia Havard

Readings:

- Ron Becker, "Gay-Themed Television and the SLUMPY Class"
- Dustin Harp et al. (editors), *Feminist Approaches to Media Theory and Research*, Chapter 7: Mia Fischer, "Queer and Feminist Approaches to Transgender Media Studies"
- Alison Bechdel, "The Rule"
- Jo Light, "What Is the Bechdel Test and How Will It Help Your Writing?": <https://nofilmschool.com/what-is-bechdel-test>
- Megan Logan, "Meet the Race-Conscious Bechdel Test: the 'DuVernay Test'": <https://slate.com/culture/2016/01/manohla-dargis-coins-the-duvernay-test-a-racial-bechdel-test-to-begin-discussion-of-minority-representation-in-film.html>
- Jonathan Shia, "Alison Bechdel: The Bechdel Test 'Has Been a Very Strange Turn in My Life'": <https://www.vulture.com/2015/04/bechdel-test-creator-surprised-by-its-longevity.html>
- Kathy Sierra, "Trouble at the Koolaid Point": <http://seriouspony.com/trouble-at-the-koolaid-point/>

- Casey Johnston, "Chat logs show how 4chan users created #GamerGate controversy":
<https://arstechnica.com/gaming/2014/09/new-chat-logs-show-how-4chan-users-pushed-gamergate-into-the-national-spotlight/>

Assignment:

Assignment 3 will be posted on bCourses on Thursday, July 11, 2019 at 9 a.m., and will be due on Monday, July 15, 2019 at 9 a.m. (DSP students may receive an extension according to their letters of accommodation.)

Module 4: African Americans on TV and Social Media (July 15 - July 21, 2019)

Lectures:

- African Americans on Television
- Black Twitter
- #BlackLivesMatter
- Interview with Malika Imhotep and Rashad Timmons

Readings:

- Kimberly Springer, "Divas, Evil Black Bitches, and Bitter Black Women"
- Nina Cartier, "Black Women On-Screen as Future Texts"
- Amanda D. Clark et al., "Black Lives Matter: (Re)Framing the Next Wave of Black Liberation"
- André Brock, "From the Blackhand Side: Twitter as a Cultural Conversation"
- Sarah Florini, "Tweets, Tweeps, and Signifyin': Communication and Cultural Performance on Black Twitter"
- Sanjay Sharma, "Black Twitter?: Racial Hashtags, Networks and Contagion"
- Amanda D. Clark et al., "Black Lives Matter: (Re)Framing the Next Wave of Black Liberation"

Assignment:

Assignment 4 will be posted on bCourses on Thursday, July 18, 2019 at 9 a.m. and will be due on Monday, July 22, 2019 at 9 a.m. (DSP

students may receive an extension according to their letters of accommodation.)

Module 5: Native Americans on TV and Social Media (July 22 - July 28, 2019)

Lectures:

- Indigenous Peoples on Television
- #NODAPL
- Interview with Marcelo Garzo-Montalvo and Beth Piatote

Readings:

- Gretchen Bataille, Native American Representations: "Introduction"
- Ward Churchill, Acts of Rebellion: Chapter 8, "Fantasies of the Master Race"
- S. Elizabeth Bird, "Gendered Construction of the American Indian in Popular Media"
- Diana George, with Susan Sanders, "Reconstructing Tonto"
- Eleanor Hersey, "World-Healers and Code Talkers"
- Terence Towles Canote, "The Invisible Minority: Native Americans on Television"
- Hannah Chubb, "Hashtag Activism: A Timeline": <https://www.marieclaire.com/culture/a20886254/hashtag-activism/>
- Nick Estes, "Fighting for Our Lives: #NoDAPL in Historical Context"

Assignment:

Assignment 5 will be posted on bCourses on Thursday, July 25, 2019 at 9 a.m. and will be due on Monday, July 29, 2019 at 9 a.m. (DSP students may receive an extension according to their letters of accommodation.)

Module 6: Latinxs on TV and Social Media (July 29 - August 4, 2019)

Lectures:

- Portrayal of Latina/os on TV
- Latinx Artists on Instagram
- Interview with José Lizárraga and Arturo Cortez

Readings:

- Angharad Valdivia, Latina/os and the Media: "Introduction"
- Dana E. Mastro et al., "Exposure to TV Portrayals of Latinos"
- Jillian Hernandez: "Beauty marks: the Latinx surfaces of loving, becoming, and mourning"
- Abigail De Kosnik and Keith Feldman (editors), #identity: Chapter 9, José Ramón Lizárraga and Arturo Cortez, "#gentrification, Cultural Erasure, and the (Im)possibilities of Digital Queer Gestures"

Assignment:

Assignment 6 will be posted on bCourses on Thursday, August 1, 2019 at 9 a.m. and will be due on Monday, August 5, 2019 at 9 a.m. (DSP students may receive an extension according to their letters of accommodation.)

Module 7: Asian Americans on TV and Social Media (August 5 - August 11, 2019)

Lectures:

- Asian Americans on Television
- Asian Americans on YouTube
- Interview with Miyoko Conley and Nic Chang

Readings:

- Kent A. Ono and Vincent Pham, Asian Americans and the Media: Chapter 5, "Threatening Model Minorities: The Asian American Horatio Alger Story"

- Virginia Mansfield-Richardson, *Asian Americans and the Mass Media*: Chapter 1, "Introduction"
- Christine Bacareza Balance, "How It Feels to Be Viral Me: Affective Labor and Asian American YouTube Performance"

Assignment:

Assignment 7 will be posted on bCourses on Thursday, August 8, 2019 at 9 a.m. and will be due on Monday, August 12, 2019 at 9 a.m. (DSP students may receive an extension according to their letters of accommodation.)

Module 8: Conclusion (August 12 - August 16, 2019)

Lecture:

- Course Conclusion and Discussion of Final Project

Assignment:

The Final Project (creative work + explanatory paper) is due on Monday, August 19, 2019 at 9 a.m. (DSP students will not receive an extension on their project because every student has had the entire duration of the course to work on their Final Projects.)

*Subject to Change