Performance, Television, and Social Media, THEATER 118AC, 2020*

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 (GSI)

GSIs are TBD.

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.

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 Announcements

Make sure to check your email frequently for announcements from the instructor and your section GSI. You will be responsible for knowing all of the information contained in the course announcements. You can also access the course announcements at bCourses/Announcements.

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 weekly assignments
6. Complete the final project

**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.

**Content Warnings**

Please note that some of the readings and lectures make references to sex, fat phobia, body hatred, violence, or death. These are noted with a triple asterisk (***).
Many readings and lectures in this course reference racism, sexism and misogyny, transphobia, and homophobia, and other forms of discrimination and stereotyping. Specific warnings will not be given for these types of content.

**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 is described in this section and also in a video that you will watch at the beginning of the course (in Module 1). Your Final Project is 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.
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 14th. 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**

**Your final course grade will be calculated as follows:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Assignments</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 the grade percentage shown on bCourses is often incorrect. The instructors will calculate your grade based on this formula:

Your points for Weekly Assignments (up to 84 points total) + Your points for the Final Project (up to 16 points total) = Your total points in the class (up to 100 points total).
Your points in the class will determine your letter grade according to the following scale:

If you get 94 points or higher, you’ll receive an A,
if you get 90 to 93 points, you’ll get an A minus,
if you get 86 to 89 points, you’ll get a B plus,
if you get 83 to 85 points, you’ll get a B,
if you get 80 to 82 points, you’ll get a B minus,
if you get 76 to 79 points, you’ll get a C plus,
if you get 73 to 75 points, you’ll get a C,
if you get 70 to 72 points, you’ll get a C minus,
if you get 66 to 69 points, you’ll get a D plus,
if you get 63 to 65 points, you’ll get a D,
if you get 60 to 62 points, you’ll get a D minus, and if you get fewer than 60 points, you’ll fail the course.

**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.

If you submit an Assignment late without an excuse, your section GSI will deduct four (4) points from your score on that Assignment for every day that it is late. In other words, if you submit an Assignment one day late with no excuse, you will be penalized 4 points, and if you submit an Assignment two days late with no excuse, you will be penalized 8 points.

**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 (Link to page)
- 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.

UC Berkeley is committed to providing robust educational experiences for all learners. With this goal in mind, we have activated the ALLY tool for this course. You will now be able to download content in a format that best fits your learning preference. PDF, HTML, EPUB and MP3 are now available for most content items. For more information visit the alternative formats link or watch the video entitled, "Ally First Steps Guide."

**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. It will close August 16th.

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

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”

Assignments:

1. The Final Project Assignment will be posted on bCourses on Monday, June 22, 2020 at 9 a.m. and will be due on Monday, August 17, 2020 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 6/25. It is due 6/29.

Module 2: Performance and Social Media

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

Readings:
- Abigail De Kosnik, “Is Twitter a Stage?”: Theories of Social Media Platforms as Performance Spaces” (Chapter One in #identity, Abigail De Kosnik and Keith Feldman, editors)
- Erving Goffmann, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Chapter III: Regions and Region Behavior, pp. 66-86
- Marshall McLuhan, “At the moment of Sputnik the planet became a global theater”
- Annette Markham, “Interaction in Digital Contexts”: https://annettemarkham.com/2012/08/dramaturgy1/ 
- Erika Pearson, “All the World Wide Web’s a Stage”: https://firstmonday.org/article/view/2162/2127
- 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 Thursday. It is due the following Monday.

Module 3: Gender and Sexuality on TV and Social Media

Lectures:
- The Gay 90s
- The Trans Tipping Point
- The Bechdel Test
● Interview with Julia Havard (***Content Warning: violence and death)

● Interview with Caleb Luna (***Content Warning: sex, fat phobia, body hatred)

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”


● Julia Havard, “#Why I Stayed” (Chapter Eight in #identity, Abigail De Kosnik and Keith Feldman, editors) (***Content Warning: violence and death)

● Caleb Luna, “5 Ways the Way We Talk About Grindr Upholds Thin Privilege and Body Fascism”: https://everydayfeminism.com/2017/03/grindr-upholds-thin-privilege/ (***Content Warning: sex, fat phobia, body hatred)

Assignment:

Assignment 3 will be posted on bCourses on Thursday. It is due the following Monday.

Module 4: African Americans on TV and Social Media

Lectures:

● African Americans on Television
● Black Twitter

● #BlackLivesMatter (***Content Warning: violence and death)

● Interview with Aaminah Norris (***Content Warning: violence and death)

**Readings:**

● Kimberly Springer, “Divas, Evil Black Bitches, and Bitter Black Women”

● Nina Cartier, “Black Women On-Screen as Future Texts”

● 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” (***Content Warning: violence and death)

● Aaminah Norris and Nalya Rodriguez, “#SandraBland’s Mystery” (Chapter Four in #identity, Abigail De Kosnik and Keith Feldman, editors) (***Content Warning: violence and death)

**Assignment:**

Assignment 4 will be posted on bCourses on Thursday. It is due the following Monday.

**Module 5: Native Americans on TV and Social Media**

**Lectures:**

● Indigenous Peoples on Television

● #NODAPL

● Interview with Marcelo Garzo-Montalvo

**Readings:**
● Gretchen Bataille, Native American Representations: “Introduction”


● 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”


● Nick Estes, “Fighting for Our Lives: #NoDAPL in Historical Context”

● Marcelo Garzo-Montalvo, “This Is What Our Prophecies Look Like” (pre-publication; please do not circulate)

**Assignment:**

Assignment 5 will be posted on bCourses on Thursday. It is due the following Monday.

**Module 6: Latinxs on TV and Social Media**

**Lectures:**

● Portrayals of Latina/os on TV

● Interview with José Lizárraga and Arturo Cortez

**Readings:**

● Angharad Valdivia, Latina/os and the Media: “Introduction”

● Dana E. Mastro & Bradley S. Greenberg, “The Portrayal of Racial Minorities on Prime Time Television”

● Persia, “Google Google Apps Apps”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xyqbc7SQ4w
José Ramón Lizárraga and Arturo Cortez, “#gentrification, Cultural Erasure, and the (Im)possibilities of Digital Queer Gestures” (Chapter Nine in #identity, Abigail De Kosnik and Keith Feldman, editors)

Assignment:

Assignment 6 will be posted on bCourses on Thursday. It is due the following Monday.

Module 7: Asian Americans on TV and Social Media

Lectures:

- Asian Americans on Television
- Asian Americans on YouTube
- Interview with Miyoko Conley

Readings:


- 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. It is due the following Monday.

Module 8: Conclusion

Lecture:
Course Conclusion

Assignment:
The Final Project (creative work + explanatory paper) is due on Monday, August 17, 2020 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