

Introduction to Performance Studies

Summer 2026

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| Instructor | Melissa Foulger | Class | LMC-2600 |
| Email | melissa.foulger@lmc.gatech.edu | Prerequisites | ENGL 1102 |
| Office | | Satisfies | |
| Office Hours | Tuesday: 11:00-12:00 | Class Time | 8:00 – 9:55 am |
| | Or by appointment/email me | Location | TBD |

Course Description

The premise of Performance Studies, an academic discipline that has grown exponentially since the late 1960s, is that performance is a fundamental category of human (and perhaps not just human) activity not limited to the performing arts. One of the projects of Performance Studies has been to develop a general theory of performance by considering what the many things we may call performance have in common. This iteration of LMC 2600 will follow this path by identifying fundamental characteristics of performance and performing.

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Arts, Humanities & Ethics area.

Core IMPACTS refer to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic, and philosophical works?

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this class, students will be able to:

- Effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance, and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts in English or other languages, or of works in the visual/performing arts

Additional Learning Outcomes Per LMC and BOR

Students will also be able to:

- Cultivate awareness of the traditions and conventions of literature, film, and other forms of narrative art, analyze those traditions and conventions in specific cultural contexts; and
- Describe relationships among languages, philosophies, cultures, literature, ethics, or the arts.

Required Materials

- Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 4th Edition (2020) available through Perusall.
- Assorted resources, as needed. (These will be available in Canvas, as hand-outs, and/or as links.)
- Something to write with or on.

Grading

This course uses an alternative grading model that prioritizes learning, engagement, and reflection over traditional grading metrics. Students are expected to focus on the quality and completeness of their work rather than numerical scores.

Assessment Structure

- Feedback is provided through written comments and detailed rubrics
- Each assignment includes clear expectations and evaluation criteria
- Students are responsible for completing all work according to assignment guidelines
- Any assignment can be resubmitted after receiving feedback for a better grade

Self Reflection

Students will complete structured reflections at designated points during the semester to assess their learning, progress, and overall performance in the course.

Module Evaluation Scale

Each module is evaluated on a completion scale:

- **3** – Exceeds expectations
- **2** – Meets expectations
- **1** – Incomplete or below expectations
- **0** – Not submitted

These scores provide ongoing feedback; final course assessment is based primarily on student reflection and demonstrated engagement.

Grade Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

| Letter Grade | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|
| A | 90-100% |
| B | 80-89% |
| C | 70-79% |
| D | 60-69% |
| F | 0-59% |

Description of Graded Components

Perusall Readings – Each class has a reading requirement. It is expected that you will actively interact with each reading. This might be asking questions, highlighting important terminology, commenting on things that resonate with you, etc. If you do not access the book via Perusall, you will need to read and notate the book in an other way and submit that to me.

It is important that you complete the readings prior to class. I will not be doing a significant amount of lecture on the material. We will be working on activities in class that further your understanding from the reading. I will offer time to ask questions for concepts that you don't fully understand.

Group Performance Exercises – In the course of the semester, there will be three Group Performance Exercises that will explore three different dimensions of performance. I will ask you to develop and present a creative response to a specific assignment. All group members are to perform in all exercises unless otherwise noted.

Each project will have several stages. The first will be an in-class brainstorming session during which we will engage in some exercises as a class and each group will brainstorm approaches to the assignment. The next class session will be a working session for groups to further develop their ideas, begin rehearsing, etc. You will then have time to prepare your performance outside of class, after which you will perform it during the class session indicated in the syllabus.

The final stage will be the documentation of the performance. Documentation of live performance has become a debated issue, largely because of the widespread belief that live events cannot be adequately captured. The ongoing problem your group will address is: How can performance documentation provide a useful sense of the event for someone who didn't see it live? You will document each of your performances in a different way (or

combination of ways) of your choosing. Each documentation is to be accompanied by a brief explanation of the methods you used and the goal of using them. The final documentation assignment will include a written evaluation of three methods used and an assessment of which was the most effective at addressing the problem.

Discussions – There is an online forum for this course in Canvas. The purpose is to provide students with a virtual space outside the class in which to raise questions about course material and discuss them. I expect you to post substantively to the discussion on the days listed on the syllabus. Your post should either initiate or respond to a discussion of the course materials or a closely related topic.

“Substantively” means a decent paragraph, not just a sentence or two. Please do not think I will not be grading your individual posts, though I will respond to them selectively. As long as you contribute substantively by the stated deadlines, you will earn all of the points for each assignment. **Please note that I am not asking you to summarize course material or class discussion, I am asking you to respond to these, raise your own questions about them, and extend our classroom discussion.**

You will only receive a grade of 1 for each posting deadline missed. If I feel that your contributions are not substantive enough to merit credit, you will receive a grade of 1 and be asked to post a more substantive response.

I have created an assignment for each discussion. They will be listed in the appropriate module. Your discussion should follow the material in that module. If you would like to make connections with earlier material, that’s fine. However, your post should always focus on the material in that module.

Teaching Philosophy

I believe that access to quality education is a fundamental human right. As an educator, my goal is to foster an environment in which knowledge expands perspectives and inspires curiosity and creativity. I am committed to supporting students in the development of critical thinking skills, empowering them to question, interpret, and create meaningful narratives both individually and collaboratively. Central to my teaching is the belief that every student’s voice has value, and I strive to help students recognize and effectively use that power.

My pedagogical approach emphasizes active and applied learning. I believe students learn most effectively when material is introduced in manageable segments and then reinforced through practical application. I also value the importance of engagement and enjoyment in the learning process. Striking a balance between rigor and creativity encourages deeper

understanding and sustained motivation. Theatre, in particular, offers a dynamic framework for developing transferable skills such as collaboration, communication, organization, and relationship-building—competencies that are essential across professional fields.

I am dedicated to creating a learning environment that is inclusive, supportive, and respectful of diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. I view the unique identities and lived experiences that students bring to the classroom as strengths that enrich the collective learning experience. Course materials and activities are designed to reflect all members of the class. I welcome and encourage student feedback and suggestions, and I am committed to continuously improving the course to better meet the needs of all learners.

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

Success in this course program depends heavily on your health and well-being. Recognize that stress is an expected part of the college experience, and it often can be compounded by unexpected setbacks or life changes outside the classroom. Your instructors and I strongly encourage you to reframe challenges as an unavoidable pathway to success. Reflect on your role in taking care of yourself throughout the term, before the demands of exams and projects reach their peak. Please feel free to reach out to me about any difficulty you may be having that may impact your performance in your courses or campus life as soon as it occurs and before it becomes too overwhelming. In addition to your academic advisor, I strongly encourage you to contact the many other support services on campus that stand ready to assist you. A [comprehensive list](#) of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being ([student-resource-guide \(gatech.edu\)](#)).

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Attendance Requirement. You may miss a total of **three (3)** classes over the course of the semester without penalty. If at all possible, please contact the instructor when you know you will not be in class.

- **Reasons for absences.** The attendance policy does not make any distinction about the reasons for your absences. Absences for any illness count against the three permitted absences. Only absences officially exempted by the Institute (e.g., due to participation in official GA Tech athletics, to religious observance, to personal or

family crisis confirmed by documentation from the Dean of Students) will not be counted among your allotted absences.

- **Responsibility for missed work.** Students are responsible for finding out what they may have missed while absent from class and what policy the instructor has for making up missed work. However, **if you are not present to participate in a group presentation, it will severely effect your grade.**
- **Lateness/Absence.** If you are more than 20 minutes late to class, you will be marked absent for the day.
- **Absence penalties.** Each additional absence after the allotted number deducts one-half of a letter grade (5 pts.) from your final grade. Please click [here](#) to see Georgia Tech's updated institutional attendance policy.

Communication is crucial. If you are unwell or face any situation that will keep you out of class for an amount of time greater than the three permitted absences, be certain to contact the Dean of Students as stated above. You should contact me as well so that we can work out an arrangement, but your situation becomes official only when the Dean of Students contact me.

Please note that Georgia Tech policy requires you to wait twenty minutes for an instructor to arrive before concluding that the class is not meeting (this policy is included here primarily for your information).

Accommodations for Religious Observances

I respect your right to observe your religion and will do what I can to accommodate your needs. With this in mind, you are permitted to be absent from class to take part in religious observances. For planning purposes, I ask that you provide me with written notice of your upcoming absence as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity

All work you turn in for this class must be your own work, with all outside reference sources, including AI-generated text and information, properly cited and acknowledged.

The evaluation process for assignments includes evaluation of your writing ability. For this reason, for the purposes of this class, any student found to have used AI technologies or programs (e.g., ChatGPT) to compose part or all of the submitted work will face the same penalties as a student who submits plagiarized work.

Students with Disabilities

Any student who feels that he/she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment to see the instructor during office hours. Students with

disabilities should also contact Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS) to discuss reasonable accommodations.

Student and Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. The Student-Faculty Expectations articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Extensions, Late Assignments, and Re-Scheduled or Missed Exams

Flexibility may be granted in cases of extenuating circumstances; however, this requires **timely and proactive communication**.

- Late work without prior communication will incur a **5% deduction per week**

Technology and Classroom Conduct

- No recording or photography without permission
- Devices should not be used for non-course activities
- Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated

Students are expected to maintain a respectful and professional learning environment:

- Engage respectfully in discussions
- Avoid disruptive behavior
- Dispose of food waste properly

Inclement Weather and Digital Learning Days

This course adheres to Georgia Tech's official inclement weather and emergency procedures.

- If campus closes: all course activities are canceled or rescheduled
- If operations are modified: activities may shift online or be adjusted
- If campus remains open but conditions are unsafe: students should prioritize safety and notify the instructor

Students are responsible for monitoring official Institute communications and course announcements.

Attendance and Participation

Absences due to hazardous weather conditions, travel disruptions, or safety concerns will be treated with flexibility. Students will be given reasonable opportunities to make up missed work or participation.

Institute Approved Absences

As per Georgia Tech policy, you are permitted to be absent from class to participate in athletic events, official field trips, and religious observances. For planning purposes, please provide me with written notice of your upcoming absence as soon as possible. When I receive this notice, you and I will discuss opportunities to make up work you will miss in your absence.

Use of Generative AI

I have no objection to your using generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT) as a research tool to identify sources and topics. However, the ideas you convey and the way they are expressed in all your writing for this course must be 100% your own. If you wish to use text generated by AI, you must treat it as you would any other research sources: you must quote or paraphrase it and provide a citation to identify the source. To present ideas or expression generated by AI as if they were your own (that is, without specifically identifying them as produced by AI) is plagiarism and will be treated as such.

Recordings of Class Sessions and Required Permissions

Classes may not be recorded by students without the express consent of the instructor unless it is pursuant to an accommodation granted by the Office of Disability Services. Class recordings, lectures, presentations, and other material posted on Canvas are for the sole purpose of educating the students currently enrolled in the course.

Undergraduate Student Academic Success Resources:

Academic Success and Advising (a unit in the Office of Undergraduate Education & Student Success) provides free support for your courses. Students can attend scheduled supplemental review (PLUS) sessions, stop by Drop-In Tutoring, or schedule a one-on-one appointment through Knack. To explore what options work best for you, please visit success.gatech.edu/tutoring or email tutoring@gatech.edu.

Course Schedule

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| 5/19 | Course Introduction | |
| 5/21 | What is Performance? | Read PS 2 – 9, 18 – 21 |
| 5/26 | What is Performance? 2 | Read PS 12 – 17, 22 - 24 |
| 5.27 | | Discussion #1 Due by 10 pm |
| 5/28 | Performance Processes | Read PS 38 – 60 |
| 6/2 | The Performance Quadrilogue | Read PS 59 – 73 |
| 6/3 | | Discussion #2 Due by 10 pm |
| 6/4 | First Performance Exercise Brainstorming Session | |
| 6/9 | Work Session for First Performance Exercise | |
| 6/11 | Types of Performance | Read PS 75 - 97 |
| 6/16 | Types of Performance 2 | Read PS 98 – 119 |
| 6/17 | | Discussion #3 Due by 10 pm |
| 6/18 | First Performance Exercise Presented in Class | |
| 6/23 | Ritual as Performance | Read PS 120 - 150 |
| 6/25 | Ritual as Performance 2 | Read PS 150 – 164 |
| 6/26 | | Discussion #4 Due by 10 pm |
| 6/30 | Second Performance Exercise Brainstorming Session | |
| 7/2 | Work Session for Second Performance Exercise | |

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| 7/7 | Play | Read PS 165 - 201 Read Huizinga, "The Nature and Significance of Play as a Cultural Phenomenon" |
| 7/8 | | Discussion #5 Due by 10 pm |
| 7/9 | Second Performance Exercise Presented in Class | |
| 7/14 | Bastille Day - No Class | |
| 7/16 | Third Performance Exercise Brainstorming | |
| 7/21 | Performativity | Read PS 240 – 273 |
| 7/23 | Social Media | Read PS 274 – 303 |
| 7/24 | | Discussion #6 Due by 10 pm |
| 7/28 | Intercultural and Global Performance | Read PS 304 – 352 |
| Final Exam Class Time | Third Performance Exercise Presented in Class | |