

Department of English & Writing Studies
Theatre Studies Program

Theatre2202G001
Performance Beyond Theatres
Winter 2024

COURSE OVERVIEW

Performance isn't just something actors at the theatre do; we are all performing, all over the place, all the time. Since the 1960s, scholars and makers of theatre have been exploring a vast array of performances of "everyday life," from church services to hockey games to the way you flirt when you're out at the bar. Performance Studies is the discipline dedicated to thinking about how performance works outside the four walls of the theatre. Applied Theatre is the change, or activate (and celebrate!) our differences. Performance Beyond Theatres is the course that will introduce you to the many ways we might usefully conceive of theatre and performance as not just an art of the stage, but an art by and for us all.

MEET THE TEACHER!

Hello Theatre 2202G!

I've been teaching at Western since 2005; in 2012 I was on a hiatus at Queen Mary, University of London, in their School of English and Drama. (Ask me about graduate work in the UK!) I have appointments in Western's Department of English and Writing Studies and in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (GSWS), and I'm one of a handful of faculty who built and launched our Theatre Studies program in 2013.

I am the current Arts and Humanities Teaching Fellow in the Centre for Teaching and Learning at Western, and I run a large research-teaching project called "Building a Creative Campus." (Ask me about interdisciplinary, collaborative teaching and learning!) Elsewhere in my scholarship, I write about feminist performance, Shakespeare and decolonization, and urban performance studies (it's a thing!). My latest book, *Women Making Shakespeare in the 21st Century* which is coming out shortly with Cambridge University Press.

Elsewhere in my life, I love road cycling, all dogs, swimming, yoga, and cooking. My favourite colours are purple and orange (did you guess?), and my superpower would be breathing underwater.

Welcome to the class!

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

When we talk about performance happening “beyond” theatres, we also talk about the spaces of our wider world –spaces that are not neutral, or just “there”. Space is political; our occupation of it requires our careful and ongoing reflection. Theatre and performance practices can contribute to this reflection in often very powerful ways.

Land acknowledgements are one tool that we can use to connect with the history of the places we inhabit or work in now; this connection allows us, in turn, to think more deeply about the power dynamics that shape the places we often take for granted.

For many of us who live on the land called Canada, historical treaties govern space’s power dynamics; for others, our living and working depends on us forgetting every day that the lands upon which we stand were never ceded by many of the First Nations communities who steward them, and who refused to give up their rights to British colonizers

Below is one version of Western’s official land acknowledgement; you can find ~~other~~ [other](#)’s worth deciding which one feels right for you, and then memorizing it or carrying it with you, so that when you need to tell others where you study you can share it along with other, personal details.

You might also be wondering whose land your family lives on, or whose land you grew up on; [this website](#) is a terrific place to start looking for answers.

We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, ~~peoples~~ [peoples](#) on lands connected to several Treaties including Treaty 6 London Township, Treaty 7 Sat ~~nnecail~~ [nnecail](#)1 (s)2 (w2T)3 (r (u c)3 (a)-1

- Be able to reflect critically on the process of making a performance-based final project, including offering an honest assessment of the wins and challenges encountered during that process.

But wait, there's more!

Students who commit to our shared labour can ALSO expect to:

- Develop or build on their existing capacity for critical analysis of theatre and performance;
- Develop or build on their teamwork skills;
- Improve their participation practice through regular self-reflection;
- Develop or build on their active listening skills;
- Develop or build on their comfort speaking in public;
- Contribute actively to a shared learning community;
- Make plenty of useful mistakes, and have a lot of fun. (Really!)

Do YOU have a goal, a promise you'd like to make to yourself to try to achieve a thing in our class this year? Write it down. Keep it handy. Check in on it from time to time.

REQUIRED READINGS AND VIEWING LISTENING

You are not required to buy ANYTHING in order to participate in Theatre 2202G.

We will use Perusall— an online e-reader and collaborative annotation tool for all of our

course readings. To sign up for Perusall, go to <https://www.perusall.com/> (1) or call (714) 431-1111 (2) for assistance. :Td

Details for each assignment are below.

Extensions policy

For any assignment due on a Friday (items 3, 4, and 6), you can take the weekend without penalty if you need it to complete your work. Make a good choice for yourself. Sometimes leeway is a good thing, but not always.

For further deadline accommodations, see your academic counsellor; Kim will comply with any recommendations they make to help support you.

If you have existing SSD accommodations, Kim will note those separately. Speak to her if you need support that falls under your SSD rubric.

1. Engagement 1: Showing up and doing the thing

VALUE: 10%

LENGTH: variable (it's all good)

DEADLINE: ongoing

Engagement is a MAJOR part of our class. That's why it comes in two parts.

Need to miss class? You can miss up to three sessions without accommodation, no questions asked. After those three misses, your grade will begin to trend downward. Don't let that happen: talk to Kim about what's going on.

B) Each week, Kim will provide a reflection prompt at the end of Tuesday's class. This prompt is SEPARATE from your Perusall readings/annotations, and will invite you to use any media you wish to respond to it. The prompt will appear in a discussion thread in that week's lesson module, and you'll have until the following Tuesday to respond to it.

The prompt will always relate our work for the week to a larger issue, to the work of other weeks, and so on; it's a chance for us to "real world" our class labour in real time. So, for example: in the week we look at Land Acknowledgements as performance, Kim might ask you to reflect on the best Land Acknowledgement you've ever heard, and tell us why it was so good. In reply, you could share text, images, a video, audio, or anything you want.

If you respond meaningfully to FIVE of these prompts, you get your full 5% for item B.

What does it mean to be "meaningful"? Our class will strive to model meaningful engagement every week, and Kim will check in with everyone at Reading Week to see how you're doing in the work of your own studenting. If needed, Kim will invite you to office hours and we'll talk about how you can pull your grade up by engaging more fully in our work together.

2. Engagement 2: Perusall Annotations (aka, preparing for class)

VALUE: 20% of final grade

LENGTH: variable (it's all good)

DEADLINE: ongoing

Engagement is a MAJOR part of our class. That's why it comes in two parts.

In part one, you show up and you do the things in class.

In part two, you prepare thoroughly for class each week by reading, watching, or listening to the texts set for that week, and you engage with your classmates in discussing the texts you read, as you read them. You do this using Perusall, which is linked to Brightspace for your convenience.

Perusall is a tool that lets you read and comment live alongside your peers. All your readings are stored in Perusall, and you should complete your readings in Perusall, because the software tracks how long you spend with each text.

How do you get 100% for your Perusall annotations?

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- There are also ways you can earn BONUS marks! For example, by reading all the way through each reading, spending a decent amount of time with the reading, etc. (Yes, Perusall tracks this. Yes, it's a bit creepy. Don't worry - Kim has an override function. This AI will not duck us up) :
- You'll quickly see, from others' comments, what quality commentary looks and feels like! Kim will also spend time early in the term highlighting great Perusall comments in

DEADLINE: Friday March 1 @ 11:55pm, via Brightspace

For your final project, you will create a performance action or a piece of mini applied theatre, either on your own or with peers of your choosing. Where and how do you begin?

For this assignment, select a piece of performance or applied theatre that we have watched or read about in class, and which you find inspiring as you think ahead to your final project. (Note that some good stuff is coming up after this assignment is due, too; you might want to glance ahead and explore as needed!)

Once you have chosen your piece, read/watch it again carefully. Then:

- think about who this work is for. What does it aim to achieve?
- consider the tactics it uses to engage its audience/participants; how do they work?
- think about some of the ethical implications of the work. You might ask, for example, who benefits from this work? Who is potentially marginalized or excluded by it—does that matter? You might also think about how your piece balances challenging audiences to think differently or creatively with how it protects audiences from harm.

A traditional “thesis” is not necessary for this assignment, but your introduction should introduce the key discoveries or conclusions your analysis will highlight in order to prepare your reader/listener/viewer for what’s to come. You should also cover all three of the prompts above to ensure your exploration of your chosen piece is thorough.

Your case study analysis can take the form of a traditional written document, but you might also choose to make a video, or record your analysis podcast. Use the medium that makes sense to you—have fun, and consider challenging yourself. You might also want to try out some new tech here if you think that tech might play a role in your eventual final project!

5. Final Project: Performance Action

VALUE: 25% of final grade

LENGTH: 105 minutes, including any audience engagement components

MEDIUM: you can use any technology that feels useful and appropriate for your action, but it MUST contain a live, in person component.

DEADLINE: Tuesday March 26 and Thursday March 28, in class

This one is for all the marbles. You’ll have been working on it for weeks. It may be live, it may be audio- or video-based, it may be hybrid. It may be fully interactive; it may be fully presentational. It might be something else entirely.

Taking inspiration from one of the many forms of performance and applied theatre we have encountered this term, for your final project you will create an event that addresses a social or political issue you feel passionate about. This issue needs to **reach** to a community or communities on our campus today, and/or a community or communities in London, Ontario today. It can reach farther, of course, but your issue should be rooted in the local.

Your performance can be created entirely by you, or it can be a group project. If it is a group project you'll receive a group mark.

We will have time after reading week class to work on our projects, but you should be thinking about yours well before that. By reading week you should know what kind of action or

important component of your report. Honest and thoughtful reflection is wanted; Kim does not need you to pretend things worked when they did not.

DO YOU NEED A HAND? WE HAVE SUPPORTS TO HELP YOU!

Academic Advising

Yourhome Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help; Kim can offer you an extension to meet your needs if your counsellor reaches out to her on your behalf! Contact info for all Faculties is https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. You can also

Week Six: February 13 & 15

READ:

- Beck, Lauren R. "Ototheatre: Summoning Theatricality." *Performance Research*, vol. 24, no. 4, 2019, pp. 8687.

- Hopkins, Shelley Orr,