Course Syllabus*

Performing Arts, Research, and the Public: Madness  

2019 Fall • Fridays 11:00-12:40 & 1:30-3:10, Place TBA  
MA 4 credits • VTP Elective

Instructor: Hyaesin Yoon (YoonH@ceu.edu)  
Office Hours: TBA

“Mental health is the revolutionary political space for black people”  
~ Bell Hooks

Course Description

This year’s theme of Madness has a number of meanings: insanity; mental, cognitive, or neurological abnormality; or rage driven by an intense sense of injustice and deprivation. In order to engage with madness as a nexus of complex political and epistemological agendas, this course explores performance (in a broad sense of the term) as our object, lens, and method.

Over the past several decades, the performing arts have become a dynamic site of feminist and other critical conversations on various issues, including the relations among gender/sexuality, race, and disability; belonging and displacement; memory and history; ecological crisis; and science and technology. At the same time, performance studies has developed into a broader and more interdisciplinary field encompassing various venues of human (and at times non-human) lives – from theater, dance, music, and other “framed” performance to social and political rituals, individual everyday behaviors, and other cultural practices. In this, performance studies also invites us to critically examine and experiment with performative aspects of our academic research including observation, spectatorship, documentation/recording, reproduction, analysis, and writing, to challenge the conventional claim that knowledge is separable from the subject, object, and social conventions of knowing.

The first few weeks of the course examine key concepts in and development of performance studies and navigate performance as a mode for feminist and queer aesthetic creation, political engagement, and critical inquiry. Then the course moves to this year’s theme, exploring various senses of madness as sites of art, political projects, and knowledge production. In this, the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, and geopolitics emerge as important axes for critically engaging with the issues of mental and emotional illness, disability, and other modes of abnormality. For this purpose, the course invites dialogues between performance theories and practices and various critical discourses on madness, such as feminist and queer theories, critical disability studies, postcolonial psychiatry, (Black) mad studies, and the medical humanities.

You do NOT need any previous experience or background in performance studies. However, please come with an open mind, as we’ll engage with various modes of individual and

* This syllabus is subject to change.
collective activity, including pedagogical presentations, production workshops, research-performance projects, and reading and screening of course materials.

Course Policies and Logistics

• We are all responsible for creating an environment where all participants can fully engage with and pay attention to each other. Please arrive on time, and turn off or silence all mobile phones before class begins. Please remember that vibration can disturb others, too. You may use tablets and laptops only to refer to the course materials. Cell phones are not allowed even for the purpose of reading. However, if you need any device for disability-related (or other comparable) reasons, you’re welcome to use it – but please let me know in advance.

• I will hold office hours throughout the semester. Everyone is welcome to visit to go over classroom discussions, assignments, or any thoughts you might have about the course. You may come in small groups or individually. To reserve a time slot, please add your name to the online sign-up sheet here (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aEP2895Zc_geS-qj9NA7h81g0ofc9tpzhjGKbgC7Ufc/edit?usp=sharing). Please sign-up for, change, or cancel appointments by 8am that day. If it is necessary to cancel after 8am, please email me. Skype meetings are available only for students at the Vienna campus or in long-term field/research outside Budapest, unless there is an urgent and necessary reason. Open time slots are also available for drop-ins during office hours. If you have a class schedule that conflicts with my regular office hours, please send me an e-mail to make an appointment.

• I will be communicating with you by e-mail frequently during the term, and you’re responsible for knowing what is in those emails. When you write, please use the subject line [Performance] to ensure that your email catches my attention.

• If you have any disability-related needs, please discuss them with me as soon as possible. Access needs can be shared with the class without shame. We, as a learning community, will try to support each other’s access needs.

Course Requirements and Assessments

Attendance and Participation (15%): Attendance is mandatory, and your active participation is crucial for the success of the course. Please complete the reading and screening assignment each week, and come to class prepared for discussion. Curiosity, humility, generosity, respect, and risk-taking are expected for our collective and experimental journey. Absences due to medical issues or family emergency will be excused in principle (if possible, you’re advised to have your absences due to illness officially documented); however, in case of repeated and prolonged absence (due to illness or family emergency), you might be asked to do a make-up assignment depending on the situation. Otherwise, missing more than one class (one 100-min session) will negatively affect your grade, and missing more than two weeks (4 sessions) might result in failing the course. Repetitive lateness will also negatively affect your grade. If you are late, it is your responsibility to notify me after the class.

Pedagogical Presentation (15%): Students (individually or in pairs) will give a presentation as if they are teaching fellow students, focusing on chosen pieces of performance relevant to the main theme of the week. This task will help students to tactically mobilize fragmentary “cases” in order to navigate the complex and conflicting terrains of art, politics, and cultures. After each presentation, the class will discuss its pedagogic performance (more than simply
delivery of knowledge), collectively evolving our presentation and teaching methods in an interdisciplinary setting.

**Text-Analysis Papers (10%)**: Students will write one 500~600-word analytic response on the reading materials assigned for the chosen week during weeks 2~6.

**In-class Production Workshops (30%)**: Throughout the course, students will engage in production meetings for the final research-performance project. The activities for the production meetings include presenting the progress of individual projects (such as short performance proposals, synopses, and production notes), sharing thoughts on others’ projects, and discussing or executing collaborative chores and other activities.

**Research-Performance Project (30%)**: Throughout the course, students will develop research-based group performance projects. These projects should be connected to the key issues and concepts of the course and should have both research and performative components. For example, a student might create a podcast-drama as an experimental ethnography, or design a poetic bike tour using the CEU Bike Share system, or organize a street-cooking session. In the final week, students will present their research-performance pieces, and submit 2~3-page individual reflection reports (due date TBA).

**Learning Outcomes**

After taking this course, students will…

- Understand the key issues raised in the broad approach to performance studies.
- Be able to engage with the major conversations among feminist and queer critiques and performance studies.
- Be able to discuss issues of madness (and mental health/illness), drawing upon a variety of critical discourses such as feminist theories and critical disability studies, and to apply performative and performance perspectives to critically and creatively engage with these issues.
- Develop firsthand experience in “performance as research,” as a way of learning, creating, and sharing knowledge through interaction with the public.

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1 (9/20): Introduction to Performance Studies**


* Suggested Reading:
  - Shana Komitee, “A Student’s Guide to Performance Studies,”
Week 2 (9/27): A Feminist /Queer Genealogy to Performativity

Part 1: A Queer and Feminist Genealogy to Performativity
- Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution,” excerpts from PSR
- Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Introduction to Performativity and Performance,” excerpts from PSR

* Suggested Reading:
  - J. L. Austin, “How To Do Things with Words: Lecture II,” excerpts from PSR
  - Jacques Derrida, “Signature Event, Context,” excerpts from PSR

Part 2: Performance and Re-presentation
- Peggy Phelan, “The Ontology of Performance: Representation without Reproduction,” Unmarked (Routledge, 1993)
- Della Pollock, “Performing Writing,” Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane eds., The End of Performance (NYU Press, 1998)

Week 3 (10/4): Performance and/as Research

Part 1: Ethnography, Oral History, and Performance
- Susie Scott, “Revisiting the Total Institution: Performative Regulation in the Reinventive Institution,” Sociology 44 (2), 2010

Part 2: Walking as Method
- Astra Taylor (dir.), “Judith Butler & Sunaura Taylor,” from Examined Life, 2008 (in-class screening)

* Suggested Reading:

Pedagogical Presentation 1: Deirdre Heddon’s Walking Interconnections (2015)

Week 4 (10/11): Staging Disability and Mental Illness

Part 1: Gender, Disability, and Gaze
• Hershini Young, “‘Sound of Kuduro knocking at my door’: Kuduro Dance and the Poetics of Debility,” African American Review 45 (3), 2012

Pedagogical Presentation 2: Sins Invalid & 1~2 other performances from the list

Part 2: Staging Hysteria
• Cecily Devereux, “Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender Revisited: The Case of the Second Wave,” ESC 40 (1), 2014

< Production Workshops 1: Collective Brainstorming >

Week 5 (10/18): Madness, Psychiatry, and Performance

Part 1: Psychiatric Power (Anti-psychiatry movement)
• Jane Arden (dir.), The Other Side Underneath, 1972, Film
• Bradley Lewis, “A Mad Fight: Psychiatry and Disability Activism,” in Disability Studies Reader

* Suggested reading:

Part 2: Performance in the Psychiatric Complex
• Susan M. Cox, “A Life of their Own: Reflections on Autonomy and Ethics in Research-Based Theater,” in A. Harpin & A. Foster eds., Performance, Madness, and Psychiatry (Palgrave, 2014)
• Rebecca Loukes, “No one ever listens’: Body, Space, and History in RedCape Theater’s The Idiot Colony,” in A. Harpin & A. Foster eds., Performance, Madness, and Psychiatry (Palgrave, 2014)

Pedagogical Presentation 3: Theater for Living and/or Orchids (Research-based-theater)

Week 6 (10.25): Post/colonialism and Madness

Part 1: Colonialism and Psychiatry
• Frantz Fanon, “Chapter 5: Colonial War and Mental Disorders,” The Wretched of the Earth (Groove Press, 2004, originally published 1961)

Part 2: Postcoloniality and Mental Health/Illness


*Suggested Readings:*
• Alice Bullard, “The Transition from Colonial to Transcultural Psychiatry,” in Sloan Mahone and Megan Vaughan eds., *Psychiatry and Empire* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

<Production Workshop 2: Project Proposals>

**Week 7 (11.1) All Saint’s Day, No Class**

**Week 8 (11.8) Racism and Madness**

Part 1: Racism and Mental Health


Part 2: Performing Black, Madness


*Suggested Reading:*
• Therí A. Pickens, *Black Madness: Mad Blackness* (Duke, 2019)
• Frank Keating, “Racialized Communities, Producing Madness and Dangerousness,” *Intersections* 5 (3), 2016

**Pedagogical Presentation 4: Choose two from the list**

**Week 9 (11.15) Mental “Health” and Neoliberalism**
• Nikolas Rose, “Neuroscience and the Future for Mental Health,” Epidemiology and Psychiatric sciences 25 (2), 2015
• Michael Pigott, “The Image of Sleep,” Performance Research 21 (1), 2016
• More material on mental health in academia TBA

*Suggested Reading
• Alice Bullard, “From Vastation to Prozac Nation,” Transcultural Psychiatry 39 (3), 2002

Pedagogical Presentation 5: Nap Ministry @ Rest as Resistance

<Production Workshop 3: Synopsis or Design of the Projects>

Week 10 (11.22) Neurodiversity and Medical Arts and Humanities

Part 1: Alzheimer’s and the Autism Spectrum
• Beatrice Allegranti and Jill Halstead, “I Can’t Find Myself,” 2015, short film (in-class screening)

Pedagogical Presentation 6: Beatrice Allegranti’s Dance Movement Psychotherapy

Part 2: Epilepsy
• B. David, Epilepsy (Pantheon, 2006, reprint edition), excerpts
• Susan Squiel, “So Long as They Grow Out of It; Comics, the Discourse of Developmental Normalcy, and Disability,” Journal of Medical Humanities 29(2), 2008

Week 11 (11.29) Class Activity or Guest Lecture: TBA

<Production Workshop 4: Final Check-in>

Week 12 (12.6) Research-performance Project Presentation and Discussion