LIVE MEDIA, VIRTUAL PERFORMANCE

SPRING 2019

Professor: “C” Heaps (Dr. “C”)

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Class Location:

Class Time:

Office Location: Theatre Office, Light Fine Arts Basement

Office Hours:

**What is this course?**

Before the advent of audiovisual reproduction, all production was *live*, or more accurately, no production was live, because liveness only exists in opposition to things that are otherwise reproduced. For the last century, an ongoing argument over the value of live performance has dominated the discourse about the “conflict” between live theatre and other forms of mediatized performance. In this course, we will talk about these various forms of performances and their differing degrees of liveness, from theatre and film to TV and radio to Twitch and social media. In doing so, we will see the intersections between digital culture and “high” culture across virtual and “real” boundaries.

**What will you be able to do by the end of this course?**

After completing this course, the student should be able to:

* Effectively research, write, and present through the lens of performance studies
* Understand digital culture and the way other subcultures operate in the virtual sphere
* Actively engage as an audience member of a variety of “live” performances
* Create your own mediatized live productions

**What texts are required for this course?**

Available at the college bookstore:

*Liveness* by Philip Auslander

*Digital Performance* by Steve Dixon

Available on Moodle or through Course Reserve:

*Media Technology and Society* by Brian Winston

*Performance* by Diana Taylor

*New Media Futures: The Rise of Women in the Digital Arts* edited by Donna Cox

*Performance Theory* by Richard Schechner

Other short readings/recordings will be made available online through Moodle. They will always be added with at least a week notice before we discuss them.

**How will you be graded in this course?**

Evaluation will be determined by:

20% - Participation

20% - Midterm PechaKuchas

20% - Reading Response Quizzes

20% - Final Paper

20% - Final Performance Project

\*Attendance in class and at events is mandatory and failure to do so will subtract points.

**GRADE %**

A+ 97%

A 94%

A- 90%

B+ 87%

B 84%

B- 80%

C+ 77%

C 74%

C- 70%

D+ 67%

D 64%

D- 60%

F Below 60%

**What will we be doing in class?**

We will be reading a variety of materials, in addition to listening to and viewing a variety of digital formats. 1-2 page reading responses will serve as quizzes once or twice a week that cover the material found in these readings and reproduced performances. While there will be some lectures about historical topics, this class is primarily a discussion-based seminar where you will be able to gather information from primary sources and analyze it together as a class.

For your midterm, you will be presenting a PechaKucha, a specific type of presentation where you prepare 20 slides and present for 40 seconds about each.

For the final, you will write a research paper about one specific type of performance, using your own participation in that type of performance as a central aspect of the paper, performing practice-as-research.

**How do I get my full participation grade?**

The large portion of the grade breakdown dedicated to participation is a positive reward system; I’m not here to take away points on a whim because you didn’t talk in class one day. Sophomore seminars are intended as discussion-based courses and as such require your enthusiastic participation. I give a high reward for participation in the class and attendance, so that students can still be rewarded for their efforts when other factors may otherwise negatively influence your grade.

**What should I bring to class?**

Do bring:

Whatever work we are discussing in class.

Whatever method you have for taking notes

Yourself, actively engaged

Do NOT bring:

Homework from other classes

Disrespect for anybody present

**What about electronics?**

I love electronic devices. You probably do too. I'm going to assume you can act as adults and responsibly use (or not use as the case may be) your laptops. Please turn off your cell phones. But know, if you use the technology to check your e-mail, stalk Facebook, or any other similar activity, you're primarily hurting yourself. Theatre is a live event; be grateful for the chance to have face-to-face time with fellow human beings. Being in your seat does not guarantee your presence, and we want you here! Also, if you are continually being too much of a disruption to the class, this privilege will be taken away.

**What about live theatre?**

Since plays are meant to be experienced in live performance, you are required to see Kalamazoo College’s production of ***Silent Sky***. You will see it during **Week 8, February 27-March 1 @7:30pm** in the Nelda K. Balch Playhouse.

**Alphabet Soup of Policy**

**Attendance**

Attendance is absolutely essential to this course. Students are allowed TWO absences because life happens, but otherwise, people need to be in class, engaged, on time. **You must never be late or miss a class in order to be considered for the full amount of the participation grade component.** Exemptions may be granted for hospitalization, deaths in the family, etc., at my discretion.

**Honor Code and Academic Honesty**

This course operates under the **College Honor System**. That means: we treat each other with respect, we nurture independent thought, we take responsibility for personal behavior, and we accept environmental responsibility. **Academic honesty** is a critical part of our value system at K. When you borrow an idea, express the idea in your own words, thus thinking it through and making it your own, and acknowledge the source of the idea with the proper citation and reference, or, in certain situations, use the exact words of the source in quotation marks and acknowledge it with the proper citation, page number, and reference. Ideas raised in class are part of the public domain and, therefore, sources of the ideas need not be acknowledged. If you are ever in doubt about this, you must ask. For the full policy, see <https://reason.kzoo.edu/studev/policies/dishonest/>.

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will result in a score of zero points on the assignment, further disciplinary action from the Dean’s Office, and possible course failure. **No exceptions.** Be sure you are presenting your own work.

**Disabilities Accommodation**

If you are a student with a disability who seeks accommodation or other assistance in this course, please let me know as soon as possible. Kalamazoo College is committed to making every effort to providing reasonable accommodations. If you want to discuss your overall needs for accommodation at the College, please direct questions to the Associate Dean of Students Office, (269) 337-7209. For more information, please see <https://www.kzoo.edu/student-life/students-with-disabilities>/.

**Learning Commons**

The Learning Commons is a network of peer support available to help you with a variety of skills and disciplines. The Writing Center, Research Consultant Center, and Center for New Media Design are on the first floor of Upjohn Library. Our English as a Second Language and Learning Specialist support programs are located there as well. The Math-Physics Center is in Olds Upton Hall. It is my observation that students who frequent these centers generally learn more and receive higher grades, so I encourage you to use them early and often. You can find more information about each of these centers here: <https://reason.kzoo.edu/learningcommons/>.

**Late Work**

All assignments are due in class on the date specified. Late work will be graded down one full grade for each day, including the day it’s due. I am willing to negotiate extensions, but please do so in advance. NO extensions for the final essay.

**Communication**

I will communicate with the class via e-mail or Moodle announcements. I will answer your questions as soon as I can, but I may not check e-mails late at night or on the weekend.

**Weekly Breakdown**

**Week 1 – What is Liveness?**

* What is liveness?
* What is live performance?
* How does liveness affect your life?
* READING: *Liveness* by Auslander, Chapters 1-2, 1-72

**Week 2 – Mediatization of Theatre**

* What is theatre like without loudspeakers?
* What is Performance Studies?
* READING: *Performance* by Diana Taylor, selections
* READING: *Digital Performance* by Steve Dixon, selections

**Week 3 – Live Music**

* What makes a concert live?
* What are the varying degrees of liveness of different ways of consuming musical performance?
* READING: *Media Technology and Society* by Brian Winston, selections
* LISTENING: WJSV Day

**Week 4 – Live Television**

* What’s the difference between live and live studio audience?
* What ways does television affect societal structure?
* READING: *Liveness* by Auslander, Chapter 3, 73-127
* WATCHING: Saturday Night Live

**Week 5 – Online Media**

* What are the differences in Liveness between different forms of social media interaction?
* Where do you perform the most online?
* READING: *Liveness* by Auslander, Chapter 4, 128-182
* PRESENTATIONS: PechaKucha on special topics

**Week 6 – Twitch**

* What is Twitch?
* What does it take to become a performer on Twitch?
* What makes Twitch so live?
* READING: *Digital Performance* by Steve Dixon, selections
* WATCHING: Follow and watch 3 separate styles of channels
* ASSIGNMENT: Research Proposal

**Week 7 – eSports**

* What shifts when we look at the competitive video game scene?
* How do eSports compare to non-e sports?
* READING: *Performance Theory* by Richard Schechner, selections
* WATCHING: eSports competition of choice
* ASSIGNMENT: Initial Thesis and Outline

**Week 8 – Just Chatting**

* What opportunities does the Just Chatting category on Twitch provide?
* Do Twitch streamers perform themselves or personas?
* VIEWING: Just Chatting channels on Twitch
* ASSIGNMENT: Rough Draft of Final Paper
* ASSIGNMENT: Watch the performance of *Silent Sky*

**Week 9 – Special Topics in Twitch**

* How do people perform gender on Twitch?
* What happens when the daily life of the performers and Twitch intersect?

READING: *New Media Futures* by Donna Cox

**Week 10 – Projects and Presentations**

* What did you learn from creating your own live performance in digital space?
* What challenges do you still see for future performers?
* PRESENTATIONS: Final Project

**Finals**

* ASSIGNMENT: Final Draft, due 12pm (noon)