

Department of English & Writing Studies
Theatre Studies Program

Theatre 2202G-001
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 discipline that helps artists and scholars to bring the pedagogical benefits of performance into the community, to support social justice, advocate for 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 2012-14 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 2013-14.

I am the current Arts and Humanities Teaching Fellow in the Centre for Teaching and Learning at Western, and I run a large research-on-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 is *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 others [here](#). It’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, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Neutral peoples, on lands connected to several Treaties including Treaty 6 London Township, Treaty 7 Sombra Township, Treaty 21 Longwoods and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This place continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors to society.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Outcomes are goals, a promise to try to achieve a thing; we may not get them perfect, but we can do our best.

By the end of this term, students who commit to the shared labour of TS2202G can expect to:

- Understand the basic principles of Performance Studies and Applied Theatre, and be able to assess the strengths, weaknesses, and ethical challenges posed by the work we will explore together;
- Understand theatre and performance “as a public practice” with a strong social justice inclination, and be able to discuss the risks and benefits of theatre and performance as tools for public engagement in our current cultural climate;
- Have put “theatre and performance as a public practice” into practice in a performance action or mini piece of applied theatre, based on an issue of concern to them and their local community/ies;

- 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://app.perusall.com/home> and create an account. Enter our course code – **SOLGA-9BQ6J** – upon registration. You'll see all our readings appear as assignments once you're in our course.

Each week, you are responsible for reading and commenting on each of our assigned readings to earn marks for engagement (see "Assignments" below). All the details about how to use Perusall, and why we are using it, are available in a document called "Annotation Guidelines for Perusall"; this document is linked under "Perusall" in Brightspace, and also in the "Syllabus in Hard Copy" area in Brightspace.

All work we will watch or listen to lives in Brightspace, under "Lessons: week by week". Click on the different weeks to see what's on tap and find links to all the week's goodies.

ASSIGNMENTS + GRADING

Your grade in Theatre 2202G is based on six items:

1. Engagement 1: (10%)
2. Engagement 2: Perusall (20%)
3. Expanotation! (15%)
4. Performance Action Case Study (15%)
5. Final Project: Performance Action (25%)
6. Final Project: Performance Action Report (15%)

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.

Kim doesn't lecture; in class, we will engage in meaningful conversation about what we have read, watched, done, or listened to ahead of class. We will also do small group work, we will spend time in reflection together (which will include writing things down and/or creating something that represents meaningful reflection for you), and we will have conversations about how we learn (and how we can learn better).

Your engagement practice needs to be ongoing throughout the term; much of it will be assessed based on our mutual sense (yours and Kim's) of how things are going *for you*. Some of it will be hard and fast; some of it will be more fluid and subjective. Regardless, it will strive to be honest and fair.

Engagement 1 has two components:

A) Showing up and being present in the moment of our learning (5%)

B) The work of studenting: regular and meaningful reflection (5%)

These components are assessed using a sliding scale; you can earn your full 10% by noting carefully the conditions attached to each one, and by talking to Kim about how it's going for you (especially when it's going less well than you'd hoped).

A) If you show up to each class meeting *and engage thoughtfully* with the work we're doing as often as you can, you get your 5%, no other questions asked.

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 – 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 in OWL 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?

- If you provide at least TWO thoughtful annotations in Perusall on each assigned reading – an original comment, OR a comment on someone else's comment – you will earn full marks (3/3 on Perusall's scale), and be on track for full marks.

- 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 class, to help you learn how to improve your annotation game.
- If you miss readings, don't leave comments, etc, your grade for this engagement component will start tracking downward. (You will be able to see your grade in real time in Perusall so you know how you are doing.) That means it's worth your while to build time into your schedule each week to complete all of our readings (all are manageable!) – and know that it's time very well spent, and fairly rewarded.

Under the Perusall tab in Brightspace you'll find a link to a document with lots more information about how to get the most out of Perusall – including your full marks!

3. Expanotation!

VALUE: 15% of final grade

LENGTH: 1000 words (give or take 10%, including Works Cited)

DEADLINE: Friday February 16, 11:59pm, via Brightspace

By now you have the hang of the Perusall annotations: you select a couple of moments that grab you in each of the articles we read for class, and you say something valuable about why they grab you. (Kim calls these kinds of moments “critical moments”: they generate a critical spark in you.) Chances are that you have completed one or two annotations you're *really* proud of – something really lit you up, and you have SO MUCH MORE TO SAY about it.

Now's your chance.

Select your favourite annotation so far. What's the argument you are engaging with in the reading? What's the argument you're making in your annotation? Run with it. Maybe go deeper into the article you annotated, to pull out threads relevant to your question/claim. Maybe put the article into conversation with *another* article we've read, to expand your question/claim! Your “thesis” here starts with your annotation: what's at issue? Then, let yourself become a critical explorer.

BONUS OPPORTUNITY: want to do two, to see if you can do better the second time around? Go for it – I'll pick your best grade! No deadline for the second attempt – just get it in by the last day of term.

4. Performance Action Case Study Analysis

VALUE: 15% of final grade

LENGTH: 1000 words, or 6-8 minutes of audio/visual material (give or take 10%, including Works Cited)

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 – and 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-style. 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: 10-15 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 be relevant 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 in 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 applied theatre event you're inspired to explore, and you should use your case study analysis (due March 1) to start thinking in earnest about what you might like to make.

Don't be scared; feel challenged, be excited! It's going to be awesome.

6. Final Project: Performance Action Report

VALUE: 15% of final grade

LENGTH: 1500 words (give or take 10%, including Works Cited)

DEADLINE: Friday April 5 @ 11:59pm, via Brightspace

Sometimes the best laid performance plans go awry; it's not everything you hoped or worked for. Sometimes the most poorly organized and under-rehearsed shows hit the jackpot and come off like a dream anyway! Sometimes good work yields good results. It's hard to know: that's one of the magical things about making performance for a live audience or a group of inexpert participants. Which is why it's so important for us to reflect, take stock, and report (to ourselves and to Kim) on how the *process* went, behind the scenes.

Process matters as much as product, but at university we're not always good at valuing process. (Ask Kim how she finally learned to stop procrastinating and write her papers at least a full day before they were due!) In this assignment, an honest accounting of the process is the goal, and is the key to success (in both grades, and life).

After your performance presentation (on either March 26 or 28), take stock. If you made your piece alone, this is a solo journey. If your project was made with a group, the reflection (and the report) are a group effort.

Your report should address each of these items:

- introduce your performance action and what it aimed to achieve;
- talk about the issue you wanted to address and why; share any research into that issue you completed in order to make your action properly informed;
- talk about how you came to decide on the *form* of action you used (for example: a ritual; an audio walk; a long table; etc), and share the research you did about that form to help you make your action well;
- share the different steps you took to build your action, including information about which group members did what labour, if applicable;
- reflect on the process, critically: what went well, and why? Where did you stumble, and how did you overcome? What challenges remained, and how would you address them differently if you had the action to make again? NOTE: this is, in many ways, the most

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

Your home 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 related 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 here:

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 come talk to Kim – she can help you find the right resource quickly.)

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western University is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, here. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca. Kim knows these folks; if you need to reach out to her for help, she can connect you!

Accessible Education

Please contact Kim if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you! You may also wish to contact Accessible Education at

http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

if you have any questions regarding accommodations you are entitled to!

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre (<https://learning.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

All required readings, listening, and/or viewing is listed below. For more goodies, though, visit each week's page in Brightspace, under "Lessons: Week by Week".

Week One: January 9 & 11

READ: Taylor, Diana. "[Framing] Performance." *Performance*. Duke UP, 2016.

Week Two: January 16 & 18

READ:

- Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. "Performance Studies." *The Performance Studies Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Henry Bial and Sara Brady, Routledge, 2016, pp. 25-36.
- Schechner, Richard. "Excerpt from 'Restoration of Behavior.'" *The Performance Studies Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Henry Bial and Sara Brady, Routledge, 2016, pp. 69-71.
- Conquergood, Dwight. "Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research." *The Performance Studies Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Henry Bial and Sara Brady, Routledge, 2016, pp. 37-47.

Week Three: January 23 & 25

READ:

- Prentki, Tim, and Sheila Preston. "Introduction: Applied Theatre." *The Applied Theatre Reader*, ed. Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston, Routledge, 2008, pp. 9-15.
- Boal, Augusto. "From Theatre of the Oppressed." *The Applied Theatre Reader*. Ed. Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston. London: Routledge, 2008. 214-28.
- Alvarez, Natalie, and Kim Solga. "Living the Interdiscipline." *Research in Drama Education*, vol. 24, no. 3, 2019, pp. 257-66.

Week Four: January 30 & February 1

READ: Robinson, Dylan, Kanonhsyonne Janice C. Hill, Armand Garnet Ruffo, Selena Couture, and Lisa Cooke Ravensbergen. "Rethinking the Practice and Performance of Indigenous Land Acknowledgement." *Canadian Theatre Review*, vol. 177, 2019, pp. 20-30.

WATCH: The interdisciplinary Anishinaabekwe artist Rebecca Belmore's startling 2002 performance, *Vigil*.

Week Five: February 6 & 8

READ:

- Weaver, Lois. "Doing Time." *The Applied Theatre Reader*, ed. Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston, Routledge, 2008, pp. 55-61.
- L'Hirondelle, Cheryl. "Already-And: The Art of Indigenous Survivance." *Sustainable Tools for Precarious Times: Performance Actions in the Americas*, ed. Natalie Alvarez, Claudette Lauzon, and Keren Zaiontz, Palgrave, 2019, pp. 289-302.
- Stuart-Fisher, Amanda. "Bearing Witness: (re) positioning the playwright in the telling of other peoples' stories of trauma." *The Applied Theatre Reader*, ed. Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston, Routledge, 2008, pp. 174-90.

Week Six: February 13 & 15

READ:

- Beck, Lauren R. "Ototheatre: Summoning Theatricality." *Performance Research*, vol. 24, no. 4, 2019, pp. 80-87.
- Carlson, Marla. "Ways to Walk New York After 9/11." *Performance and the City*, ed. D.J. Hopkins, Shelley Orr, and Kim Solga, Palgrave, 2009, pp. 15-32.

LISTEN: Sayers, Thomas. *Listening to the Coves*. Audio recording, 2021.

Week Seven is READING WEEK!

Week Eight: February 27 & 29

No reading this week! Head over to Brightspace to find out what we're going to do instead! (Among other things, Thursday is our first of two Performance Action Workshop days. Come prepared to think and work ahead!)

Week Nine: March 5 & 7

READ:

- Parker, Andrew, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. "Introduction to Performativity and Performance." *The Performance Studies Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Henry Bial and Sara Brady, Routledge, 2016, pp. 226-32.
- Frankland, Emma. "Introduction: We Are All Biological, None of Us Is Yet A Robot." *None of Us Is Yet A Robot: Five Performances on Gender Identity and the Politics of Transition*, Oberon, 2019, pp. 6-20.

WATCH: Frankland, Emma. *HEARTY*. Written and performed by Emma Frankland, Featuring Pri Bertucci, Tamarra and Cole Alvis, Directed by Rosie Powell, Keir Cooper and Emma Frankland, Video, 2023.

Week Ten: March 12 & 14

READ: Youssef, Marcus. "Best in Show: Reality Theatre, Performative Authenticity, and the 2015 Federal Election." *Canadian Theatre Review*, vol. 166, Spring 2016, pp. 10-14. (Thursday is our second Performance Action Workshop day. Time to get on it!)

Week Eleven: March 19 & 21

READ: Moon, Ellie. "Asking For It." *Canadian Theatre Review* 180 (2019): 73-90.

Week Twelve: March 26 & 28

It's Performance Action week! No reading – instead, YOU are performing!

Week Thirteen: April 2 & 4

That's it! Tuesday we debrief your Performance Actions. Thursday is optional; come for donuts and to chat with Kim about your final reports. Or off you go – and thanks for being part of the class!