

SYLLABUS
Queens College Department of Art
ARTS 394/731: PERFORMANCE STUDIO

Time: Mondays, 6 – 9:50 PM
Location: Klapper Hall, room 672

Professor Chloë Bass

Office: Klapper Hall, room TBD

Office Hours: Mondays, 3 - 5 PM **in person**; Wednesdays 3 - 5 PM **via zoom**. Both by appointment only.

Email: chloe.r.bass@gmail.com

Office hour policy: I request that you email me at least 24 hours in advance if you are planning to come to office hours. This will ensure that I'm prepared for your visit and your specific concerns.

Absence policy: each student is allowed one excused absence. However, you must email me in advance of class to let me know that you won't be there; otherwise, the absence is not excused. Beyond the first absence, missing class will affect your grade. More than two unexcused absences will result in the grade being lowered by a full letter.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This upper level course will familiarize students with different aspects of live performance art. Focusing on performance at a critical level (including dance, protest as performance, conceptual performance, and institutional critique), students will learn to use live art as a means of social assessment. This course is very much geared towards the contemporary, and will include several field trips to live events and exhibitions, as well as in-class workshops and visits from artists.

Each student will be responsible for creating several performance works, engaging actively in critique of other students' works, writing response papers about all field trips and events, engaging actively in discussion about readings and screenings, completing a final project, and writing a final paper critiquing a classmate's final performance.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To deepen understanding of the field of contemporary performance art.
- To encourage visual artists to examine aspects of their static practice through live performance; to deepen the practice of performance artists.
- To engage critical thinking skills in discussion of and criticism about live events.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Performance assignments 35% | Final project 35%
Participation in class discussions/critique, completion of readings, and group work 30%

SCHEDULE

September 9th: Intro to Performance. What is performance? What do we think of when we think about performance art? Why do something in front of a live audience?

September 16th: Institutional Critique. Introduction to the work of Andrea Fraser, Bread and Puppet Theater, and GULF Labor.

Screening: Andrea Fraser, "Museum Highlights"

In-class assignment: in small groups, stage a flash critique of an institution that everyone in the group is affected by and participates in. Must incorporate the language of that institution.

Homework: refine your institutional critique performance for re-staging in class on 9/23.

September 23rd: Visit from artist Sheryl Oring. Sheryl will talk about her ongoing live performance *I Wish To Say*, discuss performance process, answer questions, and help think through student ideas. Presentation and discussion of institutional critique performances.

September 30th: Aesthetics of protest.

In-class assignment: Bring a PRINTED photo of a recent or historic American protest to class. Re-stage and then improve the photo. What does the image say as a still? What is missing? What do you wish were there? What changes when the image moves?

October 7th: FIELD TRIP. We are going on a performance bird walk with artist Mark Menjivar. This will take place during our normal class hours. Exact meeting location TBD.

October 14th: NO CLASS. Technically there is a conversion/make-up day on Tuesday, October 15th, when CUNY will observe a Monday schedule. *However*, instead of having this make-up class, I ask that during the week of October 14th, you pick *one free live performance event* to attend at the PRELUDE Festival at the CUNY Graduate Center, which will take place on October 16th - 19th, 2024.

You will have a short (1 - 2 page) response paper due on October 21st. If you're having any difficulty choosing which event to attend, please email Chloë.

October 21st: Prelude response papers due. Video performance. What does it mean to make a “live” work for a screen? How does this differ from making work for an audience that’s in the room?

Screening day! We’ll watch a sampling of performances staged for a video audience. Screenings TBD.

Homework: make a short piece of video performance, no more than two minutes in duration. Make sure this performance is intended primarily for the camera. Who is the camera? What do you want to present to the camera? Video performances will be screened in class on October 28th.

October 28th: In-class: presentation and critique of video performances.

November 4th: Introduction to Internet performance.

Homework: stage a piece that exists only online, for a targeted online audience, within a specific user platform: Instagram, TikTok, X, YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, etc. Plan to stage this performance for at least a week. Make sure that your performance focuses on features of engagement: how do people communicate on your chosen platform? How do you know when you’ve gotten a response? In class on 11/11, you will show us the existing results of the performance within the online context.

November 11th: In-class: presentation and critique of internet performances.

Homework: Put together a proposal for your own final performance. Using the performance styles that we’ve investigated over the semester, put together a two-page proposal for a final performance including: conceptual intent, performance duration, aesthetic concerns, related props and costumes, anticipated technical needs, etc.

This work should reflect your own ongoing interest in a particular aspect of live performance, or a particular theme in your other artistic work that you want to make live in a formal capacity.

Proposals should be emailed to Chloë for feedback by November 18th.

November 18th: Discussion of final performance plans and needs. Students will have one-on-one meetings with Chloë throughout the class, and will work on gathering material or planning for their performance solo, or with peers, during the rest of the class period.

November 25th: FIELD TRIP visit to Judson Church for a Monday night performance event.

December 2nd: Final performances day one.

December 9th: Final performances day two.

December 16th: Classmate performance critique due. End of term.

REQUIRED TEXTS

All readings will be provided as links or PDFs in advance of their due date. Readings will be added to the syllabus as the semester proceeds.

Students are welcome to suggest additional readings, screenings (or other multimedia presentations), or activities to be conducted over the course of the semester, time permitting. This is a way to ensure that the class reflects your interests.

Please email me with suggestions: chloe.r.bass@gmail.com

MATERIALS

As each student will be presenting his/her/their own performance work, we will all have different material requirements. Please come prepared with the materials you need to complete your individual work. If you need speciality equipment that the Art Department may be able to provide, please email me at least 4 days in advance: chloe.r.bass@gmail.com.