COURSE DESCRIPTION
Ideas of “performance” have achieved broad resonance in contemporary theory, art, politics, culture, and studies of social behavior. This course serves as an introduction to the foundational theories and key-concepts of performance. We will look at multiple deployments of performance, concentrating on its functions as a conceptual term, as an object of analysis, and as a mode of interpretation. Investigating the interdisciplinary nature of performance, we will look into the allied areas of performativity, embodiment, interculturalism, constructions of identity and difference, the relationship between aesthetics and politics, with a particular focus on ecology and environmental justice from a feminist and queer perspective. We will look at how performance creates alternative modes of history.
and knowledge in a range of cultural contexts, engaging with a variety of so-called “high” and “low” theoretical frameworks and archives, ultimately questioning the validity of such, or any, hierarchizations. Finally, in the light of the experiences, methods, encounters, conceptualizations, and practices explored in class, we will actively engage in the devising and public sharing of a performance, *Mapping the Rio*, which will show how performance can generate new types of knowledge, bridging assumed divides between theory and practice, and the ethics and politics of performance.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**
- To demonstrate a solid understanding of key concepts and foundational theories in Performance Studies.
- To identify, analyze, and critically consider a variety of modes of performance.
- To critically interconnect methods and theories across disciplinary fields through the lens and practice of performance.
- To creatively and experimentally engage with the tools and possibilities of performance.
- To consciously connect performance with social and environmental justice.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**
- Applied interdisciplinarity & critical thinking.
- Exercise of collaborative ethics in thinking and practice.
- Increased sense of social responsibility through performance.
- Increased awareness of the historical and local social, geopolitical, environmental and performative processes that shape our community.
- Expanded knowledge of theories, processes, and behaviors that affect historical narratives and social organization.

**REQUIREMENTS**
- Attend 3 mandatory performances (details below).
- Attend and participate in the class performance *Mapping the Rio*: Thursday, April 27, Downtown El Paso, 4-8 PM.
- Consistency in attendance and active participation, which include vibrantly engaging with the assigned materials and creatively contributing to the craft of the collective performance.
- Always inform the instructor via e-mail if you will miss class.
- Abide by the attendance policy (below).
- Submit all the written assignments on time (see Grade Breakdown section).

**CLASS MATERIALS**
- All the class materials are uploaded/linked on Blackboard (BB). **Students do not need to purchase any textbook.**
- Students will need to purchase tickets for in-person performances (See Deadlines and Mandatory Events section).
- Refer to the UTEP Library Dance Studies research guide for important dance sources: [https://libguides.utep.edu/c.php?g=429599&p=2930447](https://libguides.utep.edu/c.php?g=429599&p=2930447)
Grade Breakdown and Scale

- Participation and collaborative ethics: 25%
  Please come to class ready to engage with the assigned readings and audiovisual materials. Please also complete all assignments and attend all mandatory events listed in the syllabus (see Deadlines and Mandatory Events section). Please practice a collaborative and proactive work ethics, based on listening and respectful sharing. See also the Attendance Policy below.

- Contribution to the creative process of and participation in the performance event *Mapping the Rio*: 35%
  Specific classes during the semester are conceived for the collaborative devising, structuring, and rehearsing of the performance event. Specific individual and group tasks will be given through a collective and instructor-led process on the basis of the development of the performance ideas. Students will participate in the performance according to their best capacity and their talents (all responsibilities will be deeply discussed, tried out, and negotiated). Out-of-class rehearsal time will be negotiated only based on availabilities and only if strictly necessary. **Absolute availability is needed on the performance day: Thursday, April 27, Downtown El Paso (San Jacinto Plaza area), 4-8 PM.** Further details will be profusely shared in class and on Blackboard. Students in need of official excuses need to contact the instructor at their earliest convenience.

- Thinking Performance Writing Assignments: 20%
  These assignments consist of four short papers, each 2 pages in length, in which students offer personal reflections on the aspects of performance explored so far, relating them to their lived experience and everyday life. Papers are due on Blackboard in the on Sunday of weeks 3, 6, 10, 13 by 11:59 PM.

- Final performance documentation and critical reflection: 20%
  A mixed-media documentation of the performance process plus a 4-page written reflection on the performance and its process, engaging with the theories, authors, and artists explored in class. Due on Blackboard on May 9, 11:59 PM. Note that ongoing engagement in class guarantees a successful and non-exhausting completion of the final assignment. Further instructions will be given in class and posted on Blackboard.

For graduate students only:

- Participation and collaborative ethics: 20%
  Please come to class ready to critically and deeply engage with the assigned readings and audiovisual materials. Please also complete all assignments and attend all mandatory events listed in the syllabus (see Deadlines and Mandatory Events section). Please practice a collaborative and proactive work ethics, based on listening and respectful sharing. See also the Attendance Policy below.

- Contribution to the creative process of and performance event *Mapping the Rio*: 30%
  Specific classes during the semester are conceived for the collaborative devising, structuring, and rehearsing of the performance event. Specific individual and group tasks will be given through a collective and instructor-led process on the basis of the development of the performance ideas. Students will participate in the performance according to their best capacity and their talents (all responsibilities will be deeply discussed, tried out, and negotiated). Out-of-class rehearsal time will be negotiated only based on availabilities and only if strictly necessary. **Absolute availability is needed on the performance day: Thursday, April 27, Downtown El Paso (San Jacinto Plaza area), 4-8 PM.** Further details will be profusely shared in class and on Blackboard. Students in need of official excuses need to contact the instructor at their earliest convenience.

- In-class book presentations: 10%
  Graduate students are required to give 20-minute in class presentations on two books throughout the semester (on Tuesday of Week 3 and on Thursday of Week 8). Students can choose one text from a list compiled by the instructor on the basis of their personal and research interests. Presentations need to be delivered orally (unless
agreed through an official accommodation) and can be supported by any audio-visual, performative or material elements at the discretion of the presenter.

- **Thinking Performance Creative Writing Assignments: 20%**
These assignments consist of four short papers, each 3 pages in length, in which students offer personal reflections on the aspects of performance explored so far, relating them to their lived experience and everyday life. Such reflections can be expressed through a variety of writing genres and authorial voices. Indeed, radical experimentation through writing is highly encouraged. Different formats and length can be renegotiated with the instructor. Papers are due on Blackboard in the on Sunday of weeks 3, 6, 10, 13 by 11:59 PM.

- **Final performance creative and critical portfolio: 20%**
A mixed-media documentation of the performance process plus a 4-page written reflection on the performance and its process, engaging with the theories, authors, and artists explored in class. Due on Blackboard on May 9, 11:59 PM. Note that ongoing engagement in class guarantees a successful and non-exhausting completion of the final assignment. Further instructions will be given in class and posted on Blackboard.

A = 90+  B = 80–89  C = 70–79  D = 65–69  F = < 65

**Technology Requirements**
The course utilizes Blackboard as the main platform. You need to have access to a device that allows you to enter Blackboard (better a computer/laptop to watch videos), to a printer, to webcam and microphone to record and upload audio-visual materials. All the class materials are uploaded/linked on Blackboard. Sometimes, if a video doesn’t work or a page doesn’t open, it’s because you need to download or update a software or update/change browser. Check that your device’s hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course. If you encounter technical difficulties of any kind, contact the Help Desk at https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/
If you cannot have access to technological means for whatever reasons, contact the instructor ASAP to negotiate an accommodation.
If you do not know how to use Blackboard – contact Tech Support immediately. Do not wait until you do not understand until you are having problems. You can go in person to Room 300 at the UTEP Library or contact the Help Desk via email at helpdesk@utep.edu, or by phone 747-5257. Hours are M-F 7a-8p, Sat 9a-10p and Sun 12-4p.

**Attendance Policy**
In a course that meets twice a week, a student is allowed a maximum of 4 absences in an entire semester, 2 of which require no justification and result in no penalty. A student can use these absences based on personal necessity. The 3rd and 4th absences will result in a drop of ½ a letter grade each in the student’s overall grade. At the 5th absence, regardless of the student’s current course standing or grade, the student will automatically fail the course.
Exceptions:
- In the event of international bridge closures, exceptions may be made and make-up work may be assigned.
- In case of an injury or extended illness, it is the student’s responsibility to meet with his or her instructor to discuss possible solutions for course continuation or to consider dropping the class.
In the event of highly unusual or extenuating circumstances, a student may petition the course instructor and department chair for permission to continue in a course.

In case of injury, a student who is able to be present in the studio may observe class and complete alternative and equivalent assignments to be negotiated with the instructor.

**DEADLINES AND MANDATORY EVENTS**

- Attend 1 performance of *Raising the Barre*, UTEP dance concert. February 2, 3, 4 @ 7:30 PM; June Sadowski Kruszewski Studio Theatre. Tickets at UTEP Ticket Center (2 locations: next to Don Haskins or Union East, room 111) or online on Ticketmaster (fee applies). (*)
- February 5 (Sunday), 11:59 PM: Thinking Performance Writing Assignment 1
- February 26 (Sunday), 11:59 PM: Thinking Performance Writing Assignment 2
- April 2 (Sunday), 11:59 PM: Thinking Performance Writing Assignment 3
- Attend 1 reiteration of *our secrets as we shed them: Experiencing the Bosque reimagined*. April 20 @ 7:30 PM, April 21 @ 7:30 PM, April 22 @ 7:30 PM, April 23 @ 2 PM; Sadowski Kruszewski Studio Theatre. Tickets at UTEP Ticket Center (2 locations: next to Don Haskins or Sadowksi East, room 111) or online on Ticketmaster (fee applies). (*)
- April 23 (Sunday), 11:59 PM: Thinking Performance Writing Assignment 4
- April 27 (Thursday), 4-8 PM, Downtown El Paso (San Jacinto Plaza area): performance event *Mapping the Rio*
- Attend 1 reiteration of *WhenWaterFalls*. April 28 @ 7:30 PM, April 29 @ 7:30 PM, April 30 @ 2 PM. Wise Family Theatre. Tickets at UTEP Ticket Center (2 locations: next to Don Haskins or Union East, room 111) or online on Ticketmaster (fee applies). (*)
- May 9 (Tuesday), 11:59 PM: Final performance documentation and critical portfolio

(*) If you cannot pay for a ticket, there are ushering opportunities for theatre performances. Students can sign up to usher all departmental productions. They need to come to the audience development office (lobby of the Wise Theatre in Fox Fine Arts level 2) in person to sign up.

**MAKE-UP WORK AND EXTRA-CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES**

The necessity and modality of make-up work will be discussed on a case-by-case basis. Extra-credit opportunities will be announced in class and on BB via the Announcement feature (students will receive an email on their UTEP account).

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass.

**SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Any form of academic dishonesty: cheating, plagiarizing, or taking a test for another student is considered a very serious matter at UTEP. Our library webpage provides good information on what UTEP considers Academic Dishonesty and what steps the university takes in such cases. Please review
COURSE COPYRIGHT
All the materials—written, audio, and visual—shared within this course remain within this course. To store, post, or share by any means and/or for personal use or public consumption any course material (assigned or produced within and for the course) without explicit authorization by the subjects involved is illegal. Make sure to ask for permission in case. You can share on your social media your own materials if the only person that appears or the only author is you. If you want to share content that includes or is co-authored with other classmates, you need to contact them and the instructor via e-mail (utilizing the UTEP account) to discuss the authorization.

POLICY ON COPYRIGHT AND FAIR USE
Some of the materials in this course are copyrighted. Copying of textbooks is not “fair use” under the Copyright Act. Your cooperation is expected. The University requires all members of its community to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies.

POLICY ON SENSITIVE SUBJECT MATTER
The performing arts have a power to stir strong emotions, or possibly touch on subjects you might not feel comfortable seeing or experiencing. If you have concerns about viewing or discussing specific subjects that may trigger specific emotions, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. As I will respect your individual's rights to choose what performances and topics you can engage with, I expect all our discussions and reflections to be conducted in a respectful and professional matter.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES FOR STUDENT SUPPORT
• Center for Accommodations and Support Services https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/
• Student Success Helpdesk https://www.utep.edu/advising/student_resources/student-success-helpdesk.html
• Miner Learning Center https://www.utep.edu/mlc/
• University Writing Center https://www.utep.edu/uwc/
• Counseling and Psychological Services https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/
• Students are encouraged to speak with professionals from UTEP’s Counseling and Psychological Services on a walk-in basis from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday in Union Building West, Room 202. In addition, the Miners Talk Crisis Line at 915-747-5302 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
• UTEP Title IX (Anti-Sexual Harassment and Anti-Sexual Violence) Office: https://www.utep.edu/titleix
• Need more dance in your life? Join the UTEP student organization DESERT DANCE. E-mail desertdanceutep@gmail.com
COURSE SCHEDULE

Please, note that assigned materials, extra bibliographies, presentations, and more are weekly available on our Blackboard site. Classes will include close-readings and analysis of a variety of performances (see Blackboard for details) as well as multi-media performative exercises.

WEEK 1 Intros and rituals

Tue, Jan 17
Ritual and play, foundational concepts in Performance Studies. Class rituals. Overall expectations and course overview, syllabus.

Thur, Jan 19
What is Performance? What is Performance Studies? Intro to our performance Mapping the Rio (our performance). Meet our dramaturgy collaborator, engineering professor and CERM director, Dr. Alex Mayer.

WEEK 2 Performativity and Performance

Tue, Jan 24
Video due: Richard Schechner on “Performativity” (5 minutes)
How do we do things with words? What does performance do? J. L. Austin theorization of performativity and speech acts.

Thur, Jan 26

WEEK 3 Memory and Postmemory

Tue, Jan 31
The issue of memory and the body in Performance Studies. The theorizations of Marianne Hirsh and Michael Rothberg. Graduate student presentations (20’ each)

Thur, Feb 2
Reading due: Interview with dance artist Rosemary Candelario https://glasstire.com/2022/05/11/texas-waterways-an-interview-with-rosemary-candelario/
A class theme: making the invisible visible. Guest lecture on Mapping and river mechanics with prof. Alex Mayer

Raising the Barre dance concert, February 2, 3, 4.
Thinking Performance Writing Assignment 1 due on Sunday
**WEEK 4  Presence and Ephemerality**

**Tue, Feb 7**
Ephemerality and performance with André Lepecki’s and Peggy Phelan’s theories. Diana Taylor’s theorization of the archive. Annalisa Sacchi’s reclaiming of presence in performance. With several visual examples. Discussion on *Raising the Barre*.

**Thur, Feb 9  Meet at Library: Special Collections**
**Reading due:** Miguel A. De La Torre, “Water—A Living Spirit” from *Gonna Trouble the Water*
Exploring historical and contemporary maps and documents about the Rio Grande / Rio Bravo at the UTEP Library Special Collections. Possibly with our dramaturgy collaborator prof. Alex Mayer.

**WEEK 5  Kinesthesia in Performance**

**Tue, Feb 14**
“How and why do you respond to the motions of another body?” Theories of kinesthesia, empathy and community kinesthesia. Community, state and kinesthesia: Hannah Kosstrin’s kinesthetic peoplehood.

**Thur, Feb 16  Meet in Fox Fine Arts, studio A452**
Movement session: wear comfortable clothes, preferably long pants and a shirt that covers the shoulders. Socks recommended. Bring water.

**WEEK 6  Devising Mapping the Rio 1**

**Tue, Feb 21  The walking session: meet and leave bags in Melissa’s office**
Discussing theories of walking while walking. Moving like a river. Along with prof. Alex Mayer.

**Thur, Feb 23**
Structuring *Mapping the Rio*

**Thinking Performance Writing Assignment 2 due on Sunday**

**WEEK 7  Liminalities and Borders**

***Tue, Feb 28  Video due: Schechner on “liminal and liminoid”***
Victor Turner’s theory of the liminal, and in-betweenness in performance.
Guest lecture: Andie Everett, MS, GiST

**Thur, Mar 2  Reading due: poems by Gris Muñoz TBD**
Guest and poetry lab: Gris Muñoz, water, river, borderlands
WEEK 8    Bodies Keep the Score

Tue, Mar 7
What does “embodiment” even mean? Moving with trauma. Theories of resilience and countertheories

Thur, Mar 9
Trauma and place. What is a dispositif? The performance of El Paso murals.
Graduate student presentations (20’ each).

SPRING BREAK March 13-19

WEEK 9    World Water Week

Tue, Mar 21
Guest lecture: prof. Rip Langford (Geology): History of the Rio Grande

Thur, Mar 23    IDRB room TBA
WWW: The history of the Rio Bosque with John Sproul

WEEK 10    Performing the self (in the narcissistcene)

Tue, Mar 28
Reading due: excerpts from Meggie Nelson’s Bluets
Performing Mystery. Performance and self-narrative and the world through the self.

Thur, Mar 30
Optional reading: Peggy Phelan’s “Trisha Brown’s Orfeo: Two Takes on Double Ending”
Autoethnography. In-class reading of Peggy Phelan’s “Trisha Brown’s Orfeo: Two Takes on Double Endings.”
Writing practice on ending and flooding.

Thinking Performance Writing Assignment 3 due on Sunday

WEEK 11    Cruising Utopia

Tue, Apr 4
Imagining / living / performing queerness. The theory and legacy of José Esteban Muñoz. A brief history of utopia in performance and how it influenced social and environmental movements and activism.

Thur, Apr 6
Reading due: excerpt from Jack Halberstam’s The Queer Art of Failure
Jack Halberstam on performing failure, low theory, weird archives, and trans-ness. A look back at Preciado and Butler.
WEEK 12  Devising Mapping the Rio 2

Tue, Apr 11
Reading due (for in-class embodied response): excerpt from Robin Wall Kimmerer’s *Braiding Sweetgrass*
Performance practice for *Mapping the Rio* and embodied responses to Robin Wall Kimmerer’s poetics.

Thur, Apr 13
Guest: visual and textile artist Janette Terrazas
Extra credit: dance performance at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

WEEK 13  Devising Mapping the Rio 3

Tue, Apr 18

Thur, Apr 20
Performance practice for *Mapping the Rio*.

*Our secrets as we shed them: Experiencing the Bosque reimagined*, dance installation, April 20, 21, 22, 23.
Thinking Performance Writing Assignment 4 due on Sunday

WEEK 14  Performance week!

Tue, Apr 25
Performance practice for *Mapping the Rio* + discussion on *our secrets as we shed them*.

Thur, Apr 27
After class, we’ll meet at 4 PM Downtown for *Mapping the Rio*

*WhenWaterFalls*, dance concert, April 28, 29, 30.

WEEK 15  Re-views, epistemic re-enactments, and pre-postmemory

Tue, May 2
Class discussion on *Mapping the Rio* and on *WhenWaterFalls*. Review of key-concepts, performance works, and experiences.

Thur, May 4
Q&A about final documentation assignment and Fiesta.

FINALS WEEK MAY 8-12
Final documentation assignment due: May 9.