

**CHIC 4350 & DANC 4340 - Latino/Latina Voices in Performance Activism  
Spring 2016**

TR 3:00 – 4:20 PM

Old Main 205

**Instructor:** S. Paola Lopez R.

**Office:** FOX M 211 **Office Hours:** TR 12:00 – 2:30 PM or by appointment.

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*This syllabus is subject to change, I will notify you promptly if and when it happens.*

**Course Description:**

This class uses a series of readings, lectures, discussions and movement workshops to investigate the use of performance as a creative response to local and global social problems. Performance activism is an emergent phenomenon that draws from the humanities and social science, including anthropology, performance studies and performative psychology. We will learn about the precursors to performance activism (experimental, political and educational theatre), the influence of performative psychology and philosophy, and Latino and Latina voices in the movement. We will explore other relationships between performance art and activism and integrate theory with embodied experience.

Performance activism embodies a fundamental shift in the way (some) people are working to bring about social change. In the modern era, the dominant modality of social change was confrontation, demonstration and protest. The assumption behind this modality is that conflicting interests can only be overcome by antagonistic struggle. Performance activism embodies a new modality that draws upon the human capacity to play, create and perform. The premise is that people—even if and when their economic, social and/or political interests are in conflict—are capable of creating new relationships, new activities and new ways of moving forward together.

This is a lecture class with a practicum component at least once every two weeks.

**Textbook:**

A course reader is available for purchase at UTEP Copy mine. A works cited page on the readings included can be found at the end of this syllabus.

**Course Objectives:**

- √ Address key topics and terminology for learning about performance
- √ Look at performance art in many forms and locations in order to begin a critical examination of the form in varied contexts
- √ Investigate the use of performance in and as activism
- √ Learn about influences and extensions of this movement to other disciplines
- √ Learn about Latino/Latina voices in this movement and their impact in the US and beyond

- ✓ Gain an understanding of the developmental power of performance through movement and performance-based exercises
- ✓ Relate and apply the theoretical and embodied knowledge of the class to our own experience as movers and human beings

### Assignments:

- *First Assignment:* Type your own definition for the words: *performance* and *activism*. DO NOT look the words up! Write down how you would define them at this moment from your experience: what you have seen, heard, done, etc. 90-100 words each. Due **January 21<sup>st</sup>**
- *Reading responses:* Please respond to the readings with questions, thoughts and comments you have after reading each article. **Due the same day as the readings.**
- *Performance response:* You will be required to attend a performance and respond in a creative way (see attached for guidelines and dates).
- *Midterm Performative Research Project:* You will prepare an oral presentation, skit or dance to present to the class on **March 17<sup>th</sup>**.
- *Final Performative Research Project:* Done throughout the second half of the semester. Reflection will be on **May 5<sup>th</sup>**.

**Late-work Policy:** I do NOT accept late work. Please plan ahead and give yourself plenty of time to turn in assignments on time. If something extraordinary comes up that will prevent you from turning in an assignment (accident, death in the family, severe illness, etc.) you must let me know (if at all possible) **BEFORE the due date** to request an extension.

**Attendance Policy:** You have four (4) absences permitted during the course of the semester without penalty. After that, **your grade will be lowered 1/2 a letter grade for each day missed.** Keep in mind that coming to class late or leaving early will be considered as 1/2 an absence. ***Students missing more than seven classes should drop the course.*** **Please make sure you are aware of the course drop deadline, dropping the class is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!**

*NOTE:* In certain circumstances I will allow you to make up absences. If you want to do this, please schedule an appointment with me to discuss it further.

### Criteria for Grading:

**First Assignment** (10 points): Bring in a typed definition for the words: *performance* and *activism*. DO NOT look the words up! Write down how you would define them at this moment from your experience: what you have seen, heard, done, etc. 90-100 words each. Due January 21<sup>st</sup>

**Effort** (200 points): Every day I will take into consideration your class participation, attitude and engagement.

**Reading responses** (150 points total, 10 points each): Please respond to the readings with questions, thoughts and comments that you have after reading each article. What makes you curious? What would you like to find more about? What can

you relate to? What does the article bring up for you? I DO NOT want a summary of the article. You will bring your typed 100-150 word response to class each day that a reading is due. For the days you have multiple readings, please bring a response for each of the articles. You will not get credit for late work.

**Performance response** (30 points): You will be required to attend a performance and respond in a creative way (see attached for guidelines and dates).

**Midterm Performative Research Project** (50 points): Individually or in small groups you will locate and interview a Latina/Latino performance activist or activist theatre, or an organization working with or within a Latina/Latino community.

Prepare an oral presentation, skit or dance to present the information to the class.

**Final Performative Research Project** (100 points): Throughout the second half of the semester, groups of students working closely with the instructor, will generate performance activist projects/interventions within the El Paso and Ciudad Juarez communities. The last class will be a conversation on how these projects went and the impact they had on those involved, including the students.

Total possible points: 540

A= 100-90% (486-540)

B= 89-80% (432-485)

C= 79-70% (378-431)

D= 69-60% (324-377)

F= 59% and below (323 <)

**Remember that the number of absences you have can lower your final grade!!!**

### **Tentative schedule:**

Tuesday, Jan 19<sup>th</sup> – Introduction to the class and going over syllabus.

Thursday, Jan 21<sup>st</sup> – An introduction to performance

- **DUE:** First Assignment.

Tuesday, Jan 26<sup>th</sup> – Performance for the working-class

- **DUE:** Reading #1 *Introduction* (Theatre for Working-Class Audiences...)
- **DUE:** Reading #2 *A brief Description of the Workers' Theater Movement of the Thirties* (Theatre for Working-Class Audiences...)

Thursday, Jan 28<sup>th</sup> – Practicum

Tuesday, Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>

- **DUE:** Reading #6 *Contemporary Theatre for Working-Class Audiences in the US* (Theatre for Working-Class Audiences...)

Thursday, Feb 4<sup>th</sup> – Practicum

Tuesday, Feb 9<sup>th</sup> – What do we mean by performance activism?

- **DUE:** Reading #15 *Performing the World: The Emergence of Performance Activism* by Lois Holzman and Dan Friedman

Thursday, Feb 11<sup>th</sup> – Practicum

Tuesday, Feb 16<sup>th</sup> – Theatre of the Oppressed and Augusto Boal

- **DUE:** Reading #7 *Tactical Carnival (A Boal Companion)*

Thursday, Feb 18<sup>th</sup> – Practicum

Tuesday, Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> – Playback Theatre

- **DUE:** Reading #8 *Stories in the Moment (Acting Together Volume II)*

Thursday, Feb 25<sup>th</sup> – Site-specific performance and why it matters for activism

- **DUE:** Reading #4 *The 'Place' and Practice of Site-Specific Theatre and Performance (Performing Site-Specific Theatre)*

Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup> – Defining Latinidad

- **DUE:** Reading #3 *In Quest of Latinidad: Identity, Disguise, and Politics (Latina Performance...)*

Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> – Introduction to final group project

- **DUE:** Reading #16 *Designing and Documenting Peacebuilding Performance Initiatives (Acting Together Volume II)*

Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> – SPRING BREAK \*\*NO CLASS\*\*

Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup> – SPRING BREAK \*\*NO CLASS\*\*

Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup> - \*\*NO CLASS\*\* Final Group Project meeting and discussion

Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup> – Midterm presentations

Tuesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> – El Teatro Campesino and Luis Valdez

- **DUE:** Reading #5 *El Teatro Campesino and the Mexican Popular Performance Tradition (El Teatro Campesino)*

Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup> – Practicum/Project

Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup> – Digesting specific examples

- **DUE:** Reading #9 *Fire in the Memory (Acting Together Volume I)*

Thursday, March 31<sup>st</sup> – Undesirable Elements and Ping Chong

Tuesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> – **\*\*NO CLASS\*\*** Final Group Project meeting and discussion

Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup> – **\*\*NO CLASS\*\*** Final Group Project meeting and discussion

Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup> – Digesting specific examples

- **DUE:** Reading #11 *Movements of Hope* (Performing Queer Latinidad)

Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup> – Practicum/Project

Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup> – Performative psychology and social therapeutics

- **DUE:** Reading #13 *Good-bye Ideology. Hello Performance* by Dan Friedman

Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup> – Practicum/Project

Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup> – Castillo Theatre

- **DUE:** Reading #14 *Theatre, Community and Development: The Performance Activism of the Castillo Theatre* by Dan Friedman
- **DUE:** Reading #12 *Theatre for Nothing* by Dan Friedman

Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup> – Practicum/Project

Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> – Performance discussion

- **DUE:** Performance response (see guidelines below)

Thursday, May 5<sup>th</sup> – Project and Course Reflection

### **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 this information at:

[http://libraryweb.utep.edu/research/copy\\_plag.php](http://libraryweb.utep.edu/research/copy_plag.php)

### **Copyright and Fair Use:**

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.

**ADA:**

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, by email to [cass@utep.edu](mailto: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](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass).

**Technology Problems:**

Technology problems are NOT an excuse for work that is late or missing. Students need to complete assignments for this course well before the due date to allow time for dealing with technology problems. Contact IT for technological problems and remember that Atlas lab in the UGLC or LACIT in the Liberal Arts building provide assistance with using Blackboard.

**University Writing Center:**

Located in the library room 227, UTEP's University Writing Center (UWC) offers free tutoring assistance in writing for all UTEP students. The tutors are undergraduate and graduate students who can help with all parts of a writing assignment, including prewriting, organizing, revising, and editing. They can also help you understand any writing assignment and will work with you to aid you in comprehending difficult material.

## Performance Response Information

**Due date:** Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Performance Dates:**

April 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>

Time TBA

**Location:** TBA

**Guidelines:**

It is very important for me that you take the time to interpret and respond **thoughtfully** to the dance concerts you watch. For this assignment I want you to respond in an unconventional and/or artistic way. You have the following options:

- A poem or script
- A drawing, collage, etc.
- A short dance/movement piece
- A song
- A short video
- A short story
- A website
- If you want to respond in a medium that is not on this list, please talk to me about it before hand.

**DO NOT take pictures and/or videotape during the performance to use in your response.**

**Be prepared to discuss your experience and share your work with the class, this will be part of your grade.**

## Works Cited

- Arrizón, Alicia. "In Quest of Latinidad: Identity, Disguise, and Politics." *Latina Performance: Traversing the Stage*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999. 1-28. Print.
- Bogad, LM. "Tactical Carnival." *A Boal Companion: Dialogues on Theatre and Cultural Politics*. Eds. Jan Cohen-Cruz and Mady Schutzman. Routledge, 2006. 46-58. Print.
- Broyles-González, Yolanda. "El Teatro Campesino and the Mexican Popular Performance Tradition." *El Teatro Campesino: Theater in the Chicano Movement*. 1st ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994. 3-77. Print.
- Cohen, Cynthia, and Polly O. Walker. "Designing and Documenting Peacebuilding Performance Initiatives." *Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict. Volume II*. Eds. Cynthia Cohen, Roberto Gutierrez Varea, and Polly O. Walker. Oakland, CA: New Village Press, 2011. 219-228. Print.
- Friedman, Dan, and Lois Holzman. "Performing the World: The Emergence of Performance Activism." *Performance Studies in Motion: International Perspectives and Practices in the Twenty-First Century*. Eds. Atay Citron, Sharon Aronson-Lehavi, and David Zerbib. 1st ed. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014. 1-23. Print.
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- Friedman, Daniel. "A Brief Description of the Workers' Theatre Movement of the Thirties." *Theatre for Working-Class Audiences in the United States, 1830-1980*. Eds. Bruce A. McConachie and Daniel Howard Friedman. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985. 111-120. Print.
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- Gutierrez Varea, Roberto. "Fire in the Memory." *Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict Vol. 1*. Eds. Cynthia Cohen, Roberto Gutierrez Varea, and Polly Walker. Oakland, CA: New Village Press, 2011. 153-177. Print.
- McConachie, Bruce A., and Daniel Howard Friedman. "Introduction." *Theatre for Working-Class Audiences in the United States, 1830-1980*. Eds. Bruce A. McConachie and Daniel Howard Friedman. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985. 3-15. Print.



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Salas, Jo. "Stories in the Moment." *Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict. Volume II*. Eds. Cynthia Cohen, Roberto Gutierrez Varea, and Polly O. Walker. Oakland, CA: New Village Press, 2011. 93-123. Print.

Tompkins, Joanne. "The 'Place' and Practice of Site-Specific Theatre and Performance." *Performing Site-Specific Theatre: Politics, Place, Practice*. Eds. Anna Birch and Joanne Tompkins. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 1-11. Print.

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