Performance and Community Engagement: Humanities in the World (IH 205)  
Fall 2015, Fridays 12-2:45 • COB 209  
Instructor: Dr. Katherine Steele Brokaw, kbrokaw@ucmerced.edu  
Office: COB 381 • Office hours: Wednesdays 11:45 am-1:30 pm and by appointment

This course will explore the ways in which performances can be a sites of community engagement that prompt interactions and collaborations bringing together campus and town communities. We will be reading classic performance studies texts and recent studies of community performance as well as a few plays. This class will also investigate the arts scene of the Central Valley in order to interrogate performance and community engagement through the lenses of literature, anthropology, history, theater studies, and higher education studies.

Course Learning Outcomes:

• Demonstrate proficiency in various performance theories.  
• Understand and apply both disciplinary (ie literature, anthropology, history, theater studies) and interdisciplinary (ie performance studies, disability studies, critical race studies, sexuality studies) methods to the study of performance.  
• Demonstrate an understanding of current conversations regarding the place of the humanities and arts in higher education and in the civic sphere, and the role of community engagement in higher education.  
• Be proficient in doing original research on performance.  
• Have the capacity to write a number of professional academic documents, while also developing communication skills for sharing ideas with a wider audience outside the academy, orally and in writing.

Texts:

Not for Profit, Martha Nussbaum  
Performance: a Critical Introduction, Marvin Carlson  
Theatre of the Oppressed, August Boal  
Utopia in Performance, Jill Dolan  
Engaging Performance: Theatre as Call and Response, Jan Cohen-Cruz  
Theatre and Ethics, Nicholas Ridout  
The Empty Space, Peter Brook  
Unmarked, Peggy Phelan  
Venus, Suzan-Lori Parks  
Mother Courage, Brecht  
The Laramie Project, Moises Kauffman, and articles and essays posted online

Assignments:

20%: Book review on a text about performance studies  
20%: Syllabus for an interdisciplinary performance class that includes community engagement  
40%: Conference paper two ways: 20 minute and lightning talk versions of original research, which may include “fieldwork” with local performance venues  
20%: Seminar contributions, including leading discussion, and attendance at at least two local performance events
Reading Schedule:

Theories of Theater and Performance: backgrounds

Seminar leading dates assigned.
→ Evita at Playhouse Merced this weekend

September 4: Bertolt Brecht, Mother Courage and Her Children; Bertolt Brecht essays online: “Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction,” “Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting,” “The Street Scene,” “New Technique of Acting,” “A Short Organum for the Theater.”
→ Evita at Playhouse Merced this weekend


Book reviews assigned.
→ Henry V at Applegate Park this Saturday and Sunday

Theorizing Performance in Action
September 18: Nicholas Ridout, Theatre and Ethics. Baz Kershaw, “Performance, Community, Culture,” online.
→ Henry V at 7:00 at the UCM Amphitheater, Sept 16th and 17th, and at Applegate Park this Saturday and Sunday

Performance and Anthropology

Performance and Politics
Book reviews due. Syllabus assigned.
→ Importance of Being Earnest at Playhouse Merced this weekend

October 9: Articles online: Petra Kuppers, “Disability Performance in the Streets”; Excerpts from Kuppers, Disability Culture and Community Performance (eBook available through UCM); Ana Flores, “AIDS Narrative Murals.”
→ Importance of Being Earnest at Playhouse Merced this weekend

October 16: Peggy Phelan, Unmarked.
Conference papers assigned.


Syllabus due.

October 30: No class: research day.

November 6: Jill Dolan, Utopia in Performance.

What are the Humanities (and arts) for?
November 13: Martha Nussbaum, Not for Profit; excerpts from Small, The Value of the Humanities online.

Performance and Community

November 27: No class: Thanksgiving break.

December 4: Jan Cohen-Cruz, Engaging Performance: Theatre as Call and Response; Diana Taylor, “Performance and Intangible Cultural Heritage,” online.

December 11: Mini-conference in class.

COURSE POLICIES:
Special Needs: If you have any special needs, please speak to me and to Student Services so that we can outline the best ways to promote your success in this course.

Plagiarism Policy: For serious instances of plagiarism, such as submitting an essay obtained from an online “paper mill,” students in this course will automatically fail the assignment, receive a final grade of F, and be recommended for dismissal from the university. There is no excuse for serious plagiarism.
I will also regard unattributed citations as a serious form of plagiarism.
If you’re uncertain about how to use sources, ask me, or consult this website: http://www.library.ucla.edu/bruinsuccess/.

Technology: Laptops and tablets are not allowed in seminar, except on days when we have reading material from eBooks (PDFed articles should be printed). Cell phones must be turned off, and iPods and other recording devices are forbidden during class.

Participation: If you miss more than two classes without a valid medical excuse, you will forfeit your entire participation grade for the course; missing four or more puts you in danger of failing the course. If you miss class, you are responsible for speaking with a classmate about the seminar discussion to get caught up on the material.