

**Heather Anne Wozniak**  
**Course Proposal**

**Special Topics in Literary Theory: Performing Scholarship**

This seminar will investigate how performance and media studies have redefined both the objects and methods of scholarly inquiry. Many modern performances take place in virtual environments, on computer and television screens, and new modes of digitizing and distributing texts have changed the ways humans analyze and understand the world around them.

Combining readings from feminist and queer theory, dance, music, anthropology, political science, the visual arts, and media and software studies, we will examine how these diverse disciplines inform literary studies. How can practitioners and critics of the performing arts transform political and social theory? How does digitalization impact the individual's experience of race and gender? How can a snippet of computer code contain cultural and philosophical meaning? These are a few of the questions we will consider as we examine the overlaps between performance, media, and literary theory.

Students will be responsible for active participation in class discussions, four reaction papers to raise questions for discussion (to be posted on the course website in advance of seminar meetings), and a 15-20 page seminar paper applying the theories and methods discussed in the course to their own research. The paper may take the form of an original analysis of a text or performance or a critical reflection and proposal for revising an existing project. During Weeks 14 and 15 students will give brief presentations on their projects and receive comments and suggestions.

Tentative reading list (most selections will be assembled into a Reader):

Week 1 – Introduction: The Media of Performance

Week 2 - Media and Communication

Selections from:

Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*

Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*

Week 3 - The Concept of the Human

Selections from:

N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*

Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*

Week 4 – Visualization

Selections from:

Edward Tufte, *Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative*

Jennifer Whyte, *Virtual Reality and the Built Environment*

Week 5 – Software and Code

Friedrich Kittler, “There is No Software”

Selections from:

Adrian Mackenzie, *Cutting Code: Software and Sociality*

Week 6 – New Media as Art

Selections from:

Steve Dixon, *Digital Performance*

Johanna Drucker, *Sweet Dreams: Contemporary Art and Complicity*

Week 7 – Performativity

Selections from:

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* and “Critically Queer”

Richard Schechner and Victor Turner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology*

Week 8 - Dance and Movement

Foster, Susan Leigh, “Choreographies of Gender”

Young, Iris Marion, “Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body  
Comportment, Motility, and Spatiality”

Week 9 – Celebrity

Selections from:

Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History*

Joseph Roach, *It*

Graeme Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*

Week 10 – The Digital Divide

Selections from:

Karen Mossberger, Caroline Tolber, and Mary Stansbury, *Virtual Inequality: Beyond the  
Digital Divide*

Mark Warschauer, *Technology and Inclusion: Rethinking the Digital Divide*

Week 11 – Globalized Performance I: The Queer Subject

Sue-Ellen Case, “Towards a Butch-Femme Aesthetic”

Teresa DeLaurentis, “Sexual Indifference and Lesbian Representation”

Selections from:

Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*

Week 12 – Globalized Performance II: The Americas

Selections from:

Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performances*

Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the  
Americas*

Week 13 – Globalized Performance III: Asia and the Middle East

Selections from:

Saba Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*

Deborah Kapchan, *Gender on the Market Moroccan Women and the Revoicing of  
Tradition*

Eugene Van Erven, *The Playful Revolution: Theatre and Liberation in Asia*

Week 14 – Presentation of student projects

Week 15 – Presentation of student projects