

Stockholm University

Department of Culture and Aesthetics

Theatre Studies

Performativity: Gender and Body on Stage (TVPERF, Spring 2020, MA-level, 7.5 ECTS)

UPDATED & REVISED 19 March 2020

Course director and examiner: Dr. Dirk Gindt, dirk.gindt@teater.su.se

Emails will normally be answered within 48 hours, except on weekends and holidays. Office hours by appointment in room 258.

The course will be taught online and we will use the Zoom e-meeting service for lectures and seminars. Zoom, is free for students at Stockholm University: <https://serviceportalen.su.se/sv-se/article/1103512>. The course also has an Athena site, which is an online platform that contains relevant information, official documents, important links and selected course literature (<https://athena.itlearning.com>).

Course content

The course provides an in-depth knowledge of gender and queer theoretical concepts from an interdisciplinary perspective. It covers various theoretical lines of argumentation regarding identity and sexuality. It targets students from a variety of disciplines, especially those who need a theoretical refinement for their master's thesis. The course illustrates how theories of gender, sexuality and power can be relevant for different performative and theatrical events.



Expected learning outcomes

Having completed this course, students are expected to have the skills to:

- demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the formulation of theories of performativity in a specific social and historical context;
- demonstrate a good understanding of the links between performativity, gender and queer studies, and feminism and be able to relate these to their respective disciplines in the humanities and/or social sciences;
- work independently with theoretical texts, present these for the seminar group and stimulate a critical discussion and argumentation;
- in an independent way be able to apply the theories covered by the course on a specific material and engage in a longer reflection in both speech and writing.

Attendance and learning environment

Attendance is mandatory. A student may miss one class, but any additional absence needs to be compensated with a 3-page written essay that critically discusses the literature assigned for that session. If a student has missed three or more classes, a final grade cannot be assigned. In order to guarantee a safe learning environment that stimulates critical thinking, students are expected to respect different and divergent opinions and political/cultural/religious points of view and to express disagreement in a calm and civil way that does not blame or shame other members of the class. Remember to actively listen to an argument, critically examine it and articulate your own position as succinctly and as convincingly as possible. Students are encouraged to relate and apply the various theoretical concepts to their own fields of interest and/or practice; however, at no point are they required to disclose any personal or confidential information in either group discussions or written assignments.

Course requirements

Evaluation consists of a written essay, in which students are required to critically explore the relationship between performativity and performance. Students formulate their own research question and decide which of the theoretical concepts outlined during the course they wish to discuss and apply onto an independently chosen case study. Consistent references to and a critical engagement with the course literature are compulsory. The assignment needs to be submitted as an email attachment (.doc, .docx or .pdf only) no later than Friday 29 May at 5 PM. Format: 5-6 pages, Times New Roman or equivalent (excl. foot/endnotes, works cited, illustrations etc.); size 12; space 1.5.

Students are expected to have prepared all of the assigned readings assigned for each session and to actively participate in the seminars. They are expected to take notes while preparing the readings and bring at least one considered thought, pertinent question or relevant example for possible discussion to each seminar. In order to critically engage with an article or book chapter, please think of the following:

- identify and succinctly articulate the major research questions and critically reflect on the credibility and validity of the author's arguments, sources and conclusions;
- situate the text in relation to the course literature and content studied up until that point;
- think of a relevant example of a performance that can illustrate the issues at stake;
- pick a relevant quote and prepare a pertinent question to stimulate a critical discussion with the other class members.

Evaluation criteria

A The written essay has been fulfilled in a timely manner, reveal an excellent understanding of the field of Performativity and its relationship to and impact on Theatre and Performance Studies, offers proof of highly advanced critical thinking skills and displays an impressive degree of intellectual independence and creativity. The student demonstrates an excellent ability to articulate and critically reflect upon key theoretical and methodological concerns in Queer Theory, Performance and Performativity that also problematizes their own positionality. Language and style are at an appropriate academic level.

B The written essay has been fulfilled in a timely manner, reveals a very good understanding of the field of Performativity and its relationship to and impact on Theatre and Performance Studies, offers proof of advanced critical thinking skills and display a high degree of intellectual independence and creativity. The student demonstrates a very good ability to articulate and critically reflect upon key theoretical and methodological concerns in Queer Theory, Performance and Performativity that also problematizes their own positionality. Language and style are very good.

C The written essay reveals a good understanding of the field of Performativity and its relationship to and impact on Theatre and Performance Studies, offers proof of critical thinking skills and display signs of intellectual independence and creativity. The student demonstrates a good ability to articulate and reflect upon key theoretical and methodological concerns in Queer Theory, Performance and Performativity that also attempts to problematize their own positionality.

D The written essay reveals a satisfactory understanding of the field of Performativity and its relationship to and impact on Theatre and Performance Studies. The student demonstrates an adequate ability to articulate key theoretical and methodological concerns in Queer Theory, Performance and Performativity.

E The written essay reveals a very basic understanding of the field of Performativity and its relationship to and impact on Theatre and Performance Studies. The student demonstrates an elementary ability to articulate some theoretical and methodological concerns in Queer Theory, Performance and Performativity.

Fx The criteria under E were not fully met and some additional work is required to reach a passing grade.

F The student failed to meet the criteria under E.

Late submissions will be accepted in the last week of August; in that case, the final grade can be no higher than a C.

Required readings

Several articles can be accessed on the Athena course site (<https://athena.itlearning.com>). The majority of the readings are essays or book chapters which students can access and retrieve electronically via the Stockholm University Library.

E-journals

- Go to the website of the university library (www. <http://su.se/english/library/>)
- Click on 'Articles';
- In the search engine, enter the title of the essay that you are looking for;
- The displayed list of results offers you a number of options or databases to choose from (e.g. JSTOR, Project Muse Standard Collection, EBSCO, Literature Resource Centre, Cambridge Journals Online etc.);
- The next page will ask you to sign in with your username and password. Once you have signed in, you will be able to access the article as well as back issues of the journal in question.

E-books

- Go to the website of the university library (www. <http://su.se/english/library/>);
- Click on 'E-books';
- In the search engine, enter (parts of) the title of the book and/or author that you are looking for;
- The displayed list of results tells you which databases offer the book as an electronic resource. Click on the relevant link;
- The next page will ask you to sign in with your username and password. Once you have signed in, you will be able to access the e-book and retrieve selected pages or chapters as .pdf files.

Schedule and compulsory readings

Session 1: Performative Origins or Original Performatives

Friday 3 April, 14:00-17:00, room 509

Austin, John Langshaw, *How to do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, eds. J.O. Urmson & Marina Sbisa. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd ed., 1975, pp. 1-11 (on Athena)

Derrida, Jacques, "Signature Event Context", *Limited Inc.*, tr. Alan Bass, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1982, pp. 1-21 (on Athena)

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky & Andrew Parker, "Introduction," *Performativity*, eds. Andrew Parker & Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, New York & London: Routledge, 1995, 1-18 (on Athena)

(Please observe: Students are expected to have prepared the readings for the first seminar.)

Session 2: Reading Butler – Subversive Performatives

Tuesday 7 April, 14:00-17:00, room 509

Butler, Judith, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theatre”, *Theatre Journal*, vol. 40, no. 4 (1988): 519-531 (e-journal)

Butler, Judith, “‘Women’ as the Subject of Feminism’ & ‘The Compulsory Order of Sex/Gender/Desire’”, in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York & London: Routledge, 2006 [1990], pp. 1-10 (e-book)

Butler, Judith, 2004 [1990], “Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions”, *The Judith Butler Reader*, eds. Sara Salih & Butler Judith, Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 103-117 (on Athena)

Butler, Judith, “Critically Queer”, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1993): 17-32 (e-journal)

Film screening: Jennie Livingston, *Paris is Burning* (1990): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xf6Cn2y2xEc>

Session 3: Queer arguments

Tuesday 14 April, 14:00-17:00, room 509

Butler, Judith, excerpts from “Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion”, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”*, London & New York: Routledge, 1993, pp. 121-140 (on Athena)

hooks, bell, “Is Paris Burning?”, *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, Boston: South End Press, 1992, pp. 145-156 (on Athena)

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, “Queer and Now”, *Tendencies*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1993, pp. 1-20 (on Athena)

Session 4: Shame and gay shame

Tuesday 28 April, 14:00-17:00, room 509

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, “Queer Performativity: Henry James’s *The Art of the Novel*,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1993): 1-16 (e-journal)

Halperin, David & Valerie Traub, “Beyond Gay Pride”, *Gay Shame*, eds. David Halperin & Valerie Traub, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009, pp. 1-15 (on Athena)

Halberstam Judith Jack, ‘Shame and White Gay Masculinity’, *Social Text*, vol. 23, nos 3-4 (2005): 219-233 (e-journal)

Session 5: Women and shame

Tuesday 5 May, 14:00-17:00, room 509

Screening: Ania Pachura, *When We Bleed* (2018)

Discussion with Ania Pachura

Session 6: Explicit Bodies and Feminist Performance

Tuesday 12 May, 14:00-17:00, room 509

Schneider, Rebecca, "Introduction", *The Explicit Body in Performance*, London & New York: Routledge, 1997, pp. 1-10 (e-book)

Schneider, Rebecca, "Binary Terror and the Body Made Explicit", *The Explicit Body in Performance*, London & New York: Routledge, 1997, pp. 11-42 (e-book)

Session 7: Disidentifications

Tuesday 19 May, 14:00-17:00, room 509

Muñoz, José Esteban, 'Introduction: Performing Disidentifications', *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, pp. 1-34 (on Athena)

Muñoz, José Esteban, "'The White to Be Angry': Vaginal Davis's Terrorist Drag", *Social Text*, vol. 15, nos. 52-53 (1997): 80-103 (e-journal)

Friday 29 May, 17:00: deadline final essay

Reference literature

- Abelove, Henry, Michele Aina Barale and David Halperin (eds.), *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, New York and London: Routledge, 1993
- Berlant, Lauren and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public", *Critical Inquiry* vol. 24, no. 2 (1998): 547-566
- Butler, Judith P., *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990
- Butler, Judith P., *Excitable Speech: Politics of the Performative*, New York & London: Routledge, 1997
- Butler, Judith P., *Undoing Gender*, New York & London: Routledge, 2004
- Castiglia, Christopher & Christopher Reed, *If Memory Serves: Gay Men, AIDS, and the Promise of the Queer Past*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012
- Chambers-Letson, Joshua, *After the Party: A Manifesto for Queer of Color Life*, New York: New York University Press, 2018
- Cvetkovich, Ann, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003
- D'Emilio, John, "Capitalism and Gay Identity", *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, eds. Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale & David M. Halperin, New York: Routledge, 1993, pp. 467-476
- Dinshaw, Carolyn, Lee Edelman, Roderick A. Ferguson, Carla Freccero, Elizabeth Freeman, Judith Halberstam, Annamarie Jagose, Christopher Nealon, Nguyen Tan Hoang, "Theorizing Queer Temporalities: A Roundtable Discussion", *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* vol. 13, no. 2-3 (2007): 177-195
- Duggan, Lisa, *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2003
- Ford, Richard Thomas, "What's Queer about Race", *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 106, no. 3 (2007): 477-484
- Freeman, Elizabeth, "Still After", *South Atlantic Quarterly* vol. 106, no. 3 (2007): 495-500
- Freeman, Elizabeth, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010
- Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality, volume 1: The Will to Knowledge*, tr. Robert Hurley, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990 [1976]
- Halberstam, Judith, *Female Masculinity*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1998
- Hall, Donald E., Annamarie Jagose, Andrea Bebell and Susan Potter (eds.), *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 2013
- Halberstam, Judith Jack, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*, New York & London: New York University Press, 2005
- Halperin, David M., *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995
- Hennessy, Rosemary, "The Material of Sex", *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader*, eds. Donald E. Hall, Annamarie Jagose, Andrea Bebell and Susan Potter, London and New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 134-149
- Jackson, Peter A., "Capitalism and Global Queering: National Markets, Parallels Among Sexual Cultures, and Multiple Queer Modernities", *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 15, no. 3 (2009): 357-395

- Jagose, Annamarie, "Feminism's Queer Theory", *Feminism & Psychology*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2009): 157–174
- Moraga, Cherrie & Anzaldúa, Gloria (eds), from *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, 4th ed., New York: State University of New York Press, 2015, pp. 104-162
- Morton, Donald (ed.), *The Material Queer: A LesBiGay Cultural Studies Reader*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1996
- Muñoz, José Esteban, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999
- Nash, Catherine J., "Consuming Sexual Liberation: Gay Business, Politics and Toronto's Barrack's Bathhouse Raids", *Journal of Canadian Studies* 48.1. (2014): 82-105
- Puar, Jasbir K., *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007
- "Queers Read This, A leaflet distributed at pride march in NY, published anonymously by Queers, June, 1990", *Queer Resources Directory*, <http://www.qrd.org/qrd/misc/text/queers.read.this>
- Rubin, Gayle, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality", *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, eds. Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale and David Halperin, New York and London: Routledge, 1993, pp. 3-44
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, *Epistemology of the Closet*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, *Tendencies*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993
- Stryker, Susan, "Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity", *Radical History Review* no. 100 (2008): 145-157
- Warner, Michael, "Introduction", *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, ed. Michael Warner, Minneapolis & London: University of Minneapolis Press, 1993, pp. vii-xxxi
- Warner, Michael, *The Trouble With Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Recommended journals

GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies

Journal of Homosexuality

Sexualities

Gender & Society

lambda Nordica: Tidskrift för HBTQ-forskning

TGV: Tidskrift för genusvetenskap

Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory