

# Perfa 60: Theatre for Social Change: Interactive Theatre

Professor Reid Davis, Ph.D.

Saint Mary's College of California, Spring 2012

Sichel 101

9:40-11:10 Tuesdays and Thursdays

Office: LeFevre 1

Office Hours: Weds. 1:30-3:30, and by appointment

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## Course Description

Theatre for Social Change: Interactive Theatre is designed to lead students through a process of creating social change around issues pertinent to their own lives through various forms of performative activism. Through classroom and community presentations utilizing interactive theatre we will focus on student leadership, and address issues of power, privilege, social identity and structures of oppression. We will discuss relevant reading material about these issues in our social history and we will explore our own and other's experiences in a variety of social and institutional contexts. In-class, we will introduce tools for creative and non-violent action for social change, beginning with community building, intergroup dialogue, and oppression awareness activities. These will coincide with course readings and assignments designed to provide Student Educators with an Institutional Oppression analysis. Students will also develop expressive skills through theatre activities helping them become more comfortable performing onstage and improvising in life. Outside class assignments will include readings, journaling, and group work.

## Learning Goals

In this course, you will have the opportunity to:

1. Develop an increased awareness of yourself as an individual and as a member of various social groups.
2. Learn more about your own and other's cultures, histories, and experiences.
3. Explore commonalities and differences across boundaries of social groups.
4. Develop effective expressive skills that include: communication, conflict exploration and resolution, and bridge-building skills.
5. Learn the history of community-based theatre collectives
6. Identify actions that contribute to the creation of socially just communities.
7. Use theatre games to strategize, mediate and problem-solve
8. Learn the process-content model components for successful dialogue facilitation.
9. Apply social justice issues to everyday situations.

### Required Texts:

Privilege, Power, and Difference by Allan Johnson (PPD)  
Course Reader, Articles Posted Online through Course Reserves:  
Selections from Theatre of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal  
Rainbow of Desire by Augusto Boal  
Readings for Diversity and Social Justice edited by Adams, Blumenfeld, Castaneda, Hackman, Peters, Zuniga  
Games for Actors and Non-Actors by Augusto Boal  
Radical Street Performance by Jan Cohen-Cruz  
Race, Class & Gender by Patricia Hill-Collins

### General Policies & Helpful Information:

Attendance for this course means attending in both body and spirit. That means you should plan to be on time. If you are ten minutes late to class, you will be counted as absent. If you fall asleep in class, you will be counted as absent. Saint Mary's attendance policy stipulates that students are allowed to miss three class periods, no problem. Save these to use when you are sick or have an emergency. Four absences will lower your grade in that area of the course; missing two weeks of class (six classes or more) for whatever reason will result in a failing grade overall. (No distinction is made between "excused" absences and "unexcused" absences.) You may make up one absence by attending a Seminar Event (other than the two required for informal assignments in this course) or by attending one of the Creative Writing Reading Series and writing a 1-page typed, double-spaced response afterward (due the next day in class). You are welcome to bring a drink to class but please, no food (unless you're willing to bring enough for everyone).

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is the undocumented use of someone else's ideas, words, or sentences. To present another's work as your own, even if you are paraphrasing, is plagiarism. Doing so is a serious offense and will result in failure for that assignment and, most likely, for the course. As your professor, I am obligated to report suspicions of plagiarism to the Academic Honor Council. This year, all Collegiate Seminar essays are required to be submitted to the Turnitin.com database. I do not believe that mandatory surveillance of student work is an effective strategy for encouraging original thinking, and I do not plan to utilize Turnitin.com regularly. However, I may spot check essays that bear the signs of plagiarism.

More positively, SMC has established an academic honor code that asks you, as a student, to pledge to do your own work in your own words, without seeking inappropriate aid in preparing for exams or assignments. The pledge, as you'll recall, reads as follows: "As a student member of an academic community based in mutual

trust and responsibility, I pledge: to do my own work at all times, without giving or receiving inappropriate aid; to avoid behaviors that unfairly impede the academic progress of other members of my community; and to take reasonable and responsible action in order to uphold my community's academic integrity." This course as well operates under the premises of the academic honor code, including the expectation that you will work to uphold high standards of integrity.

What that means, practically, is that all written work submitted is expected to be original to you, to this course, and generated from the assignments given. That means you may not turn in an essay that borrows a paragraph from, say, an Internet source; it also means you may not turn in an essay you wrote in high school on one of the texts we're studying here. That also means that for all quizzes, you will not look on your neighbor's work. If you have any questions about issues of academic integrity, please see me.

Etiquette: You are welcome to bring a drink to class but please, no food (unless you're willing to bring enough for everyone). Class discussions will be run seminar-style, meaning you needn't raise your hand when you want to make a comment or ask a question but you should plan to contribute each day and to listen attentively. We are part of a community in this classroom. Though we won't—and shouldn't!—agree, respect at every level is key. In terms of out-of-class communication: when you make an appointment to see me, please be respectful of my time. If you need to cancel, let me know in advance. In corresponding via email, be sure to treat the email note as a letter, addressing me by name (first name is fine) and signing your note with your name (first and last to avoid potential confusion) and the course name.

#### Grading

Attendance and Participation	30%	[30 total points]
Reflective Learning Journal	30%	[30 total points]
Group Project	20%	[20 total points]
Reading Response Papers (4)	20%	[20 total points—5 points each]

SPECIAL NOTE: YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KNOWING AND ABIDING BY THE

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE OF SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE

#### Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are critical behaviors for making a contribution to group learning. All students are expected to join in the educational mission of the class as both teachers and learners. To that end, attendance and participation are necessary in

order to be successful in this course. You are expected to come to class on time having read the assigned materials for the day, and prepared to offer thoughtful comments that contribute to the learning experience of the entire class.

More than ONE absence from the class will impact your final grade. Should an emergency arise (illness, accident, etc.) that prevents you from attending a class session; it is your responsibility to contact one of us before the class. Missed classes are made up by completing an assignment from us, appropriate to the learning objectives of the missed session.

Attendance and participation will be scored on a daily basis. You will earn points each day for active engagement in the dialogue. In awarding these points, we realize that modes of contribution may be different for different people, and that different cultures have different norms about how best to contribute in dialogue situations. This course will recognize the varieties of ways that individuals and groups contribute to dialogue. Quantity of talk is not in itself the basis for evaluating participation. The quality of input, the consistency and depth of reflection; and the demonstration of active listening are important components of dialogue as well. Good participants also support and help others to participate.

This is the daily point system that will be used for the attendance and participation portion of the course:

2 points: Arrive on time; participate in activities; contribute well to dialogue by making effective use of dialogic skills (including listening skills); link comments to readings where appropriate, and otherwise genuinely contribute to dialogue with others.

1 point: Present; participate in activities, but does not contribute very effectively to the larger dialogue process of the group.

0 points: Absent or otherwise unengaged.

### Reflective Learning Journal

You will keep a weekly reflective learning journal for this class. Think of it as a log of your experiences and reactions to the readings, exercises, films, interactions, discussions, guest speakers, lectures, etc. as it relates to the goals and objectives of the course. The journal also provides a forum for you to reflect on your experiences, to deepen the learning that comes from course activities, and to wrestle with the multiple thoughts and feelings that arise from social justice education. The journals are opportunities for you to share with us your questions, frustrations, hopes, fears, satisfactions, and ideas.

A primary objective of your journal is the critical analysis and incorporation of course materials. Your journal will be the main way you show your knowledge and

understanding of the course materials and that you are thinking about these issues, processing them in a critical manner, and illustrating their relevance to your everyday life. On some weeks, I will provide a prompt or particular question that you may (but don't have to) use as a starting point for that day's entry.

Some suggestions for your journal:

1. Keep it up to date. DO NOT wait until the last week of class and try to recreate an entire month of entries. Do it each day after class, or each night after reading for the next day.
2. One way to think about your journal entries is in terms of "evaluating, reacting and responding". Your entries are opportunities for you to think critically and reflectively about the course materials and to engage them more deeply.
3. Some questions that may help to guide your journal entries: Do you agree/disagree? How does this topic relate to others we have covered? How does this topic relate to a current event? What did I learn from this film/reading? How does this class exercise/guest speaker relate to my personal experiences?
4. Show off your understanding and knowledge. Although the journal itself is fairly free-form in nature, be sure to anchor each entry to specific information covered in class.

Some requirements for your journal:

1. There are no specific page requirements for the journal. Some entries will be longer than others. In general, though, each week's entry should be 2-3 pages in length, with the entire semester's work reflecting 20-40 pages.
2. Your journal must be typewritten and double-spaced with normal margins.
3. Your journal will be collected weekly on Tuesdays

## Reading Response Papers

During the course, you will be asked to "evaluate, react and respond" to 4 of the different topics/readings in short 1-2 page papers. These papers are an opportunity for you to think critically about what the author is saying and to engage the literature more deeply. Some questions to guide your reading response papers: Do you agree/disagree? How does this topic relate to others we have covered? How does this topic relate to a current event? What are the main points that the author is trying to make? How does this reading relate to your personal experiences? The reading response papers are not intended to be a "book report" or summary of the readings, but an opportunity to engage with the readings more critically and deeply. The final due date for your response papers is the last day of class, Friday, 6/2...but we strongly suggest you turn one in each week.

Working Calendar:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
Tue. 2/7	Review Syllabus	Discuss: Social Identity, Social Performance, Social Action
Thu. 2/9	Social Identity, Cycle of Socialization	Read: Johnson Power, Privilege and Difference Intro ("Rodney King's Question") and Chapter One ("We're in Trouble"); Tatum (ERES "The Complexity of Identity"); Harro (ERES "The Cycle of Socialization")
T/Th 2/14-16	NO CLASS/AMERICAN COLLEGE THEATRE FESTIVAL	Homework: Screen "The Color of Fear"
Tue. 2/21	Power and Privilege	Read: Johnson, Chapter Three ("The Trouble We're in: Power, Privilege and Difference") In-class: Privilege Walk Hand-In: Personal Credo paper
Thu. 2/23	Interactive Theatre: Introduction	Introduction to games for actors and non-actors Hand-in: Analysis of 2010 Interactive Theatre play "Seminar Gone Wrong" on white privilege
Tue. 2/28	Prejudice and Discrimination	Read: Blumenfeld and Raymond (ERES "Privilege and Discrimination"); Young (ERES "The Five Faces of Oppression")
Thu. 3/1	Interactive Theatre: Poetics	Read: Boal from Theatre of the Oppressed (ERES "Poetics of the Oppressed") and Rainbow of Desire ("What is Theatre?")
Tue. 3/6	Racism	Read: Tatum (ERES "Defining Racism: 'Can We Talk?'"); Takaki (ERES "A Different Mirror"); Wise (ERES "White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son")

Thu. 3/8	Interactive Theatre: Image Theatre	Read: Boal from Games for Actors and Non-Actors (ERES "Image Theatre") Hand-in: Analysis of 2010 Interactive Theatre play "Seminar Gone Wrong" on racism
Tue. 3/13	Sexism	Read: Lorber (ERES "Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender"); Kimmel ("Masculinity as Homophobia"); hooks ("Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression")
Thu. 3/15	Interactive Theatre: Image Theatre	Hand-in: Analysis of 2010 Interactive Theatre play "Coercion/Consent" on sexual assault
Tue. 3/20	Heterosexim	Read: Blumenfeld (ERES "How Homophobia Hurts Everyone"); Herek (ERES "Internalized Homophobia"); Deacon (ERES "What Does the Bible Say About Homosexuality")
Thu. 3/22	Interactive Theatre: Forum Theatre	Read: Boal from Games for Actors and Non-Actors (ERES selections on "Forum Theatre") Hand-in: Image theatre assessment paper
Tue. 3/27	Classism	Read: Brouwer (ERES "Sharing the Pie" and The Sinking Majority") Heintz and Folbre (ERES "Who Owns How Much?")
Thu. 3/29	Interactive Theatre: Forum Theatre	Hand-in: Campus Story project
Tue. 4/3	Playwrighting I:	Read: Ball (ERES "Backwards and Forwards")
Thu. 4/5	Playwrighting II:	Boal (ERES "Poetics of the Oppressed") Hand-in: Group assessment of Topic
Tue. 4/10	Playmaking I	Hand-In: Script with Group
Thu. 4/12	Playmaking II	Hand-In: Analysis of Script: power, privilege and difference
Tue. 4/17	Playmaking III	In- Class: work on scripts
Thu. 4/19	Playmaking IV	Hand-in: Second draft
Tue. 4/24	Workshop I	Groups 1-3 present
Thu. 4/26	Workshop II	Groups 4-6 present

Tue. 5/1	Workshop III	Groups 7-9 present
Thu. 5/3	Workshop IV	Groups 10-12 present
Tue. 5/8	Final Workshop	
Thu. 5/10	Final Workshop	