

<b>Course Title</b>	: Social Drama and Everyday Life
<b>Course Code</b>	: CUS3006
Recommended Study Year	: Year 2 to Year 4
No. of Credits/ Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture and Tutorial
Class Contact Hours	: 3 hours per week
Category	: Elective

Area of Concentration: Education and Liberal Studies, and Community and Cultural Policy (2018-19 intake or before); Creativity and Performance (from 2019-20 intake)

Cultures

Prerequisite(s)	: Nil
Co-requisite(s)	: Nil
Exclusion(s)	: Nil
Exemption Requirements	: Nil

**Brief Course Description:**

This course examines how everyday practices are framed by and embedded in divergent local processes of ‘social drama’ (Turner). We focus on conflict situations, big and small, in order to see how dramatic element marks the eruption of tensions from social life. As conflicts take shape in the ritualistic form of drama, we consider how individuals in public space embody the conflictual characters and perform the emotional pre-dispositions at play.

Situating such conflicts in real-life location, we study everyday performances as social events. Examining performativity in daily encounters, we re-visit cultural practices as mediated and place-bound acts of performing ordinary life. Through case-studies, we analyze storytelling in social drama to gauge its effects on everyday life condition. We investigate the experiential and affective dimension of embodiment to understand the eventfulness of social performances.

For a boarder perspective on the contemporary relevance of social drama and cultural performance, we review the politics of cultural pedagogy as manifested in various treatments of the popular – such as the ‘carnival’ (Bakhtin), ‘society of the spectacle’ (de Bord), and ‘theatre of the oppressed’ (Boal).

**Aims:**

1. To foster students’ knowledge in the key theories and diverse applications in the study of cultural performance and social drama as the embodiment of critical perspective in contemporary culture;
2. To introduce students to the intellectual debates and sociocultural contexts pertaining to the experiential and affective dimension of everyday engagement as a key to understanding the eventfulness of social performances;
3. To lay a groundwork for students to develop their conceptual and analytical capacity in appreciating the interplay of aesthetic and political factors of social drama as embedded in everyday practices.

**Learning Outcomes (LO):**

By the end of the course, students shall be able:

1. To demonstrate knowledge through explication of the key concepts of performativity and of the approaches to studying cultural performance in its many forms in contemporary society;
2. To analyze selected acts of social drama embedded in various mediated and place-bound contexts, and identify features in the experiential and affective dimension of everyday life;
3. To examine cases of enacted events by discussing performance as a lived form of engagement with reality and the aesthetic-political processes of social drama involved.

**Indicative Contents:**

1. Performativity: the performance of language;
2. Gender performativity: performance and identity;
3. Dimensions of performance; everyday rituals as a lived form of performance;
4. Cultural performance and social drama; liminality;
5. Performance as artwork, event, game, mediation and knowledge;
6. From sensuous to communal engagement: the transformative power of performance;
7. Affective touch and pedagogic processes: actors and spectators in performance;
8. Performance in education, media, and spectacles;
9. Performed city and the production of social space;
10. Crisis situations and dramatic intellectuals;
11. Activism and social creativity.

**Teaching Method:**

1. Lecture by instructor to guide students through the conceptual knowledge and critical approaches and facilitate their reading of the essential texts;
2. Oral and/or performative presentation by students to cultivate students' enactment of the acquired knowledge and critical approaches.
3. Seminar discussion and/or field work or visit by instructor and students to cultivate dynamic teaching and learning in related areas of practice studied.

**Measurement of Learning Outcomes (LO):**

1. Written assignment and tutorial work to measure students' knowledge and explication of the theories of performativity and of the approaches to studying various kinds of performance in contemporary society; (LO 1, 2)
2. Oral presentation to test students' knowledge and ability to analyze acts of social drama in a range of everyday contexts; (LO 1, 2)
3. Term project to evaluate students' capacity to handle enacted events in order to examine cultural performance as a lived form of critical engagement with social reality. (LO 2, 3)
4. Final examination (LO 1, 2, 3)

**Assessment:**

Examination: 30%

Continuous Assessment: 70% (Tutorial presentations and assignments 40%, term project 30%)

**Essential Readings:**

Shepherd, Simon. *The Cambridge Introduction to Performance Theory*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

**Supplementary Readings** (to be selected from):

Alexander, Jeffrey C. *The Drama of Social Life*. Cambridge, UK and Malden USA: Polity Press, 2017.

Alexandre, Bryant K., Gary L. Anderson, and Bernardo P. Gallegos, eds. *Performance Theories in Education: Power, Pedagogy, and the Politics of Identity*. Mahwah, NJ, and London: 2005.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson. Intro. Wayne Booth. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Bial, Henry, ed. *The Performance Studies Reader* (2004). 2nd edition. New York and London: Routledge, 2007.

Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1974). New edition. London: Pluto, 2008.

Butler, Judith. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. New York and London: Routledge, 1997.

Carlson, Marvin. *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (1996). 2nd edition. New York and London: Routledge, 2004.

Craig, Geoffrey. *Performing Politics: Media Interviews, Debates and Press Conferences*. Cambridge, UK and Malden USA: Polity Press, 2016.

Davis, Tracy C., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

de Bord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967). Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: Zone Books, 1995.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. Trans. Saskya Iris Jain. London & New York: Routledge, 2008.

Glass, Michael R., and R. Rose-Redwood, eds. *Performativity, Politics, and the Production of Social Space*. Routledge Studies in Human Geography. New York: Routledge, 2014.

Loxely, James. *Performativity*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.

Parker, Andrew, and Eve K. Sedgwick, eds. and intro. *Performativity and Performance: Essays from the English Institute*. New York and London: Routledge, 1995.

Sedgwick, Eve K. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Shapiro, Michael J. *Politics of Time: Documenting the Event*. Cambridge, UK and Malden USA: Polity Press, 2016.

Striff, Erin, ed. *Performance Studies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Thrift, Nigel. "Performing Cultures in the New Economy." In *Cultural Economy: Cultural Analysis and Commercial Life*, eds. Paul du Gay and Michael Pryko. London, Thousand Oaks and Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002, pp. 201-233.

Turner, Victor. *The Anthropology of Performance*. New York: PAJ Publications, 1992.

- . *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: PAJ Publications, 1982.
- . *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975.
- . *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1969.

Important Notes:

1. Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
2. Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
3. Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
4. To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.