

CMST 2040: INTRO TO PERFORMING LITERATURE

Louisiana State University

Montana Jean Smith

Email: msmi384@lsu.edu **Course & Location:** Section 02, Coates 137

Office: Coates 327 **Office Hours:** M/W 11:30-12:20 & 1:30-2:20

Course Catalogue Description: The study of literature through performance; reading; analysis and performance of prose; poetry; & drama.

Additional Description & Goals: CMST 2040 is a *General Education Humanities Course* designed to familiarize students with the study of literature through performance. Based on the assumption that performance is a method of understanding and enjoying literature as an expression of profound human experience, we will explore different methods of performing texts as well as learning to write about literary texts, performances, and performing.



Through the semester, we hope to:

1. Engage and embody imaginative and intellectual response to literary texts and language.
2. Stimulate an awareness of a variety of forms of literature.
3. Deepen appreciation of self and other as they interact in engaging human experience.
4. Activate a flexible, effective and expressive voice in the performance of literature.
5. Develop a responsive and expressive body in the performance of literature.
6. Sharpen basic written and oral communication skills.

Required Texts:

Collins, Billy. *Poetry 180: A Turning Back to Poetry*. New York: Random House, 2003

Pelias, Ronald J. and Tracy Stephenson Shaffer. *Performance Studies: The Interpretation of Aesthetic Texts* (2nd Edition). Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 2007.

Shapard, Robert and James Thomas. *New Sudden Fiction: Short-short Stories from America and Beyond*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007.

Stern, Jerome. *Micro Fiction: An Anthology of Really Short Stories*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: CMST 2040 is a practice-based course, which means that you need to attend class to participate in the “doing” of performance. Therefore, attendance is expected and points are attributed toward every day of class. If you are absent, for any reason, you can make up the missed points by doing an alternative assignment. The alternative assignment is a 3-4 page research paper. You have one week from the missed class day to submit the paper on the topic you missed. If you know ahead of time that you will miss class, you still must submit the paper. Any missed performance days cannot be made up. I do not accept late work. PLEASE DO NOT EMAIL ME YOUR ASSIGNMENTS!!!!

Additional Note: I take attendance at the beginning of class each day. If you are late, you can only receive half of the points for that day’s assignment.

Workshops: Workshops are a mandatory part of this class, and a necessary part of building a successful final performance. To receive FULL workshop points, you must actively participate. Active participation is defined in accordance with the needs of the workshop. Some

workshops will ask for full memorization, some will ask students to make previous choices about their performance before class. If you have not prepared, I will ask you to sit down and you will not be able to workshop your performance. You will receive a zero.

Plagiarism: Any student found to have submitted material that is not their own, in part or whole, will immediately be reported to the Dean of Students.

Email: I often use email to maintain communication with the class. Please check your email regularly for announcements. It is your responsibility to remain aware of all comments, announcements, notes and changes.

Cell Phone & Computers: This class is a no cell phone zone, unless otherwise specified for an assignment. If you are caught using your phone you will be marked absent. ADDITIONALLY: If I see you using your phone I will not inform you that I have marked you absent, rather I assume you are using your phone with a full understanding and acceptance of the consequences. If you have an emergency that requires you to attend to your phone, please let me know ahead of time in class.

Title IX: This class operates in accordance with Title IX and other applicable law under LSU guidelines. It promotes integrity, civility, & mutual respect in a discrimination free environment.

The Americans with Disabilities Act & Rehabilitation Act of 1973: If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a Coordinator in the Office of Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS & GRADING

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS	
<u>3 MAJOR PERFORMANCES</u>	<u>37% of Overall Grade</u>
Poetry Performance	10.0%
Prose Performance	12.0%
Compiled Performance	15.0%
<u>PAPERS & IN-CLASS WORK</u>	<u>43% of Overall Grade</u>
Prose Paper	10.0%
Reading Responses (8)	16.0%
HBB Responses (2)	10.0%
Participation	7.0%
<u>EXAMS</u>	<u>20% of Overall Grade</u>
Midterm Exam	10.0%
Final Exam	10.0%

Grading Scale:

A+ 100-97%

A 96.9-93.0%

A- 92.9-90%

B+ 89.9-87%

B 86.9-83%

B- 82.9-80%

C+ 79.9-77%

C 76.9-73%

C- 72.9-70%

D+ 69.9-67%

D 66.9-63%

D- 62.9-60%

F below 60%

Performances: Over the course of the semester you will perform three short pieces of literature. The performances will be Poetry, Prose, and a Compiled performance. Poetry and Prose will be solo pieces, Compiled may done in groups you choose.

Exams: You will have two exams covering topics from the course.

Reading Responses: You will complete 8 reading responses that illustrate an understanding from the course texts. These responses should be 350-600 words in length and discuss the following:

- I. **Define a Term:** Find a key idea in the text that resonates with you. Provide an explanation of what the idea means to you.
- II. **Apply the Term:** Please use your own experience (aesthetic or personal) to explain how the term or concept works.
- III. **Questions:** Please ask three questions for the class that emerge from the reading. These can be questions of clarification or audience feedback. The more complex the question, the more productive our discussions will be.

HBB Responses: Attend 2 HBB productions over the course of the semester and turn in a 1-page, single spaced response for each. PLEASE DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE END OF THE SEMESTER! I will not offer additional opportunities to complete this assignment.

Prose Paper: You will write a 5-7 page paper critiquing your prose performance using Burke's Pentad. This will allow you to synthesize much of the information from throughout the semester; how to identify larger themes, structures, literary devices, and rhetorical patterns in the text/performance and to communicate those findings in an organized, clear, and concise manner.

Participation: This class is heavily performance and discussion based. Participation is evaluated by speaking in class, using office hours, working effectively and respectfully in groups, and demonstrating an improvement over the course of the semester. (This requires more than just showing up for class).¹

¹ Special thank you to Dr. Chris Collins, Dr. Tracy Stephenson Shaffer, & Dr. Nicole Constantini on their guidance crafting this syllabus, contributing course assignments, and overall friendship.