



Cal Performances' Courses for UC Berkeley Students

Generously funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Cal Performances Mellon courses

UC Berkeley faculty in all disciplines were invited to propose new courses that feature Cal Performances' season programs at the center of the curriculum and support our goal of promoting artistic literacy. Cal Performances funds four courses per academic, with a grant of \$18,500 to the department to cover costs inclusive of faculty and/or graduate student salary and support course development, with funds to be allocated at the department's discretion. This grant encourages departments to free faculty from assigned courses and develop innovative and customized courses featuring deep study of performing works of art each year.

SPRING 2018

Moving through Loss: The Space and Stage of Mourning English

Wendy Xin

The ability to narrate, articulate, or otherwise capture experiences of loss has often been said to grant a kind of freedom from traumatic events both personal and collective. Working between literary and cultural studies and the performance arts, this seminar explores how the non-verbal narrative arts (contemporary dance, theatre, and opera) theorize grief and dispossession through motion and gesture. If loss has become almost synonymous with a particular kind of disarticulation, what is the role of music, movement, and corporeal presence in the cycle of mourning? How does the intensity of absence register itself in the contours of a single performance, performed repeatedly, staged and re-staged? Why does loss compel us to turn to the narrativization, dramatization, and performance of an experience of suffering we would rather not endure again?

Cal Performances Season: Circa: *Il Ritorno*. Kronos Quartet, *My Lai*. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Robert LePage with Ex Machina, *887*

FALL 2017

Multiple Americas: Writing, Rewriting and Performing Comparative Literature

Alexandra Brostoff and Marlena Gittleman

At once setting and subject, geopolitical region and aesthetic construct, the Americas have long captivated cultural imaginations across the globe. But what are we talking about when we talk about the Americas in the plural? What role might textuality, intertextuality, and translation play in acts of border crossing? From listening to Argentine tango to becoming part of Camille Brown's linguistic play to performing our own Americas, in this course, we'll write, rewrite, and perform across generic and geographic borders.

Cal Performances season: Théâtre de la Ville's *State of Siege*. Tango Buenos Aires's *Spirit of Argentina*. Camille Brown's *BLACK GIRL: Linguistic Play*.

Choreography - Solo and Duet Forms: What does the body know? Theatre, Dance & Perf Studies

Joe Goode

Award winning Bay Area Choreographer and TDPS Professor Joe Goode will teach "Choreography: Solo and Duet Forms – What does the body know?," cultivating critical thinking within the choreographic process. Dance is an effective delivery system for ideas, from the spiritual to the political, and choreographic practice is deepened when students relate critical and cultural studies to actual live performance choreographed by living masters. Exploring embodiment of social commentary, the “why” and the “how” of making dance and the depth of scholarship that accompanies the best of these, aims to provide a capstone experience for the students.

Cal Performances season: Reggie Wilson’s *Fist and Heel*, Moses(es). ODC Dance. Michelle Dorrance Dancers. Tango Buenos Aires *Spirit of Argentina*.

Curation Through the Arts + Design at Berkeley Letters & Sciences 25

Shannon Jackson and Natasha Boas

L&S 25 provides a central ‘creative gateway’ experience at UC-Berkeley. This course is organized around “curation,” how the role of the curator functions similarly and differently across domains and disciplines. We will study how, beyond traditional visual and object-based curation, other methodologies embrace experiential, theatrical, movement-based, time-based, conceptual, collaborative, relational, technological, and activist forms. This course will address the post-disciplinary realities that reflect the changing nature of curatorial practice. The concept of the artist-curator, curator-artist, curator-performer, curator-educator, and curator-collaborator will be explored, along with the philosophical and professional skill-sets that these roles require for local practitioners and international touring bodies.

Cal Performances season: Reggie Wilson’s *Fist and Heel*, Moses(es). ODC Dance. Théâtre de la Ville’s *State of Siege*

Spring 2017

BIG IDEAS COURSE: Thinking Through Art+Design

Natasha Boas (BAMPFA) and Michael Cohen (Ethnic Studies)

This course introduces students to key vocabularies, forms, and histories from the many arts and design disciplines represented at UC Berkeley. This year’s course is inspired by California Counter-Culture. Students will compare practices from across the fields of visual art, film, dance, theater, music, architecture, graphic design, new media, and creative writing, and explore how different artists respond formally to the central themes of the course, considering how similar questions and arguments are differently addressed in visual, material, embodied, sonic, spatial, and linguistic forms.

Cal Performances Season: Ensemble Signal; Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (*Revelations*).

Rhetoric: Corporeal Art in the Information Age

Rebecca Gaydos

What happens when life is no longer identified with an organismic body, but instead is understood as “code,” “information,” or “writing?” In this course, we will read theoretical accounts of the relationship between embodiment, art and information technology. We will observe live performance and try translating these events into verbal, written and digital languages. We’ll take note especially of dance and movement art, as we ask, what is it about bodily movement that escapes scriptural notation?

Cal Performances Season: *Available Light* (Adams/Childs/Gehry). *Cuisine and Confessions* (7 Fingers). *Betroffenheit* (Kidd Pivot/Electric Theater Company). Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

TDPS: Dance, Sexuality & Gender

Michelle Summers

Performance theory plays an integral role in shaping our contemporary understandings of gender and sexuality. Students will think and write critically about dance as a living archive that shapes contemporary identities. We will chart histories of gender and sexuality as they intersect with race, class, and nation. Students will attend one additional performance of their choosing and conceptualize a final creative/written project interrogating course themes.

Cal Performances Season: *Available Light*. Les Ballet Trockadero de Monte Carlo. Balé Folclórico da Bahia. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

Music: Voice (Music 170)

James Davies

Who does voice belong to? What is singing for? Does your voice belong to you? dy? Do you only have only one voice? Could your voice(s) not also belong to other people, since they're happening as much in their heads as they do in your mouth? In this seminar, we'll be exploring our voices and the art of singing. We will experience as many different singing voices as possible, and make comparative studies of selected political and affective modes of cultivating voice. Students will draw on theoretical studies in emerging scholarly discipline of Voice Studies, historicizing and politicizing several senses of voice.

Cal Performances Season: Black Arm Band. Miah Persson & Florian Boesch. Tallis Scholars. Ann Hampton Calloway

Spring 2016

Big Ideas: Thinking Through Art + Design @ Berkeley: The Architecture of Life

Shannon Jackson & Nicholas de Monchaux

Students will be introduced to key vocabularies, forms, and histories from the many arts disciplines represented at UC-Berkeley, responding to significant art works and events on the campus. Students will compare practices from across visual, spatial, literary, and performing art fields, considering how different forms engage the central themes of the course. Our goal will be to juxtapose visual and performance material, developing sensibilities and analytic skills for understanding how artists address environmental themes sonically, choreographically, photographically, sculpturally, architecturally, and visually.

Cal Performances Season: St. Louis Symphony; Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan; Trajal Harrell's *The Ghost of Montpelier Meets the Samurai* (private dress rehearsal); Kronos Quartet

English 20: Graphic Poetics

Serena Le

When does our perception of what is poetic coincide with our sense of what is performative? In this course, we will survey some of the boldest claims about poetry as a medium for vivid and exceptional expression—a medium variously capable of capturing, creating, and even remaking nature and reality. In the process, we will read, discuss, and encounter the work of 20th-century and contemporary writers and artists for whom language is merely one aspect of poetic process and performative power.

Cal Performances Season: St. Louis Symphony; eighth blackbird; Trajal Harrell's *The Ghost of Montpelier Meets the Samurai*; Gil Shaham; Kronos Quartet.

Fall 2015

Comparative Literature: The Art in Artifice **Alexandra Brostoff, C.Phil and Taylor Johnston, C.Phil**

Artifact. Artifice. Artist. The Latin root “art” signifies skill, and conventionally such skill produces an uninterrupted imaginary experience that is meant to approximate reality. But what happens when the artwork calls attention to the skill itself – to its own artistry? We’ll look at art that persistently reminds us we are experiencing a carefully curated unreality. How and why might a text, film, or performance disrupt artistic conventions by announcing itself as an artificial construction?

Cal Performances Season: Twyla Tharp; Rude Mechanicals; Ira Glass with Monica Bill Barnes and Anna Bass.

Music: Music Travels

Dierdre Loughridge

Via musicians, instruments, notation and sound recording, music travels. It invades, inspires and plays ambassador. What music has traveled well, and why? How does music made to travel differ from that made to stay put? How do concerns with portability and reproducibility impinge on experiences of music in the here and now? Through what confluence of historical events and forces has it come to pass that this fall, we can experience an orchestra from Venezuela play Beethoven, an ensemble from Japan play Bach, and ensemble from France play UC-Berkeley composers and an orchestra from India play trombones, clarinets and harmoniums? This course uses the idea that “music travels” in order to think about the roles of cross-cultural exchange and media technologies in both music history and today.

Cal Performances Season: Simon Bolivar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela; Bollywood Masala Orchestra and Dancers of India; Bach Collegium Japan; Ensemble Intercontemporain

Spring 2015

Haas School of Business: UGBA 157.X: Human Synchrony

Tanya Vacharkulksemsuk

This course explores the connection between synchronized human body movements, human emotion, and collective behavior in work settings, exploring how moving similarly in form and time (i.e., in synchrony) with other people leads to psychological and social consequences that form the basis of collective strength.

Cal Performances Season: Peking Acrobats; Kodo Drums; St. Paul Chamber Orchestra; and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

TDPS: Performance in and from the Global South - Graduate seminar

Catherine Cole

This course engages students in cross-cultural literacy through performing arts to enable them to be citizens of the world. We ask: What if in the present moment it is the global south that affords privileged insight into the workings of the world at large?

Cal Performances Season: The Nile Project; Hugh Masekela and Vusi Mahlasela; and Handspring Puppet Company’s *Ubu and the Truth Commission*.

Fall 2014

Music 179: Voice

James Davies

Explore voice in both the philosophical and physical sense, experiencing many different singing voices and analyzing selected political and affective modes of cultivating voice. Students will ponder: Who does voice belong to? Does your singing voice belong to nature, culture, or both? We draw on theoretical studies in emerging scholarly discipline of Voice Studies, historicizing and politicizing several senses of voice.

Cal Performances Season: Benjamin Britten's *Curlew River*; San Francisco Contemporary Music Players & Tony Arnold; and Audra MacDonald.

Comparative Literature R1B: Reading Performance

Taylor Johnston

What does it mean to think of performance as narrative? How can we read a spectacle as though it were literature? The course explores how narrative inhabits dance, oral traditions, audio forms, and theatrical performance from antiquity to the present.

Cal Performances Season: Mark Morris Dance Group; Sasha Waltz, *Impromptus* by Schubert; Théâtre de la Ville's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*; David Sedaris ("Berkeley Talks" series); and Robert Wilson's *The Old Woman*.

Spring 2014

English: Music and Literary Modernism

Eric Falci and Serena Le, CPhil

Students explore the connection between major modernist writers and the music of their time, as they grappled with the political, social and technological upheavals of the early twentieth century. Beginning with the influential Victorian critic Walter Pater, texts range from poetry by Yeats and Auden to Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Hughes' *Montage of a Dream Deferred*. The course will culminate with the creation by each student of a synthetic project—integrating both a written and aural element—with an associated colloquium during the work will be presented.

Cal Performances Season: Anne-Sofie von Otter and Emanuel Ax; Martha Graham Dance Company; Gerald Finley and Julius Drake; Venice Baroque with Philippe Jaroussky; Jonathan Biss; Calder Quartet; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra; Jerusalem Quartet; Iestyn Davies and Thomas Dunford; Kronos Quartet; Marcus Shelby Jazz Orchestra.

Music : Vienna 1800 and 1900: Art and Modernity at the Turn of Two Centuries

Nicholas Mathew

Structured around two pivotal historical moments in one cultural center, this course poses questions about the construction and reconstruction of musical modernism at the end of two centuries. The urban space of Vienna itself circumscribes the repertoire under consideration: concerts including music by Schubert, Brahms, and Schoenberg, as well as a series of performances by the city's own Philharmonic Orchestra. Students will be exposed not only to written texts, but also to examples from contemporary visual culture.

Cal Performances Season: Anne-Sofie von Otter and Emanuel Ax; Gerald Finley and Julius Drake; Jonathan Biss; Calder Quartet; Yo-Yo Ma and Emanuel Ax; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra; Pinchas Zukerman and Yefim Bronfman; Mark Morris Dance Group.

TDPS: Thinking Critically About Dance**Jenefer Johnson**

This survey spans a broad range of dance styles and a variety of analytical skills developed through scholarly lenses considering dance and the moving body, offering students a framework for thinking about gesture. To promote the development of vivid gestural awareness, students will be required to present their somatic reactions to readings and performances in the form of 'movement phrases' and other such assignments. Seminars include interactions with visiting artists

Cal Performances Season: Martha Graham Dance Company; Cedar Lake Contemporary Dance; Ballet Flamenco, Eva Yerbabuena; Trey McIntyre Project; Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo; Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; Mark Morris Dance Group.

School of Journalism: Reporting on Arts and Culture**Guest Lecturer Kathleen Richards**

The arts play crucial roles in society as a mirror of the world; a critical lens and, ultimately, a transformative power; an economic driver and enrichment to our social and cultural landscape. Students will develop a foundation on reporting on various forms of artistic expression — including visual art, film, music, comedy, theater, and dance — but also the ways in which technology is having a profound impact on these fields, through guest lectures, exercises, field trips, readings, and assignments.

Cal Performances Season: Students chose assignments from the entire spring season.

Information? Contact Sabrina Klein, PhD Director, Artistic Literacy. Cal Performances
sklein@calperformances.org