

# Performance & Pedagogy



Tufts University, Drama & Dance, DR221

Kareem Khubchandani | [kareem.khubchandani@tufts.edu](mailto:kareem.khubchandani@tufts.edu)

Aidekman 03 | 617.627.6273

Spring 2020, Mondays 1:30 – 4:30pm | Office hours by appointment

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Though we know the American university was built to educate the most elite, to institutionalize privilege, and to capitalize on minoritarian knowledge, it can still be a place where liberatory thought and practices are incubated and shared—as Roderick Ferguson says, we can be “in the university, but not of it.” How does the university commodify minoritarian knowledge, tokenize the arts, and reproduce inequality? What can we as educators do to rethink the terms of education at various scales: administration; curriculum building; course development; instruction; mentorship; assignments; and interpersonal styles? This course is designed to equip theatre and performance graduate students to teach at the undergraduate level, as well as envision futures in and beyond the academy. Moreover, it is designed to offer critiques of university structures and canon building, in order to imagine alternative forms of learning, art-making, and career development.

## OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

- \* to cultivate tools for curriculum and syllabus development
- \* to prepare for classroom challenges and imagine solutions
- \* to distill skills developed in graduate school for multiple career paths
- \* to confront how inequality is reified in the academy at social and systemic levels

## READINGS

The readings (as PDFs and links) are available week-by-week under “Modules” in Canvas.

## COMMUNICATION

Please check your Tufts email and the Canvas website regularly. If you have any problems concerning the course, if you want to better prepare for assignments, or for any other issues related to this class, please don't hesitate to schedule an appointment. I want to make sure you get the most out of this class.

## ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, PREPAREDNESS, TECHNOLOGY

Attendance is mandatory at all classes; please let me know in advance if you plan to be absent otherwise your absence will affect your overall grade. This is a discussion-based class, and so I expect active participation from all of you. I interpret disengagement in class as a lack of preparedness with the assigned materials, and it can affect your grade. Please do not use phones while in class except in cases of emergency.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Your writing should consist of *your* own ideas, words, and information you have collated. When you are quoting or referencing a resource other than your own work, please make sure this is evident using citations. You are expected to be familiar with the Tufts University academic integrity guidelines: <https://students.tufts.edu/student-affairs/student-life-policies/academic-integrity-policy>

## ACADEMIC SUPPORT

If the reading or writing assignments prove to be challenging (and they should be!) I want to encourage you to seek help. There's always room to grow and skills to be learned, and there should be no stigma attached to getting support. You're always welcome to talk to me about these things, and also know that there is an Academic Resource Center available to you: <https://students.tufts.edu/academic-advice-and-support/academic-resource-center/>

## ACCOMMODATIONS

We each arrive to the classroom with different learning needs and it is my intention to create as supportive an environment as possible. If you need accommodations, please meet with me as soon as possible, and also visit the Student Accessibility Services Office and website for further support: <https://students.tufts.edu/student-accessibility-services>.

## ASSIGNMENTS:

TEACHING DEMONSTRATIONS AND RESPONSES: 40%

CLASS OBSERVATION AND REFLECTION: 10%

ANNOTATED SYLLABUS: 40%

COVER LETTERS: 10%

## TEACHING DEMONSTRATIONS & RESPONSES

This assignment is designed to give you a feel for leading different kinds of classrooms, and an opportunity to receive feedback on your teaching style and strategies.

March 30: LECTURE: 10%

You will offer a 30-minute lecture about a cultural phenomenon (an artist, artwork, script, festival, sitcom, etc.) relevant to your syllabus. How will you clarify its importance to the course and otherwise? What images / clips will you show? Where will you position your body in the space to effectively communicate with the class? Will you read from a prepared lecture, prepare notes, or speak off the cuff?

April 6: LEAD CLASS DISCUSSION: 10%

You will lead a 40-minute class discussion based on a scholarly text you have assigned (emailed to me by April 1 so I can upload to Canvas for everyone to read in advance). How will you contextualize the text? How will you structure discussion and use time wisely to make sure that you honor what is in the text, as well as make sure the class takes away what *you* want them to? How will you make sure you are able to hear from as many voices as possible?

April 13: LEAD PERFORMANCE-BASED CLASS: 10%

You will lead a 40-minute performance-based class relevant to your syllabus. Even if you're developing a history syllabus for example, how can you use performance in the classroom to generate new ways of thinking? If there is individual or group activity, what will you do while people work privately? Will you need to model

the practice, or generate improvisation? Will you need to budget time to debrief from the activity? Will you assign any reading or viewing prior to the class? (if so, please email to me by April 8).

April 1, April 8, April 15: RESPONSES: 10%

Given the limited time we have in class for teaching demos, we won't have a lot of time to provide in-person feedback to each other. Instead, you will each write 1 page (single spaced) responses to each other's teaching demos (upload directly to Canvas under assignments within 48 hours of class) detailing: how the presentation fulfilled the assignment, most successful choices, and suggestions for improvement. You will evaluate each of your colleague's presentations, *and* write a self-evaluation as well.

### CLASS OBSERVATION AND REFLECTION

On Monday March 23<sup>rd</sup>, I have invited a panel of professors at Tufts to talk about their experiences in the classroom. I have also received permission from them for you to visit one of their classes and observe their teaching style. You are expected to email one of them individually and set a date to visit their class before Spring Break, and your reflection on this class visit (3 - 5 pages, double spaced) should be uploaded to Canvas **by March 13<sup>th</sup>**. Please read them before the March 23 in-class panel. This assignment is an opportunity for you to see how other scholars teach, but also to start thinking about teaching assessment, i.e., not taking teaching for granted but being able to take note of *how* people teach and what it achieves.

### ANNOTATED SYLLABUS

March 2: Title and course description, objectives and outcomes

March 23 (by 9am): Revised above, plus syllabus narrative and assignments

April 24: Revised above, plus 13-week calendar

May 6: Final packet

Over the course of the semester you will build a syllabus for an undergraduate class that is based on a field that you have or want to build expertise in. For your final submission, you will compile a performance and/or theatre studies syllabus on a topic of your choosing. It can be a cultural studies, performance history, critical theory, practice based, or mixed-approach course. Please consult the additional Canvas module "Syllabus resources" for advice on writing course descriptions, rubrics, and assignments. Across your syllabus, lectures, activities, in-class exercises, and readings/viewings, it should become clear how your course develops the ideas offered in your course description and achieves the goals set forth in the objectives and outcomes. This assignment is designed to give you a robust experience in designing a semester-long class; also this will

hopefully be a syllabus you can teach in our department, through the ex-college, at other Boston-based institutions, or used as part of future job applications.

Your final packet should include:

- \* Full syllabus
- \* Sample lecture (already delivered in class)
- \* A narrative summary of the syllabus calendar that evidences your understanding of the field you're engaging and explains how readings and activities are arranged to scaffold learning (3-4 pages, double spaced).
- \* Five descriptions of course readings / viewings and explanations of how they fit into the larger story your syllabus is telling (1.5 page per entry, double spaced each)
- \* Two plans for in-class performance exercise that explain what you hope to achieve (1 page per entry).

The syllabus should include:

- \* Title of the course, name of the university and department.
- \* A course description that makes clear the central concerns of the class, and demonstrates how the class fits into the departmental mission.
- \* Expected objectives and outcomes.
- \* Clear and full description of assignments that include a rationale behind each one.
- \* A calendar for thirteen weeks of instruction for a class meeting twice a week for 75 mins each (reading period + exams held during week 14).
- \* A clear grading rubric that explains how you determine what earns A through F.

## 2 COVER LETTERS

April 26 by 8pm.

Writing these cover letters is an opportunity to take a dip into the job application process. The academic job market is especially opaque, and so it makes a difference to get a sense of its intricacies and expectations sooner rather than later.

### LETTER ONE

\*Consult the sample cover letters and teaching statements in the "Job Market Resources" module. From the sample letters provided, you'll find that an academic job letter generally covers: your research expertise, the focus of your current research project(s), your teaching experience and capacity, your programming experience, your service to and beyond the academy, your fit for the position and department, and your rationale for applying based on your career trajectory.

\* Explore [Chronicle of Higher Ed jobs](#) and [Academic Wiki](#) to locate a position that appeals to you.

\* Write a cover letter (up to two-pages) for the position.

## LETTER 2

- \* Interview someone working in a non-academic position and explore how they acquired their job, and the skills necessary for employment.
- \* Write a one-page cover letter for that position. Submit with a copy of that job description or something similar.

## GRADING RUBRIC

- A = excellent in all areas. Writing presents a strong thesis statement, is argued coherently, offers clear evidence to support your ideas, and demonstrates a clear understanding of works cited. Mechanics are excellent with correct spelling, grammar, and citations. Performance / presentation is coherent, expertly organized, and confidently delivered. Takes stylistic risks in ways that benefit the project, and evidences advanced preparation.
- B = good. Writing presents a good thesis statement; the argument and evidence are okay, but could be stronger. Grammar and citations are correct with few spelling errors. Performance / presentation has cohesion but could do with better organization, delivery, style, or preparation.
- C = meets minimum requirements of assignment. Writing presents a passable thesis statement. An argument and evidence exists, but is either not convincing or not well articulated. More than a few errors in grammar, spelling, or citations. Performance / presentation shows potential / germination of productive ideas, but poorly executed.
- F = falls short of minimum requirements, but effort in completing the assignment has been made. Thesis, evidence, and argument either very weak or missing. Significant errors in grammar, spelling, or citations. Performance / presentation shows lack of organization, understanding, or preparation.

## CALENDAR

### Weds Jan 22 – Introductions

In class panel: “Keeping the university running.”

### Mon Jan 27 – Structural inequality and the university

Aaron Hanlon – The university is a ticking time bomb

E. Patrick Johnson – In the Merry Old Land of Oz

Sara Ahmed – On Arrival & Institutional Life (from *On Being Included*).

Jay Timothy Dolmage – [Introduction](#) (from *Academic Ableism*)

Matt Brim – Poor Queer Studies

Barbara Christian – Diminishing Returns: Can Black Feminism(s) Survive the Academy?

### Mon Feb 3 – Where is performance in the university?

Catherine Cole – The Theatre and the University

Eng-Beng Lim – Neoliberalism, the Arts, and the Global University

Jill Dolan – Geographies of Learning

Ben Spatz – Embodied Research in the University (from *What Can a Body Do*)

Judith Hamera – Exposing the Pedagogical Body

E. Patrick Johnson – Performance and/as Pedagogy

### Mon Feb 10 – Transgressive Pedagogies

Javon Johnson – DEBT

Laura Edmondson – Of Sugarcoating and Hope

Brian Harmon – [Performance Remains](#)

bell hooks – Teaching to Transgress

Nicholas L. Clarkson – Teaching Trans Students, Teaching Trans Studies

Kemi Adeyemi – Donald Trump is the Perfect Man for the Job

Kandice Chuh – on (not) mentoring

### Thursday Feb 20 – Envisioning Curricula

Roderick Ferguson – Administering Sexuality and Conclusion (from *The Reorder of Things*)

Nancy Ann Kindelan – A View from the Bridge

Peter Zazzali and Jeanne Klein – Toward revising undergraduate theatre education

In-class panel: “Envsisioning curricula, with department chairs.”

### Monday Feb 24 – Designing Syllabi

Jennifer Tyburczy – All Museums Are Sex Museums  
Jyoti Puri – Postcolonial Feminisms and Teaching Sociology in the Imperium  
Nguyen Tan Hoang – The Opening  
Kyla Wazana Tomkins – [We aren't here to learn what we already know](#)  
Patricia Ybarra – How to read a Latinx Play

**Monday March 2 – Performing in class**  
– **Course description due**

Carrie Sandahl – Tyrannies of Neutral in Actor Training  
Karin Shankar – Teaching Postcoloniality and Performance  
James McKinnon – I had Never Danced in a Bathroom Before  
Joe Litvak – Discipline, Spectacle, and Melancholia  
Kareem Khubchandani – Lessons in Drag

**Tuesday March 9 – Beyond: Assignments, Mentoring, and Faculty Life**

Noe Montez – Decolonizing Wikipedia through Advocacy and Activism  
Elizabeth Osborne and Shelby Lunderman – This is the Dawning of the Age of the Online Course  
Chris Amirault – The Good Teacher, the Good Student  
Amber Jamilla Musser – Specimen Days  
Erica Violet Lee – [I'm Concerned for your Academic Career](#)  
Melissa Phruksachart – On Mentoring Future Faculty of Color

**Friday March 13 – Class observation and reflection due**

SPRING BREAK

**Monday March 23 – Course planning**  
– **Course description due**

Explore Syllabus Resources module on canvas  
Read each other's syllabi drafts uploaded this morning.  
Read each other's reflections on your visits to other professor's classes.

In-class panel: "Teaching and Faculty Life."

**Monday March 30 – Teaching demo: lecture on an artist / art object**

**Monday April 6 – Teaching demo: lead discussion on a critical essay**

Read the essays your colleagues have assigned for their class session.

**Monday April 13 – Teaching demo: lead a performance-based class**

**Friday April 24 – 13-week calendar due**

**Sunday April 26 – cover letters due**

**Monday April 27 – Academic and alt-ac markets**

Read each other's cover letters uploaded

[Imagine PhD](#) (Do their skill assessment test)

In-class panel: “Navigating job markets.”

**Wednesday May 6 – Final syllabus packet due**