Spring 2016 UHON Spoken Word
Performance of Poetry and Prose as Public Advocacy
Class Meeting: Tuesday 2:00-4:30, LIB 112

Instructor Dr. Diana Tigerlily tgrlily@siu.edu 618-453-5110
Office Hours FANER 3338  Mon 2:45 – 3:45 & Tues 12:00 – 1:45

Course Description
This course will engage social issues, current events, and personal experiences through the study and performance of spoken word poetry and prose. Students will witness performances by a variety of spoken word artists, examine written texts of spoken word, and create original spoken word performances across genres of poetry and prose. Spoken word is a poetic art form that provides a vehicle for critical cultural social and political commentary on current local and global events. Writers and performers of spoken word poetry voice the connections between their personal experiences to the larger cultural contexts, utilizing spoken word as a mode of public advocacy. This course will emphasize written and oral communication skills to enhance critical self-reflexivity and empathy as methods for engaging dialogue on social and global issues, for being a public advocate to make a difference, and for creating an entry point into understanding one’s own self. This course will enhance students’ abilities to incorporate aesthetic, literary devices such as alliteration, metaphor, and rhythm into their spoken word. Finally, this course will teach the value of story—our own and others’ spoken words—as a way of sharing our unique identities, forging connections, and advocating for a just society.

Student Learning Objectives

- Develop critical cultural awareness of social issues, current events, and personal experiences by encountering and creating spoken word.
- Introduce theories of narrative and performance as methods of critical inquiry and public advocacy
- Develop and apply skills for creating, workshopping, and performing high quality spoken word poetry and prose.
- Participate in the creation of a safe learning environment emphasizing ethical communication, open dialogue, active listening, constructive feedback, and respect for one another
- Increase understanding of the intersections of cultural identity markers including but not limited to gender, sex, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, religion, and nation
- Contextualize empathy as foundational to the dynamic relationship between self and other, the personal and the universal
- Practice critical self-reflexivity to enhance written and oral communication skills
- Appreciate the aesthetic and pedagogical value of spoken word poetry and performance
Five questions this course asks:

1. What is spoken word? Where/how/why did it originate? How do I craft powerful spoken word art? What are the rewards?

2. How can spoken word poetry and prose be a tool for critical inquiry and public advocacy? How/why do stories matter?

3. What is empathy? What is critical self-reflexivity? What is intersectionality? How can knowledge of these three concepts enhance critical cultural understanding and global awareness, and in turn inform spoken word performance.

4. How can I begin to understand experiences of others whose lives are different from my own? Why is it important that I understand?

5. What is the relationship between the personal and the universal? Between self and culture?

Required Texts


Additional Materials

Viewings, in class and on D2L, video clips of spoken word performances

Selected readings on Performance Theory

Schedule/Outline of Topics

**Unit 1: Introduction to Spoken Word**

This unit will trace the history of Spoken Word and will introduce terms and concepts related to spoken word poetry and related genres such as storytelling, performance art, and slam poetry. This unit will also introduce performance theory,
as well as terms and concepts such as intersectionality, empathy, & self-reflexivity that we will engage throughout the semester.

**Unit 2: Spoken Word Artists and Critical Cultural Issues**
In this unit, we will study performances of popular and successful spoken word artists, and we will discuss current events as they relate to social and global issues. We will analyze the variety of performance styles, social/political commentaries, genres, and audience responses. Students will develop a vocabulary that will facilitate dialogues around performance and will facilitate performance as a critical response to current social and political issues.

**Unit 3: Writing and Performing Spoken Word**
Utilizing critical self-reflexivity, students will write and perform three spoken word poems focusing on a social issue, a current event, and a personal story. During the writing, workshopping, revising, and performing of these poems, students will learn poetic devices such as metaphor, concrete language, rhythm, and verse. They will learn how to give and to accept constructive feedback from one another, and they will learn the art of revision and of delivery.

**Course Assignments**
The course will include lecture, discussion, video, small group activities, workshops and performances. No performance experience is necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spoken Word 1 (Social Issue)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken Word 2 (Current Event)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken Word 3 (Personal Story)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Self-Reflection</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>500</td>
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**Final Grading Scale**
- 90-100% = 450-500 = A
- 80-89% = 400-449 = B
- 70-79% = 350-399 = C
- 60-69% = 300-349 = D
- 0-60% = 0-299 = F

**Participation**
This course depends on the exchange of ideas and experiences, the commitment and presence of each one of us. Your participation grade will reflect your contribution to fostering a positive learning environment. A good faith effort towards this fostering includes...
preparing for class by completing the readings and making notes of items for discussion; respectful verbal and nonverbal participation in the discussions, respectful listening to your classmates' ideas and opinions, respectful audiencing of performances, and performing of poems as homework assignments and as fully prepared, memorized presentations. Your presence in the classroom as both performers and audience members is necessary. Most likely, differences in opinions on issues will exist, which is expected. No one perspective has to be "right" nor "wrong," and what may seem "obvious" to one person may be new information to somebody else. It is okay to agree to disagree. Respectful exchanges include maintaining an open mind in trying to understand opinions or positions that differ from our own. No interrupting or hateful language.

**Attendance**

Since much of the work in this course happens in class through discussion, performances, and witness of performances, class attendance is essential. Each student may miss up to one class without penalty. After that, fifteen points per absence will be deducted from your final course point total. Three tardies equals one absence. I will take attendance every class. Absences on performance days counts as two absences—an automatic deduction of 30 points from your final course point total.

Basic classroom courtesies. Please arrive on time. Please be sure your cell phones are silenced and put away before you enter the classroom. Cell phone use will result in a deduction of your participation grade.

**Course Policies**

You must perform every assigned performance in order to pass the class. This includes the Final Performance Showcase.

Performances must be performed on the assigned day. Make-up performances are not allowed. In the event of an emergency preventing you from attending class and performing, notify me via email immediately. Depending on the circumstances, I may or may not allow you to make up your performance for full or partial credit.

If you are absent on a performance day (whether you are a performer or audience member), that absence will count as two absences (a deduction of 30 points from your final course total).

**Academic Dishonesty:**

Students are expected to be familiar with the *Student Conduct Code*. You should know that presenting another’s work as your own, even if by accident, is a serious violation of the *Student Conduct Code*. The *Student Conduct Code* identifies the following as acts of academic dishonesty: “Plagiarism, representing the work of another as one’s own work; preparing work for another that is to be used as that person’s own work; cheating by any
method or means; ...soliciting, aiding, abetting, concealing, or attempting conduct in violation of this code” (p. 18). Whether quoting or paraphrasing (or even summarizing) someone else’s work, you should cite your sources; failure to do so constitutes an act of plagiarism. Suspected cases of plagiarism will be investigated following Article V of the Student Conduct Code; if plagiarism is substantiated, the perpetrator may face failing the assignment, failing the course, disciplinary censure, and/or suspension from the university, depending on the details of the case (see Article III of the Student Conduct Code). As a rule of thumb: when in doubt, cite where the information is coming from. If you are uncertain whether you are citing sources sufficiently and appropriately enough to avoid plagiarism, please consult with me or a tutor at the Writing Center. Academic dishonesty is very serious and will result in a penalty.

University’s Emergency Procedure Clause:

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on BERT’s website at www.bert.siu.edu, Department of Public Safety’s website www.dps.siu.edu (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guideline pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

Accessibility: In the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), I wish to make this course as accessible as possible to students with disabilities, temporary medical conditions, or mental or emotional health issues that may affect any aspect of course assignments or participation. I invite you to communicate with me at the beginning of the semester or at your discretion about any accommodations that will improve your experience of or access to the course. We can create an agreement to document accommodations. The Disability Support Services (DSS) office provides support and various services for students with disabilities and can be reached at (618) 453-5738 or DSSsiu@siu.edu. To best serve the student population, DSS requests that students contact the office at the beginning of the semester or at their earliest convenience. The Achieve Program also offers support (for a fee) to students with learning disabilities and can be reached at (618) 453-2369 or achieve@siu.edu.
**Title IX and Violence:** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: [http://safe.siu.edu](http://safe.siu.edu) and here:

- **SIU Police Department** 618.453.3771
- **Carbondale Police Department** 618.457.3200
- **Jackson County Sheriff's Department** 618.687.1303
- **Carbondale Women’s Center** 618.529.2324
- **Carbondale Police Department Victim Advocate’s** 618.457.3200, ext. 447
- **Jackson County States Attorney’s Office, Victim Advocate** 618.687.7200
- **SIU School of Law Domestic Violence Legal Clinic** 618.536.4423
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Organization and Impact</th>
<th>Elements of Drama</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>performance has a clear beginning, middle, and end; shifts in character, scene, and concept are clear and easy to follow; performance clearly and effectively expresses a message, conveys a theme, or delivers an emotional impact; performance demonstrates deep critical thinking; integrates multiple course concepts with creative expression</td>
<td>performance has a strong focus that frames what is most significant; contains an obvious element of tension; space is used to enhance meaning of the performance; symbols are engaged and used to convey meaning beyond literal definition; performer physically commits to space and created role(s)</td>
<td>few or no errors in usage of language as relevant to character roles; completely memorized script; monologue or dialogue has consistent rate and flow as relevant to developed character(s); meets time requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>performance has a clear beginning, middle, and end but may be hard to follow at times; shifts in character, scene, and concept are identifiable with a bit of strain for the audience; to some degree the performance expresses a message, conveys a theme, or delivers an emotional impact; demonstrates a level of critical thinking; integrates a course concept with creative expression</td>
<td>performance has a focus that frames but needs more development; tension is present but nonlocatable; space is used in a mostly effective way; symbols are used literally and as index; performer partially commits to space and created role(s)</td>
<td>some errors in usage of language; completely memorized script; monologue or dialogue has a mostly consistent rate and flow as relevant to developed character(s); meets time requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>performance may begin or end in a confusing way; a lack of development in the middle; performance flow is illogical; intended message, theme, or emotional impact may be unclear or contradictory; lack of critical thinking; thin connection to course concepts</td>
<td>performance focus and tension lack development; space is not used to enhance performance; symbols are used but ineffectively; lack of demonstrated physical commitment</td>
<td>performance is difficult to comprehend in moments because of errors in language use, broken monologue or dialogue flow, and lack of memorization; meets time requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>performance is confusing in the beginning, middle, and end; flow of performance changes without warning; there is no discernable intended message, theme, or emotional impact</td>
<td>performance focus is missing or unclear; lack of space and symbolic use; performance does not develop</td>
<td>performance is consistently difficult to comprehend because of numerous errors in language use, broken flow, and lack of memorization; does not meet time requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>performance is confusing and unintelligible</td>
<td>performance has a complete lack of dramatic elements</td>
<td>performance lacks all mechanical elements</td>
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### Rubric for Writing Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>assignment clearly and sufficiently addresses each component outlined in the syllabus and/or evaluation sheet; language use is appropriate and concise; assignment is thought provoking and demonstrates critical reflection; work is polished and fluid in terms of organization and mechanics</td>
<td>assignment includes strong thesis statement; compelling introduction that includes a preview; body of work is organized by an identifiable schema; main points are clear; transitions facilitate flow; positions other than the author’s are addressed; inclusion of material from outside the classroom; conclusion synthesizes body of the work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>assignment meets all components as addressed in the syllabus and/or evaluation sheet; language use is appropriate and slightly muddled; content is slightly compelling and offers a few points of critical reflexivity and thought; most of the work is polished with minor organizational and mechanical errors</td>
<td>assignment includes adequate introduction and conclusion; body of the work has a logical sequence; reader/audience does not have to strain to understand the flow of points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>assignment does not meet all components as addressed in the syllabus and/or evaluation sheet; little evidence of critical or reflexive thinking; disruptive organization and mechanical issues</td>
<td>assignment has a weak introduction and conclusion; main points are difficult to understand or follow; lack of support for ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>assignment fails to meet a majority of the components as addressed in the syllabus and/or evaluation sheet; major organization and mechanical issues</td>
<td>assignment has no identifiable introduction or conclusion; reader has a difficult time identifying main points; broken thought-patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>assignment fails to meet components as addressed in the syllabus and/or evaluation sheet; unrecognizable organization and sentence structure; deviation from assignment focus</td>
<td>assignment has a complete lack of structure</td>
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Course Calendar

Week 1:   T  1/19 Introductions and Syllabus
          What is Spoken Word? View spoken word performances

Week 2:   T  1/26 Word Warriors Foreword – p 110; Revolution pp 1-114 with CD

Week 3:   T  2/2 poetry performance exercises
          Social issue/current event responses

Week 4:   T  2/9 W.W. 110-255, Revolution Part 5 & Part 6

Week 5:   T  2/16 poetry performances and video clips

Week 6:   T  2/23 “Who Am I” performances

Week 7:   T  3/1 W.W. 256-finish, performances, clips

Week 8:   T  3/8 take the mic Ch 1-9, writing exercises
          T  3/15 **SPRING BREAK-NO CLASS**

Week 9:   T  3/22 Writing Workshop

Week 10:  T  3/29 Performance Workshop

Week 11:  T  4/5 **Performance 1**—social issue spoken word

Week 12:  T  4/12 Writing and Performance Workshop

Week 13:  T  4/19 **Performance 2**—current event spoken word

Week 14:  T  4/26 Writing & Performance Workshop

Week 15:  T  5/3 **Performance 3**—personal story spoken word

Week 16:  T  5/10 Final Exam Period 2:45 – 4:45
          ***Performance Showcase, Guyon Auditorium***
          Critical Self-Reflections Due