Description:

This course will examine cultural, social, and political issues in twentieth-century Indonesia and China through the lens of staged performance. In its synthesis of the textual, visual, aural, material, and kinesthetic, performance constitutes a multidimensional expressive medium that challenges conventional research methods and disciplinary approaches. In part, this course is focused on interrogating and examining new methodologies for the critical study of performance as a humanistic endeavor. In this sense, the course is appropriate generally for students interested in developing critical methodologies in theater, music, and dance studies. Additionally, by taking modern Indonesia and China as its focus, this course offers specialized training in the modern histories of these two specific domains of performance practice. China and Indonesia represent two somewhat different political trajectories for modern nation-building in Asia. At the same time, shared questions cut across these two terrains, illuminating useful points of comparison and contrast: How did European and Japanese imperialisms shape and transform Indonesian and Chinese performance histories in different ways? What role did performance play in postcolonial nation-building and political revolutions and counter-revolutions in Indonesia and China during the mid-twentieth century? In what ways have issues of regional, ethnic, and spatial differences complicated relationships between performance and “national” identities in Indonesia and China? How have power-inflected differences such as elite and popular, male and female, official and unofficial, traditional and modern, and religious and secular shaped performance practices in contemporary Indonesia and China?
Assignments:

- Seminar participation: 20%
- Reaction papers: 20%
- Presentations on the readings/performances: 10%
- Research presentation: 10%
- Final research paper: 40%

The course is conducted as a seminar. Students are expected to complete all the readings and to participate in class discussion in an active and informed manner.

Each week you will be asked to write short reaction papers, no more than 2 pages single spaced, summarizing the assigned readings. These reaction papers should provide a concise rendering of the aims and argument of the text or texts. Were those aims achieved, and was the argument compelling? You may call into question a particular point in the text that is intriguing or troubling, or suggest how this text raises larger questions for the study of performance in Asia. Reactions to primary source materials should also be included in these reaction papers. At the end of the reaction paper you are required to add one or two questions arising from your reading(s) and viewing(s) that can be shared with the class. These papers are to be submitted to the class email list by 6 pm on Wednesday evening before class. Students are encouraged to read their classmates’ reaction papers before class.

You will take turns launching the discussion of the readings. On the evening before class, the student(s) presenting the following day will post an ‘agenda’ noting key terms in the assigned materials. You will submit this agenda by 6 pm on the class email list in place of a reaction paper. Students leading discussion should devise a series of problematics to prime the class discussion. They should provide contextualization for all of the assigned readings and primary sources for that day and propose topics for discussion. Presentations should last fifteen to twenty minutes.

Your work for the seminar will culminate in a final written project. This project will consist of either a research paper or a critical essay of 15-20 pages double spaced on a focused topic concerning performance in Asia. Paper topics will be determined in consultation with the instructors; an abstract and preliminary bibliography of the paper topic will be due by 6 pm on the last Sunday of Spring Break and should be submitted to the instructors via email. Final papers are due by 4 pm on Thursday, April 26th. Students will give brief oral presentations of their projects for the final session of our seminar.

Grading will be based on the quality of the reaction papers and seminar presentations, the quality of classroom participation throughout the seminar, the quality of the final written project, and the quality of the final presentation. Students are encouraged to meet with instructors in Office Hours early in the semester to discuss their progress in the class and to develop ideas for the final project.

Please be advised against falling behind in the course, as the success of the seminar depends upon the sustained and informed engagement of all its participants; be aware, too, that incompletes will not be given except in truly extraordinary circumstances.
Primary Sources:

Performance recordings and, sometimes, translated texts will be assigned to accompany most readings as primary source materials. In some cases, experts in the specific forms will be invited to lead discussions about the assigned viewings. This will allow students to gain experience interpreting and analyzing performance works in the genres being discussed in this course.

SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

January 4
No assignments due

Week 2: Approaching Performance

January 11

- Primary source: video of Suzhou pingtan, Jin Lisheng performing solo version of passage from Lin Chong, adapted from early 1960s Water Margin (Shuihu zhuan) story, in Chen tune https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBOmyMFDO7g
- Primary source: video of Suzhou pingtan, Xing Yanzhi performing solo kaipian (opening ballad) on a stage set of the story of Du Shiniang https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cG9tzsIyhCs
- Primary source: “A Sample Passage from ‘Two Women Marry’ in Suzhou Dialect” in Mark Bender, 2003, pp. 229-231.


Week 3: “Traditions”

January 18
[e-book: https://mirlyn.lib.umich.edu/Record/015085304]

- Primary sources (Films):
Bayu Aji Pamungkas. Youtube. Selection from wayang performance featuring the puppet movements of the popular young dalang, Bayu Agi Pamungkas (son of Ki Anom Suroto) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppjdidq6lX50

[e-book: https://mirlyn.lib.umich.edu/Record/004586273]

- Primary source: video segment of “Wandering in the Garden” scene from Kun opera Peony Pavilion (Mudan ting) by Bai Xianyong and Suzhou Kun Opera Theater
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AV1JMA1CwrI
- Primary source: video segment of “Self-Portrait” scene from Kun opera Peony Pavilion (Mudan ting) by Kunqu Society of New York
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NC82G7g2P4

Weeks 4-7: Colonial and Postcolonial Modernities and Traditions

January 25
[e-book: https://mirlyn.lib.umich.edu/Record/014761603]

- Primary source: Film (Youtube) Ki Anom Suroto, Wahyu Topeng Wojo 3 (final portion of a 7.5 hour performance by Java’s premiere dhalang). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBTFbMZreZ4&t=4276s

February 1
[e-book https://mirlyn.lib.umich.edu/Record/012581862]

- Primary source: video of Peking opera film Farewell My Concubine (Bawang bieji) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBpQ55M7W-g

Guest speaker: David Rolston, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, UM.


February 8
  - Primary source: Hu Shi’s 1919 *huaju* (spoken drama) play script, “The Main Event in Life”

February 15
  [e-book: https://mirlyn.lib.umich.edu/Record/014761603]
  - Primary source: TBD

**Week 8-11: Revolution and Counter-Revolution**

February 22
Wilcox, Emily. *Revolutionary Bodies: Dance and China’s Socialist Legacy*. Book manuscript.
  - Primary Source: video of 1961 film based on 1959 dance drama *Dagger Society* (*Xiaodao hui*) by the Shanghai Opera and Dance Drama Theater
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VL9FU9iNsMg

**Week 9 – Spring Break**

March 1
No Class. Abstract and preliminary bibliography for final paper topic due via email by 6 pm on Sunday, March 4th.

March 8
  [e-book: https://mirlyn.lib.umich.edu/Record/012739471]
  - Primary Sources:
  - Garin Nugroho, *Puisi Tak Terkuburkan: A Poet* (film 1999)

March 15
Weeks 12-14: Contemporary Period

March 22
- Bedhaya Ketawang, Karaton Surakarta, July 2000 (film: selections)


❖ Performance Outing: March 26th Gamelan performance. Details TBD.

March 29
- Primary Source: Live puppet demonstration by guest speaker Jennifer Goodlander

April 5
- Primary Source: videos of Shaanxi folk singers (links TBD)

Week 15: Final Projects

April 12
Final Project Presentations