HNRS 122-004  
Fall 2017, Wednesdays 4:30-7:10 p.m.  
Thompson Hall 1017

Professor: Dr. Peter Pober  
Office: RA 331  
Office Hours: T 11-11:45, R 1:15-2:30  
Office Phone: 703-993-4119

This class will explore the construction of the arts, the interplay of the various arts with each other, and the exploration of that interplay with the extra-aesthetic world. As it is an Honors class, the expectations will be higher. I will presume you come to class ready to address the myriad issues reflected in the reading and the day-to-day world. Participation is crucial to this class as is original and critical thinking. I urge you to review the university Honor Code posted at the GMU website as it will be enforced stringently in this class. Please email or call Peter with any questions you might have or anything you don’t understand BEFORE an assignment is due. He will be happy to meet with you to discuss any issues of concern.

Texts: All Required

*The Great Acting Teachers and Their Methods* by Richard Brestoff  
*Visual Culture* by Richard Howells and Joaquim Negreiros  
*Playing in the Dark* by Toni Morrison  
*From Ritual to Theatre* by Victor Turner  
*Red* by John Logan

Assignments:

1) **Ekphrastic Aesthetics:** Ekphrastic poetry is the conversation between two pieces of art. The writer interprets a work of visual art and then creates a narrative in verse form that represents his or her reaction to that painting, photograph, sculpture or other artistic creation. Each student must provide an ekphrastic example for the class. S/he will present the original text about which the ekphrastic work is written and then the elements of the ekphrastic work that speak to the original work. Alternative interpretations of the original work presented in the ekphrastic work should be highlighted. The ekphrastic example need not be poetry, but can be other forms of literary writing such as plays, novellas, short stories, etc. 10%

2) **Race and Gender Performativity:** After reading *Playing in the Dark*, each student will be required to write 6-7 page paper addressing a major issue in Morrison’s book. S/he will either agree or disagree with Morrison on the issue and use a series of other literary and extraliterary examples to document his/her stance. Each paper must be accompanied by a comprehensive works cited/bibliography page. 15%
3) Great Acting Teachers Group Presentation: Students will be placed in groups of 4 or 5 and will be responsible for presenting the theories of one or more of the theorists illuminated in the Brestoff book. Each group will have 30 minutes and the presentation must include examples of the theorist’s work and examples of the theories utilized in other media (outside of theater). Each presentation must include a diagnostic tool designed to confirm the class’s understanding of the information and ability to synthesize this knowledge. 20%

4) Visual Culture Project: Each student will have a total of 8 minutes to present a film clip of his/her choice that exemplifies one of theories addressed by Howells and Negreiros in their book. The 8 minutes must include at most a 4-minute clip while the remainder of the time must be used to show understanding of the theory and application outside of the filmic world. This will be tough to get done in 8 minutes so each student must be very prepared. The 4-minute (approximately 2-3 pages double-spaced) presentation must be submitted at the time of the oral project. Each student must present a different issue/theory from the book. 20%

5) Final Projects: Each student must study an artifact that serves to combine the aesthetic world with the “real” world (e.g. Bill T. Jones Still/Here, etc.). The final project will involve a 10-minute presentation of the artifact that addresses the theories studied during the semester illuminated in the aesthetic experience. Examples of the artifact must be provided for the class as well as reactions to and about the experience from mainstream media, critics, and the alternative press if possible. Each student must also submit a handout for the class that documents the development of the aesthetic experience and the implications of the work. 25%

6) Participation: Each student will be expected to ACTIVELY participate in the daily discussions clearly showing mastery of the material read for class. Each student may be absent once during the semester as the class only meets once a week, but not on a day s/he is listed to present to the class. Beyond the 1 absence, each additional absence will result in a 1 grade deduction of the final semester grade; i.e., 2 absences will reduce a calculated A- to a B+, etc. Participation is critical to this class. 10%
Class Schedule

Aug. 30: Read *Red*. Each student must pick one argument made by Mark Rothko in the play and come to class with a 1-paragraph typed response either agreeing or disagreeing, explain why, and provide an example outside of the play that supports her/his claim.

Sept. 6: Read *Playing in the Dark*. Each student must pick one argument made by Morrison and come to class with a 1-paragraph typed response either agreeing or disagreeing, why, and one example outside of the Morrison book which supports his/her stance.

Sept. 13: Race and Gender Performativity Papers Due. Read Intro.-p.69 in *Visual Culture*

Sept. 20: Read p.70-157 of *Visual Culture* and bring an example from a childhood film you loved that explains/elucidates one of the theories in the first half of the book (no film clip…just explain the example to us in 1-2 minutes)

Sept. 27: Read Media section of *Visual Culture*, p. 157-296; individual presentations will begin today (#1-9)


Oct. 11: All Ekphrastic presentations today.

Oct. 18: Read Chapters 1-4 in *The Great Acting Teachers*; Groups 1, 2, and 3 Present today.

Oct. 25: Read Chapters 5-11 in *The Great Acting Teachers*; Groups 4, 5, and 6 Present today.

Nov. 1: Read pages 1-60 in *From Ritual to Theatre*; each student must submit a Real-world example from a newspaper, magazine, website, etc., that Exemplifies one concept addressed by Turner in those chapters. A 1-page typed explanation of why the example illuminates the concept must accompany the clipping.

Nov. 8: Read pages 61-123 in *From Ritual to Theatre* and submit similar Assignment as 11/1 but for this chapter.

Nov. 15: NO CLASS TODAY

Nov. 22: NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

Nov. 29: ALL Final Projects; class will extend until 10:30 p.m. tonight and I will buy pizza for everyone during a break in the process.