

# English 9141: Performance and the Global City Fall 2016

Thursday 3:30-6:30, STvH1155

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## 1. Course Description

What is urban performance? How do cities “stage” themselves for citizens, tourists, politicians, and others? What kinds of performances shape the “creative city”? How do human geographers, performance theorists, theatre artists and others engage with urban studies issues in order to shape the city-worlds we now increasingly inhabit?

This course will combine theoretical readings with published descriptions of key urban performance events as well as site visits to performance spaces in Toronto, Detroit, and here in London as we unpack these questions and imagine what urban performance might look like in the years ahead. Thinking through relational aesthetics, civic “play”, para-theatrical events and civic festivals, we’ll also consider carefully the political impact of linking art and culture to a neoliberal urban agenda.

## 2. Meet your Teaching Team!

**Instructor:** Dr Kim Solga ([ksolga@uwo.ca](mailto:ksolga@uwo.ca); 519-661-2111 x80118)

**Kim’s office and hours:** AHB 3G14; Tuesdays 2:30-4:30; Thursdays 2:30-3:30

**NOTE:** I don’t check my UWO email on weekends. Any messages received after 6pm on Friday will be addressed first thing Monday morning. This ALSO means that *nothing* for our class is so urgent that you need to worry about it over the weekend – **weekends are for self-care**. Enjoy them!

## 3. Our course on the web

We are using OWL.

(New students: go to <http://owl.uwo.ca> to get started.)

It’s highly imperfect, but it allows all our stuff - including assessment things, readings, and discussion forums, to live in one place. We will be sharing research questions, discussion prompts, and other information online regularly, so this kind of concentration is useful.

**Please have a look around the site** and check out the various tools – including a comprehensive course calendar, *and all your readings in one place!* (Note that **all** the books in the bibliography at the end of this outline are on reserve for you via OWL.)

## 4. Objectives and Outcomes

An outcome is something we would like to take away from our course, at the end of the term. An objective is something we will do to make an outcome happen.

### *Outcomes*

Students who take our course seriously and commit to our shared labour can expect to:

- be introduced to a range of urban performance theory and practice;
- explore a range of interdisciplinary methodologies for thinking about performance, including economics, urban studies, and performance theory;
- develop and enhance their teaching skills, including team-teaching skills;
- explore new ways to communicate critical ideas;
- practice, develop, and improve their public presentation skills;
- experiment with collaborative labour;
- take some risks, make some mistakes, and have fun!

### *Objectives*

In order to achieve the above outcomes, students should expect to:

- read widely and critically each week in urban performance studies;
- attend both scheduled field trips;
- spend time investigating London's local arts communities;
- contribute regularly to our class conversation both in person and online;
- work in teams on one in-class teaching presentation;
- complete a mix of traditional written and creative assignments;
- screw up sometimes, and survive!

## 5. Required Texts

You need not purchase any texts for this class. All of your readings are available online or on reserve at Weldon; head to our OWL site and click on "course reserves" for access.

See the week-by-week breakdown below for information on each week's readings, and consult the full bibliography at the end of this outline for more info on where each reading comes from. (Everything on the bibliography is on reserve for you at Weldon.)

Two books will be used in their majority, and if you wish you may purchase these. Use any seller you prefer. Both are currently in stock at Amazon and Indigo.

**Harvie, Jen. *Theatre & The City*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009.**

[Note that this book *is only on reserve as a hard copy* at Weldon; there is no e-book.]

**Hopkins, D.J., and Kim Solga, eds. *Performance and the Global City*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013.**

[This book is on reserve as an e-book through course reserves, via OWL.]

## 6. Assessment

### A) The Basics

Your grade in English 9141A will consist of the following parts:

- ✓ Position paper (written, based on your engagement with a reading; 15%)
- ✓ Two reflections (optional media, based on our field trips; 15% each)
- ✓ Final project (mixed-media) (25%)
- ✓ Peer teaching exercise (in class and online, 15%)
- ✓ Participation (in class and online, 15%)

Your due dates are as follows:

- ✓ Position paper: on or before **Friday 14 October**, by midnight
- ✓ Two reflections: on or before **Friday 11 November**, by midnight
- ✓ Final project: presentation component in class on **Thursday 1 December**; documentation on or before **Friday 9 December**, by midnight
- ✓ Peer teaching exercise: TBA (we will choose slots in our first class)
- ✓ Participation: ongoing

### B) The Specifics

#### **POSITION PAPER**

**(1500 WORDS, OR 5-6PP, INCLUDING CITATIONS)**

For this task you will select *one* chapter/article from one of the books on our course bibliography (at the end of this outline) and engage with it in a deep way by answering these questions:

1. *What is the author's central claim?*
2. *What is the nature of the author's supporting evidence?*
3. *What are the strengths of the author's argument?*
4. *What are its weaknesses, and how would I address them?*

This is an opportunity for you to develop strong secondary-reading skills, and to become unafraid of challenging a fellow scholar's position in a respectful and reflective way.

Please do not select a reading we have discussed together in class.

#### **TWO REFLECTIONS (ONE PER CITY!)**

**(1000 WORDS EACH, WRITTEN; 5 MINUTES EACH VIDEO/AUDIO/EQUIVALENT)**

This term we will travel together to Toronto and Detroit. After each field trip, make some reflections; you may write them down, record them as audio or video, or use another medium of your choice.

Next, select one of the readings *we have worked on together in class*, and use that reading to shape your initial reflections into a “review” of your experience in Toronto/Detroit. (Choose a different reading for each reflection paper.)

You may use a formal or an informal tone, but don’t sacrifice criticality in your reflexivity. You may choose to place your urban fieldwork into deep conversation with your chosen reading, or you may choose another route – perhaps making a piece of creative work that refracts what you felt, learned, or saw on the road through the prism of your chosen reading. (Consider the essays by Carlson, Whybrow, or Solnit on our schedule as potential models here. Or surprise me!)

## **FINAL PROJECT**

**(10 MINUTE PITCH + 10 PAGES [3000 WORDS] OF DOCUMENTATION)**

By the end of this term we will have learned much about the machinations of making art and culture in the “creative” global city. For your final project, *you* will take the reins as an urban culture worker and design a new arts festival for London, Ontario (“LonON”).

In order to do this well you will need to spend some time – and I mean quality time, more than one outing! – doing the kind of “field work” we will do in Toronto and Detroit right here at home. Scout our local venues, signature events, and teach yourself a bit about the economic engines that keep LonON afloat. Consider:

1. *What festivals do we have? Which need replacing, rethinking? What’s missing?*
2. *To whom will this festival appeal? How will it be funded? What will it DO?*
3. *How will it put London on the “global city” map? OR, will it turn away from that map and try to hack the entire “Who’s Your City?” enterprise?*

To help with this work, we will take an “arts and culture” tour of downtown/east side LonON together during our last class before study break (20 October). For that class, you’ll be expected to bring some initial research into LonON’s arts “scene” and its economic backbone, so that everyone in the class can contribute to the tour. We will visit a handful of venues and talk to some urban arts workers and city planners as we travel.

Your final project will then be completed in two parts:

- ✓ *During our last class of the term, on 1 December, you will pitch your festival to the rest of us, as though we were urban planners and you an arts worker from the community seeking funding. We will ask you questions; your presentation should be clear, professional, and your responses well informed.*
- ✓ *One week later you will hand in your documentation, which will include your pitch material (any/all media welcome!) as well as a critical analysis of your festival plan. Now is the time to play both scholar and culture worker, examining the strengths and weaknesses of the event you have envisioned by deploying some of the scholarly readings and analytical tools we have developed together over the term. (Your documentation should include a bibliography of your research, both scholarly and popular.)*

Do not be afraid both to sell your festival *and* to bear witness to its flaws – to explore its economic and social strengths while also critiquing its potentially negative impacts. *This mix is the whole point.*

If you wish, you may work in pairs for this final project. If you so choose, both your presentation and your documentation must be joint; you will both receive the same grade for all joint materials.

### **PEER TEACHING EXERCISE**

Once this term you will work in pairs to lead the class in an exploratory exercise based on one of our readings. The goal: to help you to try out different ways to connect students with challenging material. For that reason, I ask you not to prepare a lecture-style statement for this task; you should of course have thoughts about your reading you would like to draw out, but the point of this exercise is *not* to *tell us* what they are.

Here's how the task will work:

- ✓ *By Wednesday at NOON of your week to teach, you will post to OWL a provocation* (maybe a question, maybe not...) based on ONE of the readings for that week. Let Kim know in advance which reading you will focus on.
- ✓ *Your classmates will offer preliminary reflections* on your provocation on OWL over the following 24 hours. You should read and note these reflections.
- ✓ *You will then prepare a learning exercise to help us explore your provocation.* There are lots of exercises to choose from; you might want to consult some research on “active learning” or the “flipped classroom” to help you out – the Teaching and Learning Centre at Weldon can help with this, or (of course!) you can have a chat with Kim to discuss some options. Your exercise need not be complicated, but it should be more than you simply asking everyone, “so, what did you think?”
- ✓ *When you come to class on Thursday, you will run your exercise, and then debrief it.* Here, you can incorporate your classmates' preliminary responses as much or as little as you feel will be productive.
- ✓ *You will have a total of 30 minutes for your teach.* (NOTE: this is actually not a lot of time! Use it with care.)

Clear as mud? Don't worry! Kim will model this task in our second week. If you're still stuck, though, ask yourself this question: did a teacher ever do a really useful, cool thing in class that really stuck with you? What was that cool thing?

**(TURN OVER...)**

## PARTICIPATION

It's a seminar: we all have to engage. I will reward you for your keen, prepared engagement. You will demonstrate that engagement by paying attention to the following:

1. *Come on time, with your readings complete, each week.* I've purposefully made our reading load very manageable. If I can do it, you can do it!
2. *By noon the day before class (that is, by Wednesday at noon), there will be a provocation, question, or similar prompt up on OWL.* Think about it. Offer some preliminary reflections on it. Write something, upload photos or video, you name it. *Engage thoughtfully with it.*
3. In class, we will do a bunch of different kinds of exercises, sometimes in smaller break-out groups, sometimes as a whole class, to help us think through the implications of what we are reading and experiencing. *Participate actively in these. Don't float through them – they all have a purpose.*
4. I do not care if you talk a lot: talking is not the same as participating, and it's definitely not the same as participating effectively. *If you are a monopolizer of conversations, check that.* Help everyone get into the game! Similarly, *if you're super shy, I get it – but push yourself a little.* Test your boundaries. It will not kill you to talk sometimes!

Participation, I am well aware, is a nebulous thing. Which is precisely why I take it seriously. I'll note when you are missing, and I'll note if you're not prepared. **At study break, everyone will receive a check-in from me with thoughts on your participation thus far, and comments on how you might improve.** Those thoughts will be based on the four items I list above – they are your participation rubric. I also invite you to speak to me anytime you're concerned about your participation in our class.

### C) Assignment Submission Rules

- ✓ **All assignments will be submitted through OWL.** If your assignment includes a file that is too large or the wrong format for OWL, fix it. If it appears not fixable, contact ITS. If it *really* isn't fixable, email Kim.
- ✓ **Late submissions are penalized at 2% per day.** For assignments due on a Friday, take the weekend (up to Monday at 8am) for a flat "fee" of 3%. Sometimes it's worth it, and that's ok; no need to clear this with Kim.
- ✓ **Don't ask Kim for an extension.** Any requests for accommodation must be approved in advance, wherever possible, by Matthew Rowlinson (Graduate Chair), and requests must be accompanied by medical documentation when appropriate. Incompletes are normally only granted for medical or compelling compassionate reasons. Speak to Leanne Trask if you have questions.
- ✓ **Plagiarism is a stupid idea, always. Just say no.** If I suspect your paper of plagiarism, I will send it through Turnitin.com and it will become part of the Turnitin online archive. For more, see [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

## 7. Week by week schedule

### WEEK 1 (8 September)

*Hello! + WTF is Urban Performance Studies?*

Intros all around. Housekeeping; the basics. Thinking about methodologies.

### WEEK 2 (15 September)

*Introducing the performing City*

Readings:

1. Harvie, *Theatre & The City* (on reserve at Weldon – **hard copy only**)
2. de Certeau, “Walking in the City” (course reserves on OWL)
3. Solga et al, introduction to *Performance and the City* (course reserves on OWL)

### WEEK 3 (22 September)

*What is a ‘global city’? (Pt 1 – suburbs and spectacles)*

Readings:

1. Debord, “Separation Perfected” (course reserves on OWL)
2. Massey, “The Future of our World?” (course reserves on OWL)
3. Saunders, “On the Edge of the City” (course reserves on OWL)

### WEEK 4 (29 September)

*What is a ‘global city’? (Pt 2 – creative class politics)*

Readings:

1. Florida, “The Creative Class” (course reserves on OWL)
2. Florida, “The Question of Where” (course reserves on OWL)
3. Peck, “Struggling with the Creative Class” (course reserves on OWL)

**\*\*Saturday, 1 October: class field trip to Nuit Blanche in Toronto!\*\***

### WEEK 5 (6 October)

*Case study #1: selling Toronto*

Readings:

1. Boudreau et al, “Tory Toronto: Neoliberalism in the City” (course reserves on OWL)
2. Levin, “TO Live With Culture” (course reserves on OWL)
3. McKinnie, “Urban National, Suburban Transnational” (course reserves on OWL)

### WEEK 6 (13 October)

*Public performance as public memory, public protest*

Readings:

1. Carlson, “Looking, Listening, and Remembering” (course reserves on OWL)
2. Whybrow, “Losing Venice: Conversations in a Sinking City” (in *Performance and the Global City*, e-book available through OWL)
3. Jestrovic, “Sarajevo: A World City Under Siege” (in *Performance and the Global City*, e-book available through OWL)

### **WEEK 7 (20 October)**

Walking tour of LonON! Meet at 3pm in the Grand Theatre lobby, Richmond St at Fullarton. Bring your preliminary LonON research (assigned last week), and questions for staff from the Grand, the Arts Project, and the city's urban planning office.

### **WEEK 8 (27 October) – STUDY BREAK, aka NO CLASS!**

**WEEK 9 (3 November) – NO CLASS. BUT:** you may want to read ahead because...

**\*\*Friday 4 November: class field trip to Detroit!\*\***

### **WEEK 10 (10 November)**

*Case study #2: Saving Detroit*

Readings:

1. Hamera, "Domestic(-ated) Desires, Tanked City" (course reserves on OWL)
2. Solnit, "Detroit Arcadia" (course reserves on OWL)
3. Smith, "Afro-American Music, Without Apology" (course reserves on OWL)

### **WEEK 11 (17 November)**

*Urban performance beyond east and west (Pt 1 – global theory, global tourism)*

Readings:

1. Edensor and Jayne, "Urban Theory Beyond the West" (course reserves on OWL)
2. Singh, "Culture by Any Other Name" (course reserves on OWL)
3. Bennett, "China's Global Performatives" (in *Performance and the Global City*, e-book available through OWL)

### **WEEK 12 (24 November)**

*Urban performance beyond east and west (Pt 2 – kicking ass on the margins)*

Readings:

1. Kruger, "The Drama of Hospitality" (in *Performance and the Global City*, e-book available through OWL)
2. Martinez, "Distrito Federal: 'Global City, Ha, Ha, Ha!'" (in *Performance and the Global City*, e-book available through OWL)

### **WEEK 13 (1 December) – FINAL CLASS, AKA PITCH DAY!**

What does LonON need to save it from "Other London" status? How can we have our global city cake and hack it, too? You tell me. I'll bring the cake.

## **8. Course Bibliography**

### **Stuff we are reading together (+ the great books in which to find them):**

Bennett, Susan. "China's Global Performatives: 'Better City, Better Life.'" *Performance and the Global City*. Ed. D.J. Hopkins and Kim Solga. Performance Interventions. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013. **(Week 11)**

Boudreau, Julie-Anne, Roger Keil, and Douglas Young. "Tory Toronto: Neoliberalism in the City." *Changing Toronto: Governing Urban Neoliberalism*. Toronto: UofT Press, 2009. **(Week 5)**

Carlson, Marla. "Looking, Listening, and Remembering: Ways to Walk New York after 9/11." *Theatre Journal* 58 (2006): 395-416. **(Week 6)**

Debord, Guy. "Separation Perfected." *Society of the Spectacle*. 1967. Trans. Ken Knabb. London: Rebel, 2002. **(Week 3)**

De Certeau, Michel. "Walking in the City." *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven F. Rendall. Berkeley: University of California P, 1984. **(Week 2)**

Edensor, Tim, and Mark Jayne. "Introduction: Urban Theory Beyond the West." *Urban Theory Beyond the West: A World of Cities*. Ed. Edensor and Jayne. London and New York: Routledge, 2012. **(Week 11)**

Florida, Richard. "The Creative Class." *The Rise of the Creative Class, Revisited*. New York: Basic Books 2011 (2002). **(Week 4)**

Florida, Richard. "The Question of Where." *Who's Your City? How the Creative Economy is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life*. New York: Basic Books, 2008. **(Week 4)**

Hamera, Judith. "Domestic(-ated) Desires, Tanked City." *TDR* 58.4 (2014): 12-22. **(Week 9/10)**

Harvie, Jen. *Theatre & The City*. Theatre&. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009. **(Week 2)**

Hopkins, D.J., Kim Solga, and Shelley Orr. *Performance and the City*. Performance Interventions. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009. **(Week 2)**

Jestrovic, Silvija. "Sarajevo: A World City Under Siege." *Performance and the Global City*. Ed. D.J. Hopkins and Kim Solga. Performance Interventions. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013. **(Week 6)**

Kruger, Loren. "The Drama of Hospitality: Performance, Migration, and Urban Renewal in Johannesburg." *Performance and the Global City*. Ed. D.J. Hopkins and Kim Solga. Performance Interventions. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013. **(Week 12)**

Levin, Laura. "TO Live With Culture: Torontopia and the Urban Creativity Script." *Space and the Geographies of Theatre*. Ed. Michael McKinnie. Critical Perspectives on Canadian Theatre in English 9. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2007. **(Week 5)**

Martinez, Ana. "Distrito Federal: Global City, 'Ha, Ha, Ha!'" *Performance and the Global City*. Ed. D.J. Hopkins and Kim Solga. Performance Interventions. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013. **(Week 12)**

Massey, Doreen. "The Future of our World?" *World City*. London: Polity Press, 2007. **(Week 3)**

McKinnie, Michael. "Urban National, Suburban Transnational: Civic Theatres and the Urban Development of Toronto's Downtowns." *City Stages: Theatre and Urban Space in a Global City*. Toronto: UofT Press, 2007. **(Week 5)**

Peck, Jamie. "Struggling With the Creative Class." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29.4 (2005): 740-770. **(Week 4)**

Saunders, Doug. "On the Edge of the City." *Arrival City: The Final Migration and Our Next World*. Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2011. **(Week 3)**

Singh, J.P. "Culture By Any Other Name." *Globalized Arts: The Entertainment Economy and Cultural Identity*. New York: Columbia UP, 2011. **(Week 11)**

Smith, Suzanne E. "'Afro-American Music, without Apology': The Motown Sound and the Politics of Black Culture." *Dancing in the Street: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1999. **(Week 9/10)**

Solnit, Rebecca. "Detroit Arcadia: Exploring the Post-American Landscape." *Harper's* July 2007: 65-73. **(Week 9/10)**

Whybrow, Nicholas. "Losing Venice: Conversations in a Sinking City." *Performance and the Global City*. Ed. D.J. Hopkins and Kim Solga. Performance Interventions. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013. **(Week 6)**

**Other volumes you may want to check out (for your position paper, and...)**

Hill, Leslie, and Helen Paris. *Performance and Place*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006.

Peterson, Marina, and Gary W. McDonough. *Global Downtowns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania P, 2012.

Qadeer, Mohammad Abdul. *Multicultural Cities: Toronto, New York and Los Angeles*. Toronto: UofT Press, 2016.

Whybrow, Nicholas, ed. *Performance and the Contemporary City: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010.

Whybrow, Nicholas, ed. *Performing Cities*. London: Palgrave, 2014.