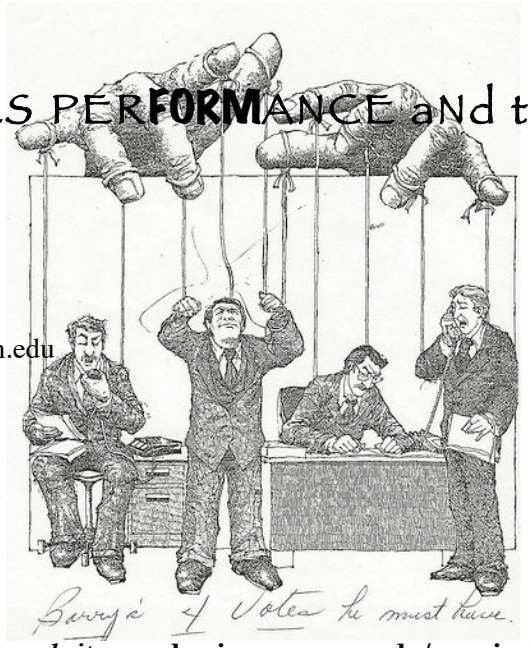
POLItiCS PERFORMANCE aNd tHe PubLIC

Winter 2008 — *Spring 2008*

Faculty: Mark Harrison
Office: SEM II – B3104
Phone: 360-867-6454
Email: harmark@evergreen.edu

Class times at SCCC:
Tuesday, 6–9:30 pm
Thursday, 6-9:30 pm

Classroom: 3212



Faculty: Doug Schuler
Office: SEM II – B2115
Phone: 360-867-6704
(Wednesdays only)
Seattle office: 206-634-0752
Email: dschuler@evergreen.edu

"*Politics is just like show business*"
-Ronald Reagan

Program website: **academic.evergreen.edu/ curricular/ppandp**

With the presidential primaries in full swing we will explore the connections between politics, performance, and the public during winter and spring quarters. We will attend performances and political events, screen several narrative and documentary films, and apply the insights from these experiences and from readings, in writing and in discussion. We will address several key questions including: How are performance techniques and metaphors applicable to the wide spectrum of political activities? How do political events and figures inform and influence the content and style of performances? How do plays, films and other media formats, venues, and products -- that entertain and inform us -- affect political action and thought? How are messages with political implications developed and disseminated -- and why? From the citizen's point of view, how are messages interpreted? What myths, frames, and other mental models are consciously employed and subconsciously invoked when political messages are encountered? What influence does the media have on social capital and the ability to take collective action? We will also consider the challenges that people face as they move beyond passive involvement, particularly in relation to changing social and environmental realities, the Internet, political language, popular culture and the media.

***Additional questions and concepts that will inform our learning goals*:**

- In what ways do we identify, understand and distinguish between information, entertainment and propaganda?
- What is role of advertising, marketing, public relations in political discourse?
- What are the functions of frames, metaphors, and myths? How do they come about?
- In what ways do politics and performance intersect in film—both narrative and documentary—and television?
- How does a film about a historic subject become a commentary on contemporary events?
- How have the evolution of technology and rise of globalization affected politics?
- *Hamlet*, for example, is one of the great plays dealing with politics. What are some of the others and how have they changed from one era to another? Do they matter?
- How do the differences between live performance and the screen mediums impact political thought and action?
- How does popular culture influence political discourse? Money? Media concentration? Show business?
- What is the difference between *civic intelligence* and *social capital* and why are they important?
- How have the Internet and other media altered traditional relationships between politics, performance and the public?

POLITICS PERFORMANCE aND tHe PubLIC

Required books for the Winter quarter (*all accept *The Breach* available at the SCCC bookstore*)

- Bertolt Brecht. *Mother Courage*
- Shakespeare. *Titus Andronicus*
- Dan Gilmour, *We the Media*
- Filloux, Tarell McCraney & Joe Sutton. *The Breach*

Films currently under consideration

- *Please Vote For Me*
- *Yes Men*
- *Good Night and Good Luck*
- *This Film is Not Yet Rated*
- *Crisis is our Product*
- *Why We Fight*
- *Shut Up and Sing*
- *Network*

Website

Be sure to use the program website – http://academic.evergreen.edu/curricular/ppandp/
In addition to the required texts, there will be short weekly READING materials **POSTED on the calendar link.** Other program information and resource links can be found on the website.

Program Requirements

- Excellent **attendance** and **full participation** in all program activities. **Completed assignments** turned in on time.

- *Seminar tickets*. A typed one-page response to a topic or question posed by the faculty. These tickets are required for admission to all seminars (typed and double spaced).

- *The Cornell box***:** this is a "handmade" response to one of the plays will be reading. In addition to revealing your understanding of the play, the box must incorporate important program topics. The point of creating a Cornell box is to give your play-reading a physical form — using theme, imagery and metaphor, character, conflict and other related areas.

- *Reflective Essay***:** there will be one critical essay asking you to synthesize some of the materials we've studied during the quarter. ***We generally will not accept*** late papers or guarantee that they will be evaluated for credit. (Your essay must be typed, double-spaced, and double sided where appropriate).

- *Field trip and fee:* We will be attending *The Breach* at the Seattle Rep on February 5. The discounted ticket price of $10 is a program fee.

- *Political Engagement Project*: A group assignment that will involve attendance at a political event and a short paper detailing your experience. Your particular choice of venue will be part of a larger group of students focusing on similar experiences (examples might include attending a political rally, a city council meeting, or an FCC Hearing on media consolidation).

On Critical Writing

Blaise Pascal once wrote a long, drawn-out letter to a friend, then apologized in the postscript that he didn't have time to write a short one. As your faculty, we share Pascal's sentiments and also subscribe to what Thomas Jefferson once noted: "the most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do." Economic critical writing requires time, reflection and effort.

POLITICS PERFORMANCE aND tHe PubLIC

Program Expectations

The faculty members shall assume that students have well-rounded college-level skills. In case of deficiencies in basic skills, students are expected to work with the Learning Resources Center. The faculty member does not assume that students initially will be conversant with critical terminology or special techniques for discussing the works to be assigned. It is assumed that by the end of the program, students will have developed the ability--both in the terminology appropriate for more advanced discussion and in their own works--to think, to speak, and to write about the issues and themes of the program. In addition, they will have improved their ability to participate in the various collaborative activities of the program.

In general, students are expected to fully participate in all aspects of the class, to thoroughly prepare for each class session, and to complete all assignments on time. Late assignments may not be evaluated. Attendance and being on time for class are essential. Unexcused absences, late, incomplete or unsatisfactory completion of assignments or plagiarism will constitute grounds for loss of credit.

Faculty are expected to be prepared for lectures and class sessions, to provide feedback on written assignments in a timely manner, to be available for consultation by appointment and to provide a written evaluation of the student's overall work in the program. Please refer to covenant for further details.

Evaluation

You will be evaluated on:

- Attendance and participation in seminar and other class discussions;
- The quality of ideas and the writing in your written assignments;
- Successful completion of the Cornell Box;
- Demonstration of acceptable understanding of program content and learning goals;
- Adherence to the agreements in the covenant

Incomplete status will be granted only for reasons of family crisis, illness, or similar emergencies. Evaluation conferences will be held at the end of the quarter. *Credit is not the same as positive evaluation*. Students receive credit for fulfilling minimum requirements and standards. The evaluation is a statement describing the quality of the student's work. It is possible for a student to receive credit but receive an evaluation that describes poor quality work. It is also possible for a student to attend regularly yet receive no or reduced credit because of unsatisfactory performance.

Students should plan to be on campus one day/evening during evaluation week for their scheduled Evaluation Conference (Dec. 6-14)

Access Services

If you are a student with **disability** who would benefit from support or services to ensure full access to this course, please contact Disability Support Services - 1701 Broadway, Room 2BE1140, PH: (206) 587-4183 (http://www.seattlecentral.edu/disability-support/contact.php). In order for your program faculty to make accommodations, we must be informed no later than the second week of the quarter *by the student and in writing from Disability Support Services*

Seminar Guidelines

What is seminar?

The program will be divided into two seminar groups, each with a faculty facilitator. Seminar is *not* an informal conversation or an entertaining chat with friends about some books nor is seminar group therapy. We encourage you to engage in all of the preceding at appropriate times and places but not during seminar time. Since the subject of our discourse in seminar is not casual, the form of our discourse must also be distinguished from that of casual conversation. We need not speak with the same clarity and carefully constructed structure of an academic essay, but we can eliminate excessive repetition, unnecessary fillers such as "um", "like", "you know", "like", "I dunno", or "like", and talking just to avoid awkward silences.

Seminar is an essential part of your education at Evergreen. It is a verbal, social way of constructing knowledge and of building a learning community. During seminar, serious, honest differences should arise (unless we are all clones) and be respectfully considered. Evergreen values diversity and learning across differences – this is a challenge to all of us, but it does not mean capitulation or agreement with every point of view. Seminar is a way to demonstrate knowledge of program content and to demonstrate higher order thinking skills. Consequently, participation in seminar is *evaluated*.

In order to participate in seminar, each participant must bring two copies of a seminar ticket as described in the syllabus—one for you to use and one for the faculty to collect. The seminar ticket will be a one-page type written response to a question or topic posed by the faculty.

How is seminar conducted and what are expected behaviors?

Each of our seminars may begin with a round robin, that is, each member will briefly read from her/his seminar ticket. In this way, everyone is heard and the group has an idea of its collective starting point. Since one of the purposes of seminar is to cultivate a learning community, we must make every effort to make the (limited) time available for all to contribute. This should be self-policed but faculty may intervene if necessary. A good rule of thumb is three comments per seminar unless everyone has contributed or someone is specifically invited to speak. Seminar members will allow each person to complete her/his statements, that is, cutting speakers off or interrupting are not appropriate behaviors.

Sometimes silence is needed to allow for reflection and even if it is uncomfortable, this is an important part of processing information. If things get quiet, just assume that everyone is thinking so hard they can't speak quite yet. Different members of the seminar group may have radically different learning styles – this enriches the discourse and allows students to learn across differences. We must allow for and be respectful of a wide range of approaches to learning.

Seminar is centered on the texts' content. Our discourse must refer to the texts in a meaningful way but should also include individual, outside learning or experience that is relevant. In this way, the community is enriched by all of its members' knowledge.

Personal experiences, anecdotes, or revelations shared in classroom or seminar discussions will be considered confidential.