Benedict Anderson famously argued that the modern nation was collectively “imagined” into existence, and that the technologies of the novel and the newspaper played a special role in that process. Scholars of U.S. theatre have expanded upon Anderson, arguing that performances—including plays, freak shows, minstrelsy, public lectures, world fairs, museum displays, “leg shows,” and other spectacles—served as key technologies by which people within and beyond the United States imagined “America.” This course examines a selection of performances that functioned as flashpoints in American cultural history, especially with regard to constructions of race, gender, and sexuality. Archival research will structure our investigations: in a typical week, we will meet once in the classroom to discuss course readings and once in an archive (the Harvard Theatre Collection, the Schlesinger Library, or the Peabody Museum) to work directly with primary materials.

ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of final grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brief argument based on assigned reading (due Monday, October 5)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consistent, productive, engaged participation and classroom citizenship</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership of one archival session</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospectus and preliminary bibliography for the final paper</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(full credit/no credit; due Monday, October 12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close reading of one piece of evidence that will figure in the final paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(due Monday, October 26)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revised prospectus and bibliography for the final paper</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(full credit/no credit, due Monday, November 9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft of final paper</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(full credit/no credit; due in class Tuesday, November 24)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation based on final paper (December 1 and 3)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper, due December 14.</td>
<td>35%</td>
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</table>
Students will take collective responsibility for the success of every discussion. This responsibility involves three components. First, you are required to arrive in class having read and thought about all the reading. In other words, merely gulping down the reading is inadequate. You should come to class having chewed and digested the material thoroughly. You are expected to prepare your own thoughts, opinions, and questions before every class. Second, you must listen actively to your classmates. Your contributions to our discussion should productively engage with your colleagues’ ideas. Third, you must express your thoughts in a respectful manner that advances our conversation. Practices that disrespect your colleagues (for example, texting, checking email, interrupting, hogging the floor, launching personal attacks, or answering cell phones) will hinder conversation; such practices, therefore, are unacceptable.

Except for the draft of the final paper, all written assignments will be submitted to the History and Literature office by 3 pm of the due date. Late papers will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each day overdue. Failure to complete any assignment can lower your semester grade in excess of the stated percentage.

Each student will lead (or co-lead) one session at the Harvard Theatre Collection. This assignment entails working in advance with curators to select relevant primary documents for the class to examine, familiarizing yourself with the background knowledge that is necessary to understand the documents, sharing this knowledge formally with your colleagues, and leading the class’s engagement with the materials.

REQUERED BOOKS (all available at the Harvard Coop and on reserve at Lamont):


*Additional readings will be available online through Hollis or as posted PDFs.*

**SCHEDULE**
Week 1. Performing the Early Republic

Thursday, September 3

Tuesday, September 8
• Thomas Jefferson, The Declaration of Independence (online at http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration.html)

Thursday, September 10
• Jason Shaffer, “‘Great Cato’s Descendants’: A Genealogy of Colonial Performance,” Theatre Survey Vol. 44 no. 1 (May 2003), pp. 5-28 (access online through Literature Online [LION])

Week 2. Performing the Early Republic, continued

Tuesday, September 15
• Susanna Rowson, Slaves in Algiers, or A Struggle for Freedom, 1794 (access online through Literature Online [LION])
• Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, “Slaves in Algiers: Race, Republican Genealogies, and the Global Stage,” American Literary History 16.2 (2004), 407-436 (access online through Project Muse)

Thursday, September 17
• Meet at the Harvard Theatre Collection!
• Annette Fern, “What have They Done to the Evidence?” Theatre Survey 45.2 (November 2004), pp.195-201 (access through Literature Online [LION])
• Tracy Davis, “The Context Problem,” Theatre Survey 45.2 (November 2004), pp.203-209 (access through Literature Online [LION])
• Bruce A. McConachie, “New Historicism and American Theater History: Toward an Interdisciplinary Paradigm for Scholarship,” in Sue-Ellen Case and Janelle

**Week 3. Edwin Forrest, Metamora, and Indian Removal**

Tuesday, September 22
- John Augustus Stone, *Metamora, Or, The Last of the Wampanoags* (access through Literature Online [LION])
- Scott C. Martin, Interpreting “Metamora”: Nationalism, Theater, and Jacksonian Indian Policy, *Journal of the Early Republic,* Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring, 1999), pp. 73-101 (Access online through JSTOR)

Thursday, September 24
- *Meet at the Harvard Theatre Collection!*
- *Recommended:* Essays by Simon Williams and Joseph Roach in *The Cambridge History of the American Theatre*

**Week 4. Minstrelsy**

Tuesday, September 29
Thursday, October 1

• Meet at the Harvard Theatre Collection!
• Inside the Minstrel Mask: read section titled “The Show,” pages 111-140.

Week 5. Uncle Tom’s Cabin

Monday, October 5: BRIEF ARGUMENT DUE 3 PM

Tuesday, October 6

• Excerpts from Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1852) (PDF online)
• Scripts for dramatizations of Uncle Tom’s Cabin by George L. Aiken (1852), H.C. Conway (1852), and Charles Townsend (1889) (access online at http://www.iath.virginia.edu/utc/onstage/scripts/schp.html)

Thursday, October 8

• Meet at the Harvard Theatre Collection!
• Excerpts from the 1869 and 1876 Promptbooks for the Howard Family productions of Uncle Tom’s Cabin (http://www.iath.virginia.edu/utc/onstage/scripts/schp.html)
• Listen to the following songs at (http://www.iath.virginia.edu/utc/onstage/performin/ossongshp.html): To Little Eva in Heaven, Uncle Tom’s Religion, Our Home is Surely the Sweetest, Early in de Morning, Poor Uncle Tom, Old Folks at Home, I’se So Wicked, Eva to her Papa, Wait for the Wagon, Camptown Races, Old Dan Tucker, My Old Kentucky Home, Who’s Dat Knocking, Topsy’s Song, Massa in de Cold Ground, Uncle Tom’s Gone to Rest, Eva’s Song, Bekase My Name Am Topsey, and Duett
• Listen to “The Flogging Scene” and “Talking Uncle Tom’s Cabin” at (http://www.iath.virginia.edu/utc/onstage/sound/soundf.html)

Week 6. The Abolitionist Lecture Circuit

Monday, October 12. PROSPECTUS AND PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY due by 3 PM

Tuesday, October 13

• William Wells Brown, The Escape; or, A Leap for Freedom (1858) (Access through Literature Online or the Black Drama database)

Thursday, October 15

• Meet in the Schlesinger Library!
Week 7. Barnum, Confidence Men, and Mass Culture

Tuesday, October 20


Thursday, October 22

• *Meet at the Harvard Theatre Collection!*


• Peruse [http://www.lostmuseum.cuny.edu/barnum.html](http://www.lostmuseum.cuny.edu/barnum.html)


Week 8. Freak Shows

Monday, October 26: CLOSE READING OF ONE PIECE OF EVIDENCE THAT WILL FIGURE IN YOUR FINAL PAPER due by 3 PM

Tuesday, October 27


Thursday, October 29
• Meet at the Harvard Theatre Collection!
• Thomson, Freakery, chapters 7 and 10

Week 9. Legs and Other Spectacles

Tuesday, November 3
• Robert C. Allen, Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture (selections in PDF online)

Thursday, November 5
• Meet at the Harvard Theatre Collection!

Week 10. World Fairs, Museums, and the Politics of Display

Monday, November 9: REVISED PROSPECTUS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY due by 3 PM
Tuesday, November 10. World Fairs

Thursday, November 12. Museums
• *Meet at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology!*

Week 11. Cosmopolitan Performances

Tuesday, November 17

Thursday, November 19
• *Meet at the Harvard Theatre Collection!*

Weeks 12 and 13. Sharing Our Research

Tuesday, November 24
• DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER DUE. Please bring three hard copies of your draft.
• In-class workshop in which students read and critique each other’s drafts

Thursday, November 26: NO CLASS; Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday, December 1
• Oral Presentations

Thursday, December 3
• Oral Presentations
Monday, December 14, 3 pm: Final paper due to Prof. Bernstein’s mailbox in the History and Literature Office