

LHUM-P410 What Is Being?

Dr. Lori Landay

Mailbox FB-118

E-mail llanday@berklee.edu

Phone 617-747-2747

Office Location Room 202, 7 Haviland

Office Hours T 11-12, Th 1-2 & also by appt.

Blog: <http://being2012.blogspot.com/>

SPRING 2012

T 10-10:50am rm 310/7 Haviland

Th 2-3:50pm rm 231/7 Haviland



Course Description

The motto of Berklee College of Music is *Esse quam videri*, a phrase from Cicero's essay "On Friendship," which translates as "to be, rather than to seem." The course "What is Being?" gives you the opportunity to focus and reflect upon the differences between seeming and being, and think deeply about existence, self, and image. Organized around three interrelated themes: seeming vs. being; performance on stage and in everyday life; and the power of images and illusion in contemporary culture, the seminar requires students to consider realworld issues by exploring in depth the great works of philosophy, literature and psychology. The course includes the reading and discussion of Plato's *Republic*, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. Funded by a National Endowment for the Humanities Enduring Questions grant, "What Is Being?" is a unique opportunity for serious seminar-style exploration of a foundational issue in human thought.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- synthesize diverse perspectives,
- evaluate a text for its argument and underlying assumptions,
- articulate your own points of view in writing and orally, and
- discuss your ideas in a wider historical and cultural context

Required Books

(to be provided to students thanks to the National Endowment for the Humanities Enduring Questions Grant)

Plato. *The Republic*

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Lloyd S. Wagner (Adapter), Miguel de Cervantes (Author), Richard Kohlrus (Illustrator) *Don Quixote: Part 1 & 2* (Campfire Graphic Novels)

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Nella Larsen, *Passing*

Jim Powell, *Eastern Philosophy for Beginners*

Eric Charles Lemay, *Heidegger for Beginners*

Henry Bial (editor), *The Performance Studies Reader*

Class Schedule (changes will be announced in class & posted on CampusCruiser)

Seeming & Being

Week 1: Introductions

- T 1/24 Cicero—handout: “To be, rather than to seem to be”
- Th 1/26 continue Cicero
“Life the Movie,” Neal Gabler (handout) and 76-77 in PSR
Checkpoint

Week 2: Plato

- T 1/31 Making the Case for Being Over Seeming: Plato
Republic, chapter 9
DUE: *Assignment 1:* How does Plato’s allegory of the cave depict seeming and being?
- Th 2/2 *Republic*, chapter 13

Week 3: Stating the Case for Seeming Over Being: Machiavelli

- T 2/7 *The Prince*, 3-112
DUE: *Assignment 2:* According to Machiavelli, is it better to be loved than feared?
- Th 2/9 Reading: the afterword

Being, Performance, and Everyday Life

Week 4

- T 2/14 “What is emptiness?” in *Eastern Philosophy for Beginners*, 58-65
- Th 2/16 “Performances: Belief in the part one is playing,” Erving Goffman, PSR 61-65
“Marina Abramović: Witnessing Shadows,” Peggy Phelan, PSR 78-86
Checkpoint

Week 5:

- T 2/21 NO CLASS—Monday schedule
DUE: *Project 1:* Take a stand on being and seeming
- Th 2/23 Don Quixote in literature, film, ballet, music, comics
Don Quixote Part 1
DUE: *Assignment 3:* Is Don Quixote performing?

Week 6 Don Quixote, continued

- T 2/28 *Don Quixote Part 1*
Checkpoint
- Th 3/1 *Don Quixote Part 2*
From *The World of Perception*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, lectures 3 & 5, on CampusCruiser

Week 7 *Hamlet*

- T 3/6 *Hamlet*, Act 1
“The Actor’s Technique,” Jerry Grotowski

Checkpoint

Th 3/8 *Hamlet*, Act 2
 “What Is Performance?” Marvin Carlson PSR 70-75
DUE: *Assignment 4:* How does a focus on acting and performance shed light on *Hamlet*?

Week 8

T 3/13 *Hamlet*, Act 3
 “Reconsidering Stanislavsky: Feeling, Feminism, and the Actor,” Rhonda Blair, PSR 249- 261

Th 3/15 *Hamlet*, Act 4
DUE: *Assignment 5:* What roles does Hamlet perform?

Week 9: SPRING BREAK

Week 10

T 3/27 *Hamlet*, Act 5
 “LIVE FROM CYBERSPACE or, I was sitting at my computer this guy appeared he thought I was a bot,” Philip Auslander, download from CampusCruiser
DUE: *Assignment 6:* What is important to you about liveness? Discuss at least one performance, live or mediatized, that you have seen recently.

Th 3/29 *Hamlet*, Act 5

Week 11: Class sees performance of *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* at the Huntington Theater

M 4/2 **DUE:** *Project 2:* performance “in” and “as” everyday life

T 4/3 English Romantic Poetry

Th 4/5 *Passing*
Moving into Modernism
 MEET AT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
DUE: *Assignment 7:* How do the women in *Passing* perform race? Gender? Anything else?

Week 12

T 4/10 *Passing*

Th 4/12 *Passing*

F 4/13 **DUE:** *Assignment 8:* Discuss how the play and the novel *Passing* engage similar themes in different ways.

Illusion and Image, Being and Seeming in Contemporary Culture

Week 13:

T 4/17 *Heidegger for Beginners*
DUE: *Assignment 9:* What is “the nothing?”

Th 4/19 *Heidegger for Beginners*

Concept Presentations

Week 14:

- T 4/24 “Frozen Journey,” Philip K. Dick, download from CampusCruiser
DUE: *Assignment 10*: What is real in the story?
- Th 4/26 “Simulacra and Simulations,” Jean Baudrillard, download from CampusCruiser
 Checkpoint

Week 15:

- T 5/1 More discussion
- Th 5/3 **DUE:** *Project 3*: PRESENTATIONS
- T 5/8 PROJECT 3 PRESENTATIONS
- Th 5/10 CONCLUSIONS

GRADING CRITERIA

Grade Determination

- 45% Assignments (1 page written, each) & Checkpoints
- 15% Project 1: Taking a Stand, 3-4 pages writing; images
- 15% Project 2: Performance in and as everyday life, 3-4 pages writing; podcast or multimedia
- 20% Project 3: 5-7 pages writing; media, presentation
- 5% Concept Presentation

A, A- (90-100) Exceptional work; far beyond what is simply “required”

B+, B, B- (80-89) Good; competent grasp of material demonstrated in assignments and in consistent participation in class discussions

C+, C, C- (70-79) Average; work that merely meets the basic requirements of the course according to acceptable standards

D (60-69) Below average; poor understanding of material demonstrated in assignments and in class discussions, but meets the minimal requirements for passing the course

F (below 60) Not passing; work is of unacceptable quality, a careless approach to course requirements and deadlines, little or no effort applied to assignments and class discussions, poor attendance, detracts from learning environment

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is mandatory. More than two absences will have a negative effect on your grade. If you have questions about attendance, ask me or talk to the Counseling Center.

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to contact another student before the next class meeting, find out what we did in class, and make sure you understand the assignment for the next class. You will have to make up any in-class work you miss or your grade will be affected. If you have a serious problem that prevents you from coming to class or completing an assignment, such as an illness or personal emergency, talk to me before class or the assignment is due and we will work out a way for you to make up the work.

Tardiness: If you are late for class or leave early more than twice, it will affect your grade. “Late” means arriving more than 5 minutes after the scheduled class time. Each lateness or early-leaving will count as 1/2 an absence; missing more than 20 minutes of class will count as an absence.

HOMEWORK, ASSIGNMENTS, & OUT-OF-CLASS PREPARATION: I expect you to come to class prepared, which means having read the assigned reading listed on the syllabus for that class meeting, with assigned homework finished, and ready to participate in class discussion and activities. Also, bring the book or a printout of online readings that we are working with to class.

There are Assignments, which are concise written engagements with the readings, Checkpoints, which are online questions that check whether you are reading carefully enough to get the major concepts, and Projects, which are longer explorations of ideas from the course.

Late Work

The assignments for the class are detailed on the syllabus. Students are responsible for meeting all deadlines. If an assignment is due on a day we have class, it is due at the beginning of class.

Part of what you need to learn in college is to finish work on time, and that when you don't there will be consequences. In a professional situation, you might lose money (by having to book a studio for an additional day, or hire someone for more time, for example) or even compromise your future by making it less likely that you would be hired by that person, or by others, if you get a reputation for being incapable of hitting deadlines, no matter how good you are.

Therefore, your grade will be lowered if you hand in your assignment late. Within 2 days, your grade will be lowered by 1/3 a grade; after a week, you will lose a full letter grade (a B would be marked down to a C, for example). If you do not hand in an assignment, you will get a 0, which can bring down your entire grade. *Do not ask for extensions*, because this is the policy, and if you choose to hand in an assignment late, you have to accept the consequences.

Academic Honesty

- Berklee College of Music insists on academic honesty. Unless the assignment explicitly is a group project, all of the work in this class must be your own. The source of all information in any written assignment must be cited properly, whether it is a quotation, paraphrase, summary, idea, concept, statistic, picture, or anything else you get from any source other than your own immediate knowledge—including the Internet. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, including parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple listing of books and articles at the end of an essay is not sufficient. Plagiarism—not giving proper credit to a source and thereby passing off someone else's material or idea as your own—is a type of intellectual theft and deceit and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting. Plagiarism may result in a failing grade for the assignment or course, and possible dismissal from the College. It is your responsibility to be aware of and abide by the rules governing plagiarism, fraud, and cheating found in the College Bulletin under the section "Honesty in Academic Work and in Scholarly and Professional Practice." If you have any questions about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, please talk with a reference librarian, ask a teacher, or refer to a writing handbook. Websites that discuss types of plagiarism and how it can be avoided through evaluation and proper documentation of sources include:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/index.html>
www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Documentation.html

Manuscript Procedures for Writing Assignments

1. Word process papers, using 10-12 point type.
2. Double-space papers.
3. Use standard margins of 1" all around.
4. In the top left-hand corner of the first page of each paper, students should type their name, the date, the course and section meeting time, the instructor's name.
5. All projects should have a title that is appropriate and attention getting.
6. Number pages in top right corner of each page.

7. Retain a copy of each paper.
8. It is expected that students will revise work and carefully edit final drafts before submitting them. Blatant errors in spelling and grammar detract from the effectiveness of the work.
9. If you submit a paper electronically, save it as a PDF, and name the file with your name and the name of the assignment.
10. If you hand in a hard copy of the paper, staple or paper clip the paper.

Course Withdrawal Policy

You may withdraw from this class by completing a Student-Initiated Withdrawal from a Class form at the Office of the Registrar. The withdrawal form must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar before the end of the 9th week of classes in Fall and Spring semesters, or the end of the 8th week in the 12-week Summer Session. If you submit the withdrawal form by the deadline, you will receive a grade of "W" for the class. Withdrawing from a class cannot be done after the deadline.

The instructor will not withdraw you from the class for any reason (including absence) or submit the form for you. It is your responsibility to withdraw from the course.

If you withdraw from this class, you continue to be financially responsible for the class and are not eligible for a tuition refund or replacement course. Please be aware that withdrawing from a class may affect scholarship, financial aid, and/or international student visa status. If you receive financial aid or veterans' benefits, your eligibility for aid may be reduced by withdrawing. If you are an international student, you may jeopardize your F-1 visa status.

In case of doubt about your status and options, ask the instructor, department chair and/or the Counseling & Advising Center.

Health

- Students are expected to maintain a state of health that allows them to participate in the instruction. For this class, a healthy singing voice is required.

Support Services

- ESL Tutors ext. 8186
- College Writing Center ext. 8306, 8510
- Counseling/Advising Center ext. 2310

Disclosure of Disability

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester.

Privacy

In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, students must authorize contact between faculty members and their parents/guardians. You will be notified via email and asked to reply in that format or in writing to grant this authorization if your parent/guardian contacts me.