



PERF201

Performance and Circus Studies

S1 Day 2019

Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

Jon Burt

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10HA 193C

via email

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

12cp at 100 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit is a broad introduction to performance and circus practices, covering a wide range of forms and disciplines. This unit focuses on giving students an introduction to the social and cultural history of new performance forms from the rise of New Circus, post-modern dance and new forms of theatre in the 1960s to the multimodal contemporary forms that they have developed into today. The unit is aimed at all students including those with no prior performance experience. Students have the opportunity to create self-devised performance work in solo/duo and group contexts.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Interpret and evaluate the socio-cultural underpinnings of contemporary performance and circus cultural history and various forms.

Explore unit themes independently and collaboratively in response to project aims and demands in the form of practical performance making, written assignments, and oral presentations.

Develop creative, collaborative and communication skills through oral presentations and

creative projects.

Develop critical evaluation skills connecting unit themes, creative proposals, and practice-based outcomes.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Solo/Duo Project	20%	No	Week 4/Week 7 in class
Research project	45%	No	Week 8, Sun 6pm
Group Project	35%	No	wk 8, wk 11, wk 12

Solo/Duo Project

Due: **Week 4/Week 7 in class**

Weighting: **20%**

A short (3 min) self-devised creative work, in either solo or duo form, engaging with a creative application of circus practice.

The solo/duo project will be assessed in terms of, the level of engagement; how well the piece has been rehearsed; the structural coherence of the piece as a whole; the level of creativity involved; the ability of students to communicate relevant ideas informing the piece in their creative proposal presentation and in class discussions; and how effectively the student(s) responded to feedback to their creative proposal.

This assessment comprises an individual oral presentation (6 mins) and a performance outcome (3 mins). 25% of the mark for this assessment will be based on the oral presentation of creative proposal/work in week 4 and their response to feedback through weeks 4-6, and 75% of the mark will be based on the performance outcome in week 7. The mark for this assessment is a 100% individually weighted marked.

Feedback for the creative proposal will be given in class in weeks 4-5, and feedback and grades for the assessment as a whole will be provided in class in week 8 and will be provided via Turnitin.

More detailed information will be provided in class and available from iLearn. For full assessment rubric please consult iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explore unit themes independently and collaboratively in response to project aims and demands in the form of practical performance making, written assignments, and oral presentations.
- Develop creative, collaborative and communication skills through oral presentations and

creative projects.

- Develop critical evaluation skills connecting unit themes, creative proposals, and practice-based outcomes.

Research project

Due: **Week 8, Sun 6pm**

Weighting: **45%**

This 1500 word essay should draw on themes and discussions from the first seven weeks of the unit referencing unit lectures and readings. Students will be required to succinctly and clearly articulate their understanding of a topic discussing a 'New Circus' or 'Contemporary Circus' artist's or group's work in relation to the issues and ideas informing it, for example, gender and sexuality, political and social issues, animal rights, risk, aesthetics, approaches to the use of apparatus.

The writing and critical discourse in the essay will be assessed in terms of organisation, protocols, analytical thinking, and thematics, in particular, the relevance and coherence of their critical study of the topic; the level of understanding and integration of unit readings, themes, and discussions to support their research; evidence of an appropriate essay structure, and use of correct academic protocols and grammar.

The essay will be submitted via the Turnitin link on the iLearn page. Feedback and grades for this task will be provided in Turnitin.

For full assessment rubric please consult iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Interpret and evaluate the socio-cultural underpinnings of contemporary performance and circus cultural history and various forms.
- Explore unit themes independently and collaboratively in response to project aims and demands in the form of practical performance making, written assignments, and oral presentations.
- Develop critical evaluation skills connecting unit themes, creative proposals, and practice-based outcomes.

Group Project

Due: **wk 8, wk 11, wk 12**

Weighting: **35%**

A group-devised work (8-10 mins) in the form of a circus-based performance project involving the creative application of discipline-specific knowledge and practical skills, engaging with unit

themes.

For the group project, there will be initial oral presentations (8 mins) in week 8 where each group will present and discuss their proposed project (25% of the assessment mark). The final performance in the group project in week 11 and participation in the feedback session in week 12 carries 75% of the assessment mark. The mark for this group project is 75% individual and 25% group.

For the group project, assessment will be based both the individual student's and the group's contributions in terms of: delivery and content; the level of rehearsal; the level of creativity; the level of learning of discipline-specific skills; the level of engagement and contribution to the collaborative group process; the level at which unit themes, readings, and discussions have informed the work; the level at which the ideas informing the piece and the creative process was presented in class discussions, and in the oral presentation given in week 8.

Feedback will be provided in class for group oral presentations in weeks 8 and 9. Feedback for the group performance project will be given in week 12, in the class feedback session. Individual and group feedback and grades for the assessment as a whole will be provided in Turnitin.

For full assessment rubric please consult iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explore unit themes independently and collaboratively in response to project aims and demands in the form of practical performance making, written assignments, and oral presentations.
- Develop creative, collaborative and communication skills through oral presentations and creative projects.
- Develop critical evaluation skills connecting unit themes, creative proposals, and practice-based outcomes.

Delivery and Resources

Delivery:

PERF201 classes are held in **Building Y3A Room 187 (Drama Studio)**. All students need to wear appropriate clothing to engage with the physical activities of this unit, ie short or long-sleeved t-shirt or leotard and knee or full-length tights or track pants. (***This unit begins meeting in Week 1 of the semester.**)

Classes:

Thursday 11am-1pm

Thursday 2-4pm.

Technologies used and required:

This unit has an online presence in iLearn. You will need access to a computer and an internet

connection. The unit iLearn page can be accessed at <http://ilearn.mq.edu.au>

All relevant PERF201 online material will be uploaded to the unit iLearn page. This is your starting point for all information and should be consulted each week so you will be able to keep up to date with all unit online content and catch up with any notifications.

Reading list: (available at Multisearch under Units>PERF201)

Readings List:

week 1 – Intro to Unit/New Circus and Contemporary Circus

Batson, Charles R. (2016). Les 7 doigts de la main and Their Cirque: Origins, Resistances, Intimacies. In Louis Patrick Leroux & Charles R. Batson (Eds.), *Cirque Global: Quebec's Expanding Circus Boundaries*(pp. 99-121). Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Maleval, M. (2016). An epic of new circus. In P. Tait & K. Lavers (Eds.), *The Routledge Circus Studies Reader*(pp. 50-65). London and New York: Routledge.

Mullet, J. (2014). Australian New Circus in the 1980s. *Australasian Drama Studies*, (64), pp. 97-108.

week 2 – Origins of Modern Circus

Davis, J. (2002). Circus Day, in *The Circus Age: Culture & Society Under the American Big Top*, Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, pp. 1-14.

Kwint, M. ([2002] 2016). The Circus and Nature in Late Georgian England, in Peta Tait & Katie Lavers (Eds) *The Routledge Circus Studies Reader*, New York & London: Routledge, pp. 331-348.

week 3 - The Circus Disciplines and Apparatus

Barlati, A-N. (2016). Glossary of Circus Terms, in Louis Patrick Leroux & Charles R. Batson (Eds), *Cirque Global: Quebec's Expanding Circus Boundaries*, Montreal: McGill University Press, pp. 294-308.

Petit, P. ([2008] 2016). To Reach the Clouds, My High Wire Walk between the Twin Towers, in Peta Tait & Katie Lavers (Eds) *The Routledge Circus Studies Reader*, New York & Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 455-460.

week 4 - Circus Side-Shows and Postmodern Freaks

Stephens, E. (2006). Cultural Fixions of the Freak Body: Coney Island and the Postmodern Sideshow. *Continuum*, 20, pp. 485-498.

week 5 - Political and Cultural Identity in Circus

Sussman, M. ([1998] revised 2016). A Queer Circus: Amok in New York, In Peta Tait & Katie Lavers (Eds) *The Routledge Circus Studies Reader*, New York & London: Routledge, pp. 198-206

Lavers, K., & Burt, J. (2017). Briefs and Hot Brown Honey: Alternative bodies in contemporary circus, M/C – Journal of Media and Culture: 'Alternative' issue. [online journal]

Lavers, K. & Burt, J. (2017). BLAKflip and Beyond: Aboriginal Performers and Contemporary Circus in Australia, *New Theatre Quarterly*, 33, pp. 307-319

week 6 - Social Circus, Who Gets to Do Circus?

Lavers, K., & Burt, J. (2015). Social circus in the Arctic: Cultivating Resilience, *Journal of Arts and Communities*, 7(3), pp.125-139.

week 7 – Non-Human Animals in Circus

Lavers, K. (2015) Horses in Modern, New, and Contemporary Circus, *Animal Studies Journal*, 4(2), pp. 140-172.

Assessment Submission, Grade and Feedback Delivery:

1. The Research Essay must be submitted via the Turnitin link on the PERF 201 iLearn page by the relevant date, as indicated above. Feedback and grades for this assessment task will be provided in the tutor's notes in Turnitin.
2. The Solo/Duo Performance assessment is in two parts, an individual oral presentation of a creative proposal in week 4 and a performance in week 7, and will be assessed by video and observational review by the tutor. A grade and feedback for the oral presentation will be provided in class in weeks 4-5 and for the performance in class in week 8. Feedback and grades will be provided in class for the individual oral presentation in weeks 8 and 9.
3. Feedback for the student's contribution to the group performance project will be given in week 12, and week 13 in the class feedback session. Individual comments and grades for the student's performance and contribution to the group performance project will be provided in Turnitin.
4. Information on how to submit your assignment and access results and feedback from assignments using My Submissions in iLearn is available at http://mq.edu.au/iLearn/student_info/assignments.htm

Referencing Style:

The referencing style for all written material where academic protocols are required must follow a recognised academic referencing style such as Chicago, Harvard, APA or MLA. If you are unsure of referencing styles please consult the library referencing resources at <http://libguides.mq.edu.au/Referencing>

Unit Schedule

week 1. Intro to unit, in-class lecture 'New Circus and Contemporary Circus', social circus ice-breakers, intro to circus practice

week 2. In-class lecture 'The Origins of Modern Circus', circus practice

week 3. In-class lecture 'Circus Disciplines and Apparatus', circus practice

week 4. On-line lecture 'Circus Side-Shows and Postmodern Freaks', oral presentations for Solo/

Duo Project

week 5. In-class lecture 'Political and Cultural Identity in Circus', circus practice

week 6. In-class lecture 'Social Circus, Who Gets to do Circus?', circus practice

week 7. On-line lecture 'Non-Human Animals in Circus', Solo/Duo Project performances

week 8. Oral presentations of Group Projects, Research Essay due (Sunday 6pm), circus practice

week 9. Group Project circus practice

week 10. Group Project circus practice

week 11. Group Project technical rehearsals

week 12. Group Project performances

week 13. Feedback session (dance studio)

Learning and Teaching Activities

Overview

Students in this unit will study performance practices across a broad spectrum of circus through various research approaches including performance theory, gender studies, historiography, animal studies, and practice-based circus arts. The unit explores circus with the context of a

wide range of performing arts disciplines including dance, physical theatre, text-based theatre, music, and other forms, and will involve a theoretical and practice-based approach to learning with a range of assessment outcomes both written and practice-based.

Performance and Circus Studies as Academic Disciplines

Circus studies is an exciting and growing field of performance study uniquely placed to interrogate social and cultural issues. The history of modern, new, and contemporary circus reveals a responsive and malleable form that has always responded to the social and cultural issues of the day. Learning about the theoretical underpinnings of circus is therefore a central part of this unit and the essay comprises 45% of the total marks. Students will need to absorb the lectures and the readings, select a topic to research, and then apply their understanding of the topic to researching and writing an academic research essay (assessment 2).

Practice

The sort of circus and performance practice explored in class is based on social circus which is a form of circus aimed at including different bodies, gender identities, and cultural backgrounds, and varying levels of experience and ability. The idea of circus practice which underpins this unit is an expanded contemporary understanding of the form as it interconnects with other performance disciplines such as dance, theatre, film, and music. Students in this unit will have access to learning different types of base-level skills from juggling, balancing acts, dance, partnering, pyramids, through to floor and aerial acrobatics. Music and sound, generating performance scripts, and visual and staging elements also form part of the practice. This means students will be exposed to a wide range of performance disciplines and skills which they can draw on to develop their solo/duo project (assessment 1) in the first part of the semester and develop content and skills for the group project (assessment 3) in the second part of the semester.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Late Submissions / Special Consideration

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests

MMCCS Session Re-mark Application

<http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914>

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Explore unit themes independently and collaboratively in response to project aims and demands in the form of practical performance making, written assignments, and oral presentations.
- Develop creative, collaborative and communication skills through oral presentations and creative projects.

Assessment tasks

- Solo/Duo Project
- Group Project

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Explore unit themes independently and collaboratively in response to project aims and

demands in the form of practical performance making, written assignments, and oral presentations.

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Develop creative, collaborative and communication skills through oral presentations and creative projects.

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Interpret and evaluate the socio-cultural underpinnings of contemporary performance and circus cultural history and various forms.
- Explore unit themes independently and collaboratively in response to project aims and demands in the form of practical performance making, written assignments, and oral presentations.
- Develop critical evaluation skills connecting unit themes, creative proposals, and practice-based outcomes.

Assessment tasks

- Solo/Duo Project
- Research project
- Group Project

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Interpret and evaluate the socio-cultural underpinnings of contemporary performance and circus cultural history and various forms.
- Explore unit themes independently and collaboratively in response to project aims and demands in the form of practical performance making, written assignments, and oral presentations.
- Develop critical evaluation skills connecting unit themes, creative proposals, and practice-based outcomes.

Assessment task

- Research project

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Interpret and evaluate the socio-cultural underpinnings of contemporary performance and circus cultural history and various forms.
- Explore unit themes independently and collaboratively in response to project aims and demands in the form of practical performance making, written assignments, and oral presentations.
- Develop critical evaluation skills connecting unit themes, creative proposals, and practice-based outcomes.

Assessment task

- Research project

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Explore unit themes independently and collaboratively in response to project aims and demands in the form of practical performance making, written assignments, and oral presentations.
- Develop creative, collaborative and communication skills through oral presentations and creative projects.

Assessment tasks

- Solo/Duo Project
- Research project
- Group Project

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Explore unit themes independently and collaboratively in response to project aims and demands in the form of practical performance making, written assignments, and oral presentations.