

**Call for Papers: *Theory and Criticism Focus Group of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE), 2016 Conference***  
Chicago, IL, August 11-14, 2016

**1) “Dis/Embodied Capital ”—An Interactive Roundtable Event**

In response to the 2016 ATHE conference theme of “Bodies at Work: Performance, Labor, and ATHE @ 30” and its location in Chicago—a city steeped in labor and performance histories—the Theory and Criticism Focus Group seeks praxis and scholarship that examines the dis/embodied capital of performance.

Many forms of capital converge in the production of theatre and performance. As cultural art forms meant to be seen, experienced, and remembered, theatre and performance have no inherent material value in the classic Marxian economic sense. Instead, as Pierre Bourdieu suggests, theatre and performance often circulate as cultural and symbolic capital. Yet the means of production that go into the creation and circulation of theatre in public and private sectors requires an ever-increasing creative use of economic capital, creative capital, and labor. In our 2016 Roundtable Series, we ask how the constant juxtaposition of economic and non-economic forms of capital in the production of theatre and performance might be theorized through the ways in which capital works both *within* and *upon* bodies. Forms of capital may veer towards the disembodied: venue locations, theatre spaces, ticket prices, business structures, scripts, building materials, jobs, season selections, touring schedules, public policies, laws and regulations, as well as the physical collection of archives. Alternatively, theatre and performance depend heavily upon the less tangible forms of capital that theatre artists, actors, and audiences already embody: race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, language, age, body size, experience, knowledge, training, and memory. More often than not, these forms of dis/embodied capital intertwine to create complicated ecosystems of symbolic, cultural, economic, social, creative, and political capital that undergird the cultural, historical, and ideological constructions of theatre and performance.

**The Theory and Criticism Focus Group seeks position papers from theatre artists, pedagogues, scholars, activists, philosophers, and critics interested in examining the notion of dis/embodied capital in our 2016 Roundtable Series.** The roundtables are designed to encourage interactive conversation, and therefore the portion of time allotted to formal presentation of position papers will be limited; focus instead will be placed on stimulating dialogue amongst panelists and audience members. Building on the tradition of our previous roundtable series, we strive to include a diverse range of participants from graduate students and emerging scholars, to professional critics, established artists, and senior scholars.

Position papers can take the form of a **short essay, a manifesto, an outreach exercise, a critical review, a theoretical musing, a research report, a creative project, an interview, or an embodied performance practice.** Questions to consider include, but are not limited to:

- ***Historical Memory:*** How has theatre and performance theory historically engaged with dis/embodied capital? How do the history or public memory of theatre companies,

significant productions, or influential artists employ dis/embodied capital? What forms of dis/embodied capital are favored in the creation of archives and institutional memory?

- ***Casting and/or Season Selection:*** How do notions of dis/embodied capital influence the actual practice of casting and/or season selection decisions? How does the influence of dis/embodied capital work in decisions of casting and/or season selection across time, space, and place? What are the alternative models that try to invent new forms of capital?
- ***Human Bodies as Capital:*** How has theatre used bodies as capital? How can performance reveal systems of power that use bodies as capital? What are the consequences of paid and unpaid labor in the theatre?
- ***Systems of Exchange:*** How does dis/embodied capital function in (trans)national exchanges of theatre productions, artists, pedagogy, and scholarship? How does digital technology (re)invent new relationships in dis/embodied capital? What are the boundaries of consensual exchange and cultural (mis)appropriation?
- ***Educational Value:*** How do educational programs in theatre and performance understand/sustain/influence/capitalize on theatre-making? How does theatre education hold value in dis/embodied forms of capital? What pedagogical techniques best address the interplay between economics and ideology in theatre? When are students consumers of capital and when are they creators of capital?

The Theory and Criticism Focus Group will be accepting individual, 250-word position paper abstracts for the Dis/Embodied Capital Roundtable Series until **Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015**. **Submissions should include** 1) an abstract (250 words or less), 2) a title, 3) contact information (name, institutional affiliation, email address, and phone number), 4) a brief bio of 50 words or less, and 5) any specific A/V requirements.

Participants will be informed of their acceptance by Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, and the Theory and Criticism Focus Group will oversee the submission of the Roundtable Series panels through ATHE's online proposal process. Send your position paper abstracts to the Theory and Criticism Focus Group conference planner **Amy Guenther** at [akguenther@utexas.edu](mailto:akguenther@utexas.edu)

## **2) Call for Complete Session Proposals, Sponsored by the Theory and Criticism Focus Group**

We also seek complete session proposals for the 2016 conference that include a broad range of theoretical interrogations and applications. We encourage multidisciplinary dialogues across the fields of performance scholarship and praxis. We also seek participants from a variety of focus group affiliations. Note that all multidisciplinary proposals must be authorized by TWO sponsoring ATHE focus groups; please contact the appropriate focus group conference planners and/or committee chair for authorizations. See the ATHE website for details: [www.athe.org](http://www.athe.org)

The Theory and Criticism Focus Group supports broad definitions of criticism and performance, and therefore encourages a wide range of examples and topics. Feel free to explore both

historical and contemporary critics and theorists, in popular culture, academic scholarship, and performance praxis. Panel proposals that engage scholarly conversation in creative ways are highly encouraged.

Complete session proposals (*separate from the Roundtable Series*) should be directed directly to the ATHE website ([www.athe.org](http://www.athe.org)). You must have the names for all participants ready for the proposal. The website includes submission information and forms. The session proposal deadline in **November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015**.

NOTES:

If you have questions about the ATHE panel proposal submission process, feel free to email Amy Guenther at [akguenther@utexas.edu](mailto:akguenther@utexas.edu)

Single paper submissions (outside of our annual roundtable series or a completed session proposal) looking for a session home may contact Amy Guenther at [akguenther@utexas.edu](mailto:akguenther@utexas.edu)

Individuals do not need to be a member of the Theory and Criticism Focus Group or ATHE to submit single presentations or panels. However, if chosen and scheduled, participants must become members of ATHE by the time of the conference.