

Inquiry into Performance and Authenticity
English 102—Emily Disher

When we consider the word “performance,” many of us immediately picture the theatre or other elaborate shows created primarily for entertainment purposes. Performing, however, is something each of us does on a daily basis, whether we adopt roles of teachers, students, community members, fathers, daughters, men, women, etc. These performances may not involve elaborate stagecraft, but they nevertheless involve complexity and skill. Often, in fact, we become so adept at the roles we adopt that we internalize our performances, until we comfortably consider them a part of our authentic selves.

In this course, students will explore the ways in which they and others perform multiple identities in varying contexts. We will examine the roles of performers, spectators/audience, and the involvement of third parties including editors, producers, etc. We will investigate this broad topic by inquiring into gender, cultural, theatrical, musical, athletic, and other identity performances. Students’ inquiry into their own performances will emerge alongside exploration of other “performers.”