

THE 4930 – Special Topics in Theatre: Solo Performance
12:50 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. T,TR
Spring 2020

Instructor: Ryan Hope Travis

Office Hours: 1:00pm-3:00pm Mon./Wed. @ McCarty C, Room 306

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Course Description:

One function of this course is to catapult students from summary to interpretation, from regurgitation to analysis, from the simple act of *seeing* to the complex and bold endeavor of *examination*. Students are expected to actively measure relevant theoretical knowledge with critical issues pertaining to social justice and social change. Solo Performance emerges out of a desire to heal. Students will create a play intended for a solo performer, and will learn the acting techniques required to successfully mount a one-person show. Additionally, theories, examples, and illustrations drawn from African, African American and African Caribbean cultural expressions will be utilized throughout this course.

Course Objective:

- A) To develop the techniques required of the actor to successfully mount a one-person show.
- B) To examine personal experiences, connecting them to a social movement, for the purpose of crafting a play that speaks to the larger society.
- C) To develop in the student an understanding of theater for social change and explore the various incarnations that form may inhabit.
- D) To introduce the student to the foundational elements of playwriting for the purpose of performing the text.

Required Text:

Students are expected to identify a social science book that examines the theme of their play in a meaningful way. Book selection is due on the second week of class.

Recommended Text:

Black Sexual Politics, Hill Collins, Patricia. (Routledge, 2005, ISBN: 0-415-95150-X)

Published plays and reference materials, both of which may be obtained from the campus libraries, will be utilized by the student in class. Handouts may be distributed as well.

Expectations of Scene Work

- Thorough analysis/prep-work
- Characters “live” in the same world
- Clear through-line of thought
- Clarity in objective(s) and tactics
- Vocal explorations
- Physicality

All performances are to be fully memorized whenever presented in class. The course concludes in a final performance utilizing the skills and techniques acquired throughout the semester.

Attendance at UF/Hippodrome State Theatre Productions:

Students are required to see all UF main stage shows and be prepared to discuss them in class. For 2 productions, you will submit a 2-page (double-spaced, 1 inch margin, name & section number in page header) commentary to class (see timetable for due dates). The critique *should not be* a synopsis of the play. Rather, attention should be paid to the use of creative imagination, physical awareness, proper vocal technique, and the overall creative development. Discuss individual performers, for example. The idea is to report your observations. Draw parallels between what you observe and your work in class.

*Jan. 24 – Feb. 2	<i>...And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi</i> by Marcus Gardley @ Constans Theatre
Feb. 7 – Feb. 16	<i>Dance 2020</i> by Elizabeth Johnson & Dante Puleio @ McGuire Black Box Theatre
Mar. 19 – Mar. 29	<i>Eurydice</i> by Sarah Ruhl @ McGuire Black Box Theatre
Apr. 1 – Apr. 5	<i>Spring BFA Dance Showcase</i> @ G-6 Studio
*Apr. 9 – Apr. 19	<i>Macbeth</i> by William Shakespeare @ Constans Theatre

*Reaction Paper Required

Class Attendance:

This is a performance class, therefore, attendance is MANDATORY. You must be present to perform. If you miss class, the work cannot be made up. We learn from each other—your presence, whether or not a “performance” is involved that day, is important to the collective learning process.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you come in after attendance has been taken, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor after class that you came in late. With that said, **you are allowed 1 unexcused absence and 1 tardy.**

2 tardies = 1 unexcused absence

1 Unexcused absence = 30 points from your final grade

Late Assignment Policy:

1. If your written assignments are late (i.e., after the due date) don't bother turning it in. You will receive **zero** credit. Keep track of due dates that are outlined on the timetable which accompanies this syllabus.
2. **** THERE ARE NO MAKE UP DAYS FOR WORKSHOPS OR PERFORMANCE DAYS****
If you miss your *assigned* workshop or performance day, you forfeit the points for that day. Only in extreme cases will scenes be rescheduled.

*NOTE: Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:
catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/

Grading:

Students may have varying degrees of “talent” and experience in acting. Therefore, students will not be graded solely on the basis of the skills and talents they bring to the class. Consideration will be given to the student’s improvement and effort that are demonstrated.

Participation is a key factor in grading. Criteria for this grade include attentiveness, participation in and/or leadership of exercises, willingness to participate in class discussions, etc... in general, the TIME, EFFORT, and COMMITMENT the student displays toward this class.

Obviously, assignments must be *complete* in order to receive *complete* points. Each assignment will be awarded a specific point value. Points will be tallied at the end of the semester to determine the student’s final grade.

300-270	A	225-239	C+	180-194	D
255-269	B+	210-224	C	193 and below	E
240-254	B	195-209	D+		

“Acting/Self Analysis” Paper	15pts
Response to Invited Lecturer	25 pts
Reaction Paper	20 pts (40 pts total)
Scene #1 Performance	25 pts
Scene #1 Script	25 pts
Scene #2 Performance	25 pts
Scene #2 Script	25 pts
Scene #3 Performance	25 pts
Scene #3 Script	25 pts
Participation	70 pts
TOTAL POINTS = 300	

For information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points, please visit: catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-gradingpolicies/.

Physical Contact Policy:

Unlike most classes, acting can require a certain amount of physical contact between students or between instructor and student. This contact may be used to aid in releasing tension, promote deeper breathing, or to fuel a deeper emotional connection. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with any physical contact suggested in class, you have the right to refuse it with no repercussion towards any sort of grade.

Academic Honesty Policy:

UF students have the responsibility to conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner while pursuing their studies. They are expected to abide by the UF Academic Honesty Policy, which defines an academic honesty offense as “the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage.” In the context of this course, this includes conducting original research and properly citing sources for any materials (both printed and online) used in the writing reaction papers, journals, and self-analysis paper. Submitting work that has been plagiarized will result in a failing grade. For more information on the UF Academic Honor Code visit: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, dso.ufl.edu/drc) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

Course Evaluations:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

Campus Resources/Health & Wellness:

1. *U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit umatter.ufl.edu/ to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
2. *Counseling and Wellness Center:* Visit counseling.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
3. *Student Health Care Center:* Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit shcc.ufl.edu/.
4. *University Police Department:* Visit police.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
5. *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:* For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center.

Final Business:

Acting is *ACTION*. Acting is not about attitude, or being clever. It's not about your ability to conjure up or manufacture a feeling or emotion. Acting is about the *TASK*. To get forgiveness, to get them to love you, etc., etc., etc. Be deliberate. Be direct. Be fearless. Learning how to do the aforementioned is the function of this class.

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

This timetable is subject to change at the instructor's discretion

WEEK 1:

Orientation, syllabus

Self-introductions, Course outlines/schedule discussed

WEEK 2:

*DUE Tuesday, Jan. 14th: BOOK SELECTION

*DUE Thursday, Jan. 16th: 2-3 page paper – What Inspires Me?

Who are you? Where do you call home? What inspires you? What social movements speak to your artistry? What do you want to *say* with the art you create? Papers must be typed and stapled.

WEEK 3:

(Ongoing assignment for the semester: Identify a social science book that examines your theme in a meaningful way. I will be checking in with your progress on this reading as the semester continues, and applying your knowledge from this text to in-class work and exercises.)

READ one chapter in selected book

Play analysis, Pt. 1

Exercises in script development and character motivation

*DUE Thursday, January 23rd: SCENE #1

WEEK 4:

Showing of Scene #1

WEEK 5:

READ one chapter in selected book

Continuing explorations in “finding the answers”

Finding the Action—working with Scene #1

*DUE Tuesday, February 4th: Response paper for ...*And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi*

WEEK 6:

READ one chapter in selected book

Crafting a character using an imagined backstory and actual historical facts

WEEK 7:

Scene #1 performances

*DUE Thursday, February 20th: SCENE #2

WEEK 8:

Presentation of Scene #2

Feedback on scenes and continuing explorations

READ one chapter in selected book

WEEK 9:

NO CLASS –February 29th – March 7th -- SPRING BREAK

WEEK 10:

READ one chapter in selected book

Scene #2: continuing exploration and exercises

WEEK 11:

Scene 1 & 2 workshops

Feedback and further explorations of the scenes in class

Review of skills and vocabulary up to this point—in class explorations using scenes and/or monologues

WEEK 12:

Scene 1& 2 workshops

Review and preparation for Vocabulary/Terms Exam

*DUE Thursday, March 26th: SCENE #3

WEEK 13:

READ one chapter in selected book

Scene #3 workshop

MASTERCLASS by Invited Lecturers - Thursday, April 2nd

WEEK 14:

In class workshops for Scenes 1, 2 & 3

Feedback and explorations of Final Scene

WEEK 15:

Feedback and explorations of Scenes 1, 2 & 3

WEEK 16:

* DUE Tuesday, April 21st: Response paper for *Macbeth*

*DUE Thursday, April 22nd: “Final” Script

Thursday, April 22nd: Final Scene Presentations – Last Day of Class

This syllabus is a good approximation of what this course will be like this semester. The instructor reserves the right to make reasonable additions or subtractions to the syllabus or to allow more or less time for certain sections based on how the work progresses this semester.
