

# **TPP 4930 Comedy Practice**

T/Th (4:05pm-6:00pm) – G15  
Spring 2022

|               |                                                                  |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Instructor:   | Dr. Charlie Mitchell                                             |
| Office Phone: | 352-273-0515                                                     |
| Office:       | McGuire Pavilion, 2nd Fl., Rm. 229 (attached to the Reitz Union) |
| Office Hours: | See Canvas page                                                  |
| Email:        | cmitchell@ufl.edu                                                |

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Students will learn to find their comic voice through the creation and performance of late night joke writing, standup, and sketch comedy.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

You will create and perform late night monologue material, a short standup set, and sketch material all of which will be part of your comedy writing packet.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

This class is a space where you respect, support, and encourage your fellow performers/writers while understanding that constructive criticism is more valuable than praise. I will not censor work in this class. The only standard is whether the work is funny and chooses targets that are worthy of comic examination. There is only one absolute and unbreakable rule – you do not steal jokes.

Each week you will hand in a writing assignment such as late-night jokes, stand-up material, and sketches. Rewriting material is just as important as your first attempt. In class, you are expected to perform your own work and the work of your peers as well as improvise scenes to generate ideas for sketches. In addition to writing assignments and in-class activities, you will perform:

- a late-night comedy show segment(s)
- a recorded stand-up set (“tight five”)
- a sketch comedy show

At certain times during the semester, you may need to make time outside of class to meet with me about your material.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

*Mastering Stand-Up: The Complete Guide to Becoming a Successful Comedian* by Stephen Rosenfield. I will also provide handouts if needed.

## **ILLNESS**

Students are expected to stay home and seek medical help for COVID-19 symptoms or exposure (persistent cough, fever 100.4+, new loss of taste or smell, muscle pain/headaches, shortness of breath, sore throat, chills, diarrhea, or feeling generally ill). The culture of hiding illness or the

“show must go on” mentality must be avoided. Students who are medically required to quarantine will have documentation from a medical provider. Students who self-quarantine must communicate with me and “attend” courses remotely.

If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>), please use the UF Health screening system (<https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/screen-test-protect/covid-19-exposure-and-symptoms-who-do-i-call-if/>) and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>).

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

This is a class *about* participation – attendance is a given. **You are expected to arrive ON TIME and to attend ALL classes.** If you feel you cannot make this commitment, please drop the class. When you work in teams, missing class hurts your peers. Any absence from class for the following reasons must be supported by official documentation to avoid a grade penalty:

- Serious family emergencies
- Special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences)
- Military obligation
- Severe weather conditions
- Participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate
- Court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena)

Religious observances do not require documentation. However, you need to let me know by the second week of classes which religious observances will conflict with your attendance.

**Students are allowed ONE unexcused absence that does not require documentation and does not conform to the UF “acceptable reasons for absence.”** Afterwards, each unexcused absence will result in a penalty of a full letter grade (10%) deducted from your final grade. Weddings, travel, job interviews, non-UF auditions, and other life events do not count as excused absences. If you have a logistical problem that will prevent you from arriving on time, see me immediately.

Any student that acquires THREE absences (either excused or unexcused) will be required to meet with me to discuss your continued participation in the course. For Majors: Failure to attend this meeting will result in Artistic Probation.

\*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:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

## GRADE BREAKDOWN

|                                                                              |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| In-Class Participation                                                       | 40% |
| - every three weeks you will be assigned a participation grade (see Rubric). |     |
| Written Assignments/Rewrites                                                 | 40% |
| Performances (standup & sketch performance)                                  | 20% |

## SCALE

|    |        |                  |
|----|--------|------------------|
| A  | 93-100 | Excellent Effort |
| A- | 90     |                  |
| B+ | 87     |                  |
| B  | 83     | Good Effort      |
| B- | 80     |                  |
| C+ | 76     |                  |
| C  | 73     | Average Effort   |
| C- | 70     |                  |
| D+ | 67     |                  |
| D  | 63     | Minimum Effort   |
| D- | 60     |                  |
| E  |        |                  |

## PARTICIPATION RUBRIC

Shows up on time, participates in exercises and discussions, demonstrates a positive attitude, willingness to give and receive critical feedback, uses time productively.

## WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS RUBRIC

Follows guidelines, has a clear comic target, and integrates feedback.

## CLASS CONDUCT

During class, there is no eating or cell phone use (especially texting).

## HONOR CODE

As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: "I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University." The Honor Code states that you cannot take photos or videos in class without my permission and the permission of fellow students.

## LEARNING DISABILITIES

If you have a disability documented with the Disability Resource Center and wish to discuss accommodations, please email me or see me during my office hours. If you have a learning disability that has not been documented, contact the DRC at

<https://disability.ufl.edu/about/contact-us/>

## COURSE EVALUATION

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.ua.ufl.edu/students/](http://gatorevals.ua.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/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/](http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/)

## **AVAILABILITY**

If you have something you want to discuss with me, please do not hesitate. You do not need to make an appointment for my office hours.

Your ongoing enrollment is confirmation that you understand and will comply with the requirements of this course. I reserve the right to alter this syllabus if necessary.