

THE 6565 – Seminar in Creative Process: Solo Work
10:40 a.m. – 12:35 p.m. Mon. + 12:50 p.m.–2:45 p.m. Tues./Thurs.
Spring 2026

Instructor: Ryan Hope Travis

Office Hours: 3:00pm-5:00pm Fri. + By Appt. @ SoTD, McGuire Pavilion, Room 226

Phone: 352-273-2608

Email: rht@ufl.edu

Course Description:

“Specialists in all areas of theatre explore the similarities in their creative thinking and methods.” (UF Graduate Catalog).

This course explores the dual craft of solo performance and playwriting, guiding students from initial impulse to fully realized personal narrative. Blending rigorous research with embodied practice, the class supports artists in developing original material for a one-person show while strengthening the performance techniques essential to the form. Students will investigate cultural, historical, and autobiographical sources to create stories that are imaginative, grounded, and deeply authentic.

Emphasizing an entrepreneurial mindset, the course also addresses the practical realities of conceiving, shaping, and producing solo work—encouraging self-sufficiency, adaptability, and a holistic understanding of the performer-as-creator. Throughout the semester, students refine their artistic presence, craft, and engagement with the audience as they build and perform a piece that reflects both personal exploration and bold theatrical invention. Solo Performance emerges here as a practice of examination, storytelling, and healing.

Key Topics:

1. *Foundations of Solo Performance & Concept Development*
Identifying themes, defining point of view, shaping the central question, and generating ideas for a one-person narrative.
2. *Research-to-Performance Pipeline*
Using historical, cultural, and autobiographical research to inform character, structure, and thematic integrity.
3. *Playwriting for Solo Work*
Building narrative architecture, crafting dialogue and monologue, integrating multiple perspectives, and refining dramaturgical choices.
4. *Performance Technique & Embodied Storytelling*
Presence, specificity, voice, physical craft, audience connection, and techniques for portraying multiple characters.
5. *Entrepreneurial Practice for the Solo Artist*
Production planning, self-producing models, adaptability in creative process, and strategies for developing, marketing, and sustaining original solo work.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- A) Crafting Original Material: Build the foundational elements for a one-person show, including concept development, structure, and thematic coherence.
- B) Integrating Research and Practice: Use cultural, historical, and personal research to craft compelling stories and deepen authenticity.

C) Entrepreneurial Mindset: Understand the practical aspects of creating and producing solo work, emphasizing self-sufficiency and adaptability.

Course Requirements:

1. Active participation in class discussions and workshops
2. Completion of assigned readings and written/oral reflections
3. Attendance to SoTD performances
4. Final project involving a performance or research presentation

Required Text:

Orlandersmith, Dael. *Beauty's Daughter; Monster; The Gimmick: Three Plays*. New York: Vintage Books, 2000.

Published plays and reference materials, which may be obtained from the campus libraries, will also be utilized by the student in class. Essays and selected readings will be posted on Canvas. Handouts may be distributed as well.

Course Journey:

This is a judgment-free zone. In this class, we are committed to sharing and listening mindfully, thoughtfully, and patiently. We hold space for each other. We listen with open hearts. We enter this space with a wide range of experiences and backgrounds. Our differences help us learn. They also provide building blocks for a safe, brave, inviting, and rigorous space. We grow here.

Assignments:

Creative Manifesto

The Creative Manifesto asks students to write a brief, reflective statement that defines the artistic impulse behind their solo piece. In it, they identify the central question driving their work, the personal or cultural stakes involved, and the themes shaping their storytelling. The manifesto should express their developing artistic identity and clarify what they believe solo performance can achieve. This document serves as both an anchor for their creative process and a practical tool for future applications or project development. (10pts)

Design Concept Experiment

The Design Concept Experiment invites students to explore simple visual and aural elements that could support or enhance their solo piece. In this assignment, students select and experiment with basic design components such as sound cues, props or objects, costume elements, lighting ideas, or spatial arrangements. The goal is not to create a full production design but to investigate how minimal, intentional choices can shape the world of the performance and inform the storytelling. This exploratory work encourages students to think holistically about their piece, integrating design considerations into their creative process and discovering how technical elements can deepen meaning, atmosphere, and clarity. See the Canvas Discussions tab for due dates, parameters, and prompts. (10 pts total.)

Final Reflective Essay

The Final Reflective Essay asks students to examine their creative and performance journey over the course of the semester, articulating how their solo piece developed and how their artistry evolved. In this reflection, students will discuss key discoveries, challenges, and breakthroughs in both their writing and performance processes, noting how research, feedback, and rehearsal shaped the final piece. They should also consider how their understanding of solo performance has expanded and identify the tools, practices, or insights they plan to carry into future work. This essay serves as a culminating synthesis of their learning, offering a clear snapshot of their growth as performer-creators. (20pts)

Note: Half of the final course grade will be based on students' submissions of working script drafts and their workshop performance presentations. These components reflect the iterative nature of solo performance creation and are essential to demonstrating growth throughout the semester.

Optional: Rehearsal Process Documentation

Maintain a logbook or weekly submission capturing:

- Rehearsal goals and outcomes
- Discoveries, challenges, and evolving insights (e.g., "tried playing Scene 3 entirely with breath impulses...")
- Journal world-building process, imagine environments, physical and voice exploration

Creative Manifesto	10pts
Design Concept Experimentation	10pts
Working Drafts and Workshop Performances	50pts
Final Reflective Essay	20pts
Participation	10pts
Total	100pts

1. To lighten our impact on the planet, all documents will be submitted via Canvas. Canvas will also be our repository for the syllabus, readings, assignments, links, grades, etc. Emailed assignments are not permitted.
2. Due dates will be set with respect to student needs and outside obligations -- where appropriate.

Grading Scheme:

Points are used to demonstrate the weight of each assignment. In general, we will utilize a "complete" or "incomplete" grading scheme. Feel free to reach out if this is unclear.

The following grading standard will be used to determine your final grade in this class:

Grade	Range
A	100pts to 93pts
A-	< 93pts to 90pts
B+	< 90pts to 87pts
B	< 87pts to 83pts
B-	< 83pts to 80pts
C+	< 80pts to 77pts
C	< 77pts to 73pts
C-	< 73pts to 70pts
D+	< 70pts to 67pts
D	< 67pts to 63pts
D-	< 63pts to 60pts
E	< 60pts to 0pts

Grading Policy:

This course embraces the philosophy of *un-grading*. Simply, complete assignments receive complete points. Because students come to this space with varying synthesis and exegesis proficiencies, diverse pedagogical backgrounds and analytical skills, *time, effort, and commitment* are the crux of your grade.

Full participation is crucial in grading. Full participation means being proactive and dedicated to all aspects of the learning process, which is crucial for both understanding the material and achieving a good grade. Each assignment will be awarded a specific point value. Points will be tallied at the end of the semester to determine the final grade.

Attendance Policy:

We learn from each other. Your presence is important to the collective learning process. Therefore:

1 tardy is permitted

Per 2 tardies = 1 unexcused absence

Per 1 unexcused absence = 5 points from final grade

You are encouraged to access the current UF attendance policy [here](#).

Attendance at UF Productions:

You are required to see the SoTD mainstage shows to which you receive a complimentary ticket. You are encouraged to attend other SoTD, Florida Players and theatre-related productions, when possible. Be prepared to discuss SoTD productions in class.

Policy on Responding to Students:

A 24 to 48 hour reply to emails/Canvas message is typical. Submitted documents are typically returned within 2 weeks after the due date.

Late Assignment Policy:

Assignments submitted 24hrs beyond the due date will receive a 1-point deduction every day it is late. Keep track of due dates. Keep the lines of communication open. If you are having a challenge, let me know. Extensions will be permitted if you email me 24hrs *before* the deadline.

Make-up assignments may include a 1-page (500 word minimum) reflection essay, applying topics discussed in class to an assigned SoTD mainstage (or approved) production.

Our Honor Code on AI (Artificial Intelligence) Usage:

As students committed to academic integrity and personal growth, we recognize the importance of producing original work that reflects our own understanding and effort. The use of AI tools can be beneficial for learning and research, but it must be balanced with ethical considerations to maintain the integrity of our academic work.

1. Originality and Authenticity – Students must ensure that all submitted essays are their own work.
AI tools should not be used to generate entire essays or significant portions of text.
2. Permissible Uses of AI / AI tools may be used for:
 - Grammar and spell-checking
 - Generating ideas or outlines
 - Conducting preliminary research
 - Providing feedback on drafts
3. Prohibited Uses of AI / AI tools may not be used to:
 - Write entire essays or large sections of text
 - Paraphrase or rephrase existing content to pass it off as original work

- Generate citations or references without proper verification
- 4. Transparency:
 - Students must disclose any use of AI tools in their work. This includes specifying which tools were used and how they contributed to the final essay.
- 5. Accountability:
 - Students are responsible for the content of their essays, including any errors or inaccuracies introduced by AI tools. Proper verification and critical evaluation of AI-generated content are required.
- 6. Respect for Intellectual Property:
 - Students must respect copyright laws and avoid using AI tools to generate content that infringes on the intellectual property rights of others.
- 7. Commitment to Learning:
 - The primary goal of essay assignments is to enhance learning and critical thinking skills. Students should use AI tools as aids, not substitutes, for their own intellectual efforts.

By adhering to this honor code, we commit to upholding the values of academic integrity, personal responsibility, and ethical use of technology in our academic pursuits.

Academic Policies & Resources:

You may find UF Academic Policies, Academic Resources, and Campus Health and Wellness Resources, [here](#).

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/.

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

WEEK 1:

Introduction to Solo Performance & Course Overview

- Course introduction, orientation, syllabus review; performer-as-creator; goals of the course
- Exploration of solo performance as an artistic and cultural practice
- Introductory exercises in presence, impulse, and personal storytelling

WEEK 2:

Foundations of Generating Original Material

- Identifying themes, personal histories, and core questions that drive solo work
- Embodied improvisation as generative tools
- Introduction to narrative frameworks for one-person shows

WEEK 3:

Research for Solo Work: Cultural, Historical, and Personal Inquiry

- Methods for integrating archival, cultural, and autobiographical research
- Developing authenticity and context through structured investigation
- Translating research findings into scenes, characters, and imagery
- Workshop: presenting early fragments of research-based material

WEEK 4:

Playwriting for the Solo Performer

- Structuring a one-person show: arc, tension, and thematic coherence
- Crafting monologues, moments, and character shifts
- Developing a first outline or “spine” of the piece
- Continued performance work focusing on voice, clarity, and multi-character embodiment

WEEK 5:

Embodied Storytelling & Character Transformation

- Physical and vocal techniques for shifting between characters
- Exploring rhythm, pacing, and emotional truth onstage
- Integrating movement and body-based storytelling methods
- Workshop: short performance etudes demonstrating character differentiation

WEEK 6:

Drafting the Script: From Outline to Scene Work

- Writing sessions devoted to building scenes and refining structure
- Dramaturgical conversations on clarity, intent, and point of view
- Check-ins to shape the emerging script
- Performance exercises aimed at grounding text in the body

WEEK 7:

Feedback, Revision, and Deepening the Narrative

- Class Visit: Playwright Kyle Bass
- Table reads and structured peer feedback
- Identifying recurring themes and sharpening the central narrative
- Workshop: performing revised sections for responsiveness and audience engagement

WEEK 8:

The Solo Artist as Entrepreneur

- Introduction to producing a one-person show: budgeting, scheduling, space considerations
- Strategies for self-sufficiency and adaptive problem-solving
- Performance practice: intentionality and command of the stage

WEEK 9:

Rehearsal Techniques for Solo Work

- Clarifying a personal rehearsal process
- Integrating script, movement, and design concepts
- Peer feedback based on clarity, stakes, and emotional presence
- Work-in-progress showings

WEEK 10:

Spring Break

WEEK 11:

Refining the Performance: Precision, Presence, and Audience Relationship

- Deep rehearsal focusing on timing, transitions, and emotional throughlines
- Exploring audience engagement, address, and energetic response
- Final writing adjustments and tightening of script

WEEK 12:

Tech Considerations for Solo Performance

- Practical introduction to lighting, sound, props, and minimal design
- Building a simple, effective technical score for a solo piece
- Run-throughs integrating technical elements
- Continued refinement of performance technique: presence, specificity, and connection

WEEK 13:

Work-in-Progress Presentations

- Formal sharing of work-in-progress
- Peer and faculty feedback sessions focused on clarity, storytelling, and presence
- Discussion of next steps for festival submission, future production, or continued development

WEEK 14:

Final Revisions of the Artistic Process

- Identifying target audiences and potential presentation venues
- Preparing written materials (artist statement, synopsis, etc.)
- Refining performance for final presentation

WEEK 15:

Final Solo Performance Presentations

- Presentation of final solo performance pieces
- Reflection on process, growth, and next steps as performer-creators

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 course expectations.