

Instructor:

Tom Zhang (pronouns: he/him)

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Office Location: Nadine McGuire Theatre & Dance Pavilion, 2nd floor, Rm 222

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 9-11am, or by appointment

Course Description/Purpose:

TPA4930, Special Topics in Stage Management, is a repeatable course for undergraduate School of Theatre and Dance students. It is a course **tailored for individual students** for building advanced stage management skills, including but not limited to time management, scheduling, verbal and non-verbal communication skills in running rehearsal, dance blocking notation, etc.

Course Goals and Student Outcomes:

The major goal of this course is to equip students with the advanced practical skills and to set them up for success in their upcoming production assignments.

The learning outcomes are subject to change based on individual projects assigned to each student, but overall, upon completion of the course, the students should be able to:

- **Demonstrate** higher proficiency in verbal, non-verbal, and written **communication**
- **Carry out** the task of facilitating regular rehearsal and tech rehearsal with higher proficiency
- **Carry out** the task of scheduling for a complex team project, such as the rehearsal schedule for a musical, using scalable tools
- **Carry out** the task of taking blocking notes for dance and theatre with higher proficiency

Required Materials:

- Access to a laptop computer with internet connectivity and functional trackpad/mouse to use Google Docs & Sheets (using UF email credentials) and course Canvas site
 - Please bring it to every class unless otherwise instructed
- Reading materials posted on Canvas for each module.

Course Attendance:

The success of this course is based on discussion and class participation. Attendance is vital.

- Only one (1) unexcused absence from class will be permitted without penalty.
- Each additional unexcused absence will lower your final grade by 5%.
- Two (2) late arrivals and/or early departures to/from class will count as one (1) absence.
- Three unexcused absences will result in a failing grade in this class.

Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog and require appropriate documentation. [Click here to read the university attendance policies.](#)

Course Assignments and Grading Percentage:

- **Skill-building Projects (60% total; 10-20% each)**
 - Each student will meet with the instructor at the beginning of the semester to confirm the tailored projects to work on, as well as their individual grade weight.
 - Specific instructions will be provided on Canvas.
- **USITT Experience Presentation (10%)**
 - Each student will do a **short presentation** (5-10 minutes), to formally share their experience and takeaways from attending the USITT annual conference, including but not limited: one piece of knowledge learned from sessions, one helpful connection made during the conference, and one takeaway they can directly apply to work and life.
 - Specific instructions will be provided on Canvas.
- **Peer Observation Assignment (10%)**
 - Observing your peers at work is not only a vital peer support and community building action but also gives you chance to learn from your peer stage managers.
 - Each student is required to attend and observe at least 2 important rehearsals of any show that you're not in, including: First Rehearsal & Design Presentation, Crew Watch, and any Tech & Dress Rehearsal.
 - After each observation, complete a Peer Observation quiz on Canvas. These are short reflections that allow you to summarize what you've learned from the experience.
- **Participation and Preparation (20%)**
 - **A (Excellent):** Consistently attends class meetings on time and fully prepared. Completes all assigned materials timely, and demonstrates thorough understanding by actively discussing questions, comments, and takeaways from them. Makes a meaningful Facebook post about production work or the SM community.
 - **B (Good):** Usually attends and participates. Completes most assigned materials. Contributes to discussion regularly, though comments may be less developed or less frequent. Facebook post completed with some relevance.
 - **C (Satisfactory):** Attends most meetings but may arrive late or be occasionally unprepared. Inconsistently completes assigned materials. Participates occasionally but with limited engagement. Facebook post completed with minimal effort or unclear relevance.
 - **D (Needs Improvement):** Frequently misses class or arrives unprepared. Rarely completes assigned materials. Limited or off-topic participation. Facebook post missing or shows little connection to course expectations.
 - **F (Unsatisfactory):** Rarely attends or participates. Fails to complete assigned materials or Facebook post. Shows no engagement in class discussions or course community.

For any assignment **submitted late**, 10% of the assignment grade will be taken off.

• A	94-100%	B-	80-83%	D+	67-69%
• A-	90-93%	C+	77-79%	D	64-66%
• B+	87-89%	C	74-76%	D-	60-63%
• B	84-86%	C-	70-73%	E	0-59%

Information on UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found:

[Grades and Grading Policies](#)

Course Outline:

Note: ASSIGN means the instructor will announce and explain the assignment in-class; DUE means the assignment is due before class on that day.

All dates here are subject to change, check Canvas for actual due dates.

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
Fri, 1/16	Course Introduction and Expectations	
Fri, 1/23	Project 1 Instruction	
Fri, 1/30	Project 1 Check-In and Feedback	
Fri, 2/6	Project 1 Wrap-up Project 2 Instruction	DUE: Project 1
Fri, 2/13	Project 2 Check-In and Feedback	
Fri, 2/20	Project 2 Wrap-up Project 3 Instruction	DUE: Project 2
Fri, 2/27	Project 3 Check-In and Feedback	
Fri, 3/6	Guest Lecturer: Cassie Aphorpe (Stage Manager at Cirque du Soleil)	
Fri, 3/13	Project 3 Wrap-up Project 4 Instruction	DUE: Project 3
Fri, 3/20	SPRING BREAK	
Fri, 3/27	Present: USITT Experience Guest Speaker: Casey Hanners (SM @ Walt Disney World)	
Fri, 4/3	Project 4 Check-In and Feedback	
Fri, 4/10	Project 4 Wrap-up	DUE: Project 4
Fri, 4/17	Senior Top 10! End of Year Celebration	

Academic Policies and Resources:

Here's the link to some academic policies and resources at UF: [Academic Policies & Resources](#)