**Introduction to Performance**

THEA 0830-11520

MWF 2:00pm—2:50pm

Bellefield Hall, Room 423

Instructor: Kristi Good

Email: kag131@pitt.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

**MATERIALS**

* *Mastering Your Performance* by Melanie Dreyer, available at The Book Center.
* Semester Pass for Pitt Rep & Lab productions.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to develop the student’s awareness of the actor’s process and a general sense of theatre as an area of human endeavor. Students will be introduced to the basic communication skills, including physical and vocal presence in front of an audience. The course will also develop an introductory level of acting skill through the use of regular warm-ups, theatre games, improvisation, and simple scene study. The class will culminate in a final scene taken from an already existing text.

**COURSE GOALS**

* To release inhibitions and feel comfortable performing through theatre games and improvisation.
* To become aware of and begin to develop the use of the physical and vocal instruments when performing on stage.
* To apply Given Circumstances and Objectives, Actions, and Obstacles within the context of an Open Scene and a Final Scene.
* To apply basic theatre terminology to class discussion.
* To write a Character Analysis Paper, applying the analysis to the application of the tools learned in class.
* To exhibit appropriate behavior for rehearsal and performance of class projects.
* To apply skills learned during the semester to the realization of a final scene taken from a play based in contemporary realism.

**CONTACTS**

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Contact Info\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**DIVERSITY CLAUSE**

All participants of this class, both students and instructors, are required to help promote and maintain, at all times, a positive atmosphere in which everyone displays and receives respect, tolerance, and encouragement regardless of race, gender, religion, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, or talent level.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh’s Policy on Academic integrity. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. For further information see: http://www.pitt.edu/~provost/ai1.html.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union, 412.648.7890/412.383.7355 (TTY), as early as possible. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

**CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

**NO:** **YES:**

Food or gum Water

Street clothes Workout clothes

Street shoes Sneakers

Hats with a brim Hats without a brim

Cell phone Cell phone in an emergency

**GRADING BREAKDOWN**

Participation 470 points

Solo Performance 50 points

Performance Quizzes (4@ 20pts) 80 points

Reading Comprehension Quiz 30 points

Open Scene 100 points

Character Analysis 70 points

Final Scene Performance 200 points

Total Possible 1000 points

**GRADING SCALE**

A+ = 975 – 1000 C+ = 775 – 799 F = Less than 600

A = 925 – 974 C = 725 – 774

A- = 900 – 924 C- = 700 – 724

B+ = 875 – 899 D+ = 675 – 699

B = 825 – 874 D = 625 –674

B- = 800 – 824 D- = 600 – 624

**ATTENDANCE**

This policy is uniform for all performance courses. The number of absences allowed should be adjusted for the class time schedule. For our class:

**Class meets 3 days per week, 3 absences are allowed.**

Each absence after the allotted amount will lower your final grade by 4 percentage points. Late arrival interrupts the focus of those students who are on time, therefore 2 late arrivals equal 1 absence.

**Instructor Policy:** Because of the hands-on nature of this course, class attendance is mandatory. Skills are developed through work in the class and cannot be made-up. There are no “excused” or “unexcused” absences; there are only missed classes. **YOU CANNOT MAKE UP PERFORMANCES IF YOU ARE ABSENT THE DAY OF YOUR GRADED PERFORMANCE.**

\***Please notify me in writing in the case of sports or religious related absences.**

Participation points are given daily. If you arrive late—NO MATTER HOW LATE—you will receive half the allotted participation points for the day.

**BONUS POINTS**

**Redeye Theatre Project**

Redeye Theatre Project (RTP) is a 24-hour play festival run by students in the University of Pittsburgh Department of Theatre Arts. Playwrights, actors, and designers meet at 8pm on a Friday and by 8pm on Saturday, they produce an entire evening of original works. To join the mailing list and receive information on participating in or attending the festival, send an email to redeye.theatre.project@gmail.com. Bonus points can be earned one of two ways:

**Participation:** Write a 2-3 page reflection paper detailing your experience of participating in the festival that integrates concepts we have been studying in class.

**Attendance:** Write a 2-3 page critique on any aspect of the performance that you choose, provided that it integrates concepts we have been studying in class.

**WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME**

* I will dismiss class on time.
* I will make myself available to discuss any questions or concerns you have about class.
* I will adhere to the four basic beliefs outlined in my Teaching Philosophy.

**FINAL NOTE**

This syllabus is our contract together. It outlines what is expected of you in order for you to get the most out of this class, as well as receive a passing grade. Keep it with your class materials and refer to it at all times so that you are aware of what is expected of you from week to week. Please feel free to discuss any concerns or questions with me at any time!

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week  | Date  | Agenda | Assignments & Notes |
| Week 1 | Aug 27 | SyllabusGetting to Know You | Assign *MYP* Ch. 1&2 |
|  | Aug 29 | Good Beginnings (Ch. 2)Letting Go (Ch. 1) | Assign *MYP* Ch. 3 |
|  | Aug 31 | The Actor’s Instrument (Ch. 3) |  |
| Week 2 | Sept 3 | **Labor Day NO CLASS** |  |
|  | Sept 5 | Working with a Partner |  |
|  | Sept 7 | Working with a Partner (cont.) | **ADD DROP ENDS** |
| Week 3 | Sept 10 | Characterization | Assign Solo Performance |
|  | Sept 12 | Characterization (cont.) |  |
|  | Sept 14 | Characterization (cont.) |  |
| Week 4 | Sept 17 | Solo Performances | \*Presentation Graded!Assign *MYP* Ch. 5 |
|  | Sept 19 | Theatre Types & Architecture (Ch. 5) |  |
|  | Sept 21 | Stage Geography & Actor’s Movements (Ch. 5) |  |
| Week 5 | Sept 24 | Stage Environments | Assign *MYP* Ch. 6 |
|  | Sept 26 | Given Circumstances (Ch. 6) |  |
|  | Sept 28 | Given Circumstances (Ch. 6) |  |
| Week 6 | Oct 1 | Given Circumstances (Ch. 6) | Assign *MYP* Ch. 4 |
|  | Oct 3 | Dramatic Structure & How to Watch a Play (Ch. 4) |  |
|  | Oct 5 | **Her Hamlet Pre-Discussion** | Assign *MYP* Ch. 7 |
| Week 7 | **Oct 9****TUESDAY!** | Final Plays DiscussionObjectives, Actions & Obstacles (Ch. 7) | Assign Final Plays |
|  | Oct 10 | Objectives, Actions & Obstacles (Ch. 7) |  |
|  | Oct 12 | Objectives, Actions & Obstacles (Ch. 7) |  |
| Week 8 | Oct 15 | Quiz**Her Hamlet Post-Discussion** |  |
|  | Oct 17 | Objectives, Actions & Obstacles (Ch. 7) | Assign *MYP* Ch. 8 |
|  | Oct 19 | How to Score a Scene (Ch. 7)How to Rehearse(Ch. 8) |  |
| Week 9 | Oct 22 | Open ScenesTable Work | Assign Open Scenes |
|  | Oct 24 | Open Scene Rubric**Horror Show Pre-Discussion** |  |
|  | Oct 26 | **Kristi at a Conference****NO CLASS** |  |
| Week 10 | Oct 29 | Open Scene Rehearsal Group 1 |  |
|  | Oct 31 | Open Scene Rehearsal Group 2 |  |
|  | Nov 2 | Quiz **Horror Show Post-Discussion** |  |
| Week 11 | Nov 5 | Open Scene Dress RehearsalALL GROUPS |  |
|  | Nov 7 | Open Scene PresentationsALL GROUPS | \*Presentation Graded |
|  | Nov 9 | **CFSB Pre-Discussion** |  |
| Week 12 | Nov 12 | Reading Comprehension Quiz |  |
|  | Nov 14 | Character Analysis Workshop | Assign Character Analysis |
|  | Nov 16 | Assign Final ScenesTable Work |  |
| Week 13 | Nov 19 | Quiz**CFSB Post-Discussion** |  |
|  | Nov 21 | **Thanksgiving NO CLASS** |  |
|  | Nov 23 | **Thanksgiving NO CLASS** |  |
| Week 14 | Nov 26 | Final Scene Rubric**columbinus Pre-Discussion** | Character Analysis Due |
|  | Nov 28 | Final Scene Rehearsal Group 1 | \*Presentation Graded |
|  | Nov 30 | Final Scene Rehearsal Group 2 | \*Presentation Graded |
| Week 15 | Dec 3 | **Quiz****columbinus Post-Discussion** |  |
|  | Dec 5 | Final Scene Dress RehearsalALL GROUPS |  |
|  | Dec 7 | Final Scene PresentationsALL GROUPS | **LAST DAY OF CLASS!****NO FINAL!** |

**Teaching Philosophy**

**Partnership** (n.)—A legal contract entered into by two or more persons in

which each agrees to furnish a part of the capital and labor for a business enterprise, and by which each shares a fixed proportion of profits and losses.

I believe that successful teaching is the result of a partnership between teacher and student. Each of my syllabi end with the statement that the document is a contract between us. With the acceptance of the syllabus, the student is entering into an enterprise whose profits and losses we will share together, based on our mutual delivery of labor. This definition brings me to my four basic beliefs about teaching.

* **Providing a safe environment.** The student cannot be expected to grow or profit from experiences in an environment in which he or she feels threatened. Our contract together contains a diversity clause that outlines for students the expectations of promoting a positive atmosphere in which all students—regardless of race, gender, religion, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, or talent level—are compelled to exercise respect, tolerance, and encouragement.
* **Exercising mutual respect and responsibility.** As equal partners in this learning enterprise, the student and teacher must respect each other. We are all human beings who have equal opportunities to make mistakes. Students can expect me to take responsibility for any mistakes I make that are in violation of our contract and rectify the situation accordingly. In return, I expect the students to show that same respect to me and take responsibility for their own failings to uphold their end of the bargain.
* **Exhibiting dedication and enthusiasm.** Through both the student’s and my own work ethic, we can prove to each other our mutual dedication to the venture we have undertaken together. When I am passionate about and show my enthusiasm for the task at hand, it is inspirational and infectious. Because of this enthusiasm, students can expect that I will always show signs of preparation for the task at hand, ready to answer their questions and further explicate the material to their satisfaction. In return, I expect that the students will also be prepared and willing to open themselves up to the possibility of sharing that enthusiasm.
* **Growing and learning together.** In my opinion, the most valuable and fulfilling part of being a student *or* a teacher is experiencing growth through learning. I can learn as much from my students as they can learn from me, and I frequently request informal assessments of my teaching so that I can continue to learn from my mistakes and improve the skills that I bring into our partnership. I trust that my openness to personal growth will encourage the students’ receptiveness to learning.

If, as partners in the enterprise to learn and grow, we can adhere to these four principles, I believe there is nothing we cannot accomplish. We will improve our self-confidence, and we will develop a commitment to personal achievement. Our efforts will be marked largely by profits, and we will learn from the losses we sustain. This partnership will be ultimately successful and a source of great pride.