

SENIOR SEMINAR COURSE SYLLABUS

THEA 4350 | FALL 2021

Instructor: Ana Hagedorn
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Class Meets: M/W 4:30pm-6:20pm
Office Hours: Scheduled by Appointment

All class correspondence will happen via your Canvas class Inbox

Required Course Text: NONE

Required Course Materials: Handouts provided by instructor through Canvas

Final Exam: Saturday, December 4 at 1:30-3:30pm

**This syllabus and course calendar may be adapted in response to student or program needs as well as scheduling guest artists visits.*

***There will be class meetings on Zoom throughout the semester. Announcements on Canvas will be made about these in advance. Attendance is required. (See Attendance Policy)*

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In addition to a study of personal aesthetics, values, philosophy, criticism, activism and advocacy within the profession, this course will focus on transitions and the parameters of preparation and responsibility as students investigate career options, professional goals, continuing education and individual life choices.

Essential to this, is that each student analyze and synthesize their knowledge and skills in preparation for helping to ensure the future they envision becomes a reality.

Class structure will include lecture, experiential learning, research, analysis, discussion and presentations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Student's will investigate personal beliefs and sources of inspiration and motivation in order to develop and clearly articulate a statement of philosophy relative to participation in the scope of the profession of theatre artists, educator and advocates and as individuals entering the profession.
- Through readings, interviews, research, observations, presentations, discussions, and engagement with guest artists, students will cultivate and expand their professional awareness and aesthetic understanding.
- By investigating personal/professional accomplishments, students will prepare documentation to support their career/continuing education choices through the development of effective resumes, professional portfolios and interviewing techniques.
- Through interactions with practicing artists and educators, as well as through active investigation of professional resources, students will develop a collection of connections essential for exploring career opportunities.

- As continuing contributors to the profession of artists, educators and advocates, students will explore professional organizations, funding sources and opportunities for continuing support and dynamic changes within the profession.

COVID AND VIRTUAL LEARNING:

During this time of COVID necessary adjustments have been made to the structure and delivery of this course. We will meet weekly via Zoom rather than in person. Unfortunately, the nature of the work we produce in this class does not allow for us to meet in person and work safely during the Covid-19 Pandemic. You will receive a class calendar that will outline what and how you will be applying yourself to the process of learning in Voice1.

Please see ***Virtual Classroom Guidelines Acting Track University of North Texas.pdf*** for more information.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY:

Attendance=Work Ethic= EVERYTHING.

Punctual attendance accounts for a substantial portion of the course grade. Thus, students are expected to be present and punctual for all classes.

The following policy is consistent with all acting courses in the department:

- Students are allowed no more than a total of THREE (3) absences during the semester.
- Students are considered tardy if they arrive for class no more than 30 minutes late. Arriving more than 30 minutes late for class is considered an absence.
- Students are expected to attend class for the duration of the period. Leaving before the class concludes is considered an absence.
- An occurrence of tardiness for the class FOUR (4) times is the equivalent or ONE (1) absence.
- A total of (4) absences means that the highest grade the student can earn in the class is an F.
- If you are scheduled to work on a particular day and are unprepared to work, you will earn an absence.

Any student with an issue in the area of attendance and/or punctuality will be referred to the Acting Faculty for guidance. If a student's absences have resulted in a grade with which they are not pleased, they may choose to withdraw from the class.

The professor's roll is the official record of absences and tardiness. At any point, students are welcome to check the grade roster on Canvas to be sure that their attendance/punctuality record is accurate.

ATTENDANCE OVERVIEW:

Special circumstances when an excused absence will be granted:

- *Must be turned into me a WEEK before event. If it is not, you will be counted absent.*
- If you are involved in any special school functions which may require you to miss a class, please inform the professor ASAP.

- Please notify me at the beginning of the semester if you will be absent due to a religious holiday.
- Illness accompanied by a doctor's note. The doc note must articulate WHEN you are eligible to return to class.
- If you test positive for COVID during the semester, you must present me with confirmation that this is your status—I will work with you to complete the class work you miss as a result of your illness. Please remember, you must alert me with documentation that your status is COVID Positive as soon as you receive your test result.

CONSIDER THIS:

An actor's professional work ethic begins in the classroom. If you have trouble being accountable to yourself and showing up for *any* class, perhaps you should consider a different profession, the "independent contractor lifestyle" is probably not your thing.

Remember, you earn the grade you receive...just like in life, you earn your successes and your failures.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND ASSESSMENT MEASURES:

- **DAILY CLASS PARTICIPATION:**
Daily class participation points: 5 points x 30 classes= 150 points
- **REQUIRED WRITTEN WORK:**

Reading Response (8) @ 25 pts	200 Points
Article Responses (4) @ 25 pts	100 Points
Personal Philosophy Packet	200 Points
Biography Project Part One	100 Points
Materials/ "Branding" Prep Project	150 Points
Virtual Audition Project	50 Points
Free Play Reflection	50 Points
Wildness Project and Presentation	100 Points
Professional Research with Working Artists	100 Points
Future Plans Project "Escape from Denton" Project/Presentation	100 Points
Guest Artists Reflections (4) @ 25 Pts	100 Points
Final Self-Assessment	100 Points

****ALL WRITTEN WORK WILL BE SUBMITTED VIA CANVAS
** LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Total Semester Points: 1500

GRADING SCALE:

A= 1500 – 1350 points	B= 1349 – 1200 points
C= 1199 – 1050 points	D= 1049 and below

NOTE:

- In order to remain a theatre major and graduate with a degree in theatre, each student must

maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5.

- In order for a class in your major to count toward credit in your major you must receive a minimum grade of “C”.
- Students should strive for excellence in all of their academic and artistic work
- Engaged discussion is an essential part of this class experience. Students are expected to participate in all discussions and to be tolerant and respectful of opinions that are different from their own.

GRADING POLICY:

- **IMPORTANT:** If you are scheduled to work on a given day and you are not prepared to work effectively and make good use of your in class coaching time, you will forfeit your work session and we will move on to the next student. Should this occur you will be counted absent for the day and receive zero daily participation points. Class time is everyone’s time—coming to class unprepared, unable or unwilling to work is unfair to everyone.
- If you miss a class when a performance assignment is due you will be counted absent and receive ZERO POINTS on the assignment. The project cannot be “made up”. Only excused medical or emergency absences will be tolerated and evidence of such must be submitted in writing from the proper authorities. *[see “Attendance Section” for more specifics on this].*

I will observe your work in each unit of study and will assess it based on the following standards, as applicable:

- Commitment to professional standards. (preparation, memorization, work ethic).
- Participation in class and in all exercises.
- Willingness to explore and take risks.

GENERAL PARAMETERS FOR LETTER GRADES:

Please note that the “descriptions” listed below are extremely general and designed only to be a basic guide to help students understand the expectations of the instructor when assessing work in class. Hopefully this little bit of context will help you set personal goals to work toward over the course of the semester.

‘A’ GRADE:

Attendance is excellent. Work is committed, focused and sustained, with obvious growth. All assignments and deadlines satisfactorily completed on time. Student shows clear excellence in mastering the objectives of the assignment. Instructor’s critiques generally focus on strong aspects of the work. The work shows careful preparation and commitment.

‘B’ GRADE:

Attendance is excellent. The basic fulfillment of all requirements is met with some growth. Student shows strong competence in fulfilling objectives of the assignment. Instructor’s critiques generally focus primarily on strong areas of work, with several specific areas of improvement suggested for subsequent work. The work is strong, has been well prepared and shows good potential for improvement.

‘C’ GRADE:

Student satisfies the requirements of the assignment. Critiques generally focus on weaker areas of work, with stronger aspects identified and reinforced. Any student at this level considers the objectives in this work obtainable. Student generally has consistent difficulties with ability to meet self-generated deadlines. Instructor's critique acknowledges that student's work generally needs further preparation and attention.

'D' GRADE:

Student produces minimum requirements for project, which generally includes presentation of work. Critiques focus on lack of preparation, lack of understanding of assignment and unwillingness to give maximum effort. This work may show poor attitude displayed in class resulting in a below average performance. This work needs much more preparation and commitment.

WRITTEN WORK:

I ask that you approach papers and other written work assigned in this class in a less formal way than what you are, perhaps, used to. I am most interested in hearing your observations from your perspective—from your voice. These are a “response” paper vs. a formal essay. I ask that as you write you are also mindful of spelling, grammar and coherency.

Students often ask me how long their response papers should be, there is no “set” length. Your paper should be as long as it needs to be for you to express your perspectives and opinions *fully and mindfully*. I do expect you to apply specificity, detail, consideration and a deeper level of analysis and investigation to your process of writing your response papers and any questions or other analytical work I assign to you over the course of this semester.

I WILL read your work, and I WILL respond to what you write.

PRESENTATIONS:

You will receive a grade or “points” for each in project. Here is a breakdown of what is expected—as applicable to each particular project—of my definition/expectation of each in project presentation. Engaging in these “steps” as an actor, helps you cultivate work ethic and a working process.

Presentation Format:

- Visual, as applicable—PowerPoint/Prezi/Padlet or a verbal presentation supported by applicable visual materials such as video, music, interview clips, etc.

Support Material:

- You are welcome to incorporate handouts, readings, etc

Presentation Length:

- All presentations should be **5-7 minutes long**.
- All Project Presentations should reflect your process of engagement with the topic you are sharing with the class. The expectation is that you have spent time preparing what you are sharing and that you have personalized your topic. Each of your presentations should reflect specificity, detail, complex consideration/reflection and a deep level of analysis and investigation.

Please Note: *Engaged discussion is an essential part of this class experience. Students are expected to participate in all discussions and be tolerant and respectful of opinions that are different from their own. Periodic assignment of readings and additional tasks may be made to enhance the understanding of topics being discussed and investigated.*

ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS:

Throughout the semester, I will meet with each student individually to discuss progress, projects and other pertinent information.

COMMUNICATION:

Please direct all class related correspondence via the “Inbox” on our class Canvas site.

PLEASE! Turn on the “Notifications” option in Canvas so you receive updates from me. I will use the “Announcements” option as a primary communication tool for class. The only way to ensure that you receive them is to “enable notifications” on your device(s).

IMPORTANT: I cannot stress how important communication is. If you are experiencing challenges, an emergency---anything that is keeping you from fulfilling your commitment to this class or any of your classes at UNT, please consider having a conversation with me. I do understand that things come up that are unavoidable and unexpected—that’s life. There are many avenues of support at UNT. I am aware of them and can point you in a direction for support and guidance. I am always willing to work with students to help them achieve success whenever possible.

Because I continue to work as a professional actress and am expected to do so by UNT and the UNT Department of Dance and Theatre, I may occasionally have to cancel class for projects I am cast in—sometimes on short notice. Always check your email the night before class. While I am teaching I turn down more work that I accept---teaching is my first priority. However, conflicts are sometimes unavoidable especially due to re-shoots and clients with whom I have ongoing contracts with.

A FEW THINGS I’D LIKE YOU TO CONSIDER:

- Be supportive of your classmates. Remember you are part of an ensemble. The energy and perspective you bring to each class will impact “the whole”. Each day we meet, consider how you are contributing to the class.
- Reject jadedness and cynicism.
- Beginners are on a quest. There are no stupid questions. Ask anything.
- Do not expect perfection---embrace the concept of process.
- Be inquisitive and curious.
- Choose to listen, respond and have a good time.

DEPARTMENTAL POLICY:

Open flame of any sort (smoking, candles, lighting matches or lighters) in scenes, monologues, improvisations or productions is not allowed. Any action of this sort must be pantomimed or cut.

WITHDRAWAL:

Should you choose to drop this course, you must initiate the drop and acquire all of the proper signatures and paperwork. If that process is not completed, you will be subject to a WF or an F at the close of the semester

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS:

Activities such as reading books or articles for other classes, studying for other classes, or any other activity which is not pertinent to this course are considered inappropriate, and will be viewed as non-participation. Please refrain from texting /cell phone use. Lap top computers are only appropriate for viewing Zoom session, note taking or relevant research pertinent to the current class.

These diversions will result in a lowered grade or dismissal from the class. Student participation is expected to contribute to a positive learning environment, and respect for others is essential. Through positive and focused participation, each student demonstrates a commitment to the art form, the profession, their peers and themselves.

RESPONSIBILITIES/TIME MANAGEMENT:

Dance and Theatre students are expected to budget and organize their time and efforts in order to meet both their academic and production commitments satisfactorily and on time. The faculty and staff recognize that the academic and production assignments within the Department, as well as outside employment and other obligations, sometimes impose conflicting pressures on Dance and Theatre students. One of the principal responsibilities of each student is to carefully identify and monitor the commitments that comprise his/her departmental assignments and outside obligations. It is important to keep in mind that production work and outside obligations do not constitute an excused absence from Dance or Theatre classes or from the completion of any required class assignments.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM:

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT NOTICE:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323. <https://disability.unt.edu/>

SPOT:

The Student Perceptions of Teaching is the student evaluation system for UNT and is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SPOT to be an important part of your participation in this class. The SPOT evaluation will happen at the end of the semester.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS/BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Bruder, Meliss (and others) *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*
Cameron, Julie *The Artist's Way*
Cohen, Robert *Acting Professionally*
Deavere Smith, Anna *Letters to a Young Artist*
Gilbert, Elizabeth *Big Magic*
Kleon, Austin *Steal Like and Artist*
Rilke, Rainer Maria *Letters to a Young Poet*
Shurtleff, Micahel *Audition*
Mathes, Benjamin *You, the Career*
Nachmanovitch, Stephen *Free Play*
Pressfield, Steven *The War of Art*

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Backstage.com
Playbill.com
NYT
LA Times
American Theatre
TheaterJones