

Musical Theatre

THEA 4000-001/301: Acting Fundamentals (MWs, 2:00pm - 4:20pm)

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesdays 1pm - 2pm (by appointment only)

Class location RTFP 127

Instructor: Nathan Autrey

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******The instructor reserves the right to change any information contained in this document, when necessary, with adequate notice given to the student.******

Prerequisites: Students must be a theatre major or theatre minor to take this course. Students must have taken the prerequisite courses THEA 1050, THEA 2051, THEA 2351, and THEA 3050 and passed them with a C or better.

Hours: 3;1

Course Description: Exploration of singing acting techniques, analysis of music and libretto, song selection for voice type, and the development of audition material. Additional study of the focusing skills that solo singing requires. Admission by vocal audition. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite(s): THEA 1050, THEA 2051, THEA 2351, and vocal audition.

Course Structure (specific to COVID-19 safety measures established by UNT): This course will be taught in-person but will follow all UNT health guidelines as set down by the University. UNT encourages everyone to wear a face covering when indoors, regardless of vaccination status, to protect yourself and others from COVID infection, as recommended by current CDC guidelines. Face covering guidelines could change based on community health conditions. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for each class. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Hotline at 844-366-5892 or COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

Subjects Covered: Overview - This course will develop practical techniques for acting through song. We will explore the American musical theatre canon and hone in on realism acting approaches, such as Stanislavski's System and others. Throughout the semester, students will learn to conduct a more in-depth analysis of character and musical text in order to inform their acting choices.

Required Text - Acting in Musical Theatre: A Comprehensive Course, by Deer Joe. Edition 2ND 16. Publisher: Taylor, ISBN 13: 9780415713276

Attendance Policy - Theatre is a collaborative art. Since so much of the process of learning about acting involves interacting with your peers, attendance is MANDATORY. As such, absences will greatly affect your ability to pass this course. Per the UNT Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy, an absence may be excused for the following reasons:

- a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose;
- active military service, including travel for that purpose;
- participation in an official university function;
- illness or other extenuating circumstances;
- pregnancy and parenting under Title IX; and
- when the University is officially closed by the President.

Please let me know as quickly as possible if you would like to request one of the exceptions above. Exercises, presentations, and discussions cannot be made up, as most of them are nearly impossible to recreate for a single student. However, I can keep it from counting against your completion percentage. Please know that any absence, whether excused or not, will mean missing important information and having to catch up. It is your responsibility to communicate with your classmates about assignments or instructions you may have missed. **WRITTEN PROOF IS REQUIRED FOR ALL EXCUSED ABSENCES/TARDIES.**

You will be allowed 2 Unexcused Absences. You will be dropped from the course after 3 Unexcused Absences. **IF THE DROP PERIOD HAS PASSED, YOU WILL RECEIVE AN “F” GRADE FOR THE COURSE.** Inability to participate due to not following clothing guidelines will also be counted as an Unexcused Absence. Arriving Late and Leaving Early are unacceptable interruptions. 2 Tardies (defined as arriving after the scheduled class time) or Leaving Early (before dismissed by the instructor) will equal 1 Unexcused Absence. Any work missed during such Tardies or Unexcused Absences cannot be made up.

Attendance Syllabus Statement: Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. It is important that you communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so you, the professor, and the instructional team can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform the professor and instructional team if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

If you are experiencing any [symptoms of COVID-19](#) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Team at COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

Office of Disability Access Accommodations: The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable 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 reasonable 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 reasonable 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, refer to the Office of Disability Access website at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>. You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

UNT Course Safety Procedures: Students enrolled in Acting Fundamentals are required to use proper safety procedures and guidelines as outlined in UNT Policy 06.038 Safety in Instructional Activities. While working in laboratory sessions, students are expected and required to identify and use proper safety guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that the UNT is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider Standard Syllabus Statements Related Policy 06.049 Course Syllabi Requirements obtaining Student Health Insurance. Brochures for student insurance are available in the UNT Student Health and Wellness Center. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention at the Student Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If students have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, they should be sure that the plan covers treatment at this facility. If students choose not to go to the UNT Student Health and Wellness Center, they may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. Students are responsible for expenses incurred there.

Safety in this Course: Acting is equally physical, vocal, and mental. You will be learning to have greater control through the use of the body, voice, and mind. Therefore, you must be aware of and protect each of those things in and out of class. You will learn physical and vocal warm-ups. After learning them, you are expected to be warmed up before class begins. A little pushing will assist in growth. However, if something hurts or is uncomfortable, let me know during the exercise, so I can make an adjustment.

If you are struggling emotionally, understand that this can also be part of the acting and growth process, and please know that you can visit this website for information on services offered by the university Student Affairs Counseling and Testing website.

Physical Contact: Acting will require physical contact at some point. Any physical contact that occurs must be at the consent of the acting partner, discussed with me, and choreographed by me. This includes handshakes, pats on the back, shoving, kissing, etc. Any sort of contact not approved by me is inappropriate and should be reported. If you feel uncomfortable with any blocking I give you, please let me know, and I will adjust it. This is for everyone's safety and comfort.

Sexual Assault Prevention: UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648.

Sensitive Subject Matter: In this course sensitive subject matters may be discussed in this class. Everyone is expected to treat these moments with the sensitivity and respect they deserve. Racist, misogynistic, homophobic, or any other form of hateful language/action is disruptive and will not be tolerated. Anyone who finds it difficult to act respectfully toward their classmates and the subject matter will be asked to leave the class and will forfeit the participation points for the day.

Emergency Notification & Procedures: UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Student Academic Integrity: The University of North Texas promotes the integrity of learning and embraces the core values of trust and honesty. Academic integrity is based on educational principles and procedures that protect the rights of all participants in the educational process and validate the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the University. In the investigation and resolution of allegations of student academic dishonesty, the University's actions are intended to be corrective, educationally sound, fundamentally fair, and based on reliable evidence. Please visit UNT Student Academic Integrity Office for more information.

General Class Information & Guidelines - You're required to wear clothing that allows you to:

- Fully stretch and move your whole body.

- Comfortably lay on the floor.
- Breathe without restriction.
- Walk naturally and comfortably. Boots, flip-flops, etc. affect how you walk. Tennis shoes with a pliable sole are recommended.
- Get dirty. Rolling around on the floor will happen, and floors are not always as clean as they might be.
- Keep warm. Bring a layer, if needed, as the temperature in the room can fluctuate.
- Stay safe. Jewelry, piercings, and certain hairstyles can create unsafe situations for both you and your classmates.
- Come prepared to work/perform even if you are not scheduled.
 - Being prepared includes being memorized so well that you don't even have to think about it. Our work as performers mostly happens on our own and what we show in class is a reflection of our work ethics. Proper feedback can't happen unless you have done your work.
- Explore every technique fully and without reservation. You'll never know which will work if you don't give it a chance.
- Leave everything else at the door. Work from other classes, relationship issues, family disputes, etc. will always be there. Allow yourself the freedom to only focus on acting during this class.
- We are an ensemble, and you are expected to support your classmates positively in everything. You tell each other what you're doing well; leave constructive feedback to me as the professional. Please refrain from clapping. Snapping after a performance and fist bumps are highly encouraged.
- You should audition for everything you can while studying acting. If you don't get cast, find another way to be involved. If all else fails, create your own performance opportunities. Every audition is a learning experience and will make you more comfortable with a very uncomfortable process.

Grading: Musical Theatre is a chance for you to learn and work on the craft of acting through song. As such, the work is as important as the final product, if not more so. Acting performances are also somewhat subjective. To stress the importance of the process and ensure fairness, your classwork will be graded based on your entire process, rather than a single performance of a monologue/scene, according to the following criteria:

1. Class Participation & Effort
2. Completion of Assignments
3. Professionalism
4. Preparedness
5. Improvement
6. Collaboration with other actors (when applicable)

Assignments will be graded based as follows:

- Participation (10pts x 30) 300 points
- 1st Pass Preparation (50pts x 4) 200 points
- 2nd Pass Preparation and Rehearsal (50pts x 4) 200 points
- 3rd Pass Performance (50pts x 4) 200 points
- Final Exam Performance (Cabaret live performance) 75 points

Assignments throughout semester:

- 2 selections of 32 bars for preparation for musical auditions
- 1 classical musical theatre group number
- 1 contemporary theatre group number
- Semester Exam, final cabaret performance

TOTAL 1000 POINTS

- 900-1000 points = A
- 800-899 points = B
- 700-799 points = C
- 600-699 points = D
- 0-599 points = F

*You can track your grade progress at my.unt.edu.

Important Dates: NOT SUBJECT TO CHANGE (as scheduled by UNT):

<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-registration-guide>

Weekly Schedule of Class Assignments - Assignment dates are SUBJECT TO CHANGE:

● **21 - 23 AUG** - Class Information and Expectations. Intro to the work, the transformation of American musical theatre from its inception of *Show Boat* to our current contemporary musicals. Homework, find 2 contrasting 32 bar excerpts from the entire cannon of musical theatre (examples, one classic selection i.e. *Carousel* and one contemporary i.e. *Book of Mormon*) only from actual musicals and not something you've performed before. Selections must show the internal workings of a character, not narrative, must be age and type appropriate.

● **28 - 30 AUG** - Warming up, vocally and physically. The beginnings of sensory work, using elements of Meisner (preparation, repetition and improvisation) and the foundation for playing objective (Stanislavski) and NEED (Strasberg). Understanding the foundations for character and play analysis. Homework, read and understand the musicals your 2 contrasting 32 bars come from and be able to discuss the context it serves in the story as a whole. Look for your characters NEED throughout the musical.

● **5 - 6 SEPT** - The beginnings of learning to layer sensory work into character and connecting self with the character, for more impactful moments. 1st pass for 2 contrasting 32 bars are due,

this will consist of an individual singing/reading of each approved song selection and discussion about the musical. Homework, memorize and work 2 contrasting 32 bars by incorporating layered-in NEED as discussed through 1st pass.

- **11 - 13 SEPT** - Move further into the work by exploring your 32 bars musical selections like a monologue, by breaking down the text through character analysis and scoring. Begin to bring your 2 distinct characters to life by bridging the gap between acting and reality in a safe space. Perform 2nd pass of 2 contrasting 32 bars, now with a deeper understanding of the text and character. Homework, tweak 2 contrasting 32 bars based on feedback from 2nd pass.

- **18 - 20 SEPT** - Final rehearsals and perform final pass of 2 contrasting 32 bars musical selections. Homework, partner up and find a 2-4 person scene from any classical musical of your choosing that has strong roles for the entire group. Make sure to thoroughly read the musical so that you understand where your character fits into the story.

- **25 - 27 SEPT** - Discuss the evolution of musical theatre and how it transformed into our modern day musical. Introduce Aristotelian Theatrical elements for future use of discussing storybook musical structure. Perform 1st pass of classical musical number and discuss the musical. Homework, memorize and rehearse scenes.

- **2 - 4 OCT** - Final rehearsal and perform 2nd pass of classical musical number as a rehearsal session. Homework, group rehearsal to put together all of the feedback for the final pass of classical musical number.

- **9 - 11 OCT** - Discuss the growth of realism in the style of acting and its spread throughout the country and influences in musical theatre. Perform the final pass of a classical musical number. Homework, find a 2-4 person scene from any contemporary musical that fits your group, make sure to thoroughly read and understand your selection and how your character fits into the musical.

- **16 - 18 OCT** - Read/sing through 1st pass of contemporary musical number. Homework, memorize and rehearse contemporary musical number.

- **23 - 25 OCT** - Begin character work with text/musical score from your contemporary musical number. Perform 2nd pass as a rehearsal. Homework, work on feedback and notes for contemporary musical numbers.

- **30 OCT - 1 NOV** - Monday's class will be an open rehearsal for contemporary musical numbers. On Wednesday we will perform the final pass of the contemporary musical number we have been working on. For homework, revisit a musical number you worked on throughout the

semester and bring in a possible group option for the entire class, these will be options for our final, cabaret musical performances.

- **6 - 8 NOV** - Begin character work with text/musical score from your cabaret musical number. Read/sing through for the 1st pass of the cabaret musical scenes. Homework, memorize and rehearse cabaret musical numbers.

- **13 - 15 NOV** - Summarize the history of musical theatre and discuss its future. Rehearse and perform a 2nd pass of cabaret musical number as a rehearsal. Homework: group rehearsal to compile all feedback for the final run-through of cabaret musical numbers.

- **20 - 23 NOV** - **Thanksgiving Break!**

- **27 - 29 NOV** - Rehearse and perform final pass of cabaret musical numbers. For your homework, review final notes of Cabaret musical number in preparation for your semester exam.

- **4 - 6 DEC** - To prepare for finals, you should rehearse your Semester Exam numbers with your group on your own on December 4th. Dress rehearsal for the Semester Exam will take place during class on Wednesday, December 6th.

- **6 DEC** - Semester Exam. Cabaret Performance.