

Musical Theatre

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

Class location RTFP 127

Office Hours: MW's 9 am - 11:00 am (by appointment only)

Office location RTFP 221

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 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: Reading/Supplies Requirements:

- The Singing and Acting Handbook by Thomas de Mallet and Nicholas Skilbeck - ISBN: 0-415-16658-6
- Paper copies of sheet music per project

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.

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.

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 Musical Theatre 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.

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.

- 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 - Active participation in this course encompasses both physical attendance and engaged mental presence during class discussions and rehearsals. Participation points will not be awarded if you are present but not engaged or prepared for class. ***There are no points awarded for absences, excused or not.**
2. Completion of Assignments - Needs no explanation.
3. Professionalism - Professional conduct requires demonstrating respect for classmates and the instructor in all interactions and consistently striving for excellence daily. This includes both giving and receiving feedback.
4. Preparedness - Adequate preparation entails completing assignments before class, whether preparing to discuss assigned readings or demonstrating elements of your rehearsal process. Preparedness is measured through passes. Pass clarification:
 - 1st pass - Ensure all necessary materials have been acquired, thoroughly read, and researched. Each individual should possess a physical copy of the materials, including group members, if applicable. Ready to rehearse the material.
 - 2nd pass - You've been actively rehearsing, memorized your material, and are making artistic choices. At this stage, you're fully committed and open to receiving constructive feedback.
 - 3rd pass - At this point, your work is performance ready. You've fully utilized the rehearsal time, refining your work through each session, especially our rehearsal session. Your choices are strong and clear, demonstrating confidence in your acting. You are wholeheartedly committing to the work, and it is evident in your performance. You are dressed and in appearance to the best of your ability to embody your character for convincing storytelling and to meet your needs as a performer.
5. Improvement - Developing as an artist hinges significantly on the ability to improve. This requires actively receiving feedback and implementing adjustments throughout the rehearsal process to refine and enhance performance accordingly.
6. Collaboration with other actors (when applicable) - Successful theatre is based on

collaboration. Effective collaboration leads to abundant work opportunities, while its absence results in a lack thereof. Be someone others want to work with by being reliable, present and committed to the work.

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
- Cabaret live performance 75 points

Assignments throughout semester:

- 1 solo, which includes a 16-32 bar cut and the full song as options
- 1 classical musical theatre group number
- 1 contemporary theatre group number
- Semester Exam, final cabaret performance

TOTAL 1000 POINTS

For every unexcused absence you will be dropped a letter grade

- 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 through Canvas.

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

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

- **18 - 20 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 a fitting solo from the entire cannon of musical theatre (examples, could be classic selection i.e. *Carousel* or contemporary i.e. *Book of Mormon*) only from actual musicals and not something you've performed before. In addition, select a 16-32 bar musical cut from the same solo. Selections must show the internal workings of a character, not narrative, must be age and type appropriate.
- **25 - 27 AUG** - Vocal and physical warm-ups will be emphasized, alongside an introduction to sensory work, drawing on elements of Meisner (preparation, repetition, and improvisation). We will also establish the foundational understanding of playing objective (Stanislavski) and NEED (Strasberg). Students will begin to understand the principles of character and play analysis. For homework, students are required to read and comprehend the musical from which their solo is derived, and be prepared to discuss its contextual role within the overarching narrative. Additionally, students should identify their character's underlying NEED throughout the musical.

- **1 - 3 SEPT** - The beginnings of learning to layer sensory work into character and connecting self with the character, for more impactful moments. 1st pass for solos are due this will consist of an individual singing/reading of each approved song selection and discussion about the musical. Homework, memorize and work solo by incorporating layered-in NEED as discussed through 1st pass.
- **8 - 10 SEPT** - Delve deeper into your solo musical selections, treating them as monologues. Analyze the text through character analysis and scoring to bring your characters to life, bridging the gap between acting and reality in a safe space. Perform a second pass of your solos, demonstrating a deeper understanding of the text and character. For homework, refine your solos based on feedback from this second pass.
- **15 - 17 SEPT** - Monday Perform 2nd pass of solos for the students who have worked their song with the MD. Everyone who hasn't worked with MD will be called on Wednesday. Homework, tweak solos based on feedback from 2nd pass.
- **22 - 24 SEPT** - Monday Finish 2nd pass for all students and Wednesday perform final pass solos 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.
- **29 SEPT - 1 OCT** - Monday and Wednesday work through 1st pass for classical musical number.
- **6 - 8 OCT** - Rehearse 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 numbers.
- **13 - 15 OCT** - Monday, Discuss the growth of realism in the style of acting and its spread throughout the country and influences in musical theatre. Introducing contemporary musical numbers. Wednesday, perform the final pass of a classical musical number. Read/sing through 1st pass of contemporary musical number. 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. Homework, memorize and rehearse contemporary musical numbers.
- **20 - 22 OCT** - Begin character work with text/musical score from your contemporary musical number. 1st pass contemporary musical numbers.
- **27 - 29 OCT** - Perform 2nd pass as a rehearsal. Homework, work on feedback and notes for contemporary musical numbers.
- **3 - 5 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. Begin character work with text/musical score from your cabaret musical number.

- **10 - 12 NOV** - Summarize the history of musical theatre and discuss its future. Read/sing through for the 1st pass of the cabaret musical scenes. Homework, memorize and rehearse cabaret musical numbers. Mock dance call audition with Bob Hess.
- **17 - 19 NOV** - 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.

24 - 26 NOV - THANKSGIVING BREAK!

- **1 - 3 DEC** - Dress rehearsal for the Semester Exam will take place during class on Monday and Wednesday. Cabaret Performance in the evening Wednesday December 3rd.