

THEA 4000: ACTING MUSICAL THEATRE

FALL 2018: COURSE SYLLABUS

Syllabus attachments include:

****Please put all paperwork in your binder and bring it with you to every class.**

- Class calendar
- Class projects overview/description.
- Project and grading outline.
- Performance grading form.
- Grading criteria outline.
- “Passes” overview.
- Helpful links page.

Class meets: Monday's: 2:00pm to 5:50pm

Professor: Sally Vahle

Accompanist: Brian Piper

Sally's Office: RTFP 221

Sally's Office Phone: 565-4121

Sally's Cell: 214-597-2140

CLASS EMAIL ADDRESS: musicaltheaterUNT@gmail.com

Required Textbook:

None. In lieu of purchasing a textbook students will be required to acquire sheet music and engage an accompanist to record music for practice outside of class. Either or both of these requirements may involve a financial commitment.

Office Hours:

Monday's 10-12pm and by appointment.

IMPORTANT: Basic skills requirement for THEA 4000:

In order for the actor/singer enrolled in THEA 4000 to succeed in accomplishing the basic requirements of this course, students enrolled in THEA 4000 must enter class with the ability to hear and reproduce relative pitch. Students enrolled in the course have been admitted because they have met the criteria stated above through an entrance audition. If it appears that a student is unable to consistently meet the demands of basic skills requirements once formal classwork has begun he or she may be asked to drop the course.

Course Description:

THEA 4000: Musical Theatre is an exploration of musical theatre performance in a studio workshop or “lab” setting. Students will study the work of the actor/singer/dancer and use their gained knowledge to develop as performers. There will be a heavy concentration on the exploration of the craft through performance. This means that you will learn by DOING what you are taking the class to learn. Areas of focus will include: vocal methods and music, including vocal production, vocal technique, music reading and sight-singing. Students will prepare and present as soloists and a duet and possibly a group number.

Since this course functions in a workshop structure and meets only once a week, **students are expected to dedicate a minimum of 10 hours of outside preparation each week to the assigned class material.**

Students should expect to work on more than one project at a time. Work presented each time the class meets will receive critique from the professor and classmates. In addition to a focus on acting musical performance there will also be a focus on the musical theater audition process. Finally, the class will participate in a final public Cabaret performance at the end of the semester.

Over the course of the semester we will:

- ☐ Explore the techniques of acting a song, how to use subtext and monologues to make your performance more believable, energized and engaged.
- ☐ Examine, through analysis, the construction of a song.
- ☐ Discuss and explore the role of a voice coach/voice teacher.
- ☐ Evolve a comprehensive warm-up.
- ☐ Explore all aspects of the musical theater audition.
- ☐ Study the basics of music fundamentals.
- ☐ Study the musical and glean knowledge of the history and evolution of the genre through various mediums: Presentations, film, audio samples, etc...
- ☐ Put it all together!

Course Final Goals:

- ☐ Students will:
 - Leave the course with a selection of musical theater audition material encompassing a number of “styles” they may be asked to utilize when auditioning for musical theater projects in the professional world.
 - Have gained a thorough understanding of a process for preparing for a musical theater audition/role.
 - Will have performed solos and a duet.
 - Will participate as a performer in a final public cabaret/ event.
 - Will have successfully participated in a mock musical theater audition adjudicated by theater professionals.

Attendance:

THEA 4000 meets once a week and is truly a "LAB CLASS". Exercises and work done in class cannot be made up. Therefore, attendance is mandatory.

- ☐ Student must present a doctor's note in order for an absence due to illness to be "excused".
- ☐ An official letter from UNT must be presented to the professor for any official school related absence.
- ☐ UNT Theatre Department policy states "an instructor is to initiate the drop process for any student has more than *three* absences in a course". Because this course only meets once a week, TWO absences may constitute failure in this course.
- ☐ **Each unexcused absence in this course will result in an automatic deduction of 100 points from your total points total in this class.**

PLEASE NOTE:

- **IF YOU ARE ABSENT ON A DAY THAT YOU ARE SCHEDULED TO PERFORM YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE THAT PERFORMANCE UP. In addition to the points you lose for missing class you will lose the points associated with the particular project you have missed.**

Withdrawing From a Course:

Should a student choose to drop this course, they must initiate the drop process and acquire all of the proper paperwork and signatures to ensure that you are dropped officially; otherwise you will be subject to a WF or F at the close of the semester.

Work Ethic and Professional Behavior:

The singer, dancer, or actor is a highly skilled and disciplined technician. Acquiring and refining these technical skills requires diligent and focused work, especially at the early stages of training. Students who wish to work in Musical Theater must apply themselves as seriously as a medical student or a classical musician. Preparation of materials and dedicated attention in class/rehearsal are essential components of an actor's work. You are expected to develop and follow a professional work ethic immediately and behave in that manner for all course work.

Professional behavior includes, but is not limited to:

1. Prompt attendance at class/rehearsal sessions.
2. Mental and physical preparation for class/rehearsal.
3. **Advance preparation** for class/rehearsal.
4. Wearing proper rehearsal/performance garments.
5. A willingness and eagerness to commit to assigned exercises.
6. Respect for classmates, accompanist, director, the classroom space, and its equipment.
- 7.

COMMUNICATION:

I have created an email address exclusively for this class---All course communication will happen via this address: musicaltheaterUNT@gmail.com. If you need to reach me concerning something urgent please call my cell phone at 214-597-2140 to speak with me, text me or leave a message.

PLEASE!

Get in the habit of checking your class email everyday. I may send you support material and assignments via email in between our class meeting days.

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 will 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 than I accept---teaching is my first priority. However, conflicts are sometimes unavoidable especially due to re-shoots, re-records and clients with whom I have ongoing contracts with.

Required Materials

- ☐ A three-ring notebook for materials you will accumulate in class. Materials may include handouts, sheet music, assignment descriptions, etc...
- ☐ A small digital recorder, cell phone with recording capability, etc.---which-ever piece of equipment you choose must be able to RECORD. Always bring this equipment to class....even if you are not scheduled to work or perform on a given day.

Clothing

- ☐ Always dress comfortably in clothing that maximizes your ability to breathe and move easily.
- ☐ Wear shoes that support your feet and allow you to move well. NO FLIP FLOPS!
- ☐ When you are working on assigned pieces (solo, duet, song/scene) you must take into consideration what your character would wear and work in

attire that as closely resembles the likely costume as possible. (We'll discuss this more).

Outside Coaching

You may choose to seek additional musical coaching outside of class as you work on your material. We will provide you with a list of qualified accompanists who will be able to work with you at a reasonable rate. They are not instructors for this class, but are skilled accompanists who will help you to drill notes and get you comfortable with pitches and singing your songs with "live accompaniment".

Expectations/Definitions of First Pass, Second Pass, Final Pass.

*****See attached overview**

Class Projects

*****See attached overview**

Grading

*****See attached overview**

Acquiring Music/Material:

In this course, you will be required to do a lot of outside research and "leg-work".

- You are expected to rehearse and prepare your music outside of class.
- You will be responsible for choosing both the Pre-1970 ballad and the up-tempo song as the solos you will present in class.
- You will not be responsible for choosing your duet.
- You will be responsible for choosing the music you include in your "Audition Song Book".

*****See attached links/resources page**

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:

COURSE INCOMPLETE

Only under extraordinary circumstances that suddenly render the student unable to continue the classwork will an INCOMPLETE be given. Please see your instructor if you feel you may qualify for a course grade of INCOMPLETE. Circumstances have come up in the past which made this appropriate. This has usually involved a scenario where a student has completed the work in excellent standing up to a certain point and then has to suddenly leave school for some reason. The terms for making up the INCOMPLETE are negotiated between the student and the professor, and these terms must be signed by both parties and submitted to the departmental office for approval.

WITHDRAWING FROM THEA 4000

Should you choose to drop this course, YOU must initiate the drop before the deadline and acquire all proper signatures and paperwork. The last day for the student to elect to drop the class with a grade of "W" is November 7. A student who is dropped from the course *by the professor* will receive a grade of "WF."

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.

STUDENT OBLIGATION TO ACADEMIC/PRODUCTION WORK

DT 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 DT students. One of the main responsibilities of each student is to identify carefully and monitor the commitments that comprise his/her departmental assignments and outside obligations. It is also important to keep in mind that production work and outside obligations do not constitute an excused absence from DT classes or from the completion of any required class assignments.

ACCOMMODATION FOR DISABILITIES

The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation: reference Public Law 92-112—The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

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 Accommodation (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 see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING (SPOT)

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at www.spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu.

The Department of Dance and Theatre also offers face-to-face SPOT evaluations, if the student wishes. Ask your professor for details if you wish to pursue that option.

ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR

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.

Departmental Theatrical Productions Fall 2018:

You are also encouraged to see all UNT Theater productions and as many productions in the Dallas Metroplex as possible. Observation is a powerful teacher. You get a free ticket to each departmental production. It is your responsibility to reserve your ticket through the Theater Box Office.

Final Words:

It is my wish for everyone to do well in this class; to learn and get an excellent grade. You all begin with an "A". The acting profession demands an extraordinary level of self-discipline and professional discipline. Consider this class--your commitment to it and to yourself—as a “professional testing ground”.

I encourage you to challenge yourself and take risks, set personal goals and achieve them.

Congratulations on choosing to take this class. Honing your musical theater acting skills will give you an edge in the “real world” and will make you even more marketable.