

# **SENIOR SEMINAR Syllabus: Fall 2020**

THEATRE 4350

Monday and Wednesday 9:00am-10:50am

Professor: Sally Vahle

Office Hours: By Appointment

Class Communication: All communication will happen via our class Canvas Inbox

Sally Cell Phone: 214-597-2140

**Required Text:    None**

\*\*\*\* This syllabus and course calendar may be adapted in response to student or program needs.

This course meets the requirements for the Department of Dance and Theatre Capstone Course for Theatre Majors.

## **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, during our scheduled class time 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 Senior Seminar.

## **Course Overview**

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.

## **Objectives**

- Students 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, educators 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.

## **Attendance and Participation Policy:**

**Attendance=Work Ethic= EVERYTHING.**

**Attendance is mandatory.**

Each student is expected to attend every class---just as you are expected to show up at a job when scheduled to work or attend every rehearsal and performance when cast in a play. The work you do each time class meets creates the foundation for every class that follows. exercises, presentations, discussion, etc.. cannot be “made up.”

Furthermore, You must be present to participate---to collaborate. The methodology of learning in the course follows an interactive design. Students must be present for each class in order to fully participate in the learning process. Attendance is required. Although three absences are permitted, you should strive never to be absent---each day in class holds intrinsic value. If you miss a class you are responsible for material missed. and all daily assignments.

I will track attendance. Attendance records are available for you to view at any time on the Canvas class site.

### **Attendance/Participation Overview:**

1. You are granted 3 absences for any reason.
2. If you are absent 4 times your grade will drop by one letter (A to B, B to C, etc...)
3. If you are absent 5 times you will fail this course. This is a firm rule.
4. Being tardy 3 times equals 1 absence.
5. After 5 absences you will be instructed to drop the class. If you choose not to drop the class you will automatically receive an “F” at the end of the semester.
6. You will be counted absent if you are more than 10 minutes late to class.
7. You will earn an absence if you do not participate in class work or if you engage in other class work during our class time.
8. If you are scheduled to work on a particular day and are unprepared to work you will earn an absence.

### **Special circumstances when an excused absence will be granted:**

- 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:**

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.***

## **Requirements / Grading:**

**\*\*\* All written work will be submitted via Canvas Grade Book or Canvas Inbox if GB is acting up. All work is due on the date specified by the beginning of that class day. LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. This policy is not negotiable.**

### **Grading**

**1200-1080 = A**

**1079-960 = B**

**959-840 = C**

**839 and below = D/F**

**\*\*Periodic assignment of readings and additional tasks may be made to enhance the understanding of topics being discussed and investigated.**

### **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.

- 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 be tolerant and respectful of opinions that are different from their own.

**Class Project Descriptions:** [Projects are also posted in the assignment and module sections of Canvas.]

### **Reading Responses [300 points total]**

Students will write written responses assigned readings. **[300 pts] [12 readings @ 25 points]**

### **Personal Philosophy Packet [200 points total]**

**Personal Assessment/Values Packet.** Students will complete the exercises in the packet and formulate a response to what they learn, in the form of a written statement. The thoroughness of the completed packet and the final documentation will constitute assessment of successful completion of this assignment.

### **Biography Project [100 points total]**

**Part 1:** Students will select a biography [book] of someone who inspires them and develop a concise, though provoking paper that amplifies the scope and depth of this individual's life and how the individual they have chosen to research inspires teaches, "speaks to" them as they investigate their life and choices. **[50pts]**

**Part 2:** Students will give an oral presentation about the biography they read. The presentation will articulate why they chose the individual they did, what they learned from the book that was inspirational and surprising, as well as, what they found to be relevant to/for them[or didn't] as they consider their future and career and the present place they find themselves in life. **[50pts]**

## **Wildness Project [100 points total]**

Students will utilize their personal and values assessments to identify an experience or activity for themselves that is completely outside of their comfort zone. This must be an experience that will not endanger themselves or anyone else. Students are not allowed to choose something that is illegal or may cause irreparable damage. **The Wildness Project** must be approved by the course professor and must be a project that can be verified as successfully completed. Identifying the project

and written plan for accomplishing it:     **25pts**

Students will prepare a short oral presentation to share with the class that contextualizes the Wildness Project experience they have chosen and why. **25pts**

Successful completion of the project.     **25pts**

Students will write a response paper reflecting on the experience they had and what they learned from it. **25pts**

## **Post-Graduation Preparation Unit [300 points total]**

### **1. Materials / “Branding” Preparation: [100pts]**

Creation of, (as applicable): Resumes, cover letters, portfolio preparation, website, audition preparation, graduate school preparation, teaching preparation, etc....

### **2. Professional Research with Working Artist(s): [100pts]**

Student will be required to become actively engaged in one facet of a chosen profession through connection with theatre artists / teachers / managers/ etc. currently engaged in professional practices. This research / interview / shadowing of contemporary artists will result in a written report.

## **Advocacy/Social Engagement Presentation [100 points total]**

Students will prepare a statement of advocacy and identify areas and topics of interest that may and/or may not relate specifically to your career

plans. To prepare this presentation, students will utilize their completed personal and values assessment packet, their “Getting Out of Denton” project, and will engage in other relevant research.

Preparation and Research: **50 points**    Presentation: **50 points**

### **3. Future Plans Project: aka “Escape from Denton” [100pts]**

As part of the development of a plan for transition to the next phase of the profession, students will research any market they are considering as a viable option for launching their professional career. Some students will research more than one potential market they might be considering their future home.

#### **Alum Interviews and Presentations [100 points total]**

Students will identify a UNT Theater Alumnus and interview them about what their experience and process has been since graduating from UNT.

Preparation and Research: **50 points**    Presentation: **50 points**

### **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 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 for 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](http://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/>