

# **THEATRE 4700: THE BUSINESS OF ACTING Syllabus: Fall 2023**

Class Meets: Language Building Room 315

- Monday's 9:00am 10:50am

Course Instructor: Sally Vahle, Professor

Office: RTFP 221

Office Hours: Monday's 11-12 and By Appointment in person or via Zoom

Sally's Cell Phone: 214-597-2140

## **Class Communication:**

- ***All class communication will happen via our class Canvas Inbox and Canvas Announcements.***

## **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.

**CANVAS:** All course work and communication will happen via Canvas---it is your responsibility to make sure that you ENABLE CANVAS ALERTS so that you don't miss out on communication, assignments, etc.....

## **COVID and Virtual Learning:**

Should COVID become an issue during this semester, necessary adjustments may need to be made to the structure and delivery of this course. *[Statements specifically addressing COVID and Virtual Learning are located at the end of this document.]*

## **ZOOM:**

Please note that we may occasionally meet for class via Zoom instead of in person. Should this occur, you will receive plenty of notice. When we meet via Zoom students are required to keep cameras on and be engaged and focused on the class work.

## **Guest Artist Visits:**

It is likely that most of our guest artist visits will happen via Zoom. When we are visiting with a guest artist it is expected that students will log into the visit promptly, at the designated time, will have their camera on during the entire visit, will be prepared to ask questions and will be fully focused on our guest during the entirety of the visit. **Any student who participates with their camera off will be counted absent.**

## **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 acting profession as individuals who are embarking on their post college professional careers.
- Through readings, interviews, research, observations, presentations, discussions, and engagement with guest artists, students will cultivate and expand their professional awareness, preparedness and creative 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 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.

### **Departmental Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

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 (for any reason) during the semester. Students shall be notified in writing by the professor when they have reached 3 absences.
- FOUR (4) absences will automatically result in a grade of F in this course.
- Students are considered tardy if they arrive for class no more than 30 minutes late.
- Arriving 15 minutes or more late for class is considered an absence.
- An occurrence of tardiness for the class THREE (3) times is the equivalent of ONE (1) absence.

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.

#### **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.

#### **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 Scale**

**1300-1170 = A**

**1069-1053 = B**

**1052-948 = C**

**947 and below = D/F**

**\*\*Periodic assignment of additional readings and/or additional assignments may be introduced to enhance the understanding of topics being discussed and investigated.**

## **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.

## **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.

## **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)

## **Access to Information – Eagle Connect**

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: [my.unt.edu](http://my.unt.edu). All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail: [eagleconnect.unt.edu/](http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/)

## **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](mailto:SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu) or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648.

## **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 <https://disability.unt.edu/>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

## **SPOT**

The Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) 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.

### **From the UNT Website: SPOT**

**Student Evaluation Administration Dates.** 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. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via *IA System* Notification" ([no-reply@iasystem.org](mailto:no-reply@iasystem.org)) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at [www.spot.unt.edu](http://www.spot.unt.edu) or email [spot@unt.edu](mailto:spot@unt.edu).

## **Virtual Classroom Guidelines Theatre University of North Texas**

Should online meetings of the class ever occur, it is expected that every student will practice virtual etiquette that is respectful to the class, the professor, and other students during these sessions. Adherence to appropriate virtual etiquette is factored into the student's grade. This includes the following:

- Log on at least a minute or two early; do not be surprised if you are counted late if you are not logged on to the virtual class when it starts.

- Do not attend class if you are unable to participate actively. Do not join the virtual classroom just to ignore it or walk away from it. If the instructor realizes this has occurred, your participation will be penalized, and you may be counted absent.
- Do not attend virtual class from your bed. While this is a virtual space, it is still a classroom. You will find it easier to pay attention, learn material, and complete your course work if you are seated at a table or desk.
- If you use a profile picture in virtual classroom, it should be a classroom-appropriate photo.
- Mute yourself unless you are making a presentation to the class or the instructor is seeking questions/comments from the class. For users in virtual classroom, the space bar acts as a quick unmute—press it down to speak on mic, then release the space bar to mute yourself again.
- You are expected to enable your video and remain on camera while class is in session, unless directed otherwise by the professor.
- Dress as if you are coming into a regular class.
- Make sure to illuminate your face with natural or artificial light so the instructor and others can see you clearly.
- Make sure there is nothing distracting or inappropriate in the background of your video feed.
- Try to avoid having other people enter and exit your frame to avoid distracting your classmates and instructor.
- If seeing yourself on camera distracts you, right-click on your own video feed in virtual classroom and choose HIDE SELF VIEW. This setting allows your instructor and classmates to see you, but you will not see yourself.
- Be careful when sharing your screen. You do not want your personal email, documents, or images to be displayed accidentally.
- Be aware everyone can see your messages in chat unless you have chosen to send the instructor a direct message. Private messages to other students are disabled to avoid distractions during class.
- Do not attend virtual class while operating a vehicle or doing anything else in which attending the virtual class at the same time may negatively impact your safety or the safety of others.
- Do not attend class in an unauthorized public space where others will see/hear the class. Your privacy and the privacy of your classmates is federally protected.

- If you know that you are unable to attend a class meeting, contact the instructor in advance to receive a recording of the class that you can watch later.
- Do not share the web URL for our virtual classroom class with anyone outside of class. If class is “virtual classroom bombed” because you shared the link, administration will be notified and will enact sanctions up to and including removal from the course and possible expulsion from the university.
- If the class is “bombed,” the instructor will first attempt to mute and boot the unwanted person from the meeting. If this is not possible or fails to stop the disruption, the instructor will end the meeting, create a new meeting link, and email it to you in short order.



