

THEA 4910: Special Problems Fall 2023

Professor: Sally Vahle
Email: sally.vahle@unt.edu
Phone: 214-597-2140

Textbook: None

Course Structure:

Student meetings will happen via Zoom. If an in-person meeting is necessary meeting times are available on Monday's between 11am-1:30pm or by appointment.

Course Description:

THEA 4910, Special Problems is an upper division course that facilitates student study of a particular topic of interest to the student that either builds upon curriculum they have studied in previous courses or a topic of interest that falls outside of UNT Theater curriculum.

Course Structure and Content:

Through dialogue and collaboration with the professor mentoring the student, the focus of study and requirements for successful completion of the Special Problems course are decided, a deadline and meeting calendar is created and the process of the work is begun. The student is responsible for managing all deadlines for course content.

COVID and Virtual Learning:

Should COVID become an issue during this semester, necessary adjustments may have 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 most guest artist visits and some class sessions may meet via Zoom instead of in person.

When this occurs you will receive plenty of notice.

CANVAS:

If you do not have “notifications enabled” it will be impossible for you to pass this class. Please double check that notifications are ENABLED.

This class will fully utilize CANVAS. All class communication will happen via the class Canvas inbox and via announcements. For classes that happen via Zoom notifications will be sent through the class Canvas portal. It is imperative that students “enable notifications” in their CANVAS class portal. Enabling notifications allows you to receive announcements, assignment notifications and other important information.

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 that meet once a week:

- Students are allowed no more than a total of TWO (2) absences during the semester.
- Students are considered tardy if they arrive for class no more than 30 minutes late. Arriving more than 30 minutes late for class is considered an absence.
- Students are expected to attend class for the duration of the period. Leaving class before then is considered an absence.
- An occurrence of tardiness for the class FOUR (4) times is the equivalent of ONE (1) absence.
- A total of THREE (3) absences means that the highest grade the student can earn in the class is an F.

Grading Policy:

Special circumstances when late work will be accepted:

[Official UNT Fall 2021 Covid Protocol statement is posted at the end of this document]

- 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 participate in 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.

Based on the focus of the Special Problems course point values will be assigned to assignments and projects. The final grade will be based on the total number of points possible and the final total of points earned. The final grade will be calculated on a 10% grading scale.

A	90%-100%	of total points
B	80%-89%	“ “
C	80%-79%	“ “
D	60%-69%	“ “

GENERAL PARAMETERS FOR LETTER GRADES:

Please note that the “descriptions” listed below are extremely general and designed only to be a basic guide to help students understand the expectations of the instructor when assessing work in class. Hopefully this little bit of context will help you set personal goals to work toward over the course of the semester.

‘A’ grade:

Participation is excellent. Work is committed, focused and sustained, with obvious, excellent growth. All assignments and deadlines satisfactorily completed on time. Student shows clear excellence in mastering the objectives of the assignments. Instructor's critiques generally focus on strong aspects of the work. Student is self-motivated, self-directed and strives and is able to improve upon strengths. All work shows careful preparation and commitment.

‘B’ grade:

Participation is above average. The student exceeds the basic fulfillment of all requirements is met with growth. Student shows strong competence in fulfilling objectives of the assignment. Instructor's critiques generally focus primarily on strong areas of work, with several specific areas of improvement suggested for subsequent work. There is evidence that the student works independently to evolve both strengths

and areas of improvement. Work is strong, has been well prepared and consistently shows good potential for improvement.

'C' grade:

Participation is mediocre. A fair number of assignments have not been submitted for grading. Student is content with/satisfies the general requirements of the assignments. Feedback and critique generally focus on weaker areas of work, with stronger aspects identified and reinforced. Lack of evidence of independent work on areas the instructor has identified as "needing improvement". Overall work ethic needs improvement.

'D' grade:

Student has missed a significant number of exercises. When work is turned in student has produced work that often does not satisfy the minimum requirements for project. Critiques focus on lack of preparation, lack of understanding of assignment and unwillingness to give maximum effort. Work ethic reflects a poor attitude, lack of organization, motivation and discipline—all of which results in below average outcomes, overall.

Critique and Feedback

I am available, by appointment, to meet with any student at any point in the semester. All students will receive written or verbal assessment of their recorded work.

COMMUNICATION:

- Please direct all class related correspondence via the "Inbox" on our class Canvas site.
- Students are welcome to reach me by calling my cell phone: 214-597-2140—text and voice mail messages----either is fine.

PLEASE!

Turn on the "Notifications" option in Canvas so you receive updates from me. I will use the "Announcements" option as a primary communication tool for class. The only way to ensure that you receive them is to "enable notifications" on your device(s).

IMPORTANT:

I cannot stress how important communication is. If you are experiencing challenges, an emergency---anything that is keeping you from fulfilling your commitment to this class or any of your classes at UNT, please consider having a conversation with me. I do understand that things come up that are unavoidable and unexpected—that's life. There are many avenues of support at UNT. I am aware of them and can point you in a

direction for support and guidance. I am always willing to work with students to help them achieve success whenever possible.

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.

Covid Specific Syllabus Statements

*****[These statements have been created by UNT in response to Covid]

Attendance:

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.

Face Covering:

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.

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

Access to Information – Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: 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/

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.

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) 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 or email spot@unt.edu.

Virtual Classroom Guidelines: Department of Dance and 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.