

Musical Theater 1- Syllabus

A collegiate-level theater course designed by Lauren Rosi

Course Description

Actors will explore, investigate and experiment with the tools of acting and singing technique. Actors will begin by learning basic improvisation skills that can be utilized on stage and in scene study. Introductions will be made to Stanislavski, Hagan, and Meisner technique in order to provide the actor with a solid foundation to build their own unique approach to character development and acting technique. Basic music theory and vocal techniques will be addressed in relation to song performance in the musical theater genre. This is a project-based course that is required of all undergraduate musical theater majors in their first year.

Course Objectives

1. Demonstrate vocal and physical confidence on stage through clear command of text, fluidity of language, projection and elocution voice, and physical awareness and versatility.
2. Perform the principles and rules of short-form improvisation such as narrative skills, character, and relationship as outlined by Keith Johnstone.
3. Illustrate character analysis by applying Uta Hagan's 9 Questions to performance.
4. Identify and demonstrate the key elements of Hagan, Stanislavski and Meisner acting methods.
5. Identify tactics (action verbs) in order to convey a character's objective (need/want) in the context of the play or scene.
6. Identify and demonstrate a character's emotional story arc within a scene or song.
7. Critique live performances based on performance techniques practiced in class, emotional connection and technical elements introduced in class.
8. Reflect in writing on personal emotional connection to character and performance to establish a connection between performance and self-evaluation.
9. Identify the poetic elements and song structure elements found in a piece of music.
10. Demonstrate strong musicality techniques, specifically breath, rhythm, vowel placement and diction.

Course Requirements & Resources

- Pencil
- Highlighter
- Folder or section in binder
- Ruler
- Play scripts & readings- to be assigned and distributed by instructor
- Respect for Acting by Uta Hagen
- On Acting by Stanford Meisner
- An Actor Prepares by Konstantin Stanislavski

Unit Plan

Week 1	August 27 – September 2	Improvisation
Week 2	September 3 – 9	Improvisation/Stansislavski technique
Week 3	September 10 – 16	Scene Analysis, Character Development, Hagan Technique <i>DUE: Reading Response on <u>An Actor Prepares</u></i>
Week 4	September 17 – 23	In-class Scene Rehearsals- Round 1
Week 5	September 24 – 30	In-class Scene Rehearsals- Round 2
Week 6	October 1 – 7	In-class Scene Rehearsals- Round 3
Week 7	October 8 – 14	In-class Scene Rehearsals - Round 4 <i>DUE: Reading Response on <u>Respect for Acting</u></i>
Week 8	October 15 – 21	Mid Term Presentations- Scenes <i>DUE: Performance Critique</i>
Week 9	October 22 – 28	Fall Break
Week 10	October 29 – November 4	Song Analysis- Music theory and Poetic devices
Week 11	November 5 – 11	Character development- Meisner technique
Week 12	November 12 – 18	In-class song rehearsal - Round 1 <i>DUE: Reading Response on <u>On Acting</u></i>
Week 13	November 19 – 25	In- class song rehearsal- Round 2 <i>NO Class Friday, November 23rd</i>
Week 14	November 26 - December 2	In- class song rehearsal- Round 3
Week 15	December 3 – 9	In-class song rehearsal- Round 4
Week 16	December 10 – 15	Final Presentations- Duets/Trios <i>DUE: Performance Critique</i>

Acting Journals DUE on the Monday of each week

Assessments/ Grading Policy

Attendance & class participation.....	10 pts per day (approx. 450 pts per semester)
Journal entries.....	15 pts each
Reading responses.....	100 pts each
Performance critiques.....	50 pts each (2 per semester)
In-Class rehearsals.....	20 pts each (4 per project)
Mid-term/Final Presentations.....	300 pts each (Scene and Song final presentations)
Musical Monday.....	250 pts (one per semester)

Each Monday, a student give an in-class presentation on a musical. Each presentation should be 30 minutes and should include a synopsis of the musical, biography of composers and writers, explanation of its significance to theater, information on the cast, crew and production, and a sampling of music from the show. This information will also be turned in as a research paper.

Grading Scale

Grades are assigned by points earned as indicated above:

100-94%	A	76-73%	C
93-90%	A-	72-70%	C-
89-87%	B+	69-67%	D+
86-83%	B	66-63%	D
82-80%	B-	62-60%	D-
79-77%	C+	59% and below	F

Classroom Policies

Behavior

A theater class can be very different from other classes. Actors are asked to push themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally- this can sometimes be a challenging or emotional experience. A theater classroom is a safe, fun environment built on mutual respect, appreciation and support.

In class rehearsals and presentations will be met only with positive feedback and suggestions for improvement from peers. Any negative language or judgments will result in a loss of points.

Attendance

Because of the nature of this course, classroom presence is *imperative*. Your grade weighs heavily on participation, attendance and preparedness. Excessive absences will result in a lower grade. Most assignments will be completed and graded in class thus *your presence is necessary*.

Students will receive **10 points per class** they attend. Students are permitted up to **2 excused absences per semester** due to illness or emergency. After 2 excused absences during the semester, students will lose their participation points for each additional absence. Students with an excused absence will be excused from their points for the day and will be permitted to turn in missed work on the day they return to class.

Any unexcused absence will result in loss of all points for that day, no exceptions.

Daily points will be lost due to class disruption, inability to stay on task, disrespect of fellow classmates or instructor, cell phone use, tardiness, cell phone use, food or drink in class.

Late Work

Late work will be accepted for a lower grade. For each day an assignment is late, your grade will be lowered one letter grade. It is better to turn in something than nothing!

In-Class Rehearsal Rubric

Used for in-class rehearsals of scenes, duets or other performance-based units

	ADVANCED 4 points	PROFICIENT 3 points	NOVICE 2 points	INCOMPLETE 0-1 points
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT: How well has the student researched, developed, and delivered their character?	* objective is well-defined * Depth and range of actions/tactics are expansive * Life / world of character is defined	* objective is somewhat defined * Depth and range of actions/tactics are adequate * Life / world of character is somewhat clear	* objective is lacking * There is little depth or range of actions/tactics * Life / world of character is not specific	* Student is doing little more than reading from the page * Little to no research or development
PREPAREDNESS: How much time did the student apparently spend in preparation for their rehearsals in class?	* Actions & lines delivered confidently * Significant amount of preparation * Well-educated and well-versed conversation about character/scene	* Actions & lines delivered well. * Appropriate amount of preparation * Appropriately prepared to speak about their character / scene.	* Actions and lines lack clarity and fluidity * Not nearly enough time on preparation * Moderately prepared to speak about of character/scene	* Actor is visibly unprepared * could not speak about the scene or have any answers
FOCUS: Does the student retain focus/present (stay in character) throughout the entire rehearsal process?	* Student stays completely immersed in their scene throughout the entire rehearsal. * Never breaks focus during the process	* Student weaves in and out of scene slightly throughout process. * Subtly breaks focus but is usually present	* Student never truly immerses enough into their character to produce any kind of believability	* Student lacks focus and makes little to no attempt at staying in any type of character.
PROGRESS Does the actor take the notes given in previous rehearsals? Has work been done outside of class?	* Understands, accepts & responds to constructive criticism. * Shows expansive growth from previous rehearsal, dedicated work has been done outside of rehearsal.	* Is generally accepting and responsive of constructive criticism * Shows adequate growth from previous rehearsal, adequate work has been done outside of rehearsal.	* Is somewhat resistive of constructive criticism * Shows some growth from previous rehearsal, very little work has been done outside of rehearsal.	* Is unresponsive to constructive criticism * Shows little to no growth from previous rehearsal, no work has been done outside of rehearsal.
CONTRIBUTION TO GROUP & REHEARSAL PROCESS	* Treats partner and director with respect, energy, cooperation and commitment. * Engaged and dedicated scene partner. Contributes significantly to the success of the project.	* Satisfactory scene partner. * Contributes appropriately to the project	* Less than adequate scene partner. * relying on scene partner, teacher or class to do the work	* They are a disrespectful and/or unacceptable scene partner and let their partner down during the rehearsal process.
Physical and Vocal Performance Notes & Feedback:				

