

Instructor: Merideth Taylor
Fall Semester 2011
TR 2:00-3:50
Syllabus
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TFMS-390 The Art of Happening

“We make art in order to connect and communicate with the world around us and with other people. In the theater, we cordon off space where special meetings might occur. We invite an audience into this place and hope that something will happen.” (anne bogart)

Goals:

As theatre artists we are engaged in the task of articulating ideas and feelings through imaginative, visual, embodied theatrical language. We must discover what it is that needs to be said, and we must devise how best to say it. This course is designed to aid students in this pursuit.

As students in the course, you will help develop a framework for an original multi-media performance work that will be presented as part of the TFMS main stage season in spring 2012. Original material will be developed collaboratively under the leadership of your professor, and all class members are required to contribute to the creation and presentation of original material in significant ways, according to your abilities and interests (e.g. writing, performing, designing, creating video, etc.). We will explore a variety of approaches and exercises to stimulate creative juices and will be inspired by readings from and about leaders in the field.

Objectives:

- To build upon concepts and skills acquired in prior performance courses/experience
- To explore methodologies for physicalizing a character, dramatic moment, or idea
- To address theatrical style issues
- To provide basic techniques in stage combat, mask work, and physical comedy
- To provide opportunities to integrate movement and text work
- To foster the ability to work effectively as an ensemble

Methods will include:

A daily warm-up (including a variety of conditioning and body awareness exercises); creative exercises exploring a number of approaches to movement theater and physicalization (e.g. improvisation, Image Theatre, Commedia delle'arte, dance, animal and mask studies); physical comedy exercises; contact improvisation; unarmed combat exercises; readings-based discussions; research; rehearsal; and critiques of TFMS productions.

Required texts: (You will find these in the Campus Store and College Library)

Boal, Augusto, *Aesthetics of the Oppressed*
bogart, anne, *and then you act*
Rebellato, Dan, *theatre & globalization*

Student Responsibilities:

1. Attending all classes promptly, physically and psychologically prepared for work. **Absences in excess of three will have a negative effect on final grade, as will a pattern of tardiness.**
2. All performance work, reading assignments, and written work presented by due date. Lines and choreography must be memorized by due dates. Late papers will not be accepted.
3. Being dressed appropriately--Hair out of face, no clothes that restrict movement or obscure body lines, no heavy or dangling jewelry, no beeping watches, skirts, or jeans!
4. Maintenance of the space--No street shoes, food, beverages, or gum.
5. Contributing to the *esprit de corps* and success of the course through active participation in discussions, willingness to engage the material, and demonstrated respect for your own and others' work.

Written Assignments :

- Written movement critiques due 10/31 and 12/16
- A written self-evaluation of accomplishments and growth over the semester, due the last day of class or no later than 12/16.

Final Exam Period: 12/14 7-9:15 PM

No Class: 10/11 (Reading Days), 11/1 (Advising Day), 11/24 (Thanksgiving)

Special Events:

TFMS Main Stage productions

- *As You Like It:* 10/13-15 and 10/20-22 at 8 PM, and 10/16 and 10/23 at 2 PM. Bruce Davis Theater
- *St. Mary's Hear and Now* 12/7-10 at 8 PM, and 12/11 at 2 PM BDT

Student generated productions will include a number of White Room productions and films.

NOTE: Students are **strongly** encouraged to audition for productions and attend all productions, relevant special workshops, and lectures!

Grading based on:

Attendance, promptness, energy investment, focus, growth of movement skills and awareness, evidence of preparatory work outside class, quality of performance work, contribution to group discussion, quality of written work, fulfilling all student responsibilities listed above, team work, and willingness to play. All performance work will be evaluated according to evidence of adequate preparation (rehearsal!) and the student's ability to grasp and apply concepts and techniques learned in class.

Since your grade is based largely on the quality of your in-class work, **you are encouraged to meet with me individually several times during the semester to assess your standing.**

A = Outstanding, superior, excellent work (no problems in the areas of attendance or promptness).

B = Good, strong, solid work (good attitude, attendance, grasp of skills, etc.)

C = "Average," satisfactory, or uneven (inconsistent--some weak areas--some strong) work.

D = Several weak areas (serious problems with attendance, completing assignments, etc.).

F = Failure to rise to the challenge.

READINGS SCHEDULE

DUE DATES:

(Subject to change)

“ Performance Structures” from Cohen-Cruz, *Local Acts* (electronic)

Week 1

Bogart, *and then you act*

Week 1 Intro – pg. 29

Week 2 pgs. 30-62

Week 3 pgs. 63-92

Week 4 pgs. 93-125

Week 5 pgs. 126-140

Rebellato, *theatre and globalization*

Week 6 & 7

Boal, *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed*

Week 8 pgs. 4-43

Week 9 pgs. 44-94

Week 10 pgs. 95-118

Week 11 pgs. 119-133