

Musical Theatre History

THEA 3323.001

Syllabus

Instructor Information

Professor: Shelby-Allison Hibbs, MFA

Term: Fall 2017

Meeting Time: Tuesday and Thursday 5:30pm to 6:45pm

Place: CB 1.310

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Office: JO 4.628

Office Hours: TBA

Please send an email or set up an appointment to meet.

Course Description

This course covers the major musicals and innovations within musical theatre practice. As a course that investigates the significance of certain trends, structure, and artists, students will engage in a series of projects to deepen their knowledge on the overall picture of American musical theatre. Students will develop fundamental strategies to discuss the historical nature of a musical, consider the musical's contextualization, and develop scholarship.

Required Materials

American Musical Theatre: No Business Like It by Nathan Hurwitz

Other supplemental readings will be distributed through the course on eLearning

Student Learning Outcomes and Objectives

1. **Describe and apply methodology processes**
 - a. Students will be able to describe and apply basic methods regarding the history of musical theatre. Initially, these discussions will be posted on Discussion Boards, and students will utilize more critical thinking in the **Historical Essay** and **Comparative Paper**.
 - b. Students will contextualize the historical nature of a musical on the page and in practice. Through the **Production Review Essay**, students will consider representation, meaning, and historicism with a live musical.
2. **Demonstrate effective communication skills**
 - a. Students will develop written communication skills through the essay projects in the course. They will develop further skills in creating an argument, considering primary and secondary sources, and structuring a scholarly essay.
3. **Demonstrate knowledge of principles and history –**
 - a. **Students will demonstrate a broad knowledge of the principles and history of Musical Theatre.** Students will gain knowledge of over 50 major musicals, write a historically-driven essays on musical theatre, and compile a bibliography through the Resource Folder Project. Students will gather a number of sources as a reservoir of documents.

Grading Policy

Grading will be on a 4.00 point scale rather than percentages. In the following project descriptions, note the point values of each project.

More than 400 points are possible for the semester; meaning you do not have to get a perfect score on everything to reach 400 points. .

At the end of the semester, the instructor will place a “.” on your point value to make the number equivalent to the standard GPA number. For example, 400 points = 4.00 = A.

Point Breakdown

4.00 = A

3.67 = A-

3.33 = B +

3.00 = B

2.67 = B-

2.33 = C+
2.00 = C
1.00 = D
0.00 = F

Discussion Boards

After reading the material or listening/reading musicals for each class, students are invited to participate in a discussion board on eLearning. The instructor will begin the thread with a question or prompt, and students are invited to offer their own thoughts on the musical/subject at hand.

Each entry should be roughly 150 words to be accepted. Each entry must be posted 1 hour prior to the class period the reading/viewing was due.

Participating in these discussion boards will also help you prepare your thoughts for the next class, which creates a more lively discussion.

Each entry is worth up to 7 points for 10 entries over the semester.

Participation

Students are expected to participate in daily discussions and in class activities. If it seems like students are not reading the assigned chapters, pop quizzes will occur.

Students can earn up to 100 participation points.

Performance Review of a Musical Production

Students are required to attend a live musical theatre production and write a critique of the production. The critique should refer to

- _ The historical significance of the musical
- _ Whether or not the production adhered to a true interpretation of the musical
- _ The meaning of the musical for a contemporary audience
- _ A discussion of musical style or structure

Worth 50 points.

Checklist for Production Review

- _ Between 900 and 1200 words
- _ Turned in on time as a physical copy to the instructor
- _ No spelling or grammar errors
- _ Review is structured well
 - o An introductory paragraph that addresses your overall evaluation of the artists' work.
 - o The writer selects a handful of points to discuss and has a thoughtful discussion of those moments from the musical or the historical significance.
 - o If mentioning the production team, use their real names and separate discussions about the actors work versus plot/character points.

- Subsequent paragraphs that address topics like:
 - Historical significance
 - Meaning for Dallas/Fort Worth in 2019
 - The interpretation of the musical relating to history and the evolution of musical theatre
 - The style and structure of the musical
- A conclusion paragraph that solidifies your observations and affirms your evaluation of the musical

MUSICALS IN DFW

Casa Manana – The Buddy Holly Story (September 7-15), Annie (Nov 2-10)

Dallas Theater Center – In the Heights (Sept 21- Oct 20)

AT&T Performing Arts Center - Once (Nov 22-24)

Dallas Summer Musicals – Cats (Nov. 5-17), Dear Evan Hansen (November 26-
Dec 8)

WaterTower Theatre – Sister Act (Oct. 24-Nov 10)

Firehouse Theatre - Cats (Sept 5-22), Side Show (Oct 24-Nov 10)

RESOURCE FOLDER

Students will select a musical that will be discussed in class and create a digital resource folder on that musical. The folder should contain 15 items along with commentary on each item. This resource folder will be due a day before that particular musical is discussed in class.

This project is worth 35 points.

This folder will be accessible to all students on eLearning.

Items may include:

- _ A scholarly article on the musical
- _ A Video resource on the musical (live performance, a video that discusses and element of the musical, interview with creators)
- _ Significant Production photographs
- _ An audio clip
- _ An essay or newspaper article on the musical

There may be no more that 4 of each item, so choose carefully.

If you have difficulty, please let the instructor know.

HISTORICAL ESSAY

To further develop research and writing skills, students will be asked to select a musical and write a historical essay on it. The essay should range between 1200 to 1800 words and cover the following topics.

This essay is worth up to 70 points.

- **The origin of the musical (Who created it? Why did they write it? What were the circumstances of that creation?)**
- **The process by which the musical was produced (How did it get to Broadway?)**
- **The response of the musical at the time it premiered (Did critics review it favorably? Did it have a long initial run on Broadway? Did it become a hit or miss? Why?)**
- **The significance of the musical through history (Did it have a resurgence later? Did it inspire or launch the career of a particular artist? Did it bring any innovations to musical theatre?)**

Students will be evaluated based on their research and thoughtful writing on these topics.

I encourage you to have your classmates proofread these essays.

COMPARATIVE ESSAY/DECONSTRUCT A MUSICAL

As the final project of the course, budding musical theatre historians will write a comparative essay of two musicals or deconstruct a musical. This project is worth up to 125 points.

For the comparative article, choose two musicals and develop a strong thesis that compares and contrasts a specific element of that musical. An example could be comparing the two most well known pop musicals of the late 20th century: *Hair* and *Rent*. While they both utilize young adults that are disillusioned about their world, the two musicals are structured in very different ways.

A deconstruction of a musical means taking the musical and discussing it through a specific theoretical lens. For example, taking a musical that presents two dimensional female characters and discuss how feminist theory would argue against that kind of representation. Or, for a great example take a look at Diep Tran's essay on American Theatre regarding her experience seeing *Miss Saigon*. Tran's family is from Vietnam and noted that what she saw onstage did not accurately reflect her family or heritage.

REQUIREMENTS

- 2500 to 3000 words
- Chicago Style Citations (Footnotes)
- Bibliography of at least 8 sources
- Well organized and structured (one topic per paragraph, flows from one thought to the next).
- No spelling/grammatical errors
- Strong observations and examples
- Thorough explanation of each musical and historical context
- Clear thesis that ties the whole paper together

Preliminary Schedule

Week 1

August 19th

Intro to Musical Theatre History

August 21st

Chapter 3 – First Stirrings

The Black Crook

HMS Pinafore

Floradora

Week 2

August 26th –

Chapter 4 –

The Merry Widow

August 28th

Chapter 5

Operetta

Vaudeville

Ziegfeld Follies

Week 3

September 6th

Chapter 6

Show Boat

Shuffle Along

Porgy and Bess

Week 4

September 9th

Chapter 7

The Cradle Will Rock

Anything Goes!

September 11th

Chapter 8

Oklahoma!

Pal Joey

Carousel

Week 5

September 16th

Chapter 9

Rodgers and Hammerstein:

South Pacific

The King and I

The Sound of Music

September 18th

The Pajama Game

Annie Get Your Gun

Kiss Me Kate

Brigadoon

Week 6

September 23rd

Chapter 10

West Side Story

September 25th

Resource Folder Due

Cabaret

Fiddler on the Roof

Week 7 -

September 30th

Hair

October 2nd

The Cult Musical

Week 8

October 7th

Stephen Sondheim

Oct. 9th

Stephen Sondheim

Week 9 -

Oct. 14th

Chicago

A Chorus Line

Oct. 15th

HISTORICAL ESSAY DUE

Andrew Lloyd Webber/Harold Prince/Spectacle Musicals

Week 10

Oct. 21st

Andrew Lloyd Webber/Harold Prince/Spectacle Musicals

Oct. 23rd

Chess

Starlight Express

Week 11

Oct. 28th

Les Miserables

Miss Saigon

Oct. 30th

La Cage aux Folles

Hedwig and the Angry Inch

Falsettos

Week 12 -

Nov. 4th

Side Show

Rent

Once on the Island

Nov. 6th

Violet

Caroline, or Change

The Color Purple

Week 13

Nov. 11th

PRODUCTION REVIEW DUE

The Lion King

The Impact of Disney on Bway

Nov. 13th

Chamber Musicals

John and Jen

The Last Five Years

Next to Normal

Week 14

Nov. 18th

Avenue Q

Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

Nov. 20th

In the Heights

Hamilton

Week 15 -

Dec. 2 Musicals and Musical Theatre NOW

Fun Home

The Great Comet

Dear Evan Hansen

Dec. 4th Musicals and Musical Theatre NOW

TBD

FINAL EXAM: Turn in Comparative Article/Deconstruction of a Musical

MUSICALS COVERED IN COURSE/
MUSICAL CHOICES FOR RESOURCE FOLDER

- *Shuffle Along*, by Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle, 1921
- *Annie Get Your Gun* by Herbert Fields, Dorothy Fields, and Irving Berlin, 1946
- *Show Boat* by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein, 1927
- *Pal Joey* by Rodgers and Hart
- *A Connecticut Yankee*, Rodgers and Hart, 1927
- *Babes in Arms* by Rodgers and Hart, 1937
- *Porgy and Bess*, George and Ira Gershwin, 1935
- *Anything Goes* by Cole Porter, 1934
- *Kiss Me, Kate*, by Cole Porter, 1948
- *The Cradle will Rock*
- *Oklahoma!* By Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1943
- *Carousel* by Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1945
- *Allegro* by Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1947
- *South Pacific* by Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1949
- *The King and I* by Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1951
- *The Sound of Music* by Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1959
- *On the Town* by Leonard Bernstein, Betty Comden and Adolph Green, 1944
- *West side Story* by Leonard Berstein, Stephen Sondheim, and Arthur Laurents, 1957
- *Brigadoon*, by Lerner and Loewe, 1947
- *My Fair Lady*, Lerner and Loewe, 1956
- *Camelot*, by Lerner and Loewe, 1960
- *The Pajama Game*, Adler and Ross, 1954.
- *Damn Yankees*, Adler and Ross, 1955
- *Candide* by Leonard Bernstein and others, 1956.
- *Fiddler on the Roof*, by Jerry Bock, Sheldon Harnick, and Joseph Stein, 1964
- *Cabaret*, Kander and Ebb, 1966
- *Chicago*, Kander and Ebb, 1975
- *Hair*, Gerome Ragini, James Rado, Galt McDermott, 1968
- *1776*, by Sherman Edwards and Peter Stone
- *Sweeney Todd*, by Stephen Sondheim, 1979
- *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* , Stephen Sondheim, 1962
- *Company*, Stephen Sondheim, 1970
- *Godspell*, by Stephen Schwartz and John-Michael Tebelak, 1971
- *Pippin*, by Stephen Schwartz and Roger O. Hirson, 1972
- *Into the Woods*, by Stephen Sondheim, 1987
- *Jesus Christ Superstar*, by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, 1971
- *Evita*, by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, 1976
- *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*

- A Chorus Line by Marvin Hamlisch, Edward Leban, James Kirkwood and Nicholas Dante, 1975
- The Phantom of the Opera, by Andrew Lloyd Webber, Charles Hart and Richard Stilgoe, 1986
- Sunday in the Park with George, Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine, 1982
- Les Miserables, by Claude-Michel Schonberg, Alain Boublil and others, 1985
- Miss Saigon, by Claude-Michel Schonberg, Alain Boublil and Richard Maltby Jr., 1989
- Assassins, Stephen Sondheim, 1990
- Children of Eden, by Stephen Schwartz and John Caird, 1991
- Chess, by Benny Andersson, Bjorn Ulvaeus, Tim Rice, 1986
- Violet, by Jeanine Tesori and Brian Crawley, 1997
- The Wild Party by Andrew Lippa, 1997
- John and Jen, by Andrew Lippa, 1993
- Parade, Jason Robert Brown, 1998
- A New Brain, by William Finn and James Lapine, 1998
- Rent, by Jonathan Larson, 1993
- The Last Five Years, Jason Robert Brown, 2002
- The Color Purple, by Stephen Bray, Brenda Russell and Allee Willis, 2006
- Wicked, by Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman, 2003
- The Light in the Piazza, by Adam Guettel and Craig Lucas, 2005
- The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, William Finn and Rachel Sheinkin, 2005
- Thoroughly Modern Millie, by Jeanine Tesori and Dick Scanlan, 2002
- Caroline or Change, Jeanine Tesori and Tony Kushner, 2003
- Avenue Q, by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx, 2003
- Hairspray, by Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman, 2003
- Once by Glen Hansard and Marketa Irglova, 2011
- Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson by Michael Friedman, 2010
- Next to Normal, by Yorkey and Kitt
- Spelling Bee by William Finn and Rachel Sheinkin, 2005
- Title of Show by Jeff Bowen and Hunter Bell, 2006
- The Book of Mormon by Trey Parker, Matt Stone, and Robert Lopez, 2011
- An American in Paris, Book by Craig Lucas, music from George and Ira Gershwin, 2015
- Fun Home, by Jeanine Tesori and Lisa Kron, 2015
- The Bridges of Madison County, by Jason Robert Brown and Marsha Norman, 2013
- Here Lies Love by David Byrne and Fatboy Slim, 2013
- Hamilton by Lin-Manuel Miranda, 2015
- Dear Evan Hansen, by Pasek and Paul, 2016
- The Great Comet, by Dave Malloy, 2014
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