

## **Special Topics in Stage Movement**

Theatre 4029: Fall 09

A Service-Learning Course

Room 170

3:10 to 4:30pm Tuesday and Thursday

(3) Credit course: 2 hours lecture, 1 hour lab per week.

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**GOAL: To develop emerging leaders in the performing arts who are problem-solvers, creative thinkers, generative theatre artists, and professionals responsible to their community.**

When devising new work, often the classroom as inspiration or reference becomes self-reflexive and non-responsive to the larger community. For the emerging theatre artist to learn how to be responsive to the community, to build a broader audience, and to produce work relevant to the lives of the community, the educational experience must go beyond the studio and the classroom by engaging with that community in a meaningful way. It is our goal to inspire and instill in the emerging artist the necessity of community engagement as a way to contribute to the overall creation of meaningful and relevant physical theatre work. Finally, to develop leaders who say what they are going to do, and do what they say.

This year, our community partner will be the LSU Language Preschool located next to the Music and Dramatic Arts Building in the Dean French House. Our goal will be to provide a meaningful and useful service through our narrative, improvisational, and physical gifts while gaining valuable insight into human communication, cues, and body language. Exploring the limitations of our own communication through movement, voice, and body language will provide the basis for character and identity formation when we construct a theatrical narrative. Student will work directly alongside the LSU graduate and undergraduate students assigned to working with special needs children at the LSU Language Preschool for one half hour each week starting week 3 of the semester. They will help with behavioral and communication skills necessary for effective social functioning. They will take what they learn working with the Preschool and integrate it into character development, movement options and story ideas for the class goal. At the end of the semester, the children and the LSU Language Preschool students will be invited to view the final performance presentation in the classroom.

This course will be an intense exploration of learning in and out of the classroom. We will choose an existing play or film to adapt into a physical theatre production that is both unique and relevant to our contemporary life. Scripts under consideration are:

- Marat/ Sade
- Woyzeck
- The Man of La Mancha
- The King of Hearts
- The Night of the Iguana
- One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
- A Midsummer Night's Dream
- Alice in Wonderland
- Flowers for Algernon
- Metropolis
- Student suggested scripts
- Les Enfants du Paradis (Children of Paradise)

### **Course Objectives:**

1. To devise a new physical theatre production using a collaborative ensemble process involving research and experimentation.
2. To demonstrate non-verbal narrative storytelling based on interaction with a community partner.
3. To demonstrate physical skills and techniques for creating specific images, characters, and situations/events.
4. To demonstrate a practiced and researched mimicry of others for the basis of a character portrayal.
5. To use the above-mentioned skills in a service capacity to improve the communicative power of their portrayals.
6. To demonstrate a broadened scope of understanding and empathy for community members who could benefit from the student's skills, resources, and assets.

Week one: Character improvisation based on observation of strangers on campus. Deciding on a text.

Week two: Character improvisation and simple story-telling based on observation and study of zoo animals.

Week 3-6: Building scenes based on character research and physical exercises.

Week 7-8: Rehearsing for the midterm performance.

Week 9-14: Developing scene and character work further.

Week 15-16: Rehearsing for the Final presentation. Closure with the community partner.

**Journal Summaries:** (15% of grade.) Over the course of the semester, journal summaries will be required to reflect on the assignments in a constructive and provocative manner.

**Quizzes:** (20% of Grade.) There will be at least four or more in-class presentations. They cannot be made up.

**Midterm Examination:** (5% of the Grade.) There will be one midterm performance, Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Final Examination:** (15% of Grade.) Thursday, Dec 10<sup>th</sup> from 12:30pm to 2:30pm there will be a final performance in-class with an invited audience. Party with the community partner.

**Participation:** (45% of Grade.) is based on two things: attendance and conduct.

- The attendance grade is based on absences and lateness. 2 absences total are allowed before it affects your grade. 3 absences results in a full letter drop for participation. Only excused absences will not count toward a grade drop with a letter from your doctor, mechanic, etc. Each absence after that will result in another grade drop. Three late arrivals after 3:10pm will add up to the equivalent of one absence and count toward a grade drop.
- Conduct will be based on five principles:
  - Passion/ Commitment: do you demonstrate in your behavior in class, in assignments, and performances that you care, that you have a personal investment?
  - Depth: are you just scratching the surface in your participation in class, assignments and performances relying on initial ideas, or do you develop and go beyond initial choices to find more significant meaning, value, purpose?
  - Specificity: are you making clear, precise, detailed choices in your work and executing them in your body?
  - Spatial Awareness: are you aware of where your body is in space? Relative to other performers? On the stage picture? Relative to the audience? Are you aware of the messages you are sending others with the placement and use of your body?
  - Discipline/ Preparation: Are you spending enough time outside of class to rehearse? Are you making the development of your work a priority?

**BE PREPARED TO SWEAT AND MOVE! DRESS APPROPRIATELY BEFORE CLASS BEGINS!**