**THEA 491: Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration**

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Spring 2015, F 1-4pm Office Hours: By Appointment

Singleton Performing Arts Center - B72 Mailbox: Performing Arts Center, 2nd Floor

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

During this course, student actors, directors, designers, visual artists and technicians will join forces to become a part of a cross-disciplinary, ensemble-based exploration. Students will create new works, powered by Tectonic Theatre Project’s Moment Work, as well as implementing other devised theatre techniques. They will gain insight into the philosophies, purposes, and processes of Moment Work and develop Moments using the elements of the stage. The class will culminate in short, devised pieces, created and performed by the students.

**REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

* Journal
* Light source (NO live flames, but flashlights, pointer lights, or cell phones, etc. are acceptable!)
* Prop
* Costume piece
* Music and/or sound without text
* A short piece of text.

**A few notes on the above:**

1) The props and costumes will be available for use by all students in the class; therefore, please do not bring anything that is fragile or has any significant monetary or emotional value. While we will ask everyone to respect the items, we would hate for an accident to happen.

2) For the text, we suggest that you try a piece of found text (i.e., some prose, a fortune cookie, an instruction manual, a newspaper article, etc.) rather than something from a play.

3) When selecting your items, text, and music, please evaluate their theatrical potential and performability. Think outside of the box!

**GRADING**

Your grade will be based on a combination of written work, class participation and presentations. In addition to these major areas, your attendance, punctuality and ability to focus on the work will also be considered. Your final grade will be based on a 1000 point total (details under “Assignments”).

VCU Grading Scale

A 100-90% (895-1000 points)

B 89-80% (795-894 points)

C 79-70% (695-794 points)

D 69-60% (595-694 points)

F 59% and Below (0-594 points)

**Written Work**

All written assignments will be typed in a **12 point font, double spaced and printed in black ink**. Double-sided printing is encouraged, to save trees, but not required. Printing multiple pages per sheet is not acceptable. Please format all outlines with proper indentation and numbering. Students must submit paper copies of all written assignments. Proper MLA format must be followed for all bibliographic citations.

**Collaborative Work**

Each time you collaborate is an opportunity. It is a chance to learn something new about your peers, your thought processes, and your strengths. Over the course of the semester students are expected to take advantage of each of these opportunities to build a creative ensemble of artists. Everyone comes into this class with different levels of experience and is expected to demonstrate a deliberate effort toward cultivating their strengths and improving upon their existing talent. **Remember, Generosity is paramount in this course.**

**Professionalism**

We will spend a lot of time discussing one another's work. As you give feedback on your classmates' work please remember to be courteous and respectful. It is important that the classroom be a safe environment where everyone can explore and play.. Please be respectful of people's boundaries and feelings. If, for any reason, you feel uncomfortable with the work inside or outside the classroom, please do not hesitate to approach me or email me.

**Attendance**

Because of the ensemble nature of this course, along with class meeting only once a week, students are allowed ONE unexcused absence.  For each additional unexcused absence, you will lose a full letter grade for the class.  The instructor must clear excused absences in advance. Arriving late for class disrupts the learning process for fellow students, so every two late arrivals will count as an unexcused absence for grading purposes.  Students arriving more than 20 minutes late to class will be considered absent.  Because each class builds upon previous information, all students will depend on one another for the success of the ensemble. it is not possible to “make-up” class sessions.  It is expected that late and absent students will call/meet other class members to find out what occurred in class and to get handouts and assignments before the next class meets.  Missing all or part of a class is not an excuse for being unprepared.

**Attire**

Students are expected to be dressed in attire appropriate for an theatre class at all times. Clothing that allows for freedom of movement is required. Skirts, shorts and jeans are not appropriate. Students coming from work or other classes should bring a change of clothes. Please see the instructor if you have any questions.

**Disabilities**

If you have any visual, auditory, ambulatory or cognitive disabilities it is your responsibility to inform me on the first day of class so that I can try to accommodate your needs. See the *VCU Resource Guide* for details.

**Religious observances**

In accordance with university policy, if you wish to observe a religious holiday you must provide advance written notification by Fri. 1/23, so that I may accommodate your needs.

**Honor policy**

Please visit the VCU website or see the VCU Handbook to review the official university honor policy. One university ruling you need to be especially aware of: **The University requires that cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off while you are in the classroom.**

**VCU Alert and Campus Security**

1. Sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts [http://www.vcu.edu/alert/notify]. Keep your information up-to-date.
2. Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on campus classrooms.
3. Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities.
4. Know where to go for additional emergency information [http://www.vcu.edu/alert].
5. Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police: 804-828-1234.
6. Report suspicious activities and objects.

**\*\*\*Note to student:** By choosing to remain in this class, you agree to abide by the standards set forth in this syllabus. Additionally, your signature on your VCU application signifies that you agree to abide by all rules and policies, including the Honor System, of Virginia Commonwealth University. For more information, refer to the Student Resource Guide, at <http://www.students.vcu.edu/policies.html> and the Student Bulletin, at <http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/>

**ASSIGNMENTS – 1000 points**

**Missed assignments MAY NOT be made up.**

**Vlogs (300 points)**

This assignment will serve as your video journal during the process. Each week, you will submit a 2-4 minute vlog on Blackboard, due the Monday following class. The vlog can contain your thoughts on the work done during class time, outside of class time, the process, and the collaboration process. Decompression and reflection are key ingredients to working collaboratively as an ensemble, so please use this as an opportunity to do such.

**Peer Reviews (150)**

During small group work, students will be expected to review the collaborative efforts of their peers. Please respond truthfully, in order for this class’ objectives to be met.

**Final Reflection Essay (150 points)**

Students will write a five-page paper, summing up their experience in this course. How has working with a multitude of artists changed how you create art? Things to touch on can include your personal journey toward improvements in this course, any “Ah-ha” moments you had this semester, and challenges you had from the beginning that you feel you've overcome (or have made steps toward overcoming.

**Class Participation (400 points)**

This is a *crucial* part of your grade. Participation in class activities, assignments and discussions is a required part of this class. You will also be expected to give feedback to your fellow classmates, both written and verbal. If you are absent without excuse on a day where feedback, for example, is being elicited, you will lose points off your participation grade.

**Course Calendar**

(Subject to change)

***JANUARY***

F 16: Intro, syllabus review, contract building, Begin ensemble work.

F 23: Ensemble and Collaboration exercises

**HOMEWORK: Bring in Costume piece, Light Source, Prop, Sound Clip or pre-recorded music (no text)**

\*\*F 30: Intro to Moment Work and the Elements What is a Moment? Exploration of Moments

**HOMEWORK: Virtuosity Moment**

***FEBRUARY***

\*\*F 6: Continuation of Moment Exploration: Multiple Elements

\*\*F 13: Continuation of Moment Exploration: Multiple Elements

**HOMEWORK: Bring in Text**

**NOTE: PRIDE AND PREJUDICE RUNNING Feb. 12-14 & 19-21 at 7:30 pm  Feb. 15 & 22 at 3:00 pm**

\*\*F 20: Continuation of Moment Exploration: LAYERING

**HOMEWORK: Bring in three relatable topics to explore**

F 27: Continuation of Moment Exploration: LAYERING; Discussion of topics and Topic chosen to explore

**HOMEWORK: Small Group Exploration of Topic to share. 3 Moments per group.**

***MARCH***

F 6: TBA

F 13: SPRING BREAK

F 20: Sharing of Moments- Continued Exploration

F 27: TBA

***APRIL***

F 3: Continuation of Moment Exploration: SEQUENCING

**HOMEWORK DUE MAY 1: Reflection Paper**

F 10: Continuation of Moment Exploration: SEQUENCING: Choosing of Share Day Moments

**NOTE: FRANKENSTEIN: DAWN OF A MONSTER running April 10 -11, 16 -18 & 23 – 25 at 7:30 pm • April 12, 19 & 26 at 3:00 pm**

F 17: TBA

F 24: Editing and Run through of Share Day

**MAY**

F 1: SHARE DAY and Class Decompression

**PLEASE NOTE: Due to BFA Performance auditions, our class will meet in Shafer Street Playhouse (Newdick Theatre) on the following days:**

* January 30
* February 6
* February 13
* February 20

**\*\* Denotes days in Newdick Theatre on the course schedule**