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THTR 591.01: ST - Musical Theatre Workshop

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MUSICAL THEATRE WORKSHOP: BROADWAY DANCE

School of Theatre & Dance – University of Montana
THTR 591-01 / Spring 2017 / 2 credits / CRN 34939
T / R 2:30 – 3:50 pm; McGill Hall 125

<u>Professor</u>	<u>Contact Info</u>	<u>Office / Office Hrs</u>
Dr. Pamyla Stiehl	Email: pamyla.stiehl@umontana.edu General Office: 406-243-4481	McGill 212C M / W 2:00-3:30 or by appointment

DESCRIPTION: A foundational course in techniques and styles of dance and choreography for musical theatre

GOALS: The goal of this course is to foster an appreciation of and familiarity with musical theatre dance – its various idioms, distinguishing characteristics, and historic periods – while learning basic dance technique and mastering different styles of dance performance. The course is developed around the learning of dance numbers from musical theatre that are representative of various periods, styles, and disciplines. In addition to technical training, students will learn and perform as a group approximately five choreographed Broadway show routines. Students will also acquire knowledge and analytical skills regarding the discipline of dance and musical theatre performance overall.

OBJECTIVES: Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Execute basic dance steps, techniques, and styles of movement, using them as building blocks to steadily progress to more difficult steps, styles, and dance combinations;
- Identify, execute and retain specific choreography, both in training (warm-ups and across-the-floor exercises) and in fully choreographed musical theatre dance routines;
- Identify and demonstrate performance and acting styles/techniques when executing theatrical dance routines;
- Create original choreography as part of a collaborative group when asked to contribute to routines;
- Chronicle, analyze and critique your own process, progress, and performance in a dance number, analytically journaling your learning/performing experience;
- Analyze and critique the art of musical theatre dance/choreography, writing a critical choreographic analysis of a specific musical's dance component.

REQUIRED DRESS: Dance shoes (preferably soft-soled jazz shoes) or some sort of flexible, soft-soled athletic shoes are the acceptable footwear for class – NOT street shoes. You will need to have these shoes for every class. You will also be required to dress appropriately for class (dance or exercise attire). Throughout the semester, if you do not have appropriate shoes or attire for class, you will be docked some points for the day. Please treat this class as a formal dance class. We will be moving and sweating – plan accordingly.

ATTENDANCE / PROMPTNESS: Just a reminder – this is not only a dance technique class but also a performance class. Like performing in a show, if you miss a class, it is gone – you cannot "make it up." Further, as the course revolves around ensemble numbers, your absenteeism hurts the entire class. **Each class is worth 5 points. With an absence or tardiness, your grade will be affected in terms of accrued points. FURTHER, missing more than two classes will drop your grade one-third of a letter for each successive absence.** In addition, **two tardies (arriving after attendance has been taken) will equal one unexcused absence.** If your tardiness is extreme, I reserve the right to count you as absent for the day and possibly refuse your admittance into class, out of respect for the other students and to avoid possibly physical injury on your part (lack of warm-up). **However, with official documentation, (doctor's note, court order, obituary with proof of travel, conference attendance, etc.), I will excuse the absence. With early notice, absences may also be excused for religious observances.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. ATTENDANCE, PREPARATION, and PARTICIPATION (APP)

Each class will count as five (5) points toward your final grade. You begin with 5 points for each class, but:

- 1 point *less than full participation -- attitude is key here; a willingness to "try" is all I ask*
- 1 point *no retention of material previously learned*
- 3 points** ***tardiness – if you are not present when we begin warm-ups at 2:30, you are counted tardy***
- 3 points *not wearing proper shoes/attire for class (please talk to me if there are extenuating circumstances)*
- 5 points *unprofessional behavior -- talking, horseplay, resistance, inattention, negativity, etc.*

You will receive an overall grade warning if your APP point deductions have become excessive per criteria listed above.

TOTAL "APP" POINTS POSSIBLE = 140

2. TWO WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. Outside Musical -- Choreography/Dance Critique: In addition to your studio work, you are to watch a dance-heavy musical theatre production outside of class (either a film version or live). Then, write a paper (**AT LEAST 5 PAGES**), analyzing and critiquing the show's choreography and dance. Address the movement designed by the choreographer. Address the choreographic style, time period, and degree of integration (i.e., what is the dominant idiom, does the dance further the plot, develop or reflect character, and reflect time/place? If not, why?). Address whether or not you feel the choreography was successful. Why or why not? You must also include some historical/contextual research as part of this paper. **Give specific examples and detailed descriptions! Due on or before MARCH 30 (Worth 20 pts)**

3. Personal Performance Analysis: For one of the group numbers (your choice), you must submit a written analysis of your own development, process, and execution. The paper must be **AT LEAST 3 PAGES** and should provide some answers to the following questions: Who am I as a theatrical character in the number/show (character, background, and personality/ psychology)? What do I want in this dance? How do I feel? Do my objectives change during the number? What is my relationship with the other dancers, the audience, the music, and the choreography? When and where do these relationships change? Does my focus shift at times? Why? Have I found varying dynamics? Where? How did all these things evolve during my rehearsal process? What were my challenges and/or victories as I learned and executed the number? **Avoid generalities; be personal and specific/descriptive! Due on or before MAY 4 (Worth 20 pts)**

Late written assignments will not be accepted -- no exceptions!

4. FIVE CHOREOGRAPHY RETENTION QUIZZES

Each group number (4) will have a retention quiz on the last day of its work period. You will be notified prior to its date. The quiz will be performance-based and done as a group. It will NOT measure technical prowess but, instead, your retention of the choreography and the effort made in your performance of it. Each quiz is worth 4 points; if you miss one, it cannot be made up. The last (5th) retention quiz may be an overall warm-up, across-the floor, studio technique retention assessment. **(5 quizzes = total of 20 pts)**

5. GRADUATE CHOREOGRAPHED PERFORMANCE PIECE

Together, the graduate students will be required to collaborate and create an original Broadway dance number outside of class (approx. 2-3 minutes) which you will also perform at our Final Exam/Open Class Performance. Depending on the number of dancers desired for your choreography, you may incorporate other students as dancers in your piece. **(worth 20 pts)**

6. FINAL EXAM / PERFORMANCE

The final exam will be an open class during which, after a warm-up, you will perform all routines learned throughout the semester. You may invite observers so that you have an audience. You will be graded on **effort, progress, and positive contribution/participation** on that day. **(Worth 40 pts)**

A FINAL NOTE REGARDING COURSE GRADES:

I have a "NO LATE ASSIGNMENT" policy – no exceptions, do not ask . . . I also have a "NO MAKE UP" and "NO ADDITIONAL / EXCEPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS" policy. The syllabus, required assignments, and grading rubrics/criteria are set in stone. The grade you earned is the grade you will receive. After-the-fact requests for extra credit, alternate/additional assignments or grading reconsiderations will not receive a response from me, as you have been duly forewarned that your grade is solely determined by the assignments and criteria set forth in this syllabus. (This is especially applicable to students who may have accrued a number of tardies or absences and hope to improve their grades late in the semester with extra-credit work. As this class is heavily based on attendance, it would not be fair to the other students to make exceptions to this major class component.)

APP	140 pts
Outside Musical – Choreography/Dance Critique	20 pts
Personal Performance Analysis	20 pts
Retention Quizzes	20 pts
Graduate Choreographed Performance Piece	20 pts
Final Exam/Performance	<u>40 pts</u>
TOTAL CLASS POINTS	260 pts

OTHER CRITICAL COURSE POLICIES & PROTOCOL

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AND THE STUDENT CONDUCT CODE:

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php.

SCHOOL OF THEATRE & DANCE:

All Theatre & Dance students must have an in-depth knowledge of the practices and procedures outlined in the School of Theatre & Dance Student Handbook. The Handbook is available online at <http://www.umt.edu/theatredance/about/handbook>.

Risk: There is inherent risk involved in many Theatre & Dance classes as they are very physical in nature. Please proceed through class, shop, or rehearsal with caution. Always be mindful of your personal safety and the safety of others. Students participating in class/shop/rehearsal/performance do so at their own risk.

Class Etiquette: There is **no eating, drinking, or gum chewing** during the class. Please let me know in writing if you have a medical exception to this policy. **Water in a capped container** is acceptable. Absolutely **no weapons**, real or fake, are allowed in the classroom. When class has ended, please return space to its original condition (in other words, **clean up** after yourselves). Lastly, **electronic devices are to be stowed away** during class unless permission has been given to access them.

Guests: Due to safety considerations, at no point during a student's time spent in class or serving on a production (in any capacity) should non-enrolled persons be guests of that student without the instructor's consent. Presence of such unauthorized persons in a class, shop, or any backstage/off-stage area will negatively affect a student's grade.

DISABILITY SERVICES:

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

Course Grade % Scale :

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>		<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>	
A	94-100	4.0	C+	77-79	2.3
A-	90-93	3.7	C	73-76	2.0
B+	87-89	3.3	C-	70-72	1.7
B	83-86	3.0	D+	67-69	1.3
B-	80-82	2.7	D	60-66	1.0
			F	0-59	0.0

CLASS SCHEDULE / CALENDAR:

I will most likely be emailing you regularly with updates, reminders, and general information. Feel free to email me regularly as well with questions, concerns, or to simply touch base or discuss an issue. I will do my best to answer within 24 hours.

Daily Schedule: Typically, the first half of each class period will be spent in warm-ups and across-the-floor combinations, leaving the balance of the period devoted to learning the group number/s. I will take role at 2:30 p.m. sharp each day before warm-ups – tardiness (and absences) will affect your grade (you will see the point deductions recorded on Moodle). Following is a rough breakdown as to the group numbers that will be learned throughout the semester:

WEEK 1 (Tuesday)	Course Orientation (no dance that day)
WEEK 1 – 2	Dance Class/Technique Basics
WEEKS 2 – 5	"Too Darn Hot" (<i>Kiss Me, Kate</i>)
WEEKS 6 – 9	"96,000" (<i>In the Heights</i>)

DUE Thursday March 30: Outside Musical -- Choreography/Dance Critique

WEEKS 9 - 12	"All That Jazz" (<i>Chicago</i>)
WEEKS 12 – 14	"Nicest Kids in Town" (<i>Hairspray</i>)
WEEKS 14 – 15	Review and Polish all dance routines **

DUE Thursday May 4: Personal Performance Analysis

** Throughout the semester, we will also work on a segment of "Dance at the Gym" from *West Side Story*

MAY 4, THURSDAY, 2:30-3:50 P.M. – FINAL / PERFORMANCE