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Fall 9-1-2018

THTR 315.01 - Physical Performance Skills I

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McDaniel, Matthew T., "THTR 315.01 - Physical Performance Skills I" (2018). *Syllabi*. 8971.
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THTR315 Section 1 :: 3 Credits

PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE SKILLS I :: Autumn 2018

Class meeting times: Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30PM- 1:50PM

Instructor: Matthew McDaniel

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Office: Law Building Commons

Phone: 406-243-4481

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 5:30PM-6:30PM *and by appointment*

- **AIM:** In this studio course you will be introduced to practice-based theories of physical performance. You will realize and refine your strengths in your physical performance while learning to evaluate your own opportunities to improve your abilities as an actor through physical performance.

OUTCOMES: *At the end of the semester the actor will:*

- Display a greater awareness, connection and understanding of the actor's body and its unique abilities in performance.
- Establish a useful physical performance vocabulary which can be practically applied to the process of character development.
- Demonstrate the actor's ability to record useful self-observations of physical behavior and generate a catalogue their discoveries in written reflection.
- Display the ability to cultivate a believable character in both abstract and realistic performance by implementing a body-centric approach.

UNIT CONTENT:

- UNIT I: AWAKENING THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION
- UNIT II: DEVELOPING A PHYSICAL VOCABULARY
- UNIT III: EMOTIONAL AROBICS: CRAFTING CHARACTER EMOTIONS THROUGH SENSATION
- UNIT IV: CRAFTING THE ABSTRACT & REALISTIC

MOODLE & SELF STUDY: The course Moodle will be used to access outside reading, research, video reference materials and occasional concept checks.

REQUIRED TEXT: *The Acrobat of the Heart* by Stephen Wangh :: Vintage; 1st Edition
ISBN-10: 0375706720, ISBN-13: 978-0375706721.

The Expressive Actor by Michael Lugering :: Routledge; 2 Edition
ISBN-10: 0415669316 ISBN-13: 978-0415669313

**We will study one piece of abstract theatre and one piece of contemporary realism. The studio ensemble will submit plays of interest to be reviewed by the instructor and the studio will vote on the plays studied. This will require you to purchase two plays across the semester.*

SUGGESTED TEXT: *Towards A Poor Theatre* by Jerzy Grotowski :: Routledge; 1 edition
ISBN-10: 0878301550 ISBN-13: 978-0878301553.

COURSE COMPONENTS:

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE MATERIAL EXPLORED, IT IS ESSENTIAL ALL PARTICIPANTS ATTEND EACH WORKSHOP SESSION. Attendance is mandatory not only to ensure the entire ensemble is acquiring the material in tandem but to maintain safety and wellbeing of the ensemble and each individual participant.

You are provided two free personal/sick days during the semester without losing credit. Upon your third absence your cumulative score will be dropped ONE letter grade upon the third absence and continue to drop for each following absence. Use them wisely and communicate your needs to the instructor. If you need to be absent for personal emergency or medical issue, please notify the instructor as soon as possible. ***No excused absences without a written note from your physician.***

BE ON TIME! Tardiness, however inevitable in some circumstances, should be avoided at all costs. If you have a specific condition or obstacle making prompt attendance a concern, please communicate your issues at the beginning of the semester or when necessity arise. After the ensemble has prepared the studio space for each workshop, the ensemble will meet around the perimeter of the studio, promptly at 12:35PM to begin conditioning work.

SAFTY PROCEDURES & CONDITIONING WORK

This course is extremely physical in nature and will require close attention to the studio rules and safety procedures designed to keep each participant safe and healthy while exploring the physical skills and set outcomes. Please see the attached *STUDIO RULES & SAFTY PROCEDURES* for full breakdown of expectations.

The exploration of physical performance is intended to build and maintain personal physical fitness and ability as a performer. Each Workshop session will contain a 15-20 minute conditioning and preparation component before exploring practical material for that day. These conditioning exercises may be comprised of any number or combination of relaxation, breath/body awareness, vocal preparation, or strengthening and stretching routines. ***You are expected to perform at your individual body's ability and maintain and awareness of your body's needs at any given time during the semester.***

EXPLORATIONS & PERFORMANCES

Each Unit is comprised of 7-8 Workshops consisting of assigned readings, practical explorations of the theories studied and a performance to culminate the lessons learned in each Unit. You will be required to present FOUR performances across the semester.

If for some reason you are to miss a Performance, you will be required to make up the Performance during the instructor's office hours or by appointment. You must schedule this "Make-up" within 48 hours of your absence. This may include outside commitment from a partner, which you will be responsible for scheduling and negotiating the best time for your partnership.

FINAL MONOLOGUE & SCENE PERFORMANCES

The final for this course will consist of a Final Showcase to be presented to the Faculty & Staff of the School of Theatre & Dance and other invited guests. You will be performing ONE Scene and ONE Monologue. Both of these pieces will be developed over the duration of the semester.

PROCESS JOURNALS & PERFORMANCE REFLECTION RESPONCES

For the duration of the course you will be expected to maintain a Process & Reflection Journal. The intent behind this Journal is to provide a platform for the development of "in-process" articulation while we study and explore physical performance theories and methodologies. In this Journal, you will be expected to maintain diligent notes of the exercises,

explorations, discoveries and physical vocabulary cultivated in each Unit. You will be required to write a *minimum of 100 word* response for each day. You must bring this Journal to class EVERYDAY as you will be expected to take notation of the physical movement practiced and discoveries made in each Workshop.

You will receive 10 points for a qualifying entry. At the end of each Unit, you will be required to write a minimum of 200-word response detailing a reflection of your experience from introduction to performance. You will then submit this Journal to the instructor post performance. **At the end of the semester you will have a total of 33 qualifying entries to receive full credit for this component of the course.**

At the end of the semester you will also write and submit a minimum of 750 word reflection essay of your process for the two characters you present in the Final Studio Showcase, displaying your ability to articulate your process from initial exploration to performance.

EVALUATION: *Your semester grade will be based on the following:*

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| • ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION | 40% |
| • PROCESS REFLECTION JOURNALS | 15% |
| • FINAL STUDIO PERFORMANCE: MONOLOGUE | 15% |
| • FINAL STUDIO PERFORMANCE: SCENE | 15% |
| • PERFORMANCE REFLECTION RESPONSES | 15% |

STUDIO POLICIES:

ATTIRE

Appropriate movement attire is a MANDATORY requirement for full participation in this course. Please wear clean, black and well-fitting tee shirts or tank tops which allow for room to move and stretch. Pants, shorts or athletic bottoms should be black and allow for movement. NO SHOES or JEWELRY will be allowed in and on the studio floor. You will be asked to participate barefoot. If you would like to cover your feet you may use rubber soled socks. Individuals wearing long hair should tie it up and keep it away from the face.

The instructor will survey each participant before the work begins. If any of your attire does not meet the studio safety requirements you will be asked to remove the article before beginning work. If any element of your attire is inadequate and cannot be removed, you will be asked to sit out and participation points will be deducted.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

It is highly recommended each participant bring a personal hand or yoga towel to class each session to wipe away excess sweat. You may also bring your own personal exercise or yoga mat if you prefer not to work on the communal mats or floor during the conditioning portion of each Workshop. It is also suggested you purchase a pair of cloth knee pads for the duration of the course.

THE SPACE

The ensemble will be required to prepare the studio space at the beginning of each workshop. The ensemble is provided with the first 5 minutes of class to change attire and prepare the studio space. Conditioning Exercises will begin promptly at 12:36AM. The following studio atmosphere must be obtained prior to each workshop beginning:

1. All rehearsal furniture and properties must be cleared from the studio floor and placed in the storage space in SG123 or flush against the walls of the studio in an organized fashion.
2. The space MUST be swept fully and all dirt removed from the studio floor and placed in a proper trash receptacle.
3. All personal belongings must be kept off the main studio floor. You may keep your personal belongings in the audience bank or in SG123 storage area. Ensure you have quick access to your water, personal towel and exercise mat.

4. All mats must be laid out and connected securely to the others in a large rectangle or square unless indicated by the instructor.

At the end of each workshop the ensemble will be responsible for striking and organizing all mats, furniture or properties utilized during the workshop process each session. The ensemble will be allotted 5 minutes post workshop session to complete the following tasks.

1. All furniture, properties or equipment used during the workshop session should be returned to storage in an organized fashion.
2. The mats should be wiped down with antiseptic wipes and returned to storage in an organized fashion.
3. The floor must be swept and all personal belongings must be removed or stored in the locked storage room in SG123.

SELF CARE

The ensemble and instructor will work together to ensure you are learning the skills and techniques required by the course curriculum in a safe and controlled manner. If you ever feel unsafe or your physical/emotional/mental health is at stake, you may always call HOLD and notify the instructor. It will always be your right to take a break or step out of the workshop when you see fit. Please do not feel hesitant to approach an issue, no matter how trivial you may find it, your knowledge of yourself will be trusted and your well-being will ALWAYS be prioritized.

For your own personal protection and safety, you MUST communicate ALL prior injuries, conditions and/or physical limitations to the instructor prior to beginning work. You will NEVER be expected to perform any tasks risking the relapse, exacerbation or extension of previous injuries, conditions or personal limitations.

It is highly suggested you bring a water container which can be securely sealed to prevent spills. You are allowed to bring a small snack that can be consumed on breaks, but you MUST clean up after yourself and take responsibility for all spills or messes made in the studio. Please do not bring full meals to class and due to the nature of the course, it is not advised that you eat 30-60 minutes prior to class.

UNIVERSITY and SCHOOL OF THEATRE & DANCE ACADEMIC POLICIES

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.

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>.

There is inherent risk involved in many Theatre & Dance classes as they are very physical in nature. Please proceed through class, shop time, 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.

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 my consent. Presence of such unauthorized persons in a class, shop, or any backstage/off-stage area will negatively affect a student's grade.