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Fall 9-1-2022

THTR 322.01: Musical Theatre Audition Techniques

Pamyla A. Stiehl

University of Montana, Missoula, pamyla.stiehl@umontana.edu

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Musical Theatre Audition Techniques

THTR 322-01 / FALL 2022 / 2 credits

McGill 125; T/TH 2:00-3:50

(Schreiber Gym is also an alternate classroom for this course)

Instructors: Pamyla Stiehl	Contact Info: Pamyla.stiehl@umontana.edu	Stiehl Office Hours: PARTV 192 Mon/Weds 12:30-2:00 or by appt.
Michael Legg	Michael.legg@mso.umt.edu	Office Hours: PARTV 101; TBA
T.A./Accompanist Spencer Stern	Spencer.stern@umontana.edu	Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A foundational studio course which focuses on the development and practice of musical theatre audition skills. The course will comprise specialized training in requisite areas of singing, acting, dancing and materials preparation pertaining to the professional format, demands, and craft of musical theatre auditions.

GOALS: The goal of this course is to foster familiarity with and mastery of musical theatre audition practice through selection, performance and polish of audition songs comprising various periods and styles. The class will also address general audition work, including monologues, dance calls and callback readings. Lastly, the course will prepare the student for the overall business of musical theatre auditioning, including research, material preparation, and industry protocol.

OUTCOMES: Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Identify and execute fruitful musical theatre audition material, applying vocal and acting technique, professional polish, and practiced craft;
- Build an efficacious audition song repertoire, including pieces from a spectrum of genre categories;
- Work outside of class to research, select, and rehearse audition material, including monologues;
- Apply practical skills in terms of singing, reading, and dancing for callback auditions;
- Chronicle, analyze, and constructively critique process, progress, and craft of peers and self in studio setting;
- Research, prepare, and execute professional theatre auditions outside of UM, requiring an understanding of how auditions function in the professional world;
- Present an industry-standard headshot and resume.

REQUIRED DRESS: You will be required to dress appropriately and comfortably for class. As required in all UM acting classes, this means clothing that promotes a "neutral" state of being (not flashy, controversial logo-bearing or overtly skin-revealing), as well as appropriate shoes for studio work. When a dance call is scheduled, you will need to wear dance or exercise wear. You will also want to simulate actual audition attire for graded "craft" days.

ATTENDANCE / PROMPTNESS: This is a professional practice studio. If you miss a class, the experience is gone – you cannot "make it up." You will also learn a great deal by observing and constructively critiquing your fellow classmates. Therefore, ATTENDANCE IS CRUCIAL. School of Theatre and Dance policies will be strictly enforced. Class absences can be excused if **documentation** is provided (e.g., doctor's note, court notice, obituary with travel itinerary) or if I am notified as to a **religious/cultural observance conflict**. **During this time of COVID, if you are feeling ill, you must not attend class and should see a doctor ASAP – your absence will be EXCUSED.** For every UNEXCUSED absence, your grade will drop one-third of a letter grade. In addition, **tardiness in excess of 10 minutes will be considered an unexcused absence.** Please follow your attendance record on Moodle – if there are any discrepancies or if you are encountering any health or related issues that affect your ongoing attendance, please contact me immediately.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. VOCAL AUDITION WORK on FOUR PIECES (10 pts “process” / 10 pts “craft” per piece):

Students will have coaching/feedback sessions on each audition song in their compiled repertoire representing stipulated styles/categories – **32 bars (with a 16-bar cut also accessible)**. You are to be prepared and ready to work with your accompanist in front of the class for your session, culminating in your formal audition (“craft”) of the piece. **This means independent work outside class so that vocal selection is already musically learned and ready to execute, as time does not permit “learning the music” in studio time.** Please be aware that “craft” will also reflect process (i.e., growth, effort and preparation evidenced by final audition execution). REFER TO MOODLE FOR RESOURCES AS TO AUDITION PIECE SELECTION AND ONLINE RETRIEVAL. *(Worth 80 pts total)*

2. MONOLOGUE ASSIGNMENT / General Audition (10 pts “process” / 10 pts “craft”):

Students will have a coaching/feedback session on a **45-second monologue of their choice**. Again, you are to be prepared and ready to work in front of the class for your session. **This includes independent work outside of class to find and prepare the monologue before studio work.** Please be aware that “craft” will also reflect process (i.e., growth, effort and preparation evidenced by final audition execution). *(Worth 20 pts total)*

3. CALLBACK SESSION – Scenes with Readers

You will participate in a simulated professional callback session in a scene with a reader. Participation is key to accruing points for this exercise. *(Worth 20 pts)*

4. CALLBACK SESSION – Singing/Dancing

You will participate in a simulated callback session for a classical Golden Age musical, which will include specific singing from the score, as well as a general dance call. Participation is key to accruing points for this exercise. *(Worth 20 pts)*

5. FINAL PROFESSIONAL AUDITION EXERCISE – This assignment is a three-part culmination of your semester’s work in this course (written component 20 pts; headshot/resume 20 pts; “craft” audition 20 pts):

- 1) For the **written component (AT LEAST 3 PAGES)**, you will need to choose a musical currently playing on Broadway, Off-Broadway/other NYC venue, a national tour, or scheduled for a professional/semi-professional regional theatre’s upcoming season (local or national). You plan to audition for this musical, preparing as effectively as possible – **please do not work in fantasy but realistically explain as to how you might land and execute this audition.** Therefore, you will need to **1)** provide some background on the musical -- its composer/lyricist/librettist, style, etc. -- as well as a BRIEF plot synopsis/character breakdown. **2)** Provide info regarding the theatre and/or production company in terms of casting practices, which includes explaining the logistics of the audition, i.e., how would you actually audition for this show and what are they requiring in their audition call? *(For instance, do you need to fly to New York for a general, non-Equity call or is this a regional theatre call that you could accomplish through local travel/lodging logistics and communique?)* **3)** Explain why you would audition for this show. Which character do you see yourself cast as and why (i.e., character type, vocal type, dance, etc.)? **4)** Finally, you will address/justify the audition material you’ve chosen and explain how you would technically prepare for the overall audition. This audition selection will be performed in class as the “craft” component of this assignment (see below). *Please submit to the MOODLE ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION – Audition Written Essay – for this written component.*
- 2) You must have a **professional-quality headshot and resume** prepared and submitted with the written assignment. *Please submit to the MOODLE ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION – Headshot/Resume – for this component.*
- 3) You will **perform the audition in class** as a demonstration of craft for this cumulative exercise.

TOTAL ASSIGNMENT = 60 pts (20 pts per component); DEADLINE IS WEEK 15; Dec 8 for written component and headshot/resume.

Late written assignments will not be accepted

A FINAL NOTE REGARDING COURSE GRADES:

I have a "NO LATE ASSIGNMENT" policy. I also have a "NO MAKE UP" and "NO ADDITIONAL / EXCEPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS" policy. After-the-fact requests for extra credit, alternate/additional assignments or grading reconsiderations will not receive a response, as you have been informed that grades are determined by the assignments/criteria set forth in this syllabus. (This is especially applicable to students who may have accrued a number of tardies or unexcused 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 requirement.)

OVERALL CLASS GRADING BREAKDOWN:

Vocal Audition Work (4 pieces / 10 pts process; 10 pts craft)	80 pts
Monologue Assignment (10 pts process; 10 pts craft)	20 pts
Callback Scenes with Readers Exercise	20 pts
Callback MTHR Dance/Song Exercise	20 pts
Final Professional Audition (20 pts written; 20 pts headshot/ resume; 20 pts craft)	60 pts
TOTAL CLASS POINTS	200 pts

**** Please be aware that attendance may also affect final course grade. ****

Course Grade % Scale :

Grade	Percent		Grade	Percent	
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:

PLEASE NOTE that this class is a combined training/education experience shared by ACTING BFAs and MTP BFAs, co-taught by Michael Legg and me. There is training and knowledge that is crucial for all theatre disciplines and will require cojoined sessions. As the semester progresses, your concentration will be specifically addressed and the studio work will focus on the MTP-specific assignments. **CLASS SCHEDULE MAY FLEX AND ADJUST AT INSTRUCTORS' DISCRETION AND CLASS PROCESSION THROUGH ASSIGNMENTS.**

Course readings up through Week 4 are required and will be discussed. If you cannot respond to questions during the class discussion, I will assume you have not read the material and it will affect your Process grade for all audition assignments.

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 further discuss a topic. I will do my best to answer within 24 hours during a Mon-Fri workweek.

- WEEK 1 Class Orientation; Discussion, Theory, and Practice
Initial Sharing of an Audition Song from your existent repertoire for Feedback
- Have read "Song Selection: The Song Is You" (MOODLE) by end of Week 1

- WEEKS 2-3 Discussion, Theory, and Practice (cont.)
Initial Sharing of an Audition Song from your existent repertoire for Feedback (cont.)
- Have read “Acting the Song: Audition” (MOODLE) by end of Week 2
 - Have read “Musical Theatre Song” Chapters 9-11 (MOODLE) by end of Week 3
- WEEK 4 **Monologue Work/Assignment – Process / Craft (your choice for a General Audition)**
- Have read “Jane’s Workshop Audition Notes” (MOODLE) by end of Week 4
- WEEK 5 **First Vocal Audition Selection Assignment – Process / Craft (your choice for a General Audition)**
- WEEKS 6-7 **CALLBACK SESSIONS – Scenes with a Reader**
- WEEKS 8-9 Jazz/Golden Age Audition Selections – Process / Craft (final “craft” showing of piece Thurs 10/27)
- **CALLBACK SESSION MTHR – Song/Dance Golden Age Musical WEEK 9; Tues 10/25**
- WEEKS 10-12 Rock/Pop Audition Selections – Process / Craft (final “craft” showing of piece Tues 11/15)
Tuesday 11/8 – Election Day; no class held
- WEEKS 12-14 Contemporary Audition Selections – Process and Craft (final “craft” showing of piece Thurs 12/1)
Wednesday 11/23-Friday 11/25 – Thanksgiving Holiday; no classes held
- WEEK 15 Final AUDITION assignment – “craft” showings of assignment’s audition pieces
- **DEADLINE Thurs 12/8 – Written Audition Exercise and Headshot/Resume Submittal**

FINAL / THURS 12/15; 2:20-5:20: TBA

OTHER CRITICAL COURSE POLICIES & PROTOCOL

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AND THE STUDENT CONDUCT CODE:

You are expected to abide by the following School of Theatre and Dance regulations. There is no eating, drinking, or gum chewing. Please let me know if 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.

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

www.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/default.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

<https://www.umt.edu/umarts/theatredance/handbook.php>.

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.

From UM President Seth Bodnar:

The wide availability of safe, effective vaccines to combat COVID-19 means that we are able to continue full in-person learning again this semester. The Office of the President urges every member of the UM Family to get vaccinated (and receive a booster shot) if you haven't done so already. Vaccination provides the best means of protecting yourself – and others in our UM Family – from the risk of COVID-19.

Please visit <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/corona-virus.php> for the latest health/safety information, as well as campus communications and plans about the global health pandemic.

From the EO/AA Office:

Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and the Office for Disability Equality (ODE). "Reasonable" means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications. For more information, please consult <https://www.umt.edu/disability/default.php>.

Statement of Empowerment

The School of Theatre and Dance recognizes that theatre and performance content and processes can provoke; therefore, during the course of a class or rehearsal, students can choose to remove themselves from activities should they feel a threat to their well-being. Please communicate with your instructor and/or stage manager as soon as you can, either prior to or soon after leaving.

Wellness

Personal considerations such as health, wellness, and/or other issues can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive in the university setting. For helpful resources, please contact the Curry Health Center Counseling department at 406-243-4711 or schedule an online appointment through the CHC Health Portal: <https://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/>. For a crisis or for after-hours care, you can contact the emergency rooms at St. Patrick Hospital or Community Medical Center; the National Suicide Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255; or the Crisis Text Line: text MT to 741-741. For University of Montana Financial Aid, call 406-243-5373 or email finaid@umontana.edu. Please stay in communication with your faculty advisor and know that we are here to help. You can call in anytime to our office hours (posted on office doors) or email us to set up an appointment.