

THTRE 354: MUSICAL THEATRE HISTORY AND PERFORMANCE

Course Syllabus—Fall 2023

Instructor: Cason Murphy, M.F.A.

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Course Time: Tuesday and Thursday from 3:40pm-4:55pm

Office: Carver 320

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Classroom: Carver 308

Phone: 515-294-8936

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:00am-12:00pm

Tuesdays from 2:00pm-3:30pm or other times by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

This course is a combination of theory and practice, which examines the history of musical theater, specifically the “Broadway musical,” and emphasizes this American contribution to the literary and performing arts.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students should be able to:	This will be measured by:
Summarize the trends and discuss the changes in the development of the history of the American musical theatre throughout the 20th and 21st centuries	<i>In-class lectures and discussions, reading assignments, musical deep dive presentation, reading responses, and research projects</i>
Compare and contrast the styles of different musical genres, productions, creators, and performers across various eras	<i>In-class lectures and discussions, reading assignments, reading responses, exams, and research projects</i>
Discuss musical theatre’s ability to be a vehicle for social change in the world	<i>In-class discussions, reading responses, musical deep dive presentation, and research projects</i>

COURSE GOALS

- To offer students a survey knowledge of the history of the American musical theatre.
- To understand the structure and function of the various components of a work of musical theatre.
- To explore the role musical theatre has in reflecting, challenging, and changing the world.
- To develop in the student an ability to objectively critique their own work and the work of their classmates.
- To celebrate the human right to be creative.

TEXT AND MATERIALS

Textbook

Musical Theatre: An Appreciation—Alyson McLamore

NOTE: Students will receive access to a digital version of our text via ISU’s Immediate Access program. **See below in Classroom Policies for more information on Immediate Access enrollment/opt-out.**

Any additional texts, articles, librettos, and supplemental material needed will be provided on Canvas.



Top Hat

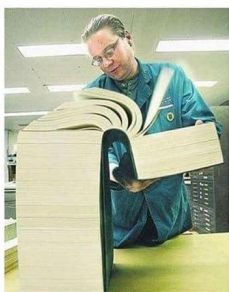
We will be using Top Hat (www.tophat.com) for class participation. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message. For instructions on how to create a Top Hat account and enroll in our course, please refer to the invitation sent to your school email address or consult *Top Hat's Getting Started Guide* (<https://bit.ly/31TGMlw>).

You should have received an invitation from me to join our Top Hat. If you already have a Top Hat account, **go to our Canvas page and click through the "Top Hat 1.3" link on the side navigation bar at least once.** From then on, you can either click through that link or go to <https://app.tophat.com/e/332337> to be taken directly to our course. If you are new to Top Hat, follow the link in the email invitation you received or...

- Go to <https://app.tophat.com/register/student>
- Click "Search by school" and input "Iowa State University"
- Search for our course with the following join code: **332327**.
- Be sure to click through the "Top Hat 1.3" link on the side navigation bar of our Canvas shell at least once.

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time please contact their Support Team directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in-app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491. Specific user information may be required by their technical support team when troubleshooting issues.

My knowledge of
musicals



My knowledge of
being a normal human



COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Your final grade will be calculated on a 750-point scale:

698-750:	A	600-622:	B-	510-524:	D+
675-697:	A-	585-599:	C+	473-509:	D
660-674:	B+	548-584:	C	450-472:	D-
632-659:	B	525-547:	C-	0-449:	F

Course Requirements	Points
Participation / Attendance	100
Quizzes and Reading Responses	150
Self-Evaluations and Other Assignments	50
Head Over Heels Response	50
"Musical Deep Dive" Research Presentation	150
Musical Theatre Midterm and Final Exams (2 x 75 pts)	150
Pitch Your Own Musical Project	100
TOTAL	750



ITEMS TO BE GRADED

PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to be at and participate in every class. Participation also includes being on time and fully prepared for class (assigned readings and assignments done, prepared for discussion, and with all necessary supplies). That said, the past few years have shown us that life can get hectic quickly. Thus, each student can avail

themselves of **two unexcused absences** throughout the semester without a point penalty. Unexcused absences on specific project days (except in extremely extraordinary circumstances, and at my discretion) will result in a zero for that assignment.

Additionally, a student can be excused for missing a class for any of the following—with proper documentation. **NOTE: Any university-approved absence must be communicated to the instructor by your supervising faculty at least one week prior to the absence.**

- Field trips or curricular-related activities
- Extra-curricular activities as a representative of the university, such as:
 - Academic or professional conferences, workshops, presentations, or programs
 - Intercollegiate athletic, academic, and judging competitions
 - Musical, theatrical, dance, or other artistic performances
- Military or National Guard service
- Court appearances
- Funerals
- Positive COVID-19 test or necessary isolation from exposure
 - The period of excusal from class will extend to the full length of the isolation period under current CDC guidance.

QUIZZES AND READING RESPONSES: Reading responses/quizzes will be given on key textbook readings/production librettos throughout the semester. The student is expected to have read the material prior to the class meeting and completed the assignment on Canvas prior to our more in-depth discussion of the ideas/show during class. *One quiz (worth 5 points) and one reading response (worth 10 points) will be dropped.*

NOTE ON LATE WORK: I understand that sometimes students get behind/get overwhelmed—especially in this age of disruption. If you miss a due date, you can (and should) still turn submit something. If you start to fall behind in class, the best thing you can do is talk to me!

HEAD OVER HEELS RESPONSE: Students will be asked to attend the ISU production of the musical *Head Over Heels* (Oct. 27–Nov. 4) and write a critical response to the show, particularly in relation to class discussions (guidelines will be provided). (If you are cast in *Head Over Heels*, a slightly adjusted version of the assignment will be assigned to you.)

MUSICAL DEEP DIVE: Once during the semester, you and a partner will lead the rest of the class in discussion about one of the musicals we read/listen to. The pair will be responsible for guiding class discussion, curating relevant audio-visual materials, and leading an insightful dive into the musical by identifying the main elements of musical theatre within your presentation, *including but not limited to*: a brief

plot summary, a major dramatic question, a song plot; an [about] set, relevant social context; deep analysis of at least one song/production number; and other pertinent information (notable historical productions or revivals; critical reviews and/or scholarship; and/or unique anecdotes). A digital visual aid (PowerPoint/Prezi/Keynote) should be created and distributed to class.

PITCH YOUR OWN MUSICAL PROJECT: Students will construct a [Pecha Kucha-style](#) pitch for a “new musical” (whether original concept or adaptation). As part of your project, you will be expected to identify the main elements of musical theatre, including but not limited to: a brief plot/energy alignment summary; a major dramatic question; a character list; a song plot; an [about] set; a demonstration for the social need for *this* musical; and an example of lyrics and/or music for at least one song. Extra points for creative design and/or additional material creation are available.

MUSICAL THEATRE EXAMS: Twice during the semester (at the end of Week 7 and 14), students will complete online exams within Canvas over material from assigned textbook readings, articles, class lectures, videos, and any show libretti we have read. **Students will have one two-hour attempt to complete each exam once started.**

COURSE SCHEDULE

I reserve the right to alter the reading assignments and/or the number of assignments, exams, and projects as necessary to meet the time constraints and enrollment of the course.

Date	Topic of Class Meeting	What's Due For Next Time?
Week 1		
Aug. 22	Introduction to Class / What Do We Know About Musical Theatre?	READ: Excerpts from <i>Musical Theatre Analysis Throughout the Ages</i>
Aug. 24	A Musical Theatre Theory Primer: How Musicals Work Part I	Primary Self-Reflection due by 11:59 on Aug. 29
Week 2		
Aug. 29	A Musical Theatre Theory Primer: How Musicals Work Part II	READ: Chapters 4, 7-9
Aug. 31	Discussion: Origins of the American Musical Theatre	READ: Chapters 11-15 SUBMIT: Quiz 1
Week 3		
Sept. 5	Discussion: The 1910-1920s and the Birth of the “Musical”	LISTEN/READ: <i>Show Boat</i> SUBMIT: <i>Show Boat Response</i>
Sept. 7	Musical Deep Dive: <i>Show Boat</i>	READ: Chapters 16-20 SUBMIT: Quiz 2
Week 4		
Sept. 12	Discussion: 1930s and Depression-Era Musicals	LISTEN/READ: <i>Anything Goes</i> SUBMIT: <i>Anything Goes Response</i>
Sept. 14	Musical Deep Dive: <i>Anything Goes</i>	READ: Chapters 21-24 SUBMIT: Quiz 3
Week 5		
Sept. 19	CASON GONE / Discussion: The 1940s and the Dawn of the Golden Age	LISTEN/READ: <i>Oklahoma!</i> SUBMIT: <i>Oklahoma! Response</i>

Sept. 21	Musical Deep Dive: <i>Oklahoma!</i>	READ: Chapters 25-28 SUBMIT: Quiz 4
Week 6		
Sept. 26	Discussion: The 1950s and the Evolution of the Modern Musical	LISTEN/READ: <i>West Side Story</i> SUBMIT: <i>West Side Story Response</i>
Sept. 28	Musical Deep Dive: <i>West Side Story</i>	READ: Chapters 29-35 SUBMIT: Quiz 5
Week 7		
Oct. 3	Discussion: The 1960s and the Rise of the Political Musical	LISTEN/READ: <i>Cabaret</i> SUBMIT: <i>Cabaret Response</i>
Oct. 5	Musical Deep Dive: <i>Cabaret</i>	MUSICAL THEATRE EXAM 1
Week 8		
Oct. 10	Discussion: The 1970s and the Diversification of the Great White Way	LISTEN/READ: <i>The Wiz</i> SUBMIT: <i>The Wiz Response</i>
Oct. 12	Musical Deep Dive: <i>The Wiz</i>	READ: Chapters 36-38 SUBMIT: Quiz 6
Week 9		
Oct. 17	Lecture: The 1980s and the Return of the Spectacular	LISTEN/READ: <i>Little Shop of Horrors</i> SUBMIT: <i>LSOH Response</i>
Oct. 19	Musical Deep Dive: <i>Little Shop of Horrors</i>	READ: Chapters 39-42 SUBMIT: Quiz 7
Week 10		
Oct. 24	Discussion: The 1990s and Voices of a New Generation	LISTEN/READ: <i>Hedwig and the Angry Inch</i> SUBMIT: <i>HATAI Response</i>
Oct. 26	Musical Deep Dive: <i>Hedwig and the Angry Inch</i>	READ: Chapters 39-42 SUBMIT: Quiz 8 SEE: <i>Head Over Heels</i> (through Nov. 4)
Week 11		
Oct. 31	Discussion: The 2000s and the Corporate Musical	LISTEN/READ: <i>In the Heights</i> SUBMIT: <i>In the Heights Response</i>
Nov. 2	Musical Deep Dive: <i>In the Heights</i>	READ: Chapters 43-44 SUBMIT: Quiz 9 SEE: <i>Head Over Heels</i> (through Nov. 4)
Week 12		
Nov. 7	ELECTION DAY—NO CLASS	LISTEN/READ: <i>Head Over Heels</i>
Nov. 9	Musical Deep Dive: <i>Head Over Heels</i>	READ: Chapters 45 SUBMIT: Quiz 10
Week 13		
Nov. 14	Discussion: The 2010s and Musicals in the Era of Social Media	LISTEN/READ: <i>Fun Home</i> SUBMIT: <i>Fun Home Response</i>
Nov. 16	Musical Deep Dive: <i>Fun Home</i>	READ: Chapters 46 SUBMIT: Quiz 11 and <i>Head Over Heels Response</i>

THANKSGIVING <i>(No class—Nov. 21 and Nov. 23)</i>		
Week 14		
Nov. 28	Discussion: The Current State of Musical Theatre	LISTEN: <i>A Strange Loop</i> SUBMIT: <i>A Strange Loop Response</i>
Nov. 30	Musical Deep Dive: <i>A Strange Loop</i>	MUSICAL THEATRE EXAM 2
Week 15		
Dec. 5	Review / The Big Finale / Last Thoughts / Pitch Your Own Musical Work Day	
Dec. 7	Pitch Your Own Musical Work Day	
Final		
Dec. 12 (Tuesday)	PITCH YOUR OWN MUSICAL 2:15pm-4:15pm	Final Self-Reflection due by 11:59pm on Dec. 14

CLASSROOM POLICIES

PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY: This class honors ISU's Principles of Community and expects the classroom discourse and attitude to reflect them: respect, purpose, cooperation, richness of diversity, freedom from discrimination, and the honest and respectful expression of ideas:

<http://www.diversity.iastate.edu/principles-of-community>

REGARDING NAME, GENDER IDENTITY AND/OR GENDER EXPRESSION: Class rosters and any other university-controlled apparatuses (email, Canvas, etc.) are created, and provided to me, using the student's legal name. However, I will gladly honor any request to address you by an alternate name or pronouns. Please advise me of your preferences so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

COLLABORATION: An ensemble is only as strong as its least-present member. In order for students to begin to understand this concept, this class will be set up as an artistic community, dependent on the participation and enthusiasm of each member for the success of the whole. This class can be quite surprisingly interactive. The more each student puts into this class, the more we will all get out of it.

CONTENT: Musicals can contain strong language and mature content: profanity, violence, sexual terms, religious references, outdated language/slurs, and other mature themes/elements. Theatre provides us an opportunity to explore the human condition, and the human condition is not always pretty. Expect to examine and take apart material that challenges you as a reader/viewer.

TECHNOLOGY: Cell phones, laptops, and tablets are tools—use them wisely. Any disruption from technology or continued distractions will result in a deduction of 25 points. If there are extraordinary circumstances and you are waiting for an important call, let me know beforehand to make arrangements.

IMMEDIATE ACCESS: As noted above, students have access to a digital copy of our textbook through Immediate Access, a collaborative affordability initiative between the ISU Book Store, faculty, and publishers. You will be automatically charged on your u-bill for this digital content. The billing description on your u-bill will show the department and course number, followed by "IMMED ACCESS" and the last 4 digits of the billing ISBN. **Students who drop the course within the first 10 days of class will receive a**

refund on their u-bill (5 days for courses 8 weeks or shorter). You do not have to notify the bookstore if you drop the course. This is an automated process. **Students may choose to opt out of the program.** Students have within the first 10 days of class to opt out and receive a refund to their u-bill (5 days for courses 8 weeks or shorter). This means you are choosing not to receive the digital content from the bookstore and you must find another way to acquire it in order to complete required assignments. Instructions on how to opt out will be emailed shortly before classes start. For further questions about Immediate Access please email immediateaccess@iastate.edu.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: As a land-grant institution, we are committed to the caretaking of this land and would like to begin this event by acknowledging those who have previously taken care of the land on which we gather. Before this site became Iowa State University, it was the ancestral lands and territory of the Baxoje or Ioway Nation. The United States obtained the land from the Meskwaki and Sauk nations in the Treaty of 1842. We wish to recognize our obligations to this land and to the people who took care of it, as well as to the 17,000 Native people who live in Iowa today.

ACCESSIBILITY: Iowa State University is committed to assuring that all educational activities are free from discrimination and harassment based on disability status. Students requesting accommodations for a documented disability are required to meet with staff in Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to establish eligibility and learn about related processes. Eligible students will be provided with a Notification Letter for each course and reasonable accommodations will be arranged after timely delivery of the Notification Letter to the instructor. Students are encouraged to deliver Notification Letters as early in the semester as possible. SAS, a unit in the Dean of Students Office, is located in room 1076, Student Services Building or online at www.sas.dso.iastate.edu. Contact SAS by email at accessibility@iastate.edu or by phone at 515-294-7220 for additional information.

PUBLIC HEALTH: If you are not feeling well, you should stay home and focus on your health. Should you miss class due to illness, it is your responsibility to work to arrange for accommodations and to make up coursework, as consistent with the attendance policy.

Iowa State University is committed to proactively facilitating all students' well-being. Please know that the following on-campus services are available for assistance regarding your physical, intellectual, occupational, spiritual, environmental, financial, social, and/or emotional needs:

- Student Wellness call (515) 294-1099 or via website (<http://studentwellness.iastate.edu>)
- Thielen Student Health Center call (515) 294-5801 (24/7 Medical Advice) or via website (<http://www.cyclonehealth.org>)
- Student Counseling Services call (515) 294-5056 or via website (<https://counseling.iastate.edu>)
- Recreation Services call (515) 294-4980 or via website (<http://recservices.iastate.edu>).
- Students dealing with heightened feelings of sadness or hopelessness, thoughts of harm or suicide, or increased anxiety may dial 988, use the ISU Crisis Text Line (Text ISU to 741-741) or contact the ISU Police Department (515) 294-4428.

Public health information for the campus community continues to be available on Iowa State's public health website. All public health questions should be directed to publichealthteam@iastate.edu.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: The class will follow Iowa State University's policy on academic misconduct ([5.1 in the Student Code of Conduct](#)). Students are responsible for adhering to university policy and the expectations in the course syllabus and on coursework and exams, and for following directions given by faculty, instructors, and Testing Center regulations related to coursework, assessments, and exams. Anyone suspected of academic misconduct will be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct in the Dean of Students Office](#). Information about academic integrity and the value of completing academic work honestly can be found in the [Iowa State University Academic Integrity Tutorial](#).

WRITING AND MEDIA CENTER ASSISTANCE: The Writing and Media Center (WMC) helps students become effective, confident communicators by supporting students during all stages of the writing process, from brainstorming to revising, as well as with oral, visual, and electronic communication. The WMC offers one-on-one and group consultations online—to register and schedule an appointment, see <https://iastate.mywconline.com/>. For more information, visit our website at <https://www.wmc.dso.iastate.edu> or emailwritectr@iastate.edu.

FREE EXPRESSION: Iowa State University supports and upholds the First Amendment protection of freedom of speech and the principle of academic freedom in order to foster a learning environment where open inquiry and the vigorous debate of a diversity of ideas are encouraged. Students will not be penalized for the content or viewpoints of their speech as long as student expression in a class context is germane to the subject matter of the class and conveyed in an appropriate manner.

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION: Iowa State University welcomes diversity of religious beliefs and practices, recognizing the contributions differing experiences and viewpoints can bring to the community. There may be times when an academic requirement conflicts with religious observances and practices. If that happens, students may request the reasonable accommodation for religious practices. In all cases, you must put your request in writing. The instructor will review the situation in an effort to provide a reasonable accommodation when possible to do so without fundamentally altering a course. For students, you should first discuss the conflict and your requested accommodation with your professor at the earliest possible time. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the [Dean of Students Office](#) at 515-294-1020 or the [Office of Equal Opportunity](#) at 515-294-7612.

HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION: Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. Veteran. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies may be directed to Office of Equal Opportunity, 3410 Beardshear Hall, 515 Morrill Road, Ames, Iowa 50011, Tel. 515-294-7612, Hotline 515-294-1222, email eooffice@iastate.edu

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you are experiencing, or have experienced, a problem with any of the above issues, email academicissues@iastate.edu