

# THTRE 355: MUSICAL THEATRE II

## Course Syllabus—Spring 2024

Instructor: Cason Murphy, M.F.A.

Accompanist: Sonya Siebert • TAs: Annika Baker and Brandon Schumann

**Course Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:10pm-3:25pm

**Classroom:** Carver 308

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**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:00pm-1:00pm

Tuesdays from 3:30pm-5:00pm or other times by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

This course will continue to the work on theory, technique, and history of Musical Theatre for the musical theatre performer started in THTRE 354—by focusing on preparing and auditioning for the musical theatre. The course will be structured primarily as a musical theatre audition workshop, where you will have the opportunity to prepare and present several songs of varying styles and historical periods. This course is not intended to teach you the mechanics of how to *sing*, but rather how to *more effectively act songs and audition for the musical theatre*. We will also have the opportunity to discuss the realities of the musical theatre industry through the preparation of professional materials and speaking with working professionals.

### COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

<b>Students should be able to:</b>	<b>This will be measured by:</b>
Choose appropriate audition material based upon their character type and type of audition	<i>Typing assessment and reflection, in-class exercises, and coaching</i>
Prepare for and perform musical theatre audition material from multiple eras	<i>In-class auditions and final cabaret performance</i>
Analyze a song from an acting and singing perspective for audition use	<i>Song analyses, in-class exercises, and coaching</i>
Constructively critique their own work and the work of their classmates	<i>Self-reflections, workshop feedback, and final cabaret performance</i>
Prepare self and materials for the profession	<i>Mock auditions, guest speaker reflections, audition book creation, and market research</i>

### COURSE GOALS

- To expand your spectrum of trust, expression, and imagination.
- To improve your confidence in performing in front of people.
- To expose you to various approaches to acting musical texts.
- To strengthen your skills in auditioning for the musical theatre.
- To continue the creation of your musical theatre repertoire.
- To develop in you an ability to objectively critique their own work and classmates.
- To experience practical real-life audition situations.
- To fine tune your skills to performance level
- To celebrate the human right to be creative.
- To work as a collaborative and cooperative artistic community.

## **TEXT AND MATERIALS**

*Acting in Musical Theatre: A Comprehensive Course (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)* by Joe Deer and Rocco Dal Vera.

NOTE: Students will receive access to a digital version of our text via ISU's Immediate Access program. **You must opt-out by Jan. 29 in order to not be charged via this service—see the Immediate Access tab on our Canvas shell for more.**

Outside of the required text, any additional material/articles/sides will be provided on Canvas (it is the student's responsibility to read/prepare prior to class).

Everyone should utilize a black or white three-ring binder for their audition songs, properly cut and marked.

You will be required to seek out new musical material to work on throughout the semester. Songs must be from musical theatre shows (unless otherwise discussed). The Iowa State library contains many musical scores from many time periods and genres. I have a personal collection of many of the Hal [Leonard Singer's Musical Theatre Anthology](#) in various voice parts. Scores can also be ordered from other universities through inter-library loan or purchased online (see the "Song and Sheet Music Resources" List on our Canvas shell). **Please work to choose your songs early so that you are not scrounging to find material at the last moment.**

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

Your final grade will be calculated on the 800-point scale:

744-800:	A	584-615:	C
720-743:	A-	560-583:	C-
696-719:	B+	536-559:	D+
664-695:	B	504-535:	D
640-663:	B	480-503:	D-
616-639:	C+	0-479:	F

<b>Course Requirements</b>	<b>Points</b>
Participation / Attendance	100
Reflections and Responses	250
Early MT Song Workshop & Performance	100
Modern Song Workshop & Performance	100
Contemporary Song Workshop & Performance	100
Audition Book, Market Analysis, & Professional Materials	100
Final Cabaret	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>800</b>

## **ITEMS TO BE GRADED**

**PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE:** You are expected to be at and participate in every class—even days in which you are not presenting work. Participation also includes being fully prepared for class (memorized, rehearsed, dressed appropriately, and with all necessary supplies). Absences on workshop or audition

days in which you are expected to present your work (except in extremely extraordinary circumstances, and at the instructor's discretion) will result in a zero for that assignment.

However, 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 as soon as possible prior to the absence.**

- Field Trips and Curricular related activities
- Extra-Curricular activities as a representative of the university, such as:
  - academic or professional conferences and workshops
  - intercollegiate athletic, academic, and judging competitions
  - musical, theatrical, dance and other artistic performances
- Military Service
- Court Appearances
- Funeral
- 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.

**RESPONSES AND REFLECTIONS:** Throughout the semester, we will read the textbook, speak with guests, view performances, or read relevant articles for student response in relation to class concepts/exercises/feedback/discussions. You may be asked to reflect on those, and as well as track your progress throughout the semester in written form (guidelines for each response/reflection will be provided on Canvas).

**SOLO SONG PERFORMANCES:** Over the course of the semester, you will select and prepare 32-bar audition cuts from songs from the musical theatre canon to be performed with live accompaniment. Students will be asked to perform songs in three styles—a **Contemporary MT song** (2000-present), an a **Modern MT Song** (1965-1995), and an **early/Golden Age MT Song** (pre-1960s). In each case, you will be evaluated largely on a combination of your workshop and mock audition performance (memorization, comfortability on stage, preparation for in-class rehearsal, stylistic understanding, willingness to explore and be creative, and execute a final product), along with the completion of song analysis documents (focusing on character, lyrical understanding, subtext, and beats/tactics).

**WORKSHOP DAYS:** On workshop days, you will be graded on memorization, musicality, taking direction, growth, willingness to try anything, and overall professionalism. On days of coaching performers are expected to know their songs—not only the lyrics but also all the notes. If you have a hard time learning music, I suggest hiring an accompanist to record the accompaniment for you to work on or teach you the song. The class will be broken down into three groups for coaching sessions. Those groups (Group A, B, and C) will be determined prior to the first workshop.

**Note:** Though there is time set aside in class to work on your songs, you must also work outside of class in order to be completely successful in this course.

**AUDITION BOOK AND PROFESSIONAL MATERIALS:** At the end of the semester, students should prepare their audition binder with all songs worked, additional songs identified to be within their repertoire, headshot, professional résumé, and a completed preliminary market analysis.

**SELF-TAPE:** Once during the semester, students will be assigned material to rehearse, perform, and submit as a self-tape. Students will be responsible for following instructions in order make sure the requested material is filmed, edited, and returned before the deadline.

**FINAL CABARET:** The class will culminate by organizing and producing a cabaret at the end of the semester during finals week featuring songs worked in class—along with the possibility of additional ensemble numbers or songs from guests.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

*I reserve the right to alter the reading assignments and/or the number of assignments 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?
<b>Week 1</b>		
Jan. 16	<b>NO CLASS — Inclement Weather</b>	Read Section I (and Chapter 18)
Jan. 18	<b>NO CLASS — KCACTF</b>	<b>SUBMIT:</b> Preliminary Self-Reflection by 11:59 on Sun. Jan. 21  <b>PREPARE:</b> Diagnostic Audition and Contemporary Song Choices
<b>Week 2</b>		
Jan. 23	<i>Perform:</i> Diagnostic Audition Meeting with Your Coaches <i>Discussion:</i> Approaching Auditions	Read Section III <b>SUBMIT:</b> Reading Response
Jan. 25	<i>Discussion:</i> Approaching Your Song / Beating a Song Exercise	<i>Work Contemporary Song Analysis and Beats</i>
<b>Week 3</b>		
Jan. 30	Group A Workshop (Contemporary)	Read Section II <i>by Feb. 8</i>
Feb. 1	Group B Workshop (Contemporary)	
<b>Week 4</b>		
Feb. 6	Group C Workshop (Contemporary)	
Feb. 8	Second Runs / Coach Work	<b>SUBMIT:</b> Contemporary Song Portfolio
<b>Week 5</b>		
Feb. 13	Contemporary Song Mock Audition	<i>Re-read Previous Reading Responses and Preliminary Self-Reflection</i>  <b>SUBMIT:</b> Audition Self-Reflection 1 by Sun. Feb. 18
Feb. 15	<i>Discussion:</i> Audition Post-Mortem / Strengths and Stretches	<i>Work Modern Song Analysis and Beats</i>
<b>Week 6</b>		
Feb. 20	Group B Workshop (Modern)	Read Section IV <i>by Feb. 29</i>

Feb. 22	Group C Workshop (Modern)	
<b>Week 7</b>		
Feb. 27	Group A Workshop (Modern)	
Feb. 29	Second Runs / Coach Work	<b>SUBMIT:</b> Modern Song Portfolio
<b>Week 8</b>		
Mar. 5	Modern MT Song Mock Audition	<i>Re-read Previous Reading Responses and Audition Self-Reflections</i>  <b>SUBMIT:</b> Audition Self-Reflection 2 by Sun. Mar. 10  <b>Complete Self Tape Exercise</b>
Mar. 7	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
<b>Spring Break (Mar. 11-15)</b>		
<b>Week 9</b>		
Mar. 19	Mock Dance Call	<i>Work Early MT Song Analysis and Beats</i>
Mar. 21	Group C Workshop (Early MT)	Read Section V by Apr. 2
<b>Week 10</b>		
Mar. 26	Group A Workshop (Early MT)	
Mar. 28	Group B Workshop (Early MT)	
<b>Week 11</b>		
Apr. 2	Second Runs / Coach Work	Complete Early MT Song Portfolio
Apr. 4	Early MT Song Mock Audition	<i>Re-read Previous Reading Responses and Audition Self-Reflections</i>  <b>SUBMIT:</b> Audition Self-Reflection 3 by Sun. Apr. 7
<b>Week 12</b>		
Apr. 9	Cabaret Check-in / Brainstorming	Read Section VI and Begin Market Analysis
Apr. 11	Guest Speaker	
<b>Week 13</b>		
Apr. 16	Cabaret Prep—Studio Time	
Apr. 1		
<b>Week 14</b>		
Apr. 23	Cabaret Prep—Staging	Prepare Professional Materials/Audition Binder for Final Evaluation
Apr. 25		
<b>Week 15</b>		
Apr. 30	Cabaret Prep—Staging	
May 2		
<b>Week 16 Finals Week</b>		
May 9	<b>12:00pm-2:00pm:</b> Cabaret Dress Rehearsal <b>7:00pm:</b> Cabaret Rehearsal & Performance!	<b>SUBMIT: Final Self-Reflection due by 12:00pm on Fri. May 10</b>

## **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. Students will be present for all coaching/workshop days (even if not performing); subsequently, if a student fails to contribute by not speaking up, participating, or attending the student's participation grade will be penalized. This class will be largely hands on and 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, descriptions of violence, sexual terms, religious references, and other mature themes/elements may be presented in this class. Theatre provides us an opportunity to explore the human condition, and the human condition is not always pretty. Expect to examine material that challenges you as both an actor and as an audience member.

**ATTIRE:** In addition to the suggested masks, appropriate rehearsal clothing should be worn in class. For most meetings, this simply means comfortable clothing and shoes that allow for easy movement, sitting & laying on the floor, and/or a range of physical movement (i.e., flip flops, restrictive clothing, and short skirts should be avoided). On performance days, students should wear clothing that supports the text/performance piece or suggests character. Ultimately, you should be able to fully participate without your clothing being a danger or a distraction to you or those around you.

**TECHNOLOGY: Cell phones, laptops, and tablets are tools—use them wisely and sparingly.** Any disruption from technology or continued distractions will result in a deduction of 25 points. That being said, if there are extraordinary circumstances and you are waiting for an important call, let me know beforehand and we can make arrangements. Recording is not permitted in class—the exception to this is if a performer asks to have their performance recorded during rehearsals or last runs.

**PHYSICAL CONTACT:** The nature of acting and any acting course or performance requires physical contact from time to time with others. A good rule of thumb is to always check in with anyone before engaging in physical contact in order to make sure you are BOTH clear on boundaries/previous injuries/concerns before you begin working.

**FEEDBACK:** Each student will be expected to not only receive but also give positive criticism. Emotionally and socially prepare yourself to enter into a room in which all *constructive* feedback has a place and is encouraged. Without seeing our flaws we can't get better. We are a team this semester and all feedback should focus on making the group better and stronger together.

## **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](http://www.sas.dso.iastate.edu). Contact SAS by email at [accessibility@iastate.edu](mailto: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.

You may choose to wear a face mask and/or receive the COVID-19 vaccine and boosters, as well as other vaccines such as influenza, but those options are not required. Thielen Student Health Center will continue to provide COVID-19 vaccinations free-of-charge to students. The university will continue to offer free masks and COVID-19 test kits during the fall 2022 semester. Other wellbeing resources for students are available at: <https://www.cyclonehealth.iastate.edu/wellbeing-resources/>.

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](mailto:publichealthteam@iastate.edu).

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** The class will follow Iowa State University's policy on academic dishonesty. Anyone suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students Office:  
<http://www.dso.iastate.edu/ja/academic/misconduct.html>

**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](mailto:emailwritectr@iastate.edu).

**FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND 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:** If an academic or work requirement conflicts with your religious practices and/or observances, you may request reasonable accommodations. Your request must be in writing, and your instructor or supervisor will review the request. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the Dean of Students Office or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance.

**HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION:** Iowa State University strives to maintain our campus as a place of work and study for faculty, staff, and students that is free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and harassment based upon race, ethnicity, sex (including sexual assault), pregnancy, color, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, or status as a U.S. veteran. Any student who has concerns about such behavior should contact his/her instructor, Student Assistance at 515-294-1020 or email [dso-sas@iastate.edu](mailto:dso-sas@iastate.edu), or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance at 515-294-7612.

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