

THTRE 355: MUSICAL THEATRE II

Course Syllabus—Fall 2021

Instructor: Cason Murphy, M.F.A.

Accompanist: Barb Evenson

Course Time: Monday and Wednesday from 2:15pm–3:35pm

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Office Hours: Mondays from 11:30am–1:00pm

Wednesdays from 11:00am-12:00pm or always 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 students will have the opportunity to prepare and present several songs of varying styles and historical periods over the course of the semester. This course is not intended to teach students 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 musical theatre makers.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students should be able to:	<i>This will be measured by:</i>
Choose appropriate audition material based upon their character type and type of audition	<i>Typing assessment and reflection, in-class exercises and coaching</i>
Perform a professional musical theatre audition	<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 for the profession	<i>Mock auditions, guest speaker reflections, audition book creation, and market research</i>

COURSE GOALS

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

TEXT AND MATERIALS

Students 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. *(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 1000-point scale:

930-1000: A	730-769: C
900-929: A-	700-729: C-
870-899: B+	670-699: D+
830-869: B	630-669: D
800-829: B	600-629: D-
770-799: C+	0-600: F

<i>Course Requirements</i>	<i>% of Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>
Participation / Attendance	20%	200
Reflections and Responses	20%	250
Golden Age Song Performance & Analysis	15%	150
Modern Song Performance & Analysis	15%	150
Contemporary Song Performance & Analysis	15%	150
Audition Book & Professional Materials	5%	50
Final Cabaret	5%	50
TOTAL	100%	1000

ITEMS TO BE GRADED

PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to be at and participate in every class. This includes class discussion and all exercises and performances. Participation also includes being fully prepared for class (memorized, rehearsed, readings done, dressed appropriately, and with all necessary supplies). **Attendance will be strictly monitored—missing class will negatively affect your grade.** That said, this past year and a half 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 project or performance days (except in extremely extraordinary circumstances, and at the instructor's 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 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
- presentations or programs given to external audiences
- 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 speak with guests, view performances, or read relevant articles for student response in relation to class concepts/exercises/feedback/discussions. Students will be asked to do research on the prior to class and complete a short reflection. Students will also be asked to reflect on their progress throughout the semester in written form (guidelines for each response/reflection will be provided on Canvas).

SOLO SONG PERFORMANCES: Students will select and prepare 32-bar audition cuts from songs from the musical theatre canon with live accompaniment. Students will be asked to perform songs in the following styles—a **Golden Age Song** (1930s-1965); a **Modern Song** (1965-2000) and a **Contemporary Song** (2001-present). In each case, students will be evaluated largely on rehearsal and performance (memorization, comfortability on stage, preparation for in-class rehearsal, willingness to explore and be creative in workshop, and their mock audition performance), along with the completion of scene analysis documents (focusing on lyrical understanding, subtext, and beats/tactics).

WORKSHOP DAYS: Songs (words and music) must be memorized by the day of your coaching. You must be prepared to work on your songs in class from this day onward. On coaching 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 the first week of class.

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

AUDITION BOOK AND PROFESSIONAL MATERIALS: Students will be required to use a black binder for their audition songs. All of your songs for the semester should be contained in this binder, so that they can be used at any time—at the end of the semester, students will submit their audition book with all songs worked, analysis documents, a preliminary market analysis, headshot, and professional résumé (more on that in class).

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 duets, ensemble numbers, or songs from guests. The format and timing of this will depend on local health and safety conditions.

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?
Week 1		
Aug. 23	Introduction to Class / Who are You? / Outline Golden Age Song and Start Song Search	
Aug. 25	The State of Musical Theatre & Choosing Material / Beating a Song	Primary Self-Reflection Due 11:59 on Sun. Aug. 29
Week 2		
Aug. 30	Exploring Body / Mind / Voice	
Sept. 1	Studio Day (first meet with accompanist) – Contemporary Song	
Week 3		
Sept. 6	<i>LABOR DAY (No Class)</i>	
Sept. 8	Group A Workshop	
Week 4		
Sept. 13	Group B Workshop	Contemporary Character Analysis due by Sept. 22
Sept. 15	Group C Workshop	
Week 5		
Sept. 20	Contemporary Song Last Runs	
Sept. 22	Contemporary Song Mock Audition	
Week 6		
Sept. 27	Mock Dance Call or Guest Speaker TBA	
Sept. 29	Studio Day (first meet with accompanist) – Modern Song	
Week 7		
Oct. 4	Group B Workshop	
Oct. 6	Group C Workshop	
Week 8		
Oct. 11	Group A Workshop	Modern Character Analysis due by Oct. 18
Oct. 13	Modern Song Last Runs	
Week 9		
Oct. 18	Modern Song Mock Audition	
Oct. 20	Modern Song Debrief / Golden Age Song Overview	
Week 10		
Oct. 25	Guest Speaker or Mock Dance Call TBA	
Oct. 27	Studio Day (first meet with accompanist) – Golden Age Song	
Week 11		
Nov. 1	Group C Workshop	
Nov. 3	Group A Workshop	

Week 12		
Nov. 8	Group B Workshop	Golden Age Character Analysis due by Nov. 15
Nov. 10	Golden Age Song Last Runs	
Week 13		
Nov. 15	Golden Age Song Mock Audition	
Nov. 17	Guest Speaker and Cabaret Preliminary Planning	
THANKSGIVING <i>(No class—Nov. 22 and Nov. 24)</i>		
Week 14		
Nov. 29	Cabaret Prep—Studio Time	Prep Audition Book and Materials
Dec. 1		
Week 15 Prep Week		
Dec. 6	Cabaret Prep—Staging	
Dec. 8		
Week 16 Finals Week		
Dec. 15	2:15pm–4:15pm: Cabaret Dress Rehearsal	
	TBD: Cabaret Rehearsal & Performance!	Final Self-Reflection Due by 11:59pm Fri. Dec. 17

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: profanities, 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. **NOTE: It is a violation of copyright law to alter/change/omit dialogue from a play or musical.** Keep this in mind when you select material, as you will NOT be permitted to change the text in any way.

COVID-19 HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION: Given the nature of this class in regard to singing and performance, it is highly encouraged for students to wear masks for class rehearsals and performances. Please make sure to follow all Cyclones Cares recommendations (<https://www.care.iastate.edu>) to ensure that our fall semester is able to continue as we all hope! For the 2021-22 academic year, university leaders are asking all Cyclones to take responsibility for their own health and show they care with four simple behaviors:

- Get vaccinated
 - Multiple locations are available on campus for free, convenient vaccination. Further information is available on [ISU's Covid-19 Vaccinations](#). Vaccinations may also be obtained from health care providers and pharmacies.
- Monitor your health
- Stay home if you're ill
- Wash your hands often and wear a face mask
 - All students are encouraged—but not required—to wear face masks, consistent with current recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Further information on the proper use of face masks is available on the [CDC website](#).



ATTIRE: In addition to the suggested masks, appropriate rehearsal clothing should be worn in class. For most meetings, this simply means clothing that allows for easy movement, sitting & laying on the floor, and/or jumping jacks (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. Be on time, dressed in comfortable clothes and shoes that allow you to move, bend, sit on the floor, etc.

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. Especially since we are still in a pandemic.

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. Contact SAS by email at accessibility@iastate.edu or by phone at 515-294-7220 for additional information.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS: 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 contact the ISU Crisis Text Line (Text ISU to 741-741) or contact the ISU Police Department (515) 294-4428.

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 emailwritctr@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, 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