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Fall 2021

Theatre 358
Oral Interpretation

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Principles of oral interpretation: practice in analysis, in reading aloud of literary selections, and in reader's theatre.

OVERVIEW
The benefits of performance are often discussed in terms of the audience, of the public community that views it. But performance is not only what happens in front of an audience. For the performer, the act of performance can also be a method for learning and exploring, another way of knowing. The process calls for critical and creative thinking, skill-building, analysis, and interpretation in order to make artistic choices that effectively communicate meaning and intention. This interdisciplinary course provides the opportunity for students to actively explore the creative process and engage in the study of written texts in the context of embodying and bringing these texts to life. Readings, discussions, and assignments focus on analysis, interpretation, and performance of texts as a way of knowing, as a way of communicating, and as a way of sharing understanding and meaning.

LEARNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES
Students who fully commit to and engage in the work of this course:

- Will be able to identify specific qualities in literature and analyze the pieces selected in terms of intellectual and emotional content.
- Will be able to identify the vocal and physical qualities needed to best communicate these pieces of literature to an audience.
- Will improve performance skills through the practice of interpreting literature before an audience.
- Will sharpen critical abilities through listening to and engaging with the performances of others.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS
Performance Pieces
You will analyze, rehearse, and perform four pieces for this class, in addition to our regular activities and exercises. We’ll work on these pieces in stages, so expect to go through a process that includes multiple drafts and revisions. More information about each assignment will be provided.
Workshop Responses
In preparation for workshops, you will be carefully reading, observing, and responding to other students’ work. Sometimes we will workshop in small groups, sometimes as a full class. We will discuss workshop process, expectations, and requirements as those deadlines near.

Writing Exercises, Performance Exercises, Reading Reflections, Etc.
These will include short performance and written pieces—formal and informal, creative and critical—as assigned. You may also be asked to give brief presentations and/or lead discussions.

Reading/Performance Attendance
You will attend at least three reading/performance events during the semester, including one Emerging Writers Series reading, one ISU Theatre production, and another event of your choice. Attend more events if you can.

Final Synthesis Essay
An opportunity to document, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate your learning and performance in class this semester.

MY EXPECTATIONS
The following expectations are simple but vital to your success in this course.

- **Fully commit to and engage in your own and others’ learning.** We are creating a learning community and a safe environment for sharing creative work,
- **Be in class on time, ready to work and play, with all assignments read, turned in, or ready to present in class.** Because this is an interactive, hands-on course, attendance and participation are essential to student success and you are expected to attend all classes. However, because life happens, you will be allowed to miss up to three classes to allow for sickness or emergencies. If you have to miss a class, please notify me and get notes from a classmate. If you miss more than three meetings, your final evaluation will be affected, and you may not be able to pass the class if you have five or more absences. Of course, this fall is unusual and may require extra flexibility from all of us, so please communicate any unforeseen problems or needs with me, and we’ll troubleshoot together.
- **Performance workshops are an important part of this class.** We will discuss our process in class, but know in advance that those are significant days, requiring your full preparation and engagement.
- **Please submit all assignments when due.** Let me know well in advance if you do not believe you can meet a deadline.
- **Treat the classroom and fellow learners with respect and care.** Practice active listening, keep cell phones and other non-essential electronics off and stowed, refrain from the use of profanity or other inappropriate/insensitive language, and respect other students’ learning styles and needs. I strongly encourage adherence to CDC guidelines for Covid-19 safety, wellness, and community health.
- **Do your best work.** You will set personal learning goals and track your own progress throughout the term. You’ll be asked to engage in self-evaluation in this class. Your final grade will depend on your attendance, participation, and completion of and quality of assignments, as well as substantial progress toward your own learning goals and the goals of the course, and I will encourage and honor your thoughtful, honest, fair, and substantiated self-assessment.
- **Enjoy!**
SCHEDULE OVERVIEW (details on Canvas)

Week One  
   August 24    Introduction  
   August 26    Introduction  

Week Two  
   August 31    Conversation  
   September 2  Conversation  

Week Three  
   September 7  Interpretation and Performance  
   September 9  Interpretation and Performance  

Week Four  
   September 14 Prose  
   September 16 Prose  

Week Five  
   September 21 Prose  
   September 23 Prose  

Week Six  
   September 28 Prose  
   September 30 Prose  

Week Seven  
   October 5    Poetry  
   October 7    Poetry  

Week Eight  
   October 12   Poetry  
   October 14   Poetry  

Week Nine  
   October 19   Poetry  
   October 21   Poetry  

Week Ten  
   October 26   Storytelling  
   October 28   Storytelling
Week Eleven
November 2  Storytelling
November 4  Storytelling

Week Twelve
November 9  Storytelling
November 11 Storytelling

Week Thirteen
November 16 Group performances
November 18 Group performances

Week Fourteen
November 30 Group performances
December 2  Group performances

Week Fifteen
December 7  Group performances
December 9  Group performances

Finals Week
Final TBA

Please note: This syllabus and its corresponding Canvas page may change to accommodate class and instructor needs. Any changes will be promptly communicated to students.

Iowa State University’s policies and procedures may be found online at the ISU website; this class follows all university policies, including ISU’s policies on academic integrity, discrimination, and accommodations.