

Special Topics: Acting for Change

Course Information: IDS2935 [sections 21738, 21739, 21740]

Course Meeting Times: T, TH 12:50-1:40pm, F: 10:40-11:30 am, 11:45- 12:35 pm, 12:50-1:40pm

Location FLG 0220, Tur 2333, 2305, 2318

Instructor: Braxton Rae (they/them)

T.A.: Savannah Simerly

Contact: Braxton.r@ufl.edu, s.simerly@ufl.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

Is there anything more to art than it just being fun and entertaining? Is there a way we can use our creative energy to create meaningful social and societal change? In this course we will delve into the world of performance and performance theorists in order to gain an understanding of the theatrical techniques and how they can be used in various applications to promote real change. **In order to do this we will:**

1. Read through the writings of different performance theorists.
2. Learn about different genres of performance and theatre
3. Read and discuss various plays, music albums, and video projects.
4. Learn and workshop different theatrical techniques to create change through art.

Essential Question: How can we use Art/Theatre/Performance to create meaningful Change?

Required Materials:

- **Theatre of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal**
- **The Greek Plays: Sixteen Plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides**
- **A ticket to Everybody by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins as performed by the UF Department of Theatre and Dance**
- **Any other course materials will be provided**

Assignments/Grades

Detailed Project Proposal (40%)-- A minimum 1,000 word essay that consists of the student proposing a project that creates change in a field that they are passionate about. The student will utilize the teachings of our performance theorists and the theatrical techniques we learned to create a robust proposal for a project. A Grading Rubric will be provided closer to the projects due date. **Due 11:59pm 4/25/2024**

Group project workshop (20%)-- each group will plan and execute a 20 minute sample workshop where they will work with their fellow classmates to practice how to create a workshop that promotes change using theatre/performance practices. **Groups will be assigned and order will be determined in class.**

Poetics Theorist Essay (15%)-- Write a minimum 500 word essay on a theorist of your choice detailing what theory they are proposing and how those theories can be used in practice when trying to create art that begets meaningful change. **Due 12:49pm 2/13/2024**

Everybody Response Paper (15%)-- Write a minimum 500 word essay about Everybody by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins as performed by the UF Department of Theatre and Dance. Note what interested you and made you lean in, and what made you tune out. Note its similarities and differences between this work and *Everyman*.

Participation (10%)-- This course has a mix of lectures, small group discussions and additional assignments. To be successful in this course the student must show up to class on time and ready to take notes or participate as needed. After more than four total absences, you may be in danger of failing this course and will need to speak to Braxton Rae about how you might be able to catch up.

Please note that I do not accept late work under most circumstances. If a circumstance occurs where a student is not able to turn in an assignment on time, they should contact Braxton immediately. Braxton will then determine on a case by case basis if an extension will be granted.

Course Calendar:

note, all assignments are listed on date DUE. This schedule is subject to change

Week 1-- Welcome

Tuesday 1/9-- **Welcome**-- Introduction to the course/syllabus

Thursday 1/11-- **Welcome**-- What is theatre and performance? **Read:** Foreword and Introduction of *Theatre of the Oppressed* by Augusto Boal [TOP]

Friday 1/12-- Gameplay

Week 2-- Aristotle

Tuesday 1/16-- **Aristotle's System of Tragedy.** Read TOP pg 2-35 (*Art Imitates Nature- A Short Glossary...*)

Thursday 1/18-- **Aristotle's System of Tragedy..** Read: TOP pg 36-50 (*How Aristotle's Coercive System of Tragedy Functions-General Notes*)

Friday 1/19-- **Aristotle's System of Tragedy.** Read: *Antigone* by Sophocles

Week 3--Machiavelli

Tuesday 1/23-- **Machiavelli and the Poetics of Virtu** Read: *TOP* pg 51-80 (Ch2 Machiavelli and the Poetics of Virtu)

Thursday 1/25-- **Machiavelli and the Poetics of Virtu** Read: *Antigone* by Sophocles (review text for class)

Friday 1/26-- Read: *The Mandrake (Mandragola)* by Machiavelli

Week4-- Brecht and Hegel

Tuesday 1/30-- **Hegel, Character as subject or Object?--** Read: *TOP* pg 82-92 (*The Epic Concept- Freedom of the Character Subject*

Thursday 2/1-- **Brecht, Character as Subject or Object?--** Read: *TOP* pg 93-115 (*A Word Poorly Chosen- Empathy or Osmosis*

Friday 2/2-- Read: *Sweat* by Lynn Nottage

Week 5-- Boal *go see Everybody by Braden Jacobs-Jenkins at the UF Department of Theatre and Dance this week or next week*

Tuesday 2/6-- **Poetics of the Oppressed--**

Thursday 2/8-- **Poetics of the Oppressed--**
Watch:

- *The Theater of the Oppressed : a rehearsal for the revolution.* (Youtube: <https://youtu.be/KMp8a9z-tTY?feature=shared>)
- *Theatre of the Oppressed - Augusto Boal - EXPLAINED* (Youtube: <https://youtu.be/rNMC4KA69m4?feature=shared>)

Friday 2/9-- **No Friday Section, Work on your Poetics Essays!--** Read *Everyman*

Week 6-- Performance Art *go see Everybody by Braden Jacobs-Jenkins at the UF Department of Theatre and Dance this week or next week*

Tuesday 2/13-- **Performance Art Due before the start of class: Poetics Theorist Essays**

Thursday 2/15-- **Performance Art**

Friday 2/16-- *Experience: Truth* by Braxton Rae (Website: www.TruthbyBraxtonRae.com)

Week 7-- Documentary Theatre

Tuesday 2/20-- **Documentary Theatre--** Read: *Death House*

Thursday 2/22-- **Documentary Theatre**-- *Conduct a three question interview with someone in your degree department, they cannot be in your same class year. You can ask questions on any topic. After conducting the interview, write a short (250 words or less) response detailing how you might turn their responses into a piece of art/performance.*

Friday 2/23-- **Everybody Discussions** (*You should have seen Everybody and read Everyman by this time*)

Week 8-- Devised Theatre

Tuesday 2/27-- **Source Objects**

Thursday 2/29-- **Source Text**

Friday 3/1-- **Devised Theatre**-- *Create: a 3 minute or less video that utilizes a source material with a partner **In Your Section** to be watched and discussed in sections. **Due at 11:59pm***

Friday 3/1: Everybody/Everyman Essay

Week 9-- Devised Theatre

Tuesday 3/5-- **Collections**-- *Listen to the albums Renaissance by Beyonce, Endless Summer Vacation by Miley Cyrus, and Pink Friday 2 by Nicki Minaj*

Thursday 3/7-- **Commentary and Gift Economy**

Friday 3/8-- No Friday sections, enjoy spring break!!

Week 10-- Spring Break

Tuesday 3/12, Thursday 3/14, Friday 3/15-- No Class Enjoy Spring Break!!

Week 11-- Guest Speakers!

Tuesday 4/16-- **Guest Speaker TBD**

Thursday 4/18-- **Guest Speaker TBD**

Friday 4/19-- **Discussion of Guest speakers**

Week 12-- Group Workshops

Tuesday 3/19-- Group Workshop Demonstration

Thursday 3/21-- Groups 1&2

Friday 3/22-- *Read: ...but you could've held my hand by JuCoby Johnson*

Week 13-- Group Workshops

Tuesday 3/26-- Groups 3&4

Thursday 3/28-- Groups 5&6

Friday 3/29-- *Read: Fade by Tanya Saracho*

Week 14-- Group Workshops

Tuesday 4/2-- Groups 7&8

Thursday 4/4--Groups 9&10

Friday 4/5 *Read: God of Carnage by Yasmina Reza*

Week 15-- Group Workshops

Tuesday 4/9-- Group 11

Thursday 4/11-- **Group Workshops Discussion**

Friday 4/12-- No Friday Sections

Week 16-- Wrapping Up!

Tuesday 4/23-- **Final class conclusion**

Thursday 4/25-- *Final Project Proposal due by 11:59pm Thursday 4/25*

Please Note That:

- Just as our world is ever changing and we are all adapting to life as it comes towards us, so too will this course. This whole syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of our class and the world we live in. Any changes will be communicated clearly with the class and the syllabus will be updated as needed.
- You are people before you are students. I understand that life happens. Please communicate to me if you have needs that are being unmet in this course that I can help with. I am also happy to help refer you to relevant support services such as mental health resources, food scarcity resources, or anything else you may need. Please take care of yourself to the best of your abilities. You do not have to be alone.