

# TPP 4930 Comedy Practice

Fall 2020 - T/Th (4:05pm-6:00pm) – G15

Instructor: Dr. Charlie Mitchell  
Office Phone: 352-273-0515  
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 12:00-2:00pm or by appointment by appointment (see Canvas for Zoom link)  
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## COURSE OBJECTIVES

To find your comic voice by striving for excellence in comedy writing and performance.  
To invent, work, and rework material that you can assemble into a comedy writing packet.

## EXPECTATIONS

This class is a space where you respect, support, and encourage your fellow performers/writers while understanding that constructive criticism is more valuable than praise. I will not censor work in this class. The only standard is whether the work is funny. In the world of comedy, there is only one absolute and unbreakable rule – you do not steal jokes.

Each week you will hand in a writing assignment such as late-night jokes, stand-up material, and sketches. Rewriting material is just as important as your first attempt. In class, you are expected to perform your own work and the work of your peers as well as improvise scenes to generate ideas for sketches. In addition to writing assignments and in-class activities, you will perform:

- a late-night comedy show segment(s)
- a recorded stand-up set (“tight five”)
- an online sketch comedy show

At certain times during the semester, you may need to make time outside of class to meet with me about your material.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

*Mastering Stand-Up: The Complete Guide to Becoming a Successful Comedian* by Stephen Rosenfield. I will also provide handouts if needed.

## ILLNESS

Students are expected to stay home and seek medical help for COVID-19 symptoms or exposure (persistent cough, fever 100.4+, new loss of taste or smell, muscle pain/headaches, shortness of breath, sore throat, chills, diarrhea, or feeling generally ill). The culture of hiding illness or the “show must go on” mentality must be avoided. Students who are medically required to quarantine will have documentation from a medical provider. Students who self-quarantine must communicate with the instructor and “attend” courses remotely synchronously, when available, or asynchronously if approved by the instructor.

If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>), please use the UF Health screening system

<https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/screen-test-protect/covid-19-exposure-and-symptoms-who-do-i-call-if/>) and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>).

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY (COVID EDITION)**

This course will be conducted using a hybrid model. When not meeting online, half the class will attend live on Tuesday or Thursday and the other half will attend remotely. Your online presence is just as important as your live one.

Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

*You can miss two unexcused classes without penalty.* After two, any absence from class for the following reasons must be supported by official acceptable documentation to avoid a grade penalty:

- illness—doctor's note must be on official letterhead with address and phone number, noting the date and time of visit and diagnosis verifying that an absence from class is warranted, doctor name and signature
- serious family emergencies
- special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences)
- military obligation
- severe weather conditions
- participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate
- court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena)

Religious observances do not require documentation but you should inform me by the end of the second week of any religious observances that will conflict with class attendance.

Barring the above circumstances, students are expected to be in attendance daily and to be on time. The first “unexcused” absence will result in a half letter grade (5%) deducted from the final grade. All additional “unexcused” absences will result in a penalty of a full letter grade (10%) from the final grade. Please make me aware of any persistent technology problems.

## **GRADE BREAKDOWN**

In-Class Participation	40%
Written Assignments/Rewrites	40%
Performances	20%

## **CLASS CONDUCT**

During class, there is no eating or cell phone use (especially texting).

## **HONOR CODE**

As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: “I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.” The Honor Code states that you cannot take photos or videos in class without my permission and the permission of fellow students.

## **LEARNING DISABILITIES**

If you have a disability documented with the Disability Resource Center and wish to discuss accommodations, please email me or see me during my virtual office hours. If you have a learning disability that has not been documented, contact the DRC at <https://disability.ufl.edu/about/contact-us/>

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/](http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/](http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/)

## **AVAILABILITY**

If you have something you want to discuss with me, please do not hesitate.

Your ongoing enrollment is confirmation that you understand and will comply with the requirements of this course. I reserve the right to alter this syllabus if necessary.