

Instructor: Ryan Hope Travis

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Office Hours: 8:30AM-10:30AM Wednesday + By Appointment

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Course Description:

“Introduction to devised theatre, which is the process of theatre creation in a collaborative manner. Explores the collaborative process of original work created by a group of artists who in many instances are also the performers. Exposes a variety of processes in ensemble theatre-making, including adaptation, group-writing, found text, improvisation, working with counterpoint, and creating solo performance, as well as methods of offering criticism.” (UF Undergraduate Course Catalog)

Learning Objectives:

This course draws on and builds upon every theater course you have taken to date. Devised theatre is a deeply collaborative process and calls on the skills and talents of every artist in the creative space. In other words, the devising process incorporates the most communal elements of theatre creation. The defined roles of actor, writer, and designer blur. Devised theatre moves the performer beyond the singular act of embodying a character. It moves designers from their typical silos. Actors, writers, designers, dramaturgs - everyone - comprise the Ensemble. Together, they mine every aspect of their artistry.

While there is no standardized approach toward building a devised play, one factor unifies devised theatre as a form - it responds to the communities in which the work is created. This course is practiced-based. We will analyze examples of devised work. Then, we will create.

Student learning objectives for Junior Performance Workshop in Acting/Directing (Part II) are:

- A) To develop in the student an understanding of devised theatre and explore the various incarnations that form may inhabit
- B) To introduce the student to the foundational elements of devising
- C) To explore creation techniques utilized in global devised theatre
- D) To create a new work using devised theatre techniques

Course Materials:

Required:

- Published plays and reference materials, both of which may be obtained from the campus libraries, will be utilized in class. Handouts will be distributed as well.
- Come prepared to work, i.e. wearing movement clothes or costumes (appropriate to character).
- Simple props for scene work!

Course Content and Student Expectations:

Students will create a new work using devised theatre techniques. The course will conclude with a staged performance utilizing the skills and techniques acquired throughout the semester. The classroom will be transformed into a rehearsal space. Much like any rehearsal process, class sessions must be approached

with openness and full commitment. A strong emphasis is placed on clarity of thought and intentionality (in writings and performances).

A variety of methods and approaches will be explored. Expectations of performance work and submitted assignments include:

- Thorough analysis/prep work
- Clear through-line of thought
- Clarity of objective(s)
- Clear and specific tactics
- Vocal *choices*
- Physical *choices*

The course will conclude with a final performance to be shared with the UF community more broadly. Finally, to lighten our impact on the planet, all documents will be submitted via Canvas.

Course Policies:

Physical Contact Policy

Unlike most classes, acting spaces can require a certain amount of physical contact between students or between instructor and student. This contact may be used to aid in releasing tension, promote deeper breathing, or to fuel a deeper emotional connection. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with any physical contact suggested in class, you have the right to refuse it with no repercussion towards any sort of grade.

Participation & Lateness Policy

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

Attendance Policy

This is a performance class, therefore, attendance is mandatory. You must be present to perform. If you miss a class, documentation is expected. An alternative assignment will be created for the missed work. We learn from each other. Your presence, whether or not a “performance” is involved that day, is important to the collective learning process. With that said, **you are allowed one unexcused absence/self-care day**. *Please also review the university attendance policy below.

Policy for Late Submissions

Communication is key. Life happens. If assignments are perpetually late, one-on-one consultation will be scheduled. Penalty includes up to zero credit if student has not communicated appropriate cause.

Policy on Responding to Students

- 24 to 48 hours to reply to emails is typical.
- Submitted documents are typically returned within 2 weeks after due date.

Grading:

This course embraces the philosophy of *un-grading*. Simply, complete assignments receive complete points. Because this is an artform, students may have varying degrees of experience and “talent” in acting. Therefore, doing good scene or performance work is not enough. *Time*, *effort*, and *commitment* are the crux of your grade.

Full participation is crucial in grading – i.e., full commitment to exercises, willingness to participate in class discussions, full prep work outside of class, etc.

1. *Full commitment to exercises*: This means consistently completing all assigned exercises, whether they are scene work, in-class exercises, or working on set with your peers. It is about putting in the effort to understand and apply the material.
2. *Willingness to participate in class discussions*: Active participation in class discussions shows that you are engaged and interested in the subject. It involves asking questions, sharing your thoughts, and contributing to group conversations.
3. *Full prep work outside of class*: This includes all the preparation you do outside of class, such as reading assigned materials, reviewing notes, and meeting with scene and writing partners. It is about being prepared for each class session and staying on top of the coursework.

Overall, full participation means being proactive and dedicated to all aspects of the learning process, which is crucial for both understanding the material and achieving a good grade. Each assignment will be awarded a specific point value. Points will be tallied at the end of the semester to determine.

Grading Scheme:

The following grading standard will be used to determine your *final grade* in this class:

Grade	Range
A	100pts to 93pts
A-	< 93pts to 90pts
B+	< 90pts to 87pts
B	< 87pts to 83pts
B-	< 83pts to 80pts
C+	< 80pts to 77pts
C	< 77pts to 73pts
C-	< 73pts to 70pts
D+	< 70pts to 67pts
D	< 67pts to 63pts
D-	< 63pts to 60pts
F	< 60pts to 0pts

For information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points, please visit:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Assignments:

- Writing sessions will begin with an in-class prompt. You are expected to expand on what you've written outside of class. This material will serve as the backbone for the script we ultimately create.
- After scenes are shaped, edited, and roughly blocked, they will be performed in-class. These workshop performances will serve as benchmarks for the creation process.
- Due dates for submitted work will be set with respect to student needs and outside performance activities -- where appropriate.
- To lighten our impact on the planet, all documents will be submitted via Canvas.

Writing Session #1	5pts
Sharing Workshop #1	10pts
Writing Session #2	5pts
Sharing Workshop #2	10pts
Writing Session #3	5pts
Sharing Workshop #3	10pts
Writing Session #4	5pts
Sharing Workshop #4	10pts
“Off Book” Day – Final Performance Pt. 1	10pts
Final Performance Pt. II	5pts
Participation	25pts
Total	100pts

Final Business:

Our primary goal is to create a new work using devised theatre techniques. You may find this process challenging at times. Check-in if you are having "one of those days." I got you. Finally, we will always give each other grace and will always lead with kindness.

I intend to foster an environment where you can shape/re-work/craft/re-imagine your personal creative process. I expect you to come to this space with a willing and open heart, self-awareness, imagination, and above all, be ready to work. Let's get it!

Attendance Policy:

This is a performance class, therefore, attendance is required. You must be present to perform. We learn from each other. Your presence, whether a performance is involved that day, is important to the collective learning process. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class.

2 tardies = 1 unexcused absence

Per 2 Unexcused absences = 10 points from your final grade

You are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office to receive a letter of excusal for anticipated or unanticipated absences. For information on current UF attendance policy, please visit:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Participation + Lateness Policy:

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness. Contact the Dean of Students Office for an excusal letter when appropriate.

Attendance at UF SoTD Productions:

You are required to see the SoTD mainstage shows to which you receive a complimentary ticket. You are encouraged to attend other SoTD, Florida Players and theatre-related productions, when possible. Be prepared to discuss SoTD productions in class.

Policy on Responding to Students:

A 24 to 48 hour reply to emails/Canvas message is typical. Submitted documents are typically returned within 2 weeks after the due date.

Late Assignment Policy:

Written assignments submitted 48hrs beyond the due date will receive a half letter grade deduction every day it is late. Keep track of due dates. Keep the lines of communication open. If you are having a challenge, let me know. Extensions will be permitted if you email me 24hrs *before* the deadline.

There are no make-ups for workshops, exercises, or performances. Professional actors who show up late get fired (eventually). For graded in-class work, the make-up assignment will be a 1-page (500 word minimum) reflection essay, applying on-camera acting techniques to an assigned SoTD mainstage production.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/

Academic Honesty Policy:

UF students are responsible for honest and ethical conduct while pursuing their studies. They are expected to abide by the UF Academic Honesty Policy, which defines an academic honesty offense as “the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage.” In this course's context, this includes conducting original research and properly citing sources for any materials (both printed and online) used in the writing reaction papers, journals, and self-analysis paper. Submitting work that has been plagiarized will result in a failing grade. For more information on the UF Academic Honor Code visit: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodation should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, dso.ufl.edu/drc) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. A meeting with the student, instructor and DRC representative will be scheduled to discuss students' needs. Absences related to accommodation are not retroactive.

Campus Resources:**Health & Wellness**

1. *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575 or visit umatter.ufl.edu/ to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
2. *Counseling and Wellness Center*: Visit counseling.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
3. *Student Health Care Center*: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit shcc.ufl.edu/.

4. *University Police Department*: Visit police.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
5. *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center*: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center.

Academic Resources:

1. *E-learning technical support*: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](http://helpdesk@ufl.edu) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
2. *Career Connections Center*: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
3. *Library Support*: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using libraries or finding resources.
4. *Teaching Center*: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
5. *Writing Studio*: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
6. *Student Complaints On-Campus*: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information](#).
7. *On-Line Students Complaints*: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).

Course Evaluations:

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/. 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/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

This timetable is subject to change at the instructor's discretion

WEEK 1:

Orientation, syllabus

Exploration of script examples – Read Ping Chong's Original Work and Ryan Hope Travis' *New Berry*

WEEK 2:

Individual Inventory: Community Agreements + Dialogue

WEEK 3:

Identify scope of devised work

Exercises in exploring character/text and “finding the answers”

*DUE Tuesday, January 24th: What Does “12” Mean? (Writing Session #1)

WEEK 4:

Explore potential performance locations

*DUE Thursday, February 2nd: Stream of Consciousness (Writing Session #2)

WEEK 5:

Review writing materials to date.

Identify links in each other's work.

WEEK 6:

Crafting characters. Will these characters be rooted in historical facts?

*DUE Monday, February 13th: Ruminations and Iterations (Sharing Workshop #1)

WEEK 7:

Finding linkages in the “scenes”

*DUE Wednesday, February 22nd: A Wizard's Lab (Writing Session #3)

WEEK 8:

Continuing to find the links

*DUE Wednesday, March 1st: “The Trees are the Ancestors” (Sharing Workshop #2)

WEEK 9:

Explorations in “the physical senses”

*DUE Tuesday, March 7th: Sequoia in the Woods (Sharing Workshop #3)

WEEK 10:

NO CLASS – March 12th – March 19th – SPRING BREAK

WEEK 11:

Unpacking the physicality

*DUE Tuesday, March 21st: Burning in the Grove (Writing Session #4)

WEEK 12:

Raising the stakes: continuing the development of your skills

Identifying holes and inconsistencies in the story

WEEK 13:

Feedback and further explorations of scenes

*DUE Thursday, April 6th: Staging with Scene Partners (Sharing Workshop #4)

WEEK 14:

Monologue study and continued scene exploration

Developing backstory with the ensemble

WEEK 15:

Final Scene Presentations

*DUE Thursday, April 27th - “Off Book Day” + ENSEMBLE-BASED FINAL PERFORMANCE

This syllabus is a good approximation of what this course will be like this semester. The instructor reserves the right to make reasonable additions or subtractions to the syllabus or to allow more or less time for certain sections based on how the work progresses this semester.
