Independent Study – Physical Comedy
THR 491.008

Spring 2018

Instructor: Slade Billew  Phone: (936) 468-1112
E-mail: billewbs@sfasu.edu  Office: GFNA 311A
Office Hours: MW 11:00 – 1:00; TR 12:30 – 1:30 or by appointment

Credits: 1

Objectives: In this course we will explore the foundations of theatrical physical comedy. We will examine the use of specific techniques and skills to create physical comedy moments. Further, we will study how to choreograph physical comedy etudes. We will consider safety, style, character psychology, and physical logic.

Required Text: Readings will be posted by the instructor on d2l throughout the semester. These readings will be drawn from:
Clown Training: a practical guide by Jon Davison
The Physical Comedy Handbook by Davis Rider Robinson
as well as others.

Grading components:
1) Engagement 30%
2) Reading Responses 10%
3) Performance/Scene Work 40%
4) Final Physical Comedy Performance 20%

Final Grading: (0-59) F (60-69) D (69.5-79) C (79.5-89) B (89.5-100) A

Engagement: The expectation in this class is that you are present as an engaged artist for each class session. You must be present and ready to work at the beginning of each class session. You are expected to be mentally, emotionally, and physically ready for each class. You will be asked to engage as a student, artist, and collaborator every day. You should meet or exceed the expectations of the course, the School of Theatre, and the university. Your engagement will be noted and evaluated on a daily basis.

Reading Responses: Students will write short (250 word) responses to readings throughout the semester.

Performance/Scene Work: Throughout the semester you will be asked to create short pieces of choreography drawing on the skills you are developing. These will require out of class rehearsal. You will be evaluated on your ability to achieve the assignment objectives, create engaging theatre, and your growth as an artist.
Final Physical Comedy Performance: Over the later part of the semester you will create a short choreography. For your final project you will create a narrative comedic story that incorporates a range of the physical comedy skills we have developed.

Program Learning Outcomes

- This course applies to the following School of Theatre Program Learning Outcomes at an introductory level.
- PLO #2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of theatre history and a variety of theatrical styles
- PLO #3: The student will demonstrate collaborative and/or leadership competencies appropriate to participate or take a leadership role in an effective theatrical production.
- PLO #4: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the component areas of theatrical creation, process, production, performance, and study, and their interrelationships.
- PLO #5: The student will be able to form and articulate a critical analysis and evaluation of a work of theatre.
- PLO #6: The student will demonstrate intermediate and advanced competence in one or more theatre specializations.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of THR 127 / Stage Movement, the student will

- Have an awareness of how the body moves (supports PLO #4).
- Have an understanding of the process of relaxation of the body and connection to the body as they relate to readiness for performance. (supports PLOs #4 and #6).
- Have an understanding of various schools of movement and movement theory (supports PLOs #2 and #5).
- Demonstrate an understanding of movement techniques and skills independently and in groups (supports PLOs #2, #3 and #6).
- Communicate understanding of the kinesthetic experiences of the course as they relate to the theories covered and the experiential work with the body (supports PLOs #4 and #5).

POLICIES and EXPECTATIONS

Course Specific General Expectations:

- Clothing that allows a full range of movement is required for each class. This means you do not need to adjust the clothing before, after, or during movement. Clothes should be clean. On occasion, the color of clothing may be dictated. For safety, clothing should fit the body and not be excessively flowing or large.
- This class requires significant physical interaction between students. Please come to class clean, and with nails trimmed.
- Jewelry should be removed before class. This includes necklaces, long, dangling earrings, watches, body piercings and large rings. This prevents potentially dangerous snags on your own body or other’s bodies.
• Soft soled movement or athletic type shoes shall be worn for class. On occasion, we will work with bare feet.
• Bring a no-spill water bottle to class. Only water is allowed. Fill it before class; you can’t leave class to fill it. No food in class (this includes gum and candy).
• Hair should be pulled out of the face. No hats are to be worn (unless we’re working with them in class).
• Assist in keeping the space clean, organized and ready for the next class.

Absences/Lateness: Theatre is an intrinsically collaborative art, and the practical application side of your training occurs largely in the classroom. Therefore your absence from class impacts not only your learning, but also the learning of the other students. You should not miss class. However, I recognize that life happens. Therefore, you have two absences to use at your discretion. After that each two additional unexcused absences will cost you a letter grade. Arriving late to class twice will also count as an absence. Only religious holidays, sponsored school events, and documented medical or personal issues may qualify as excused absences upon my discretion. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain any missed notes from a dependable classmate. It is the responsibility of the student to check in with the instructor after class if s/he is late or arrives after attendance is taken. As stated by School policy: Seven (7) absences in a T/TH class or ten (10) absences in a MWF class will result in an automatic failure of the course. As this class meets two days a week, the T/TH (7 absences) rule applies.

Course Work: All course work must be completed and turned in as indicated by the course calendar, as discussed in class or communicated on D2L. This includes quizzes, workshops, journals and other assignments. Students who arrive in class after quizzes have been completed may not take the quiz. Additionally, once the quizzes are passed out students are not allowed to leave the classroom until they have turned in the quiz. All work is due on the assigned date.

Students with documented disabilities must meet with the instructor in advance of accommodation to arrange accommodations for that disability.

General Expectations:

Please respect others as well as yourself; this includes other students, the instructor, guest speakers, and performers. The majority of the following guidelines for behavior reflect this principle.

1. Recording class in any form is not allowed.
2. With rare exception, I should never see your cell phone or electronic device in this studio. Cell phones should be set to silent or turned off and stowed before you enter the room. Absolutely NO use of cell phones is allowed in class unless there is an emergency, or it is approved/requested by the instructor.
3. Use of a cell phone (or other electronic device) or your friend’s brain during a quiz will result in a grade of zero on that quiz.
4. Disorderly conduct or talking inappropriately in class is not permitted.
5. Failure to follow any of these expectations will result in being dismissed from class and counted absent (unexcused).
Academic Integrity (A-9.1)
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Students with Disabilities
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/