Master Syllabus

THE-1030-Creative Expression in the Theatre

Course Description: Students with little or no acting experience develop the physical and vocal skills required for theater performance through structured exercises and improvisations. The course will help students construct a physical character by identifying and selecting from character givens and by creating clear character objectives based on given circumstances, design an appropriate theatrical ground plan with organic blocking, break a scene down into units and transitions, evaluate effective acting choices by watching college and professional theatre productions, and fully understand and participate in the cooperative process of acting. The course does not fulfill the humanities elective required for General Studies.

Course Outcomes and Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:
1. Use developed technique for coping with instrumental blocks: fear of exposure, social obligated behavior, and outer-directed self-image.
2. Define and evaluate the collaborative relationship of the actor to his/her fellow theatre artists: director, playwright, designers, producers, etc.
3. Utilize individual relaxation and concentration skills as tools in preparation for studying the actor's craft.
4. Use his/her body and voice as the primary instrument of dramatic expression to work through exercises and to perform "scripted" material.
5. Begin to evaluate their emotional, behavioral, sensory and cognitive resources.
6. Begin to identify goals, needs and relationship obligations.
7. Demonstrate his/her understanding of the rigid discipline and commitment to an acting partner and ensemble situation.
8. Demonstrate the various conventions of the theatre as practiced by the actor.

Course Outline: While the accompanying schedule provides a class-by-class description of activities, topics and due dates, here is an overview of course activities and topics:
• Overcoming self-consciousness, preliminary group interaction
• Exercises exploring acting, goals, and obstacles
• Exercises dealing with conflict, intensifiers, environments, objects
• Exercises dealing with whom, where and why
• Dramatic structure, scene break-downs, stage conventions; geography, terminology
• Improvisation leading to creating a scene
• Improvisation leading to creating a character
• Introduction to the physical approach
• Introduction to the psychological approach
• The actor as interpreter (scene work and monologue from published play)
The course primarily involves skill demonstrations including homework problems, performance exams, class performances and public performances.

**Student Goals:** Through this course you should develop physical and vocal conditioning and become familiar with relaxation techniques. This course should help you work productively with others and make you a more informed and enlightened audience member. Hopefully, you will become more aware and accepting of your own physical being and become more comfortable with stage-fright.

**Preparedness:** All students must arrive ready to move and participate. Loose fitting attire is suggested: T-Shirts, sweats, leotards or tights work well; shorts and revealing clothing do not. No eating, drinking or smoking is allowed in the classroom.

Service Assignment: Each student must engage in two "Service Learning “experiences through involvement with the local community theatre scene and living History Project.; this requirement is 10% of your final grade. A wide range of involvement is possible, limited only by your imagination. Some recommended methods follow:
- Acting in or “crewing” a production (backstage, lights, sound, etc.) = 100 points
- Participating in a major work-call (typically 3-5 hours; contact local theatres) = 100 points
- Staffing performance night (ushering, box-office, selling concessions) = 50 points

Many other service activities are possible: office assistance, shop assistance, publicity, etc. Contact participating theatres to ascertain their needs and make proposal to your instructor. You will need to document your community theatre service: What you did, where you did it and the name of your theatre contact. Submit documentation to receive credit. If you do help with work-calls or construction, be sure the theatre has adequate insurance to protect you if injured; these are not "field trips" and you will not be covered by college's insurance. Important note: if you commit to service and do not show up to the theatre (or do not give them ample notice that you cannot make your commitment) 50 points will be deducted from your overall total.

**Required Reading, Writing, and Other Outside of Class Assignments:** This course treats acting with a scope and intensity which requires students to study outside of class. Budget several hours a week for study, reading, writing of intent paper sand critiques, rehearsing, memorizing lines, attending plays, doing service and any other preparation needed to be ready for the next class session. Pay close attention to the schedule of classes and the due dates for readings and assignments.

**College Level Critical Thinking Tasks/Assignments:** Students will be expected to use critical thinking skills to describe, evaluate, justify, and synthesize the various concepts under observation. Each lesson, progressively, requires you to recall and translate concepts presented in previous lessons in order to fully incorporate and apply them effectively to his/her own subsequent work. You must also be able to diagnose on paper or group discussion the strengths; and weaknesses of the scenes presented by others. Being that each assignment is given to allow the student to explore, compare and contrast, and evaluate your own understanding of the concept under scrutiny that particular week, you will be held responsible for your own presentation. Thus, students are continually demonstrating their understanding of the concepts and techniques covered in the class. Your responses to criticism from the instructors will also demonstrate that understanding when work is presented a second time for evaluation.

**Class Participation:** A willingness to participate in all activities is encouraged and, in fact, required. Several games and projects will be group endeavors; sensitivity and respect for your
classmates is imperative. Each student is expected to participate enthusiastically in activities, question and answer sessions, critiques and discussions of classmates' presentations. Participation counts for 10% of your total grade.

**Performance Assignments:** Students will develop and present one historical character for alive, a ten, and 15 minute presentation for various ages from K –college, two improvisational pieces, and a two to three person scene from an extant play and lastly, a monologue from dramatic literature, which will be the final for this class. All told, performance assignments comprise 35% of the total grade. Several class sessions are provided for in-class rehearsal time. Substantial rehearsal time outside of class will be needed.

**Written Assignments:** Several writing assignments will come due throughout the semester; they fall into two categories: Intent Papers (written justifications of performance choices) and Critiques of Performances. The intent papers are mandatory. Students will have some choice as to which critical papers they complete. All told, the writing assignments comprise up to 25% of your final grade.

- **Intent Papers**
  - Each performance assignment will require written justifications of your choices, intents and purposes due on the day you perform
  - Late submissions will not be accepted.

- **Critical Papers**
  - Three critical papers must be completed; the semester affords five opportunities for students to write critical papers.
  - After each full round of performances, an 800 word critique can be due written in standard academic prose. You must critique 2 rounds of student performances.
  - You are required to see two dramatic performances outside of the classroom; you must critique at least one of them.
  - Late submissions of critical papers will be accepted for an additional week but with a penalty of 10 points.

These writings substitute for a final exam; it is expected that course-specific terms are used in all papers to demonstrate your mastery of course topics. Critiques can be submitted via e-mail; intent papers may not. A sample GOTE sheet for the first graded assignment is attached.

**Quizzes:** Students will be quizzed periodically on the required readings. Quizzes will be generated from questions that students bring to class. While not required, each student is encouraged to compose two or three quiz questions (and their answers) from the lessons due the next class period. The instructors will choose from the submitted questions for that session's quiz. Students will receive an extra credit point for each submitted question (up to three) and another point each time their question is chosen. If duplicate questions are submitted, the first one selected will receive the extra credit.

**Attendance:** Class attendance, which is 10% of your total grade, is mandatory and crucial to success in this course. Much of the learning in this class is experiential and as such cannot be made up. Each absence, up to four, will deduct 25 points from your total. Each late arrival or early departure will deduct 5 points from your total. Role will be taken promptly at the start of class. Only medical reasons for missing class, for you (or your children) will be excused. While
attendances mandatory, the conscientious student in good standing can miss classes with no effect on their final grade. (See the explanation of "point totals" below for more details).

**Grading:** Your final grade will be determined according to a point system as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Assignments Literature Improvisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Directed Improvisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Acting Scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>Monologue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Writing Assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intent papers (all due)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Gote Sheet</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Improv. Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Monologue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Final Scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Critical Papers (3 of 5 due)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Literature Improv. Critique or Directed Improv. Critique or Acting Scene Critique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outside Play Critique One or Outside Play Critique Two</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**TOTAL Points**

1600

The total number of points achievable in the semester is 1,600. Your final grade will be determined out of 1500. The additional 60 points is a "buffer zone "to allow grading flexibility. It can cover up to two absences or a critical paper or a service paper or any combination therein (note that intent papers are mandatory and always due the day you perform). A student with perfect attendance can elect to turn in all 7 required papers, complete their service and use the 60 point buffer towards their final grade. A student that falls substantially behind in points is welcome to propose extra credit projects to the instructors; a need for additional points beyond the 60 point buffer must be demonstrated. The acceptance of the extra credit projects and their point value is totally at the discretion of the instructors; both instructors must be in agreement before extra credit projects are approved.

**Final Grade:** The final grade you receive will be based on the total number of points earned throughout the semester, according to this table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point Spread</th>
<th>Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1600-1500</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1499-1400</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1399-1300</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1299-1200</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My responsibilities: You've invested a lot of time and money into getting the best education you can get at College of Southern Maryland. It's my responsibility to give you good, accurate information and plenty of opportunities to ask questions as you try your new skills. It's also my responsibility to treat you with the respect to which you are entitled as an adult. I expect you to afford your classmates and me the same consideration.

Student Behavior: All students are bound by the guidelines and regulations as set forth in the current Student Handbook. If you do not have a copy, please obtain one from the Dean of Student Affairs. College of Southern Maryland seeks to provide appropriate academic adjustments for all qualified individuals with disabilities. This College will comply with all applicable federal, states, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines, specifically Section 504, of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), with respect to providing appropriate academic adjustments to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the responsibility of the student to register with and provide medical verification and academic schedules Disability Support Services (DSS) at the beginning of each semester and no later than the second week of school unless otherwise determined by the coordinator. The student also must contact the faculty member in a timely manner to arrange for appropriate academic adjustments. Contact Disability Support Services for further information or assistance.

Classroom Decorum:
It's also my responsibility to treat you with the respect to which you are entitled as an adult. In return, I expect you to afford your classmates and me the same respect. In order to facilitate a positive learning environment for all students, a minimum level of mutual respect and decorum is necessary:
^ Turn off your cellular phones, beepers, personal stereos, and similar machines.
^ If you must leave during class, notify me prior to the beginning of class.

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated at College of Southern Maryland. Academic dishonesty includes the following: cheating, plagiarism, falsifying academic records, and other acts intentionally designed to provide unfair advantage to the student, or the attempt to commit such acts. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, intentionally giving or receiving unauthorized aid or notes on examinations, papers, or class assignments intended to be individually completed. Cheating also includes the unauthorized copying of tests or any other deceit or fraud related to the student's academic conduct. Plagiarism occurs when a student obtains someone else's work and presents those ideas or words as his or her own. Be very careful about lifting information directly from the Internet. In a university setting, plagiarism is an especially serious offense. If you cut-&-paste someone else’s writing from the Internet and submit it as your own, you have committed plagiarism. As easy as it is for you to search the Web and cut-&-paste, it’s that easy for me to do a Google search and find out you did so. Being found out will result in zero points for the assignment, the possibility of being dropped from the course, or even expulsion from the university. Don’t risk it!

If you don’t know how to format quotes or cite sources, or if you’re not sure if what you’re writing constitutes plagiarism, talk to me or refer to one of the style manuals listed above.
** Please take this warning seriously **

**Policies:**

**Attendance:**
Please familiarize yourself with College of Southern Maryland absentee policies and note that 3 absentee’s equal’s one letter grade drop. Come in late three times and that equal one absence. It is your responsibility to make sure if you come in late to inform me after class

**FX Grade**
Beginning in the spring 2007 semester, the FX grade may be assigned. A grade of “FX” is given at midterm and at the end of the semester if a student has not been attending the class. If the student has not attended for an extended length of time, the grade of FX should be given. In the case of students in distance learning courses, an “FX” grade may be assigned to students who have never participated or ceased to participate in the course. The grade will appear on the transcript and equate to an “F” in the grade point calculation.

**Incomplete (I) Grades**
The grade of "I" should be treated as an exception. An "I" may be given if the student's work has been qualitatively satisfactory and if circumstances beyond the student's control are responsible for the student's failure to complete course requirements. Students need to consider that their financial assistance eligibility may be jeopardized by an incomplete grade. If the instructor feels that an "Incomplete" is justifiable under the circumstances, the student and instructor must then fill out a contract (see Contract for Grade of Incomplete) stipulating the work remaining to be done and the expiration date by which the work will be submitted to the instructor. In establishing the expiration date the instructor should consider the work required, the nature of the material and the student’s individual circumstances. Generally fewer than eight weeks should be allowed for completion of the work. In extraordinary circumstances the instructor may establish an expiration date up to six months after the class end date. Grades which remain “I” after the expiration date will automatically become “F” grades. The Contract for Grade of Incomplete Form (available from the department chair) must then be submitted by the instructor to the department chair for approval. Incomplete contracts must be submitted prior to submission of the final grade sheet for any student receiving an "I" grade.

**Unauthorized Persons in the Workplace:**
With these guidelines the college clarifies its position with regard to the presence of unauthorized persons in the workplace. These guidelines, in compliance with liability insurance requirements, apply to all students and employees and seek to 1) ensure a safe environment for students and employees; 2) safeguard the integrity of the classrooms*, laboratories, and offices; 3) promote efficient and effective work in the college. These guidelines also recognize, however, that emergency situations may occur. 4.) The college strongly discourages students from bringing unauthorized persons into the classroom or laboratory while instruction or testing is ongoing. If child care difficulties, for example, prevent you from attending class, you are encouraged to comply with the instructor's policy on absenteeism, including informing the instructor and arranging to make up the work missed. Such an arrangement might include use of the Testing Center to make up tests. It is important to recognize, however, that your grade may be jeopardized as a result of excessive absences, regardless of the reason for them.
Audit:
A student may audit a class. My expectation is that if you are auditing this class you will be held to the same standards that your classmates will be held, as you will bemused in the group projects and other class room assignments. This means that you will need to provide supporting material to those that are not auditing the class. Students receive no credit for an audited class. One may change from credit to audit or audit to credit, with the instructor’s permission, at any time before the end of the withdrawal period. The appropriate form must be used (Request for Audit Form and Request for Credit Form). In the case of change from credit to audit the reasons for making the change and the requirements for eventually receiving a grade of AU must be specified. If the student does not fulfill the requirements for the audit, a grade of WD will be recorded for the course. Audited courses require the same tuition and fees as regular courses. Students auditing a course will be expected to meet requirements set by the instructor. A student who does not fulfill the terms of audit as explained byte instructor on the syllabus may not change from audit to credit. Audited courses do not meet prerequisite requirements. Audited courses are noted on the transcript as having a grade of AU. The AU grade is not calculated in the GPA.

General Education Skills and Categories of Knowledge
Reading Graduates should be able to:
1. read college-level material
2. Define or interpret unfamiliar words
3. Adjust reading style to type of material
4. Identify the main components and the supporting evidence
5. Interpret inferentially as well as literally
6. Evaluate written material to reach conclusions
7. Synthesize information and concepts gained from reading

Writing Graduates should be able to:
1. Write complete sentences, proofread and edit, punctuate, and spell in Standard English
2. Choose style and contents appropriate to audience and purpose
3. Write unified, coherent academic essay, correct in structure and mechanics, which supports clear, limited thesis
4. Write coherent research paper, including gathering information, taking notes, quoting, paraphrasing and summarizing accurately, and documenting sources properly.

Observation Graduates should be able to:
1. Conduct careful, thoughtful observations of objects and phenomena in nature, society, science, and art
2. Describe their observations and measurements accurately using appropriate terms and units
3. Interpret and draw appropriate conclusions based on their observations and measurements

Learning Graduates should be able to:
1. set study goals and priorities to attain stated course objectives
2. Plan for completion of both long-term and short-term assignments
3. Adapt to variety of methods of instruction
4. Locate and use resources outside the classroom  
5. Ask pertinent questions  
6. Accept constructive criticism and learn from it  
7. Apply appropriate theories to solve problems  

Speaking Graduates should be able to:  
1. Express their needs and expectations clearly  
2. Ask and answer questions effectively  
3. Give clear directions  
4. Organize and present ideas and feelings in language appropriate to the situation and audience  
5. Use nonverbal skills appropriately  

Listening Graduates should be able to:  
1. Interpret, analyze, and evaluate spoken messages  
2. Identify the main and subordinate ideas in spoken messages  
3. Recognize the use and meaning of nonverbal messages  
4. Distinguish between informative and persuasive spoken messages  
5. Recognize when another does not receive or understand a spoken message  
6. Follow spoken instructions  

Interpersonal Communication Graduates should be able to:  
1. Recognize and seek to resolve interpersonal conflicts  
2. Recognize and respect cultural diversity  
3. Accurately describe another’s point of view, even if it is different from one’s own  
4. Behave appropriately in a variety of social situations  
5. Engage in constructive discussion  

Reasoning Graduates should be able to:  
1. Recognize valid and invalid reasoning  
2. Draw reasonable conclusions from information found in various sources  
3. Distinguish between fact, opinion, and inference  
4. Identify, define, evaluate, and solve problems  
5. Recognize cause and effect