

SpecTopic: Musical Thea Wkshp (3 credits)

Lecturer: Alex Durrant

CRN: 61505

Class Meets: TR 1.14pm - 2:33pm

Location: Castle

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Office: 138 Hala Palanakila

Office Hours: M & W 10.30am – 11.30am & 2.30pm – 3.30 pm

T 9am – 10am

Windward Community College Mission Statement

Windward Community College offers innovative programs in the arts and sciences and opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding of Hawai'i and its unique heritage. With a special commitment to support the access and educational needs of Native Hawaiians, we provide O'ahu's Ko'olau region and beyond with liberal arts, career and lifelong learning in a supportive and challenging environment — inspiring students to excellence.

Catalog Course Description

Musical theatre is a tough performance genre to master as it requires acting, singing and dancing skills. This highly practical course will give you a taste of the world of the musical. You will take part in activities designed to improve your technical and interpretive skills in each discipline. You will then bring these skills together to work on an extract from a musical that you will rehearse and perform in a workshop situation.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- Identify the important concepts and facts associated with musical theatre under examination.
- Explain cause and effect relationships in connection to musical theatre.
- Compare and contrast various interpretations of musical theatre.
- Relate musical theatre to contemporary events

Attendance Policies

Students are expected to arrive on time and stay for the entire class session. **ATTENDANCE POLICY: *More than 3 absences will significantly lower the grade. After 4 absences, each absence will lower the grade by a full letter. Three "tardies" equal an absence. Medically excused absences will be dealt with on an individual basis.***

Active Participation Expectations

Students must be eager to both think and sweat at the same time. An alert body and mind are expected.

Students are expected to actively participate in each class unless medically unable.

Active participation is shaped by a particular mindset: motivated, open-minded, supportive, exploratory, and patient. This class will challenge your Learning Edge:

"Your Learning Edge is the balance between taking risks and taking care of yourself, the boundary of your discovery zone and your comfort zone. In your comfort zone, you don't learn anything. When you take risks and move beyond where you are comfortable, you enter a discovery zone where this opportunity to learn. Learning happens by creating new experiences and failures in your discovery zone, and then reflecting upon and evaluating them in your comfort zone. You will not learn anything by spending all your time in either zone, and the dance back and forth is what I call your Learning Edge." (Morgan Rich)

Health Statement

Please notify the instructor if there are any particular physical concerns that affect your ability to dance. An *Acknowledgment of Risk/Medical Consent Form* must be completed and submitted to the instructor on the first day of class.

Disabilities Accommodation Statement

If you have a physical, sensory, health, cognitive, or mental health disability that could limit your ability to fully participate in this class, you are encouraged to contact the Disability Specialist Counselor to discuss reasonable accommodations that will help you succeed in this class. Ann Lemke can be reached at 235-7448, lemke@hawaii.edu, or you may stop by Hale 'Akoakoa 213 for more information. Please Note: This course takes a tactile teaching approach. Tactile teaching involves hands-on correction by the instructor, and is a valuable teaching aid in assisting the student in understanding aspects of proper alignment, placement and movement concepts during class. Physical contact may range from simple touch to correct alignment to relaxation massage. Students may also be asked to experiment with exercises that involve weight exchange. If this makes you uncomfortable, please notify the professor and appropriate modifications will be made.

Course Assignments

- A. **Reflection Journal/Portfolio:** Students will be required to keep and evaluative log of their practical activities. Students are required to identify their strengths and weaknesses in reference to defined practical activity so that they can develop their technical skills. For tutors to gain an insight into how learners intend to do this, they need to be encouraged to self-evaluate their progress and performances. Instructor will provide prompts for short entries each class period and occasional more in-depth check-ins, such as at mid-term. Course *handouts* and *assignments* are also collected here to form an ongoing portfolio of work.
- B. **Exploration of material and short solo performance:** Students shall study selected musical song choices with the intention of exploring how the performance disciplines combine to create a fully conceived musical performance.
- C. **Presentation:** Students will present a short oral report on a musical of their choice considering its original context, its influence on the genre and its contribution to contemporary musical theatre.
- D. **Rehearsal for a performance extract:** Students will take an extract from a musical of their choice. This could be a short scene, song, duet or dance number to be performed in groups or solo. They may combine the disciplines of dance, acting and singing or choose to focus primarily on one. They will engage and develop their own interpretation of the extract with tutor guidance. Interpretation must be appropriate for the chosen genre but will absolutely allow for personal creativity.
- E. **Final sharing of created work:** Students will work towards presenting a showcase of their collective work that will be shared with their peers

Grading

Each student will be evaluated at the level in which they have enrolled. Grades will be based upon attendance, enthusiastic class participation, technical and performance improvement, written and oral assignments, and a growing sense of professional behavior appropriate to studio work and the level of the student. **No incomplete grades will be given in technique class.**

Grading Criteria:

| | | | |
|----|----------------------------|-------|-----|
| A. | Progress in technique | | 40% |
| | technical skills | (20%) | |
| | performance skills | (20%) | |
| B. | Attitude and concentration | | 50% |
| C. | Presentation | | 10% |

The attendance policy will be adhered to, and will affect the result of the above grading procedure. If a student is injured and unable to participate, they may attentively watch class and submit notes taken on

class materials to the instructor (using the “*Class Observation Form*” provided). **If a student is unable to take more than 6 classes due to injury, they will be advised to drop the course.**

The professor will amend the syllabus as may be appropriate. Students will be made aware of any changes to assignments or grading policies.

Dress Code Policy

Students will need to wear clothes which allow for free movement. Large or potentially dangerous jewelry and watches are not permitted. Hair needs to be confined and out of the face..

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

This unit enables learners to put into context the practical performance skills developed and honed in acting, singing and dance technique classes within the genre of musical theatre. The emphasis in this unit is on the interpretation of a role or roles, the application of the necessary skills as defined by the nature of the work and the context of the production, rehearsing the role effectively and performing it to an audience. The balance of acting, dance and musical elements will vary according to the nature of the chosen work and the individual roles within the piece. The role of Charity in *Sweet Charity*, for example, requires acting, singing and dancing skills in almost equal measure whereas the roles of Tony and Maria in *West Side Story* are principally acting and singing roles. Before embarking upon a role within a musical theatre work, learners will need the appropriate technical and interpretative skills in order to engage with a role effectively. For a performer in a musical theatre work, the role should be approached in a similar way to that of any work written for the theatre. The text (meaning the dialogue, the lyrics, and the musical and choreographic elements) requires reading and analysis and the context of the work and the production requires research. A role will be developed through a synthesis of personal research and understanding of the work that is developed in rehearsals with the director, the musical director and choreographer. Understanding the performance style required by a particular piece in line with a director’s concept of the production is equally important. The tone and style of *Chicago*, for example, is very different from that of *The Sound of Music*.

Material to be Covered

Learners will take part in a series of practical workshop sessions designed to enable them to develop skills in the three areas required for the performance of musical theatre work.

The three areas are:

Acting – work undertaken in these sessions will include:

- movement skills – use of movement, gesture and facial expression to communicate meaning
- vocal skills – clarity of delivery, communicating meaning through words
- learning lines
- developing a character
- exploring relationships with other characters.

Singing – work undertaken in these sessions should include:

- tuning, rhythm and timing
- following an accompaniment
- communicating the meaning of a song
- learning songs (music and lyrics)
- projection and placing of the voice
- interpreting lyrics
- phrasing
- musicality

- characterization
- expression.

Dance – work undertaken in these sessions should include:

- posture and alignment
- coordination and balance
- spatial awareness
- rhythm and timing
- learning choreography
- projection
- phrasing
- musicality
- characterization.

Musical theatre rehearsal skills should include:

- learning song(s) – i.e. note-bashing sessions
- learning choreography
- combining the separate elements of the piece – score, choreography and libretto
- combining skills (acting, singing and dancing) coherently
- developing a character appropriate to the context of the extract
- developing the relationship between musical, lyrical and spoken elements of the extract
- receiving and giving constructive and positive feedback.

Performance skills should include:

- singing – tuning, rhythm and timing, following the accompaniment, communicating style and meaning
- dance – posture, alignment, coordination, balance, spatial awareness, rhythm and timing, dynamic range, communication of style and meaning
- acting – use of movement, gesture and facial expression to communicate meaning ● coherent interpretation of a character/role
- security in the combined skills of acting, dancing and singing
- commitment, focus and energy ● stage presence.