Theatre Arts 3300.001—Movement for Actors
Spring 2014—Tuesday/Thursday, 11:00-12:15

Instructor: Kelly Russell
Office Hours: W 10:00-12:00, TR 9:00-10:30
Office Location: Bay Hall 3.22
Phone: 825-5992
E-mail: Kelly.Russell@mail.tamucc.edu

The mission of the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Theatre Program is to provide students with the tools needed in preparation as theatre educators or professional practitioners, or for continuation of their studies on the graduate level.

The goal of the program is to provide students with meaningful experiences that promote an understanding of theatre as a medium of expression and collaboration. We give students the opportunity for creative and critical thinking, problem solving, and exploration in an environment that values artistic integrity, understands failure as well as success, and respects the viewpoints of others in the encouragement of artistic truth. The extensive season of the Theatre Program serves not only as a training lab for our students, but also enhances the cultural and aesthetic experience of our campus and is a major cultural resource for the residents of South Texas.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION
Students will gain insights into the physical skills, techniques, and styles developed and used in modern performance.

II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students in the class will—
• Identify and practice movement techniques developed by Alexander, Laban, Bogart, Feldenkrais, Chekhov, and Margolis.
• Evaluate stage movement in theatrical productions.
• Reproduce specific personality-driven movements in a person they observe.
• Create movement-based performances by freeing the expressive and responsive potential of the body.
• Use the body as an exploratory tool in class exercises.
• Move from intellectual to kinesthetic understanding.
• Demechanize habitually conditioned physical vocabulary.
• Demonstrate elements of physical comedy.

III. OUTSIDE REQUIREMENTS
In addition to individual preparation for class, it will be the responsibility of each student to collaborate with his or her partner(s) outside of class in order to rehearse for required performances. Further, you will be required to see two plays at TAMU-CC. You will be responsible for buying tickets to these productions. Consider it a necessary expense for the course just like a book, lab manual, or course materials. These performances will be discussed in class. Don’t forget that seeing actors onstage is a very important part of your training. Plan to see each of the following shows:

The Bacchae February 19-24
Avenue Q April 16-21
IV. **EVALUATION**

15% Movement Piece  
15% Observation Character  
15% Viewpoints exercise  
15% Auto Performance (Final)  
10% *The Bacchae* Review  
10% *Avenue Q* Review  
10% Laban Improvisation  
10% Class Participation

Grading Scale:  
A = 100-90  
B = 89-80  
C = 79-70  
D = 69-60  
F = 59-0

V. **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance in this course is critical to your success. For purposes of grading, no distinction will be made between excused and unexcused absences (excluding absences for recognized religious holidays, death in your family, doctor’s excuse with documentation, and approved university functions.) Your absence affects the progress of the entire class. **Each absence in excess of two will lower your average a full letter grade.** More than four absences will result in a failing grade for the course. Exceptions under *extreme* circumstances may be made at the discretion of the instructor. You must consult with me immediately to make such an exception viable.

**Lateness:** Three late arrivals constitute one absence. If you arrive more than ten minutes late you will be considered absent. Time management skills are one of the most significant tools of the profession. The practice and development of these skills is expected.

**Missed Assignments:** No make-up work for quizzes or missed in-class activities. Reviews are due on the assigned deadlines and will not be accepted late. An unexcused absence on the date of an assigned performance will result in a failing grade for that activity. (Exceptions to deadlines will only be made in extreme circumstances at the discretion of the instructor.)

VI. **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office at (361) 825-5816 or visit the office in Driftwood 101.

VII. **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

The College of Arts and Humanities requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as
soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

VIII. GRADE APPEAL PROCESS
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

Tentative Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CLASS CONTENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>January 23</td>
<td>Syllabus &amp; Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>January 28</td>
<td>Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais Technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>January 30</td>
<td>Observation Exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>Basics of Stage Combat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>February 6</td>
<td>Basics of Stage Combat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>February 11</td>
<td>Laban Movement Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>February 13</td>
<td><strong>Laban Improvisation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>Moving to Music, Improvisation w/ Props</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>February 20</td>
<td>Acting Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>February 25</td>
<td><em>The Bacchae: Play Review Due</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>February 27</td>
<td>Movement Piece Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>Movement Piece Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>March 6</td>
<td>Psychological Gesture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>Psychological Gesture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>March 20</td>
<td><strong>Observation Character Performances</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>Finish Performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>March 27</td>
<td>Read <em>The King Stag</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Animal Characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>Commedia Characters/King Stag Scenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>Postmodern Choreography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>Postmodern Choreography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Viewpoints</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Movement Piece
- You may use other people in your movement piece, but there will be only one grade given per performance.
- Choose a dynamic piece of music.
- Craft a movement-based performance inspired by the music.
- The performance should have a strong beginning, middle, and end. It does not have to have a linear story, but should have a carefully crafted structure. It is not an improvisation. The performance should be carefully rehearsed.
- This is not a dance, but can include dance and other forms of movement. It is also NOT a lip-sync.
- You may use props and costumes, but they are not required.
- Remember, change holds an audience’s attention. Don’t let the performance become monotonous.
- Reveal something about yourself in this performance.
- Have fun and be creative!
- You will be evaluated on focus and concentration, freedom from inhibitions, risk, use of the body to express thought and emotion, change, use of space, impact on the audience.

Observation Character
- You will choose a person of the same gender to observe over a one-week period
- You will create a 3 minute scene and perform the person you observed in one of their usual environment.
- Focus should be on the character’s physical behavior, with special attention to shape, center, tempo-rhythm and gesture.

Viewpoints Exercise
- Students will create a group performance based on the teachings of Anne Bogart
- The performance will include the use of Tempo, Duration, Kinesthetic Response, Repetition, Shape, Gesture, Architecture, Spatial Relationship and Topography.
- The performance will be based on a theme specified by the instructor.
Auto Performance Guidelines

- You are the subject of this movement-based performance.
- Your performance can be inspired by your dreams, an event from your past, your relationship with others, your family, etc.
- It does not have to tell a story, it may be an abstract representation.
- You may perform solo or use other performers to help with the presentation. However, you are evaluated on the total performance. If the other actors in your piece are weak your grade will suffer.
- You may use music of any kind.
- You may use props, costumes, and/or set piece, but they are not a requirement. You are responsible for providing all of the technical elements you plan to use. Make sure you rehearse with everything before your final performance.
- You may include text in your performance, but it is not required. You can write it or it can come from outside materials. (Poetry, newspaper articles, quotes, plays, commercials, comic books, cereal boxes, etc.)
- Use what you have learned in this class. Try something new. No one cares to see the same old stuff you have always done. Throw out your bag of tricks and take some risks.
- The total performance time should be between 3 and 5 minutes.

Laban Improvisation

- Motivate the use of Rudolph Laban’s eight “efforts” in an improvisation.
- You must use each of the following gestures/movements in order: dab, press, slash, punch, glide, float, wring and flick.

Play Review Guidelines

Your written review will need to be **between two to five typed, double-spaced pages**. You MUST support your opinions with specific examples from the performance. Please organize your review using the following guidelines.

**Paragraph 1—The Script.** Comment on the text of the play as a work of literature. Was it of merit to produce? Was it interesting and appropriate for the audience in attendance? What particular theme(s) did the work address? **Do not summarize the plot or re-tell the story of the play.** Your review is for me, and I have also seen it…MANY times!

**Paragraph 2—Design Elements.** Consider the costumes, lighting, set and sound. Did the design of these elements contribute to the overall quality of the production? Did they help you better understand environment, location, theme, subject matter, etc? How could the design elements be improved?

**Paragraph 3—Acting.** Were the characters believable within the world of the play? Were you able to hear and understand lines of dialogue clearly? Did the actors react and respond accordingly to the situations and events of the play? Did the performers handle the language of the play effectively? Who was your favorite performer? Why? Which performer could use the most improvement? What could they do to get better? Use specific examples from the performance to support your opinions.

**Paragraph 4—Directing.** Did the director use movement patterns (blocking) that supported the action in each scene? Did all of the different elements of the theatrical event (design, acting, blocking, etc.) contribute the overall effectiveness of the show? Did the performance run smoothly and professionally?

**Paragraph 5—Audience Response.** What was your overall reaction to the play? Was it enjoyable, moving, funny, thought-provoking, and/or engaging? What was the general response from the rest of the audience? Did you overhear anyone comment about the performance as they were leaving? What would have improved your enjoyment of this theatrical event?