Theatre Arts 3300.002—Movement for Actors
Spring 2015—Tuesday/Thursday, 9:30-10:45 a.m. CA 103

Instructor: Kelly Russell
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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:

Water by the Spoonful March 10-12
Assassins April 21-26
IV. EVALUATION

- 15% Movement Piece
- 15% Observation Character
- 15% Viewpoints exercise
- 15% Auto Performance (Final)
- 10% Play Review 1
- 10% Play Review 2
- 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. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/PLAGIARISM

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in grade of “0” for that assignment.
VI. DROPPING A CLASS
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 10, 2015 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

VII. STATEMENT OF CIVILITY
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

VIII. GRADE APPEALS PROCESS
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamu.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

IX. DISABILITY SERVICES
The Americans 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 call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

X. ACADEMIC ADVISING
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA
The Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**XI. STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC CONTINUITY**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

### Tentative Class Schedule

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<td>Syllabus &amp; Expectations</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>January 27</td>
<td>Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais Technique</td>
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<td>Observation Exercises</td>
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<td>Alignment Exercises</td>
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<td><strong>Water by the Spoonful Review Due</strong></td>
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<td>Animal Characters</td>
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<td>Commedia Characters/<em>King Stag Scenes</em></td>
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<td>Commedia Characters/<em>King Stag Scenes</em></td>
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<td>Viewpoints</td>
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<td>Viewpoints</td>
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<td>Viewpoints</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
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<td><strong>Viewpoints Performances</strong></td>
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<td>Lessac Movement Techniques</td>
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<td>Auto Performance Prep/Class Summary</td>
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<td><strong>May 07</strong></td>
<td><strong>Final Performance, 8:00 – 10:30 a.m.</strong></td>
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EXPLAINATION 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 works 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?