Theatre 315 - Theatre for Young Audiences

Core Values
- Creating Theatre is a process for youth development.
- All youth have the capacity to learn and to be central actors in their own development.
- Art-making has transformative power.
- Youth and adults can work in respectful collaboration.
- Young people are worth believing in. They are trustworthy, capable, and competent.
- There is merit in the artistic work of youth.
- Youth need adults to support them, correct them and guide them.
- Differing points of view enrich and strengthen art-making and learning communities.

THEA 315 - Theatre for Young Audiences
Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-1:45
Professor: Dani Bedau
Email: dbedau@mail.sdsu.edu
Office: DA 210
Office Hours: Monday 1:00-3:00 PM or by appointment

Course Description:
Current philosophies and practices in theatre for young audiences. Techniques of selecting and producing plays for and with youth. Theatre styles, script analysis, and functions of the production team.

Required Texts:
- The Performer’s Guide to the Collaborative Process by Sheila Kerrigan
- Slinky Malinki Catflaps by Lynley Dodd
- International Plays for Young Audiences: Contemporary Works from Leading Playwrights, Edited by Roger Ellis
- Salting the Ocean Edited by Naomi Shihab Nye

Suggested Texts:
- Theatre for Community, Conflict and Dialogue by Michael Rohd

Departmental and Course Expectations:
1. A maximum of two excused absences (or late arrivals or early leaves 5 times) are allowed before grade is significantly impacted. Any additional absence or unexcused absence will
result in half a letter grade deduction. (For example, an A would turn into an A-, a B+ into a B and so forth).

2. All written assignments must be written in Standard Academic English. They must be typed in 12-point Times or Helvetica in black on white paper, with one-inch margins. They must be error-free. Do not submit work that has not been proofread.

3. No late assignments will be accepted. All work must be submitted on time.

In-class Involvement:
This course is a practical introduction to Theatre for Young Audiences. The bulk of our work will be in-class, participatory and experiential. The only way to learn is by doing. Since none of the in-class activities can be replicated outside the class session, no make-up assignment is possible if you are absent. One absence may not directly impact your grade, but two absences and/or excessive lateness will result in the lowering of your grade.

Assessment:
Your course grade is based on your performance in the following activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>% of Final Course Grade</th>
<th>VPA Standards Linkage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 1- Attending Performances</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 2- Developing Creative Community</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 3- Poetry in Motion</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 4- Lead Opening Circle</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 5- Children’s Literature Read Aloud/</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1, 2, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STORY TELLING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 6- Page to Stage</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1, 2, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 7- Read and Conceptualize a TYA Play</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 8- Final Reflection</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading
94-100 = A
90-93 = A-
87-89 = B+
83-86 = B
80-82 = B-
77-79 = C+
73-76 = C
70-72 = C-
67-69 = D+
63-66 = D
60-62 = D-

Tasks
Task 1 - Attending Performances
Point Value: 5 (Note: You must attend ALL performances and turn in ALL responses in order to receive full points. There are no partial points given for this assignment)
Due Date: Various (the Tuesday after the last performance of each run)
Goal: This task will develop competency in judging the quality of theatrical process and production based on elements, principles and concepts of the theatre

Assignment: The School of Theatre, Television and Film requires that students attend all performances and film festival taking place during the semester students are enrolled in a course within the school. This semester you will be required to purchase tickets and attend the SDSU season shows and film festivals. You can find a list of productions and an opportunity to purchase discounted tickets via the School web site. Please see the links below.

There is a direct link to purchase tickets on the website:
http://theatre.sdsu.edu

You are required to turn in ticket stubs as proof of attendance and a brief paper about the play on the Tuesday following the close of the event. For the film festival, all that is required is to turn in your ticket stub.

How to proceed: Attend the shows and respond to the work. You will be asked to respond to the work by writing a brief response. **Ticket stubs and responses are due the Tuesday following the close of the event.**

Task 2 – Developing Creative Community
Point Value: 5
Due Date: Tuesday, October 11
Goal: To consider and articulate the basics of community building and explore techniques and methodologies leading to the creation of safe creative community.

Assignment: You will be asked to write a two-page paper articulating the elements that contribute to the development of a safe creative community.

How to proceed: Read assigned sections from the Kerrigan book and participate fully in exercises and discussions in class. Write a paper that describes what you have learned about the importance of conscious community development and offers some examples from your reading and your in-class experience. Include three examples from the book (Chapters 5,6,7) and one from class.

Task 3 – Poetry in Motion
Point Value: 15
Due Date: Thursday, October 6

Goal: This assignment will develop performance and imaginative skills by asking you to find and memorize a short children’s poem and work with others to develop a short, staged presentation using the Composition Box technique.
Assignment: Select and become familiar with a short children’s poem from *Salting the Ocean*. You will then work in small groups to create a 1-3 minute composition presentation using the poems as your text.

How to proceed:
- Participate fully in the process as guided by your instructor during the in-class sessions
- Include all of the required elements in your Composition Box
- Work together to create your piece
- Rehearse and refine your work
- Use the Rehearsal Checklist elements as you rehearse
- Keep a record of your in-class sessions

On your date: At the conclusion of Opening Circle, each small group will have 5 minutes to present their compositions to the class and participate in a feedback process. Immediately preceding your group presentation you will hand in copies of your group records. These should be stapled to your Group Presentation one-sheet. Include a copy of your individual poems.

Task 4 - Lead Opening/Closing Circle
Point Value: 10
Due Date: Various (September 13 – December 6)

Goal: In this task you will gain competency in the skill of guiding a group through a warm-up process that includes physical, vocal, and articulation work, as well as a game.

Assignment: Each student will lead Opening or Closing Circle once during the semester. Each Circle should be 10 minutes long and must include physical, vocal and articulation. You can include a short group game if you have time or you can consider games/activities that cover all 3 areas required by the Circle activity.

How to proceed: Observe the first few weeks of class while I am leading Opening and Closing Circle. Consider your skill set and passions and design a Circle you are excited and passionate about! You may use activities and exercises that you have learned in other places or read about. Fill out the Circle Rationale and Sequence Form found on Blackboard. Please use the Warm-up/Ice Breaker Activity Worksheet, also on Blackboard, to describe the game you lead.

On your date: Arrive a few minutes early. Written forms are to be emailed to me BEFORE the start of class and to the entire class via Blackboard. I will open the class and hand it over to you. Be ready to begin and clear with your instructions.

Task 5 – Children’s Literature Read Aloud/ STORY TELLING
Point Value: 20
Due Date: October 13, 18, 20, 25, 27 (as assigned)

Goal: To develop presentation and imaginative skills through Reader’s Theatre techniques.
**Assignment:** Students will select an excerpt from a children’s book to read aloud. The selection should be 1-3 minutes in length. You will prepare this selection for individual presentation in class.

**How to proceed:** Find a piece of children’s lit that interests you. Be sure to pick an excerpt that is filled with lively characters and plenty of interesting action. Your task is to bring the story to life using the space, your body, voice and expression. You must add two of the following elements to your reading: music, props, sound effects, costumes and movement. Use the Rehearsal Checklist as a guide as you prepare and rehearse. Don’t just read the book; find an interesting way to tell the story.

**On your date:** Each student will have 5-7 minutes to set up, present and hear feedback on their work.

**Task 6 – Page to Stage – Story Theatre Presentations**
**Point Value:** 20
**Script Adaptations:** Tuesday, November 1
**Due Date:** Various – December 1 and December 6 (as assigned)

**Goal:** To develop fluency in script writing and expand performance skills.

**Assignment:** Students will take their children’s literature selection and adapt it into a script that could be staged as a classroom play. In small groups, you will then select one of these scripts to fully stage for the class.

**How to proceed:** Once you have presented your excerpt in class and received feedback you may begin work on your script. Please read *Skin and Bones* by Neil Duffield found in *International Plays for Young Audiences: Contemporary Works from Leading Playwrights*, Edited by Roger Ellis. This will provide you with an example of the kind of format to use when writing a script. Your script should consist of 3-5 pages of dialogue. A copy of this script will be turned in. You will then be assigned to a small group. In these groups you will select one of the adapted story scripts to stage and fully present in the class. These presentations will require some outside rehearsal time and should include elements of costume, set, sound and movement.

**On your date:** Each group will have 15 minutes to set up, present and hear feedback.

**Task 7 – Read and Conceptualize TYA Play**
**Point Value:** 15
**Due Date:** Thursday, December 8

**Goal:** This assignment will introduce the process of thinking conceptually about existing theatrical material.

**Assignment:** A one-two paged paper articulating how you would conceptualize a TYA production with a group of young people.

**How to proceed:** Re-read *Skin and Bones* Neil Duffield found in *International Plays for Young Audiences: Contemporary Works from Leading Playwrights*, Edited by Roger Ellis and create a
concept for how you would present the play. Please articulate how all of the elements of theatre (acting, direction, lights, sound, costumes, props, sets) are addressed by your concept.

**On your date:** This is a written assignment to be turned in on the due date. No late papers will be accepted.

**Task 8 – Reflection Paper/Final Exam**  
**Point Value:** 5  
**Due Date:** Thursday, December 8

**Goal:** To reflect and close the process of our class.

**Assignment:**  
Write a two-page reflection paper assessing what you have learned in class about drama, and describe how you think you will use it in your future. Be creative! Remember this is not a course evaluation.

**Note:** This syllabus is a working document and is subject to change and mid-semester revisions.