



MUS-216: MUSICAL THEATER PRODUCTION: MUSIC

Effective Term

Fall 2025

BOT Approval Date

12/17/2024

Discipline

MUS - Music

Course Number

216

Course Title

Musical Theater Production: Music

Short Title

Musical Thtr Prod: Music

Credit Status (CB 04)

D - Credit - Degree applicable

Units**Lab Units**

1.00

to

3.00

Total Units

1.00 - 3.00

Variable Hours**Lab Contact Hours Variable**

54 - 162

Total Student Learning Hours Variable

54 - 162

Is this an existing Extensive Lab?

No

Do you want to propose this for Extensive Lab?

No

Distance Education

No

Catalog Description

This course is designed for the presentation of a musical. Students develop rehearsal and performance skills in the areas of singing, stage movement and acting, with an emphasis on developing singing/musical technique.



Requisites

Prerequisite(s)

Prerequisite(s) (must be taken before)

By audition and/or interview.

Codes

TOP Code (CB 03)

1004.00 - Music

CIP Code

50.0509 - Musical Theatre.

Repeatability Code

No

Grading Option

Letter grade OR P/NP

Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

Learning Objective

1. Develop proper techniques for the use and care of the vocal instrument.
2. Practice appropriate posture for singing.
3. Produce singing that projects to the audience, with accurate diction and a focused sound.
4. Perform with accurate pitch, in tune with other voices and instruments.
5. Perform with accurate rhythms and tempos.
6. Demonstrate good musical phrasing.
7. Exhibit an awareness and appreciation of people groups that have historically been excluded from full participation in the music theater arts (Learning Objectives 1-7 are for the 1-unit version of the course)
8. Develop and identify audition requirements for any musical production.
9. Plan gestures, movements, and body language that will enhance the moods and emotions of the music. (Learning Objectives 1-9 are for the 2-unit version of the course)
10. Exhibit acting and singing skills appropriate for a minor or featured character role.
11. Exhibit acting and singing skills appropriate for a lead role.
12. Evaluate their own performance based on an understanding of professional musical theater expectations. (Learning Objectives 1-12 are for the 3-unit version of the course.)

Learning Outcome Information

Course Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to maintain and follow rehearsal and performance schedules and requirements.
2. Students will develop and improve self-evaluative and analytical skills through journaling the production process.
3. Students will demonstrate good breath support and posture while singing musical theater repertoire.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to sing correct pitches in selected musical theatre repertoire.
5. Students will demonstrate proper tone while singing musical theatre repertoire.

Program Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome

1. Students build performance skills in instrumental, music, voice, piano, and/or guitar.
2. Students discover how musical works are composed through the study of foundational elements: melody, harmony, rhythm, form, instrumentation, and texture.
3. Students develop an awareness of the aesthetic values in music and the roles music plays in the aesthetics of various time periods, styles, and world regions.
4. Students explore how music has evolved throughout history, and in specific styles and world regions.
5. Students explore various career paths in music and the expectations of each field.
6. Students will enrich the arts through interaction with the community.

Institutional Learning Outcomes

Aesthetic Awareness: The student will identify and evaluate how aesthetic expression leads to an appreciation of social and cultural context as well as the values of art and nature.

Communication: The student will effectively express and exchange ideas through listening, speaking, reading, writing, visual works, and other modes of interpersonal expression.

Cultural Awareness and Humility: The student will demonstrate knowledge of and sensitivity toward individuals of diverse ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, and religious affiliations, as well as toward those individuals with diverse abilities and socio-economic classes to respectfully interact with individuals of diverse perspectives, beliefs and values while being mindful of the limitation of their own cultural frameworks.

Social Awareness: The student will recognize and analyze the interconnectedness of global, national, and local concerns, analyzing cultural, political, social, and environmental issues from multiple perspectives and appreciate similarities and differences among cultures.

Content

Course Lab Content

I. Actors/Singers

- a. Audition process
- b. Course overview and expectations
- c. Backstage Etiquette
- d. The actor's state of mind
 - aa. Focus and concentration
 - bb. Journaling for self evaluation and reflection
- e. Rehearsal schedule and requirements
 - aa. Warming up the voice and body for rehearsal and performance
- f. Discussion of stage fright
- g. Discussion of public solitude and dual consciousness
- h. Discussion of the relationship between an actor/singer's unique background/experiences and the diversity of characters they may be portraying
- i. Music and Voice
 - aa. Matching pitch, rhythm and tempo with other performers
 1. Solo, small ensemble, and large ensemble singing, as required by assigned role.
 - bb. Vocal projection in a theater
 - cc. Following a conductor and instrumental ensemble
- j. Text analysis
 - aa. Read through of script
 - bb. Discussion of character objectives
 - cc. Discussion of presentational style
 - dd. Relating emotional content of text and subtext to musical concepts
 - ee. Discussion of themes in the text that display either positive or negative examples of the treatment of historically marginalized people groups
- k. Musical Movement and Blocking

- aa. Understanding character movement
- bb. Determining meaningful gesture
- cc. Matching choreographed movements to the score and character motivations.
- I. Memorization of lines and actions
- m. Assisting crew as needed
- n. Maintaining professional performance level
- o. Technical rehearsal
- p. Public performances

Methods of Instruction

Method

Directed Study

Integration

Directed study of music theater techniques through instructor led exercises to include vocal technique, ensemble and solo singing, and following a musical score or libretto, followed by instructor evaluation and feedback.

Method

Discussion

Integration

Instructor led discussion of production goals, purpose and process, with focus on rehearsal and performance schedules and requirements.

Method

Observation and Demonstration

Integration

Observation of the different character role types, with demonstration by the instructor as well as students. Demonstrations are critiqued through discussion with instructor and students.

Method

Papers and Reports

Integration

Papers and reports include script analysis, character development, and student observation of performance process, followed by instructor feedback.

Method

Directed Study

Integration

Directed study of the origins of the musical being performed. Who were the primary creators (author, composer, lyricist, director, etc.) and how might their background (including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other relevant factors) have shaped the production?

Methods of Evaluation

Method

Class Participation

Integration

Students are observed at each class meeting and evaluated by the instructor. Student should be consistently involved in each class meeting/rehearsal, participating with activities and discussions, interacting with the instructor and other students in meaningful and appropriate ways that contribute to the objectives of the class and demonstrate sensitivity to the diverse backgrounds and identities of classmates. Students will receive verbal or written feedback from the instructor if their participation is inadequate.

Method

Final Performance

Integration

The class culminates in a public musical theater production. Each student's performance will be evaluated based on his or her use of proper vocal technique, demonstrated ability to memorize parts, and integration of movement into the performance.

Method

Self-Evaluation

Integration

Instructor assessment of self-evaluation discussing overall achievement of course objectives, especially in regards to music-focused objectives. Papers should be well-organized, include a thesis with a strong focal point, substantiation of points made, and a strong conclusion. Ideas presented should include a discussion on the student's overall growth as a vocalist and performer.

Assignments

Assignment Type

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Analyze the motivations of your character, including such factors as heredity, race, environment, temperament, employment (if any), personal habits, health and age. The written assignment will be evaluated by the instructor for thoroughness, depth, and insight of the analysis.

Example Assignment: Character Analysis Paper – Coalhouse Walker Jr. from Ragtime

Write a 2-3 page paper analyzing the motivations of Coalhouse Walker Jr., one of the central characters in Ragtime. In your analysis, address the following factors:

Heredity and Race: How does Coalhouse's identity as a Black man in early 20th-century America shape his motivations and actions? How does his heritage influence his perspective on justice and equality?

Environment: Examine how the socio-political environment of the time period, particularly the racial tensions and inequalities, affects Coalhouse's choices. How does his environment impact his quest for dignity and respect?

Temperament: Analyze Coalhouse's personality traits. What aspects of his temperament, such as his pride, dignity, and sense of justice, drive his actions throughout the musical? How does his temperament evolve in response to the events that unfold?

Employment and Status: Consider how his position as a successful pianist and his professional success contribute to his self-identity and motivations. How does his status affect how others perceive him and how he perceives himself?

Personal Habits and Health: Explore any personal habits that shape Coalhouse's decisions or interactions. How does his health or physical condition play a role in his journey?

Age: Reflect on how his age and life stage influence his motivations. Does being a father and partner to Sarah affect his choices? How does his maturity shape his understanding of the world around him?

In your paper, use specific examples from the text and music to support your analysis. Additionally, consider how the historical and cultural context of Ragtime affects your understanding of Coalhouse's motivations and development as a character.

Assignment Type

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Prepare a journal with daily personal observations, analyses, and evaluations of their character growth and the rehearsal process. The journal may be typed or hand written. Journal entries will be periodically checked by the instructor, and the complete journal will be evaluated at the end of the semester for completeness and meaningful analysis.

Example Assignment: Journal of Character Growth and Rehearsal Process – Eliza Doolittle from My Fair Lady

For this assignment, students will keep a detailed journal tracking their personal observations, analyses, and evaluations of their character growth and the overall rehearsal process. The journal should document daily reflections, and can be typed or handwritten.

Assignment Guidelines: Over the course of the rehearsal period, you will play the role of Eliza Doolittle in My Fair Lady. Each day after rehearsal, reflect on and write about the following:

Personal Observations: Describe your emotional and physical response to playing Eliza each day. How are you connecting to her character?

What challenges are you facing in embodying her, and how are you addressing them? Are there moments where you feel especially connected or disconnected from her journey?

Character Growth: Analyze how Eliza evolves throughout the rehearsal process. Focus on key moments, such as her first lesson with Professor Higgins, her frustration with the phonetics training, or her triumph at the ball. How does her background, as a poor flower girl with strong Cockney roots, influence her initial behavior and personality? How do you see her motivations and self-perception changing over time?

Reflect on Eliza's relationships with other characters, particularly Higgins and Colonel Pickering. How do these relationships impact her growth and how are you adjusting your portrayal as these dynamics shift?

Rehearsal Process: Evaluate how the rehearsal process is helping you develop your portrayal of Eliza. What specific exercises, scenes, or feedback have been most helpful in shaping your performance? Document any breakthroughs you experience during rehearsals. For example, if you had difficulty understanding Eliza's transition from vulnerability to strength, what moments or insights helped clarify that shift?

Consider how collaboration with your scene partners is influencing your character development. Are there particular moments in the dialogue, staging, or blocking that have deepened your understanding of Eliza?

Daily Reflections: After each rehearsal, write a short evaluation of what went well, what needs improvement, and what specific goals you have for the next session. For example, if you struggle with the Cockney accent, what strategies are you using to improve? How are you working on Eliza's emotional range, from her fiery early scenes to her more refined, conflicted moments later in the musical?

Final Submission: By the end of the semester, your journal should include a series of daily entries that reflect on your personal journey with Eliza's character, your progress through the rehearsal process, and the growth you have observed in your portrayal. Your reflections should be honest, analytical, and specific, demonstrating both your understanding of the character and your commitment to your craft as a performer.

Assignment Type

Other

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

Prepare a video recording of yourself singing one of your assigned musical numbers. Make a list of areas that need improvement as well as things you're doing well. The written self-critique (along with optionally the video) will be evaluated by the instructor for specificity of critiques.

Example Assignment: Self-Evaluation Video Recording – "Your Daddy's Son" from Ragtime

For this assignment, you will prepare a video recording of yourself singing "Your Daddy's Son" from Ragtime. After completing the recording, reflect on your performance by making a list of areas that need improvement as well as aspects you feel you performed well.

Guidelines:

1) Video Recording:

Set up your recording space with good lighting and minimal background noise.

Perform the song in its entirety, focusing on both vocal technique and the emotional depth required for the character of Sarah.

2) Self-Evaluation:

Areas for Improvement:

Identify specific vocal challenges, such as sustaining long phrases, breath control, or navigating the emotional highs and lows of the song. Were there any moments where you felt pitch or diction could improve?

Reflect on your character portrayal. Did you fully connect with Sarah's pain and regret in this moment? What can you do to deepen the emotional expression in future performances?

Strengths:

Highlight areas of strength, such as moments where your vocal tone, dynamics, or phrasing were particularly effective.

Note where you felt connected to Sarah's emotions and able to convey her inner turmoil through your acting and vocal choices.

Submit the video along with your list of self-evaluation points. This process will help you track your progress and set goals for future rehearsals.

Assignment Type

Reading

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Read and analyze the script, libretto, or musical score. Note if the characters and themes are representative of the diverse experiences and perspectives of people from different backgrounds. Does the musical challenge or reinforce dominant cultural norms and values? What role, if any, does your character play in those dynamics? The depth of student insights will be evaluated by the instructor via in-class discussion.

Example Assignment: Script and Score Analysis – Usnavi from In the Heights

For this assignment, read and analyze the script, libretto, or musical score of *In the Heights*. In your analysis, consider how the characters and themes represent diverse experiences and perspectives, and examine whether the musical challenges or reinforces dominant cultural norms and values. Focus on the role your character plays in these dynamics.

Guidelines:**1) Diverse Experiences and Perspectives:**

Analyze how *In the Heights* portrays the experiences of a predominantly Latinx community in Washington Heights. Focus on the diverse cultural backgrounds of the characters, such as Usnavi, a Dominican bodega owner, and others who represent various Latin American identities.

Reflect on how Usnavi's story, along with those of his neighbors, highlights themes of immigration, gentrification, and the pursuit of the American Dream. How do their experiences reflect the challenges faced by underrepresented and marginalized groups?

2) Cultural Norms and Values:

Consider whether *In the Heights* challenges or reinforces dominant cultural norms. For example, does the musical question or affirm common ideas about success, belonging, or cultural identity in America?

Reflect on the musical's exploration of the immigrant experience. How does the narrative engage with the struggles of maintaining cultural identity while seeking upward mobility? Are themes of family, community, and tradition celebrated in a way that counters mainstream narratives?

3) Character's Role:

Analyze Usnavi's role in challenging or reinforcing cultural norms. As the central character, how does he represent the hopes and challenges of first-generation immigrants? How does his decision to stay in the neighborhood rather than return to the Dominican Republic reflect the complexity of belonging and identity?

Discuss how Usnavi's personal journey—balancing dreams of leaving with a growing sense of responsibility toward his community—mirrors the larger dynamics of the neighborhood. How does his character challenge or uphold the values of perseverance and success in the face of gentrification?

In your analysis, use specific examples from the script and score to support your points. Consider how *In the Heights* offers both a celebration and a critique of the immigrant experience in America, and how your character's journey reflects these larger themes.

Assignment Type

Other

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

Perform your assigned role to the standard that was set in the rehearsal process during the public performance. The final performance will be evaluated by the instructor and feedback will be given either in written form or through verbal debrief with the student.

Course Materials**Textbooks**

Robert Benedetti (2014). *The Actor in You* Pearson, Allyn and Bacon. ISBN: 020591490X

Gillyanne Kayes (2005). *Singing and the Actor* Routledge. ISBN: 0-87830-198-4

Karen Hall (2014). *So You Want to Sing Music Theater: A Guide for Professionals* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. ISBN: 978-0810888388

Other Resources

Script varies depending on play being produced

Class Size Information**Class Size**

32

Class Size Category

G - Large lab 32

Diversity and Inclusion**Explain how diversity and inclusion(e.g., gender, culture/race, sexuality, etc.) is infused into the course.**

Students will engage with musical theater works that represent a broad spectrum of identities, cultures, and perspectives. Through analyzing, learning, and performing a musical theater libretto, students will explore the writings, musical styles, and contributions of artists and composers who have been historically excluded due to gender, sexual identity, race, and ethnicity.

For example, students might be assigned to study the works of Lin-Manuel Miranda, focusing on how *Hamilton* incorporates diverse musical styles and narratives reflecting America's multicultural roots. Another assignment could involve analyzing a musical by Jeanine Tesori, a female composer, whose work addresses themes of sexuality and identity. Students could also perform excerpts from musicals by African American composers such as *The Color Purple*, reflecting on how the music and narrative address racial and cultural experiences.

In addition to performance-based activities, students will engage in discussions and written reflections that examine how these works challenge traditional norms in musical theater. By studying diverse creators and stories, students will deepen their understanding of how gender, race, and identity shape artistic expression in musical theater. This approach fosters a learning environment where inclusion and representation are prioritized, encouraging students to think critically about the impact of diversity in the performing arts.

Describe how assignments, instruction, evaluation, course content, and interactions are contextualized for diverse learners promoting an equitable course.

In order to promote an equitable course that caters to diverse learners, the assignments, instruction, evaluation, course content, and interactions are contextualized through various learning modalities. For visual learners, ample visual examples are provided, such as video recordings of performances and live demonstrations by the instructor. Sheet music is also made available so that students can visually engage with the material they are learning. For auditory learners, both music and dialogue will be demonstrated live, allowing students to hear the material firsthand. Students will engage in reading and writing activities by analyzing scripts or sheet music, and they are required to write about their character development, blocking, and specific sections of music. Kinesthetic learners

are supported by the active implementation of dialogue, singing, dance, and stage movement, ensuring that they physically engage with the course content. This multifaceted approach ensures that the course meets the needs of a diverse student body by offering multiple ways to engage with the material.

Interactions

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-student interaction.

Student interaction is built into this course. Students work together when reading scripts, practicing lines, learning and rehearsing choreography and when learning the vocal music for the show. They discuss the scenes together, bounce ideas around about their characters, offer each other feedback, help each other remember vocal parts, choreography, notes, and direction, and provide support to each other throughout the process. All of this fosters the skills of collaboration and teamwork essential in the performing arts.

Explain how the course will incorporate instructor-to-student interaction.

The instructor directs the students in every aspect of this course and in every class. Specific instruction on details related to the script, dancing, singing, blocking, stage etiquette, etc. is provided, as well as feedback and direction related to performance techniques and skills. Discussions are also facilitated to support the overall success of the students and the show. The majority of the instruction is verbal, so instructor to student interaction is extensive and direct. All of this fosters the essential skills of following direction carefully and incorporating director feedback well.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-content interaction.

The content for this course lives in the script/libretto, the choreography, and the music. Students directly interact with this content multiple times per week. They read and enact the script, they learn, rehearse, and perform the choreography, and they read the musical score and sing. The content is realized through all of these modalities. All of this fosters the essential skills of studying and interpreting a script and score to bring it to life on the stage.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-self interaction (metacognitive).

Students in MUS 216 are continuously self-evaluating and considering their performance as they rehearse over the course of the semester. They must reflect on what they are learning and how they are applying that learning in order to improve and hone their skills. They are motivated to do this self-work as their exam is a public performance. Students will also reflect in a journal and/or self-reflection essay. This helps establish the life-long habit of self-reflection and self-evaluation of both rehearsal and performance, a skill essential in the performing arts.

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